

TRIBUNE



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Letter From The Editor

ON THE COVER this week we have a picture of Kataragama taken over twenty years ago. It is a view of the entrance of the main temple, known to the Sinhalese as the Maha Devala of Kataragama Deviyo and to the Tamils as the temple of Murugan or Subramaniam. Today, the view and scene is very different: everything has been re-furbished according to the imagination of neo-sophisticates who have dominated the cultural (and religious) scene in Sri Lanka in the last two decades. Kataragama has been "made" a Sacred Area in terms of the statutory laws laid down by the post-Independence enthusiasts who want to re-create an image of ancient Sri Lanka in terms of modern imperatives in a manner that has staggered the sensibilities of people who know better about things both ancient and modern. But the erudite were never in the positions of power and strength—but at different times they no doubt had a much greater say in the affairs of state than they do now. Kataragama has today become yet another crowded complex for religious picknicking (and religious tourism) for vast hordes of humanity who delight in rushing around from temple to temple either to win "merit" for a better life in the next re-birth or to plead for forgiveness for cosmic and karmic misdemeanours in past births which has made life hard in this birth. In spite of this vast humanity which now flocks to Kataragama—it may be argued it is only part of a divine or karmic purpose—the truly religious still seem to find solace in going to this shrine. Many of them bemoan the changes which have overtaken Kataragama, but they have reconciled themselves to them as part of the (cyclic) karmic changes that make life. Those who believe in karma and re-birth as an endless perpetuity of birth, growth and death for all beings and things—animate, inanimate, visible and invisible (to human eyes)—are not perturbed by these changes. Fifty years ago, Kataragama was a remote sylvan shrine which was reached on foot from Tissamaharama through elephant-infested jungle or from the north along the banks of the Menik Ganga, mainly by Hindu devotees who made the pilgrimage on foot—*pada yatra*—along the eastern seacoast from as far away as Jaffna. (Even today, there are devotees who make this pilgrimage in this way). In the past fifty years, Kataragama has undergone changes which nobody had imagined possible even thirty years ago when the motor road to Kataragama was completed. The Buddhists, individuals and institutions, have now taken over the Kataragama which had for long been regarded as a Hindu shrine. There is no doubt that in the remote past, Buddhist temples and dagobas had studded the whole area. But in those days, Hinduism and Buddhism were part of the same religio-cultural *ethos*. When the nation went into decay and the jungle had swept over this part of the country, the Hindu shrine to Subramaniam or Murugan had survived. From a Hindu point of view, Kataragama is a unique shrine. In this temple there is no visible representation of the deity who is worshiped. Kataragama is unique because it was the only temple of Murugan (in Sri Lanka and even the Indian subcontinent) which is *a-rupa*—without a *rupa* or a statue or an idol. The symbolic representation of the deity in Kataragama is believed to be a *yantra* in a box which is taken out only in procession during the festival in July (August) and also on the occasion of the Hindu New Year (and also the Sinhala New Year) in mid-April and also on the legendary birthday of Murugan—on the asterism (nakshatra) of *kartikai* in the month of *kartikai* (usually after mid November). A group of jungle tribes had looked after the temple and the mystery of the *yantra* through the countless centuries when Kataragama had become a lonely outpost in the jungle. Today, everything is different. Kataragama is a tourist paradise. It can be reached by air, road and train (at least to a point from which access to the temple is easy). New roads are being built to Kataragama. New resthouses and pilgrims' rests have been built. The area around the temple has been cleaned out of shops and shopkeepers—they have moved beyond the river. But a new breed of profit-greedy men, who exploit the religious susceptibilities of ordinary people, have taken their place and have begun to swarm all over the sacred area. (Whether this type is more pestiferous than the former shopkeeper class is hard to decide, but for the moment the shouter of pseudo-religious slogans seems to be on top). All Ministers—including many Marxists—today flock to this shrine. Apart from personal belief or unbelief, it pays dividends at election times (and even at other times) to be known to be a devotee of the god of Kataragama.

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EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

Prime Minister Returns;
Ja-ela, Non-Aligned

THE PRIME MINISTER, Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike, returned to the island on Thursday April 15. She immediately entered into the campaign to help the SLFP candidate win the Ja-ela by election. Though most observers believe that the UNP will win the Ja-ela seat without any difficulty, the pro-government media has "handled" and "managed" the news (shades of the Wijewardena's) in such a way that some have developed creeping suspicions that the SLFP candidate might yet come in as a winner—dark horses win sometimes, you know. By the time this issue of *Tribune* is on the newstands, the results of the Ja-ela by-election will be known.

There is no doubt that but for the Ward Place rumpus, which has brought the in-fighting in the UNP to the surface in a dramatic way, the UNP would have done much better at Ja-ela. If the UNP wins—as many think it will—the majority would be less than what it might have been (the Ward Place episode is certainly not a votecatcher for a party led by J. R. Jayewardene. If the UNP losses—this will surprise political pundits—the Ward Place incident can be considered a major contributory factor in the UNP setback.

However, nobody who knows anything about the Ja-ela electorate or the family of the late MP Paris Perera will pay much heed to the gimmick in which his son "Algernon" has appeared on SLFP platforms pleading that people should vote SLFP. People in the area know about this son of Paris Perera and the entire "background" because of which he was not allowed to attend the father's funeral (certainly not due J. R. Jayewardene's machinations.) The SLFP would have done much better without this kind of gimmick which has already boomeranged into a *gundu*.

There is also no doubt however that the SLFP would have done much better if it had mobilised the services of Minister Maithripala Senanayake more widely in the campaign. He is known to have

addressed only one meeting in the electorate and it is alleged that the meeting was "boycotted" by the local organisers. Minister Maithripala Senanayake had felt that this was a rebuff to him inspired by Mr. Anura Bandaranaike. Anyway, according to the *Janadina*, Minister Maithripala had complained to the Prime Minister on her return about the manner in which he had been treated, and he has left for Mexico on April 20 to attend a meeting of IPU. But apart from the pointed departure staged by the Minister, who has been acting Prime Minister for the last one month, on the eve of the by-election, the more important fact is that the political influence he wields was not utilised in favour of the SLFP candidate. It must be remembered that Ja-ela has a strong and large element of conservative voters and one way for the SLFP to have attracted these votes was to have mobilised the electioneering charisma of Mr. Maithripala Senanayake to the fullest. It is significant that whilst the in-fighting in the UNP has burst open like a cancerous wound, the in-fighting inside the SLFP goes on under the counter covered up by the pro-government media.

THEY HAVE been many grumbles grouses about the quality of flour that was distributed to consumers and bakers in April, but the authorities have sought to make amends (without providing any believable reason why the flour had gone bad—with fairy tales that hooks were used to unload the bags, that polythene bags had caused the deterioration, etc etc.) Whilst the media has been paying a great deal of attention to these matters, the most significant political news centred around the Prime Minister's visit to Yugoslavia and India. In Belgrade (or Brioni) she had met Tito and Sadat, and in New Delhi Mrs. Indira Gandhi.

No local paper has carried any interpretative analysis of discussions the Prime Minister has had in Yugoslavia or India. There have been enthusiastic accounts of what she had done and discussed, but it is impossible to know just what new trends have developed as a result of these talks. A piece in the *Observer* by Sarath Nanayakara was the only piece which gave some clue or indication about some of the new thinking among some of the top leaders of the non-

aligned movement. But apart from this, all reports were repetitive pieces garnished with the usual journalistic trappings.

We have, therefore, to rely on reports in foreign papers. English commentaries from Yugoslavia have not come in as yet, but from India some comments and analysis have reached the island.

It is strange that our media has not tried to analyse the significance and implications of India's, virtually unilateral, decision to send an Ambassador to China after 14 years. This was a bold step and the fact that Peking has accepted an Indian Ambassador is an indication that the Indian move was well-timed. There have been speculations in foreign papers whether Mrs. Bandaranaike, who has sought to help in the normalisation of relations between India and China for many years, was not the "honest broker" on this occasion. Hints in the Indian papers indicate that Yugoslavia had played a major role in bringing about the new rapprochement between Delhi and Peking.

About the Prime Minister's discussions in New Delhi two commentaries by G. K. Reddy of the *Hindu*, datelined from New Delhi, April 10 and 14, throw a great deal of light and we reproduce the same without comment. The first report of April 10 read:

The Prime Minister of Sri Lanka, Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike, is arriving in Delhi on Tuesday for talks with Mrs. Gandhi on her way back from Yugoslavia, where she had a general exchange of views with President Tito and President Sadat on the broad strategy for the forthcoming non-aligned Summit Conference. As head of the host Government, she will have conferred with the leaders of the three principal non-aligned countries—India, Egypt and Yugoslavia—before returning to Colombo on Thursday after her two-day stop-over in Delhi.

The Sri Lanka Prime Minister has been in Yugoslavia for the last three and half weeks undergoing nature cure treatment for some leg ailment. As a guest of President Tito, she had occasion to meet him frequently during this visit, which coincided with President Sadat's trip to Yugoslavia giving her the additional opportunity of having similar discussions with him. So Mrs. Bandaranaike will be able to acquaint

Mrs. Gandhi with the latest thinking of the Yugoslav and Egyptian Presidents on some of the more important issues that are expected to come up for discussion at the Non-aligned Summit in August before ascertaining her views on these issues. The Yugoslav Foreign Minister, Mr. Kilos Minic, who is arriving in Delhi on Wednesday will also convey to Mrs. Gandhi and Mr. Chavan the views of President Tito on them. Apart from their common faith in non-alignment, India and Sri Lanka are bound together by close friendship and good neighbourly relations which serve as an additional incentive for periodic meetings between the heads of the two Governments. Mrs. Bandaranaike would have certainly availed herself of this opportunity to meet Mrs. Gandhi even if Sri Lanka was not hosting the Non-aligned Summit Conference. After her State visit to India in January 1974, she stopped over in Delhi later that year on her way back from Iran. Since she has not met Mrs. Gandhi for the last one and half years, she decided to break journey in Delhi to keep up the continuity of these personal contacts which are of utmost importance for sustaining the State-level relations even when there are no major bilateral problems.

The earlier idea of holding a meeting of the Asian members of the non-aligned group in Delhi before the Colombo Summit has been given up, since it was felt that any attempt to define this geographical concept and prescribe the criteria for participation would create unnecessary misunderstandings among the concerned nations. The suggestion was first mooted by Sri Lanka and subsequently welcomed by India in the sincere belief that it would be quite helpful if the Asian members of the non-aligned community also met, like the other major geographical or ethnic groupings such as the Arab countries, African States or Latin American nations, to discuss matters of common interest before the next Summit. But in dealing with a vast continent like Asia, it is not easy to decide which of the countries should be invited to the proposed meeting to serve the desired purpose, without diluting the representation to the point of making the whole thing a meaningless exercise. One suggestion was that the participation should be confined to South and South-East Asia, which would have left out the West and East Asian regions. So it was thought that the best thing

to do would be to drop the whole idea for the present rather than get involved in a futile controversy over the very concept of Asia on the eve of this Summit Conference.

But the non-official seminar which India was thinking of organising along with the meeting of the Asian group will be held as planned later this month to provide an intellectual forum for discussing the future role of non-alignment. A number of leading personalities from various non-aligned countries are being invited to this seminar and the ideas emerging from it will be circulated among the member nations for their information before the next Summit Conference. The India International Centre has been entrusted with the organisation of this seminar in consultation with the concerned agencies of the Government. The Foreign Ministers of the 17-member countries of the Bureau of Non-aligned Community will be meeting in Algiers next month to get down to the tasks of fixing the agenda, preparing the policy papers, and reviewing the rules for the admission of new nations. India has already cautioned the other non-aligned countries against the attempts being made by some interested powers from time to time to water down the admission rules and thereby dilute the very purpose of non-alignment. It has been pleading for the determination of proper criteria for membership and its strict enforcement to prevent the disruption of the principles of non-alignment.

Another source of misunderstanding and even friction at times has been the strange convention that has been allowed to develop that, in the absence of a permanent secretariat of its own, there is no recognised agency for co-ordinating the activities of the community during the inter-summit periods. Though an attempt has been made to fill this gap by the permanent representatives of the non-aligned countries at the UN functioning as a sort of standing committee, the countries hosting the summit conferences or the meetings of the Foreign Ministers have been taking upon themselves the responsibility of extending invitations to various categories of countries pending their formal admission. It was in this context that Peru invited countries like Australia, Rumania and Sweden as guests to the Foreign Minister's meeting in Lima last year. And to avoid such

confusion in future, an attempt is being made to prescribe certain procedures at the Algiers meeting of the 17-members bureau for regulating both admissions and attendance.

The report of April 14, read as follows:

After an hour-long meeting with Mrs. Gandhi, the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka, Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike, said that she too was opposed to any dilution of the principles of non-alignment. She seemed to share the Indian view that the criteria for the admission of new members should be clearly defined, so that there was no misunderstanding over their interpretation or application in future. There were already countries in the non-aligned community which had friendship treaties. The members of the non-aligned community have to take note of the feelings of some of them who have been complaining that the existing rules were either too rigid or too flexible. This was a matter that had to be decided either at the level of the Foreign Ministers or at the summit by the heads of Government.

But otherwise Mrs. Bandaranaike did not think there was any serious threat as such to the non-aligned movement. If there were threats, it was up to the community itself to deal with them. There were bound to be some countries which did not like non-alignment. The members of the group had their own differences. All such issues had to be tackled by the non-aligned community in the larger interests of its own cohesion and common purpose. Though she did not say specifically that the idea of a meeting of the Asian countries of the non-aligned group before the Colombo summit had been formally given up, it was quite evident that both India and Sri Lanka were no longer pursuing it. In other words, it had been quietly dropped in the sense that the suggestion did not figure at all at to-day's discussions.

The whole emphasis at these talks was that everything possible should be done not only to make the forthcoming summit a great success but also put some new content into the very concept of non-alignment. Mrs. Bandaranaike thanked India and other countries which were assisting Sri Lanka in making the arrangements for the summit conference which was being held for the first time in Asia. She decided to stop

over in Delhi for a couple of days on her way back from Yugoslavia to acquaint Mrs. Gandhi with the talks she had with President Tito and President Sadat and seek her advice and guidance over various issues facing the non-aligned movement. She also felt that the way India and Sri Lanka had gone about settling their bilateral problems without any outside interference could serve as a model for other non-aligned nations. Though she regretted that some DMK elements in Tamil Nadu were supporting the separatist movement in Sri Lanka, the forthright manner in which Mrs. Gandhi had disapproved of it was an eloquent manifestation of the excellent relationship prevailing between the two countries and other problems.

The problems of non-alignment dealt with at to-day's talks between the Prime Ministers of India and Sri Lanka and their advisers will be considered in greater depth during the three rounds of discussions in the next two days with the Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Yugoslavia, Mr. Milos Minic, who arrived in Delhi to-night in the course of a trip to Egypt, Iraq, Pakistan and Iran. As one of the principal architects of non-alignment, President Tito has been taking an active interest both in the preparatory work and the policy issues that would be coming up for discussion at the Colombo summit conference. The Prime Ministers of India and Sri

Lanka met without any aides for about 40 minutes before they were joined by their advisers for fuller discussions. Earlier, the External Affairs Minister, Mr. Y. B. Chavan, called on Mrs. Bandaranaike at Rashtrapati Bhavan for a general exchange of views on what was described as matters of bilateral interest. The talks were continued at a working lunch that Mrs. Gandhi gave in honour of Mrs. Bandaranaike. She is leaving for Colombo to-morrow via Madras.

About the discussions in Yugoslavia, the Daily Mirror of April 20, published a report datelined, Cairo ("Monday" without a date). The comment is obviously slanted, (but as all comment is slanted there is little to complain about). But we reprint the comment from the Daily Mirror from a source called ANSA (an Italian news agency).

'Before the upcoming non-aligned nation's summit meeting in Colombo and on the eve of Indian Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi's visit to the Soviet Union, Egypt and Yugoslavia, Egypt and China have mounted co-ordinated efforts to 'recuperate New Delhi', according to political observers here. This reported diplomatic efforts comes in the wake of India's refusal to supply Egypt with spare parts for Soviet manufactured arms, a move dictated by Moscow. With this development, many commentators felt that Prime Minister Gandhi would come under fire during

the non-aligned nation's conference and that India would lose its key role in the organization. Now, however, the Cairo Government has announced that on May 2 the Egyptian capital will host Indian and Yugoslav delegations for three-way trade talks among the three nations at the head of the non-aligned organization. This announcements is after decisions made in new Delhi and Peking to raise their respective diplomatic representations up to the ambassador level. Sino-India diplomatic relations had been reduced to the Charge d'Affairs level at the time of the Chinese-Indian conflict

During Egyptian President Anwar, Sadat's recent talks at Brioni with Yugoslav President, Tito the two leaders reportedly discussed at length means for either edging India out of the non-aligned nations' sphere of influence or establishing closer ties. New Delhi showed favourable signs. Cairo observers now say that the latter means have been put into effect with the normalisation of diplomatic relations between India and China. On a related front, Egyptian vice-president, Hosni Mubarak was stated to leave for Peking yesterday for talks on Chinese-Egyptian relations and the Peking decision to supply Cairo with the spare parts required for Soviet-made arms. ANSA.

What this report means is yet to be seen in the context of contemporary events.

CHRONICLE

April 5 — April 11

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; TOCSL—Times of Ceylon Sunday Illustrated; DM—Dinamina; LD—Lankadipa; JD—Janadina; VK—Virakesari; ATH—Aththa; SM—Silumina; SLD—Sri Lankadipa; JS—Janasathiya.

MONDAY, APRIL 5: The Government has decided to do away immediately with the 80 to 100 percent tax on the landed cost of commercial vehicles imported through the convertible rupee accounts; commercial vehicles like lorries, vans and tools for machinery will be permitted by the Government with the utilisation of idle CRA money now estimated at Rs. 84 million—CDN. Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike, had talks yesterday with Yugoslavia's Foreign Secretary, Milos Minic, on the preparations for the Non-aligned conference to be held in Colombo in August this year—

CDN. According to the Daily News nearly 800 employees of agency houses taken over by the Janawasama will be laid off on grounds of redundancy; the employees are mainly from the estate departments of the agency houses. Mr. Pieter Keuneman, Minister of Housing and Construction, instructed the Department of National Housing to begin issuing housing loans to applicants on fixed priority basis—CDM. Virakesari quoted political circles as saying that there would be a third powerful political party contesting the next general elections in which neither extreme leftists nor extreme rightists would be involved; the paper further said that Mr. Rukman Senanayake, UNP MP for Dedigama, is likely to head the new party. Police sought particulars from Interpol of ten international guerilla organisations in an effort to study their behaviour to provide maximum security for delegates attending the Non-aligned conference—LD. Mr. George Rajapakse, Minister of Health, appointed a committee of six to draw up plans to re-organise the country's health services—DM. Mr. Maithripala Senanayake, Acting Prime Minister, presiding over a Mahaweli diversion ceremony in Kalawewa during the weekend said with the diversion of the Mahaweli to the North Central province it will be possible to produce an additional 100,000 tons of rice

locally—ATH. According to a report of the Central Bank only three state corporations managed to increase their productions in the year 1975: the corporations are Milk Board, State Flour Milling Corporation and the National Textile Corporation—ATH. People of Paris, the French Capital, have been warned by the health authorities to get vaccinated as there is a rapid increase in the spread of rabies. Indian Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, said that Indian researchers have discovered that crude petroleum could be obtained from non-edible seeds of forest origin. A building occupied by the Soviet Mission to the United Nations in New York came under rifle attack for the third time within five weeks: the attack drew a protest from the Soviet Union and was condemned by President Ford. The biggest Islamic conference ever staged in Europe opened in London yesterday: the opening statement said the conference had no political aims.

TUESDAY, APRIL 6: Following representation by the Ceylon Planters' Society that private engineering sector was holding the plantation industry to ransom in regard to servicing estate machinery, the Tea Board has decided to set up its own engineering division—CDN. The Ministry of Education recommended to the Government to pay an incentive bonus to science graduate teachers willing to serve in remote areas: according to this recommendation science graduate teachers willing to serve in the same areas where they have been posted will get an additional Rs. 165 to their salaries: the Ministry has decided on this course of action following the dearth of science teachers in schools in remote areas—CDM. Mr. Anura Bandaranaike, Chief Organiser of the SLFP Youth Leagues, said at a by-election meeting held at Ja-ela that instead of answering the specific questions he has raised the UNP campaigners are resorting to abuse and filth in their campaigns: Mr. Bandaranaike further said this proves that the UNP though it claimed that it had reformed, is still the same old "rotten and stinking set-up"—CDM. According to the *Virakesari* Ministry of Plan Implementation has drawn up a short-term plan to look into the daily needs of the people: this plan will be implemented once the Premier returns to the island and will be operated with aid from Yugoslavia, Iran and Saudi Arabia. According to the *Lankadipa* there is no indication of oil in the third test well now being dug in Pesalai: the paper further claimed that the Ceylon Petroleum Corporation has not replied its earlier letter asking whether there is or not, oil, at the third test well in Pesalai. During the last few months a sum of nearly Rs. 200,000 had been paid to workers hired during the strike at the Government Press out of public funds: and these workers had been idling after the regular employees returned to work and continue to receive their payment—JD. Police raided an illegally established nudist colony at Hikkaduwa and arrested 6 foreigners: the foreigners described as hippies were from England, Australia, Canada, West Germany and America: drugs worth nearly \$ 10,000 was also taken into custody from these hippies—ATH. Mr. T. B. Illangaratne, Minister of Trade, Public Administration and Home Affairs, has drawn up a plan to give legal training to all Grama Sevakas—DM. Mr. James Callaghan has been elected by the Labour Party to be Britain's new Prime Minister to replace the out-going Premier, Mr. Harold Wilson. Prince Norodom Sihanouk of Cambodia an-

nounced his resignation from the post of head of state: Deputy Premier and Commander in Chief, Khieu Samphan, had taken over as head of state. Mr. Kukrit Pramoj, Thailand's Prime Minister, lost his chances of forming a new Government after he was defeated in his own constituency in Thailand's general election: Mr. Pramoj's elder brother, Mr. Seni Pramoj's Democratic Party gained an early lead with more results to come.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 7: A group of people men, women and children in about ten private buses and lorries who came from Dedigama to the Ward Place residence of the UNP leader, Mr. Jayewardene yesterday morning to handover a petition against proposed action against Mr. Rukman Senanayake, UNP MP for Dedigama, were set upon and several were injured: Mr. Jayewardene later in the day making a statement in the NSA over the incident said the previous day he received a telegram from his party's secretary in Dedigama that a delegation of people would arrive the next day to handover a petition but yesterday nearly 1000 people who came in vehicles with weapons attempted to invade his house and that time the house was crowded with his constituents as that was the day he normally met his constituents: Mr. Robert Senanayake, father of Mr. Rukman Senanayake, said that he was not aware that a deputation was to come from Dedigama to meet Mr. Jayewardene: he further said he was shocked at the treatment meted out to the people of Dedigama: Mr. Jayewardene in his statement to the NSA requested the Deputy Minister of Defence and Foreign Affairs that action should be taken to prevent such incidents amounting to intimidation of political leaders occurring in the future: the UNP leader also said that he was earlier informed that this incident had been at the instigation of Messrs J. R. P. Suriyapperuma, Jinadasa Niyathapala and Fowze—CDN. The Bank of Ceylon will shortly set up subsidiary banks in all the 22 districts of the country to provide agricultural and industrial loans to unemployed youth: the Bank of Ceylon will provide the initial capital and the subsidiary banks will function as autonomous units—CDN. The CPSU Central Committee has awarded Dr. S. A. Wickremasinghe, President of the Communist Party of Sri Lanka and the MP for Akuressa, with the People's Friendship Order on his 75th birthday—CDN. A special meeting to celebrate Dr. Wickremasinghe's birthday will be held today at the Nawarangahala presided by the Speaker of the House, Mr. Stanley Tillekeratne: several politicians belonging to various parties are expected to address the meeting—JD. According to the *Virakesari*, Al Ahram, a semi-official Egyptian daily has said that President Anwar Sadat of Egypt has been invited by President Tito to Yugoslavia to coincide with the visit of Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike, so that the three leaders could have discussions regarding the non-aligned conference to be held in Colombo in August. The last suspect wanted in connection with Galle doctor's assault incident surrendered to the Galle Magistrate through his lawyer and remanded till the 9th of April—LD. Mr. W. P. G. Ariyadasa, Minister of Local Government, yesterday presented to the NSA a Bill to compel private sector employers to grant members of local authorities who are their employees leave to attend meetings of the respective local Councils—CDM.

Mr. James Callaghan who took over as British Prime Minister on Monday night immediately went on television to warn the nation that it was living on borrowed money and said the country must unite to fight inflation. 70 year-old Seni Pramoj, leader of the Democratic Party of Thailand, said that door was open for other parties to join the Democrats in forming a coalition government: the Democrats obtained 115 seats 15 short of an absolute majority, in the general elections.

THURSDAY, APRIL 8: On the orders of the Acting Prime Minister, Mr. Maithripala Senanayake, a seven-member high level police team led by Mr. R. Sundaralingam, SP, began investigations into the Ward Place incident opposite Mr. J. R. Jayewardene's residence: Government yesterday discussed the developments following the Ward Place incident in which supporters of Mr. Rukman Senanayake, MP for Dedigama, were alleged to have been assaulted opposite the UNP leader's residence—CDN. According to the *Daily Mirror* in future unemployed persons who wish to travel abroad will have to furnish security in a sum of Rs. 5000/- or a bank guarantee for this amount: this order came into effect yesterday in view of the large number of unemployed persons who went abroad in search of jobs and who had to be brought back at government expenses as they were found stranded without employment. Nearly 36,000 acres of paddy lands in the Minneriya district may not be brought under cultivation during the Yala season as no action has been taken to supply water to these lands—ATH. According to the *Lankadipa* Mr. Rukman Senanayake, MP for Dedigama, is expected to return to the island from UK today: According to the *Virakesari* the executive Committee of the UNP met yesterday but did not arrive at a decision on Mr. Rukman Senanayake's position in the party. Mr. K. B. Ratnayake, Minister of Transport, has written to the Post Master General that unless a backlog of bills amounting to Rs. 11 million is settled without delay transportation of mails by train will be stopped—CDN. Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike, Yugoslavian President, Marshal Tito and Egyptian President, Anwar Sadat, will hold a conference on the forthcoming Non-aligned Conference tomorrow at Brione, Yugoslavia—CDN. The Anglo-French supersonic Concorde jet aircraft will touch down at the Bandaranaike International Airport, Katunayake, at 8 a.m. on April 13: according to air line sources this will be a technical stop-over—CDM. Seventy passengers and crew were held captive abroad a Philippine air lines plane by three armed men in Manila and air line officials said they were prepared to pay the 300,000 dollar ransom the hijackers were demanding. New China News Agency reported that Vice-Premier Teng Hsiao-Ping has been stripped of all his posts and Acting Premier Hua Kuo-Feng has been confirmed as Prime Minister of China.

FRIDAY, APRIL 9: At a luncheon given to the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka, Yugoslavian President Marshal Tito said "significant work lies ahead for the success of the Non-Aligned Summit Conference to be held in Colombo and the visit of the Sri Lanka Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike, to Yugoslavia has contributed greatly to the discussion on the summit": President Tito pledged to assist for the complete success of the summit—CDN. Mr. Rukman Senanayake, MP for Dedigama, returned to the island from UK yesterday: at a working committee meeting of the UNP presided by the leader of the UNP, Mr. J. R. Jayewardene, it was decided to appoint a committee to probe the Ward

Place incident—CDN: according to the *Daily Mirror* Mr. Rukman Senanayake has said that he would first go to Dedigama to meet his supporters to ascertain for himself the position on the reported attack of his supporters at Ward Place. Mr. Pieter Keuneman, Minister of Housing and Construction, told the NSA yesterday that if necessary the Government would protect the leader of the Opposition even from his own party men—CDM. Mr. V. Dharmalingam, MP for Uduvil, yesterday questioned the NSA as to why Tamil youth arrested from 1972 onwards are still kept in custody without being produced in courts—VK. Local government elections will be held from the beginning of next year—LD. According to the *Janadina* it is 26 days now since the Prime Minister left the country for Yugoslavia and so far no one responsible in the Government sector has indicated whether her trip abroad was private or official: the paper said that it recently reported that two other ladies have accompanied the Premier and posed the question as to who paid the expenditure for their trip and also said that so far no responsible person in the Government replied its question. Nearly 500 members of the LSSP-controlled trade union in the national savings bank launched a two-hour token strike yesterday regarding annual bonus—JD. Yesterday the Government received 8520 metric tons of flour from Canada as gift—CDN. Mr. C. Manohara, District Judge of the Special Bribery Court in Colombo, reported to the Secretary to the Ministry of Justice that 75 percent of the people convicted in bribery cases were state officers—CDN. Soviet Union declared its support to the forces in Lebanon which are "struggling for national unity" and called for maximum effort to consolidate the present ceasefire.

SATURDAY, APRIL 10: According to a *Reuter* report from Belgrade Prime Minister Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike will leave Yugoslavia tomorrow for a private visit to Paris after which she will return to Sri Lanka on Thursday: the report further said that the Prime Minister was in Yugoslavia since March 15, primarily to undergo medical treatment for rheumatism—CDN. Mr. Lakshman Jayakody, Deputy Minister of Defence and External Affairs, told a press conference held at the Ministry premises yesterday that the Prime Minister would meet the Indian Prime Minister in New Delhi on her way back to Sri Lanka but the day of her return is still undecided—JD. A Ministerial sub-committee has recommended to the Government to impose certain emergency regulations to see that no hoarding of essential food items take place during the August Non-Aligned Summit Conference—CDN. Mr. Lakshman Jayakody, Deputy Minister of Defence and External Affairs, told the Press Conference he held yesterday that detailed reports on the preparations for the August Non-Aligned conference will be handed into the co-ordinating authorities by the end of this month and almost everything has been finalised for the conference—CDN. Mr. Jayakody said that forty two Indian trawlers were caught poaching in Sri Lanka territorial waters this week and during the past few months a total of 110 Indian Trawlers have been apprehended—CDN. Ministry of Health has ruled that in future doctors who had put in the required number of years of service would be allowed to resign only in February and October each year and not at other times: the Ministry said these months have been decided to prevent doctors resigning during all parts of the year and causing a shortage at medical institutions—

CDM. Customs officials seized contraband worth a million rupees from the Beruwela residence of a Pettah merchant: after confiscating the goods a fine of Rs. 681,000 was imposed: it was paid promptly—CDM.

SUNDAY, APRIL 11: According to the *Sunday Observer* Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike, will return to the island on Thursday, April 15, by a special Indian aircraft placed at her disposal by the Indian Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi: both Premiers will have discussions in New Delhi on the forthcoming Non-Aligned Summit Conference. Ceylon Hotels Corporation will undertake catering for about 3000 delegates at the Bandaranaike Memorial International Conference Hall during the Non-aligned Conference—CO. According to the *Sunday Times* Pakistan has turned down a request by Air Ceylon to give the latter traffic rights to operate a flight to Sharjah from Colombo touching down at Karachi through Bombay: Foreign Ministry sources expressed surprise that Pakistan had turned down Air Ceylon's request. When the NSA meets on April 22 Mr. Rukman Senanayake, MP for Dedigama, is expected to make a statement on the

incidents that took place near the Ward Place residence of Mr. J. R. Jayewardene, leader of the UNP: Mr. Senanayake visited the victims of the alleged assault soon after his arrival in the island from UK—TOCSL. An American company will undertake oil exploration work in the sea around the country in June this year—VK. According to the *Aththa* a sum of Rs. 30.8 million has been received by the Sri Lanka Government as aid from foreign countries for the August Non-Aligned Conference—ATH. According to the *Janasathiya* a special two-day puja will be performed in India when the Sri Lanka Premier visits that country: this prayer has been organised to invoke the blessings of the God to give Mrs. Bandaranaike courage and power to make the forthcoming Non-Aligned Conference a complete success. Mr. Maithripala Senanayake, Acting Prime Minister, addressing an election campaign meeting at Ja-ela pledged that he would give land at Rajarata to landless peasants of Ja-ela when the third stage of the Mahaweli Diversion was completed—SM. Lebanese Parliament passed a law enabling it to elect a new President straight away as an essential step towards ending the country's political crisis.

LETTER

THE CASSOCK ?

Sir,

I am writing this to request *Esses* (vide *Tribune* February 21, 1976) if he should reply to Father Reginald Perera you may incorporate these ideas in his notes. The Father has replied to the article in the *Tribune* of 21st February 1976 written by "ESSES". He calls it a diatribe against priests who do not sport "priestly garb." He seems to be bitten by a permissive bug. He is making a feeble attempt to show that he is not guilty of kicking his cassock of an ordained priest and wearing shirt and slacks with a haversack across his shoulders like a hippie, going about when out of his outlandish "tree tops" visiting churches friends and relations. The one and only reason, for his change of garb is for him to be comfortable.

Of course these ordained priests can get into slacks or even a span cloth when doing manual work or in a farm. But at other times they should not be ashamed to wear their cassock—this is also sacrifice—a penance tantamount to the Bishop of Jaffna appealing to Catholics to abstain from eating flesh, alcoholic drinks, cinema, smoking etc during at east the Lenten season. But according to Father Perera, the "self appointed" Pope, comfort in attire is his first priority. But this is almost a sacrilege. He

is an ordained priest. He was not ordained at the altar of God in his shirt and slacks. Pope Paul condemns in no uncertain terms "there are too many priests today mingling in the world disguising themselves almost as though they are ashamed of being priests."

But our self appointed 'Pope', Father Reginald Perera, refers to the 5th century, but the poor chap is oblivious to the fact that this is the 20th century. The world has advanced much and become civilised since then. Could many vices and cruelties that were justified by the Pope and Cardinals of yonger centuries be justified in this 20th century?

Centuries ago Popes and Cardinals had a number of mistresses and children who were secretly intermarried and these sanctimonious hypocrites preached morality to the faithful. Is this done to-day? There are shocking vices printed in black and white in a book called "Popes and Cardinals."

If you read the world's famous trials by Charles Franklin you will read about many murders and brutal tortures committed on famous scientists. Gallileo was tortured and sent to prison as a heretic by the 'Holy Inquisition' because he proved that the earth moved round the sun, and as this conflicted with papal dogma, it was heresy. The same treatment would have been meted out to the astronauts who walked the moon.

The Borgia Pope Alexander VI consigned the Saint of Florence, Friar Giroloma Savonarola, to the flames for challenging the election of the Borgia Pope. Ask Fr. Perera whether such kind of cruelties can justifiably be committed today, in the 20th century. His reference to the 5th century is ludicrous and preposterous.

Our shirt and slack wearing priests do not care a brass button for the appeals of the Pope and Bishops. There were many self appointed "Popes and Bishops" in this country today mingling in the world with their 'hippie' garb. What is there to prevent these so-called priests to enter a pub for a couple of alcoholic drinks and an inebriated visit a brothel? Oh! Immortal Gods where in our world are we?

I write this not from imagination. I have seen with my own eyes priests drunk and dancing at picnics—some had to be carried and put to bed. I have seen even a Bishop consuming whisky. I can write pages on the misbehaviour of priests.

I only wish you (*Esses*) will write your next *Tribune* condemning Fr. Perera's views and opinion of the "shirt and slack wearing priests or hippies". I will support you.

George L. de Silva

"Shanthi Mahal"
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Kurunegala.

INDIA AND HER NEIGHBOURS—

NEPAL

by A Special Correspondent

New Delhi, April 17.

One of the greatest achievements of Mrs. Indira Gandhi in her decade as Prime Minister is that she has succeeded in improving India's relations with her immediate neighbours. There have been, no doubt, several ups and downs, especially with her neighbour Pakistan, but a survey will reveal that what she has been able to do to improve bi-lateral relations with countries like Nepal, and Sri Lanka is an indication of the decisive manner in which she has set out to implement her foreign policy.

In this series, it is proposed to examine India's relations with her neighbours, first the smaller countries like Nepal and Sri Lanka, then her bigger neighbours Pakistan and Bangladesh, and finally the largest neighbour, China. As these lines are being written, the news is to hand that India and China have agreed to resume diplomatic representation at ambassadorial level—after a break of 14 years. As a matter of topical interest, before dealing with India's relations with Nepal, as intended in this article, it is useful to record what a Delhi commentator, very close to the Establishment, has to say about the latest turn of events with China, especially the role played by Yugoslavia to smooth matters between India and China. Writing in the *Hindu*, in a despatch from the capital on April 15, G. K. Reddy stated:

"The credit for the latest breakthrough in Sino-Indian relations goes to the Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi and Mr. Chavan, for the political understanding and foresight they have shown in correctly assessing the current Chinese situation and making this timely move for ending the 14-year stalemate. But the real groundwork for it had been done through painstaking analysis and correct perception by the trio of senior officials—the Chairman of the Policy Planning Committee, Mr. G. Parthasarathi, the Prime Minister's Secretary, Mr. P. N.

Dhar, and the former Foreign Secretary, Mr. Kewal Singh—who have been closely associated with the decision. At the final stages Mr. K. R. Narayanan was also brought into the picture because of his high reputation for perspective thinking and capacity for posing a problem of this nature in its concomitant context, not as an isolated decision but a potentially major move for putting greater content into India's policy of seeking better relations with all the neighbouring nations.

"It was a happy coincidence that the Foreign Minister of Yugoslavia, Mr. Milos Minic, happened to be in Delhi when this announcement was made to-day since no other country had worked as hard as Yugoslavia to make this modest understanding between India and China possible. During his visit to China in October last year, the Yugoslav Premier, Mr. Bijedic, specially stopped over in Delhi both on his onward and return journey to first acquaint himself with the Indian thinking and then communicate the Chinese reactions to the moves under way for the restoration of ambassadorial representation.....

"But in consonance with the true spirit of Indo-Soviet treaty relationship, India took the Soviet Union into confidence before the final move was made to arrive at an understanding with China over the resumption of ambassador-level relations. The Prime Minister's Secretary, Mr. P. N. Dhar, spoke to the Soviet Ambassador in Delhi, Mr. Viktor Maltsev, last month about the rationale behind this move and later on Mr. Kewal Singh had a more detailed discussion with him. There could be no objection from the Soviet side, since the Soviet Union itself was having an Ambassador in Peking, despite its strained relations with China. At any rate, the Indo-Soviet relations are so cordial that there is no scope at all for any misunderstanding about the motivations behind this move.."

India's resumption of full diplomatic relations with China is bound to have significant impact in regard to India's relations with Nepal on the one hand and with Pakistan on the other. With Nepal, the reactions are bound to be positive. The Prime Minister of

Nepal, Dr. Tulsi Giri, who had been in India on a state visit from April 4 to 13, hailed the move for the normalisation of relations between India and China.

In a statement to pressmen in Calcutta on April 14 just before his departure to Kathmandu he had said that the improvement of relations between India and China would "solve most of the problems" of Nepal. "We will be very happy to see relations between India and China coming on a smoother plane. This will always be to our mutual interest."

Asked to clarify how normalisation of relations between India and China would solve Nepal's problems, Dr. Giri replied: "Sometimes we are painted in the press as anti-Indian. Sometimes anti-China and sometimes equidistant to both. So many connotations are often given to us. The fact is, we are rever anti-India or anti-China. We never tilt this way or that way. We want friendly relations with India and China and all our neighbours. For some problems we may have to look to India more and on geophysical considerations, as I have already said, we may be nearer to India". Replying to another question, Dr. Giri said, Nepal did not have any political problems with India. Primarily, it was a question of mutual trust.

Though the Nepalese Prime Minister did not specify the "problems" which better Indo-Chinese relations were bound to improve, political circles in New Delhi have been acutely conscious for a long time about them and one of the most important matters which had come up during the recent visit of Dr. Tulsi Giri to India had evidently centred round them—many of them (owing to the sensitive nature of the problems) being unsaid or unstressed during the talks but nevertheless always real and overwhelmingly significant.

To remedy these irritants which has befouled Indo-Nepalese relations, Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, had taken a series of steps in recent times which have been noted with interest in diplomatic and political circles in the Indian capital. Towards the end of January, this year, Mr. Y. B. Chavan, India's Foreign Minister had spent five days in Nepal—which is regarded

as a very long stay for visits of this kind. Before and after this, there have been an unusually active exchange of visits at different levels between the two countries. In the Indian press, it has transpired that New Delhi was greatly concerned about some of the actions of Nepal in recent years especially in fostering the anti-Indian objectives of China.

There has been a great deal of concern in New Delhi that Peking had made Nepal a centre for instigating and supporting separatist movements in the north-eastern parts of India inhabited by the mountain tribes like the Nagas and the Mizos. But Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, after painstaking and patient work in these northeastern regions, conciliatory but firm, had resolved the problems with the Nagas and the Mizos. The agreements she had effected with the "nationalist" (and separatist) movements in these areas had also no doubt inspired China's capacity to interfere in these regions which bordered her territory. In this new situation, India had reason to complain that diehard Mizo separatist elements had found shelter in Kathmandu where they kept contact with the Chinese. There also seems to have been a belief that a recently established section of the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs which is in charge of the Himalayan states of Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim had considered Nepal as the most suitable base to keep India on the hop—through overt and covert activities. It must be remembered that that frontiers between Nepal and China and Nepal and India are practically unguarded because of the mountainous terrain—enabling ample opportunities for the transport of cargo and the passage of people from China to India and back through Tibet. This has been one of the matters for greatest concern to the Indian Government.

Early in 1974, an Indian scientist in the nuclear field, Swaran Kumar Sarkar, had disappeared without a trace from a uranium ore concentration plant near Jaduguga in Bihar in an area bordering Nepal. The authorities in Delhi suspected that he had been kidnapped by pro-Chinese groups hiding on the Nepali border. Later, investigations led to a well known smuggler in North India, Jogendra Prasad Singh

in whose house was found concentrated uranium worth nearly Rs. 20 million—hidden in various spots in the most clever manner. The Indian authorities believe that this smuggler was making his millions stealing concentrated uranium in Bihar and taking it across to the Nepalese border to be transported to China. It was also believed that mica from the mines of Kodarama in Bihar were being similarly smuggled through Nepal to China.

These are not the only matters which had worried the Indian Government. It was also thought that Nepal was also being used to organise anti-Indian elements from Bhutan and Sikkim to further separatist objectives in their countries. Apprehensions were also being entertained that guerilla camps and training centres might be set up in the mountainous regions of Nepal to harass India. These apprehensions had increased after it was found that the Chinese had become interested in the Gurkha League which has been agitating for a separate statehood status for the Darjeeling area (on the lines of Sikkim). The League had sent a memorandum to the Indian Prime Minister on this subject. But there are elements within the Gurkha League, which have begun to demand separation from India and the creation of an independent state—and what troubled Delhi was that some of these fanatical separatist elements were beginning to edge the older leaders from the control of the Gurkha League. Even here India suspected that the centre for helping the Gurkha separatists was based in Nepal.

What had disturbed the Indian Government even more was that many of the opposition and insurrectionary elements which had to sought to bring the Government of Indira Gandhi down last year had sought refuge in Nepal. It is also necessary to remember that some of the finest units of the Indian Army were the Gurkha regiments—and Gurkhas come from the mountainous Himalaya regions in Nepal, Bhutan, Sikkim and around Darjeeling. Anti-Indian activity and propaganda among them had become a matter of serious concern to Delhi from the point of view of India's strategic security.

There is no doubt that China has established an important foothold

in Nepal. It has given aid and gifts on a massive scale. It has built many projects and highways. Most of these projects have a multi-purpose and also had anti-Indian implications and overtones. Textile factories have been gifted by China to Nepal—and this will naturally lead to a sharp reduction in the import of Indian textiles, and also to induce Nepal to import from China.

It was to meet this situation in Nepal that Mrs. Gandhi had carefully and persistently sought to improve relations with Nepal. No doubt serious grievances are entertained by Nepal against India. Indian merchants have exploited the Nepalese in many ways, and the big brother attitude adopted by Indian bureaucrats towards the Nepalese had created strong "anti-Indian" feelings in that country. These latent sentiments had been fanned by elements in the international arena hostile to India.

But Nepal too has now realised that it cannot play an anti-Indian game for ever—because Mrs. Indira Gandhi is a firm ruler and the manner in which she had dealt with the situation in the former East Pakistan and in Sikkim was were something to bear in mind. After Mr. Chavan's visit to Nepal at the end of January, 1976, in which he had done a great deal to remove the anti-Indian fears entertained by Nepalese, there were favourable responses from Kathmandu.

Speaking in Kathmandu on February 19, 1976, Nepal's Prime Minister, Dr. Tulsī Giri, said it was his belief that in future to maintain the friendliest of atmosphere between the Himalayan Kingdom and India "we must first isolate and then eradicate the areas of differences between us" through exchange of views. "We can start this by delinking politics from other areas of our relationship. On this subject and other matters we will during the months ahead discuss with Indian leaders ways of building further avenues in solidifying and strengthening the bounds of friendship between our two countries," he added. Dr. Giri, who was addressing the Nepal Council of World Affairs on 'Nepal's foreign policy in the changing world' yesterday, said leaders of both countries desired an atmosphere of co-operation and friendship with each other.

Dr. Giri referred to the visit of the External Affairs Minister, Mr. Y. B. Chavan, to Nepal last month and said the exchange of views underlined the theme of co-operation and friendship with each other. He declared that Nepal's foreign policy in 'our immediate vicinity' would be to have the friendliest of relations with adjacent countries.

"The Nepalese Prime Minister also referred to Nepal's relations with China. Being especially close many differences were 'bound to arise with our neighbours', he said. But differences from 'our perspective need not lead to durable misunderstanding and vexing problems. They can, we believe, be resolved through negotiations to mutual satisfaction of the involved States. This has been our understanding in the long and historic association with both India and China'. He then stated that Nepal's relations with China 'has been an example of true friendship between the two countries. The many areas of co-operation between China and Nepal mark the bonds of friendship which stems from understanding and respect of each others views. We hope to continue this relationship in the future..."

This was, no doubt, a reminder to India that she should not indulge in the "big brother" attitudes which had marred relations earlier—that Nepal always had China to fall back on.

Before leaving for India on April 4, 1976, Dr. Tulsi Giri had told pressmen at Kathmandu: that during his forthcoming visit to India he would discuss with leaders there the question of declaring the Himalayan kingdom a zone of peace. Dr. Giri, who was beginning an official visit to India on April 7, said Nepal would however, not like to raise the issue at any international forum, including the Colombo summit of the non-aligned countries. 'We have to sell the idea by repeated discussion with friendly countries,' he said. "We are treating this on a bilateral basis. Some Governments have responded to the proposition and some are asking for more details. We intend discussing the issue with India without inhibitions."

Dr. Giri said "Nepal will never try to damage India's interests, notwithstanding any misunderstand-

standing, accidental or incidental". There were few serious or basic problems between the two countries, and none that could not be settled by "talking, explaining and hearing each other's view," he added. The Prime Minister said he was going to India "to strengthen the process of co-operation, friendship and trust," which had already begun. His talks with the Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, were primarily meant to establish what he called the "framework for durable bilateral relations" between the two neighbours. "Once this has been done, matters such as trade and mutual co-operation would follow," he added. Asked whether during his Delhi talks he would sound India about having two separate trade and transit treaties instead of the one at present, he said "not this time." A request might be made "in due course." The Prime Minister spoke of the great scope for exploiting the water resources of the kingdom. Although Nepal had gained sufficient experience in the field through the Kosi and Gandak projects, this would not deter it from going in for joint projects. He said Indian participation was necessary in the Karnali and other projects and Nepal would be looking for "fair equal benefits from these."

The attitude of the Indian Government to the visit of Dr. Tulsi Giri was best reflected in an article in the *Hindu* by its New Delhi correspondent, G. K. Reddy (dated April 6).

"The Prime Minister of Nepal, Mr. Tulsi Giri, who is arriving to-morrow on a week-long State visit to India will be having wide-ranging discussions with Mrs. Gandhi and Mr. Chavan on all aspects of Indo-Nepalese relations during his two-day stay in Delhi. A special feature of this visit is that it comes as a culmination of the conscious efforts made by both countries in recent months to clear up some of the old misunderstandings and open the way for closer relations based on a better appreciation of each other's policies and perceptions. At the political level, there is evidence of a new awareness on the part of Nepal that the policy of equidistance from China and India, which in effect amounted to wooing China at India's expense, has not yielded the desired results in the sense

that it has not enhanced the landlocked kingdom's political leverage in the long run. So Nepal has learnt the hard way that it would be more desirable to refashion its foreign policy pursuits in such a manner that it should be possible to strengthen its traditional ties with India, while continuing to maintain a reasonably cordial relationship with China within the framework of its own geopolitical limitations.

"After Indo-Nepalese relations slumped badly in the wake of the Sikkim developments, Nepal has, no doubt, made some overtures to undo the damage by taking a more realistic view of the sub-continental situation. But the basic contradiction in Nepalese attitude towards India still persist in the absence of a frank acceptance of the fact that geography and history have combined to make the Himalayas the natural and inviolable frontier of not only India and Nepal but of the entire sub-continent. So the latest Nepalese idea of declaring itself into a zone of peace in the heart of the Himalayas is only adding to the prevailing confusion in the minds of King Birendra's advisers about the relative concepts of mentality, non-alignment and equidistance. As Mr. Chavan told the Nepalese leaders during his last visit to Kathmandu, it is not for the neighbouring countries of Nepal to come forward and declare it as a zone of peace, but for Nepal itself to identify the sources of danger to its integrity, if any, through bilateral negotiations. It was not realistic to expect India to enter into negotiations with China to provide such a guarantee to Nepal, especially when it had no intention whatsoever to imperil Nepal's legitimate rights on its side of the Himalayan region. Though Nepal continues to toy with this idea, it has assured India that it does not propose to raise this issue in any international forum, including the Non-aligned Summit Conference. So in the course of his talks with Mrs. Gandhi and Mr. Chavan, Mr. Tulsi Giri is expected to press for at least an assurance that India is prepared to give some thought to this proposition. From India's point of view, the question will arise whether such an assurance can be given without the implicit commitment that it is not averse to the idea in principle. The general expectation,

therefore, is that the issue will certainly figure in the discussions, but nothing will come out, of it in the light of the known positions of the two Governments.

"In the economic sphere there are no insurmountable problems that cannot be resolved with the necessary goodwill on either side. The question of river waters and power generation under joint auspices is being discussed at a different level and the two Prime Ministers will probably leave these matters to be settled by experts. The Nepalese attempts to separate the issues of trade and transit in negotiating a new agreement later this year have not been accepted by India, which feels that there is no advantage to be gained by disturbing the established pattern. It is, however, prepared to provide additional facilities for the storage and transshipment of goods to and from Nepal without any hindrance to its foreign trade.

"An old controversy that has been dragging for the past several years relates to the refund of some Nepalese claims in regard to excise duties collected on Indian goods imported by it. Under the existing procedures, Nepal does not impose any customs duties on Indian goods, while India refunds the excise levies collected on them at the source before export. But some misunderstanding arose several years ago whether this exemption related only to the basic excise duties or the additional levies imposed as surcharges.

"Though India has agreed to refund both the original excise duties and the surcharges as a special gesture, the Nepalese Government has not been able to furnish the relevant details in support of its claims since the concerned records were destroyed in the disastrous fire that burnt down the old Singha Durbar Palace housing its offices. So an attempt is being made to settle this matter through an ad hoc payment without insisting on proper documentation.

"The last but not the least important issue that is likely to figure at these talks concerns Nepal's ambitious attempt to develop its own manufacturing capacity to meet its defence requirements. As an eloquent testimony to the new atmosphere of realism now prevailing in Indo-Nepalese relations, Nepal is adhering to the spirit of the 1950

Treaty of Friendship and Co-operation in turning to India for this assistance.

"The letters exchanged at that time of signing this treaty clearly stipulate that it is India's responsibility to meet Nepal's legitimate needs for military equipment. This concept is based on the common belief that though as a sovereign independent nation Nepal is not a part of India, the two countries have such special relations by virtue of their geographical location and historical association that they share a common defence system with the Himalayas as the frontier of the whole sub-continent."

(To be Continued)



BUILDING A VILLAGE HOUSE—76

An Altogether New Year

(concluded part II)

By Herbert Keuneman

In the girl's eyes, the biggest event of the month of March by far—indeed, the biggest event of their whole Kantalai adventure, saving perhaps the first days of reaching and settling in their new home—would seem to have been the arrival, and that at a comparatively 'low profile' level, of the Prime Minister on her first visit to the commune, or collective, or whatever it is. Maybe a pure idealist (or he might prefer to think of himself as a purely practical economist) would find it in himself to deplore this, arguing that in a genuinely development-orientated undertaking the girls would, or should, have displayed at least a comparative enthusiasm over the arrival of their livestock! to which, selected as Dairy Assistants as they are, they should—theoretically—have been more tuned in: yet Ukku Amma, as you read last week, dismissed that event in a couple of lines and does not seem even to have been sufficiently excited to go over and inspect and describe her new charges. Though, in fairness, to her it must be pointed out that writing the very next morning she just may not have yet had time.

It could be that, as a cynical friend of mine remarks, 'development' in Sri Lanka is a political rather than an economic undertaking! However this may be, it is certainly a fact that in the Sri Lanka of today (as it used to be when Ceylon was previously Sri Lanka) the *tamasha* is an ineluctable part of the inauguration of a new venture; and it is certainly a fact that this particular *tamasha* appears to have been conducted, if this was as it seems to have been an official *tamasha*, on a commendably modest and intimate scale; and it is certainly a fact that at this scale it was probably an excellent thing for morale and may therefore well be written into the account on the credit side.

I am not naturally given to pro-government enthusiasms (pro any Government) though I do believe that any government while democratically in power should be afforded by every citizen every chance to do its job (so long as it does its job) and I confess a partiality for the Kantalai experiment; which, however, probably so strongly springs because of my *duvas'* involvement in it. I also excuse the comparative prominence I give Mrs. Bandaranaike's visit in this article, because that is what the girls have given it in their letters. And also because the three girls' three accounts cast some considerable light on the characters of the girls themselves: Ukku Amma: shy, modest, yet proud to be amongst those noticed; Ukku Menika: matter-of-fact, a little heavy (as becomes a shot-putt champion?) and not about to forego a prominence that is to be had even mainly by association; and pretty Bisso, gay and longing to be noticed (as every pretty girl has a right to be) and yet—the trait is not here evident, but you know her letters—a wistful bent towards an yet unformulated cognitive-ness.

But too much talk, where the girls themselves were meant to speak.....

UKKU AMMA to THE FAMILY (11.3)

On the 7th of this month the Prime Minister and a huge (SIC: SINH. VISALA) entourage arrived by helicopter. We arranged a

procession and a meeting to welcome her. Indra, one of our good friends, made a fine speech. There was an account of us in the *Dinamina* for the 10th. The Prime Minister is very beautiful and gracious. She spoke to us so kindly.

UKKU MENIKA to MUTU MENIKA (7.3)

The Prime Minister came to Kantalai today. She stayed only a short while, about an hour, because she was on her way somewhere else. She didn't even make a speech. The Minister (MR. SOORIYARATCHCHI) introduced the three of us, saying: 'Here are the Ehetuwewa Contingent'. Mr. Charles Abeysekera came too.

BISO MENIKA to THE FAMILY (8.3)

On the 7th, yesterday, Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike, the Prime Minister, visited here but stayed only a short time. Our Minister, Mr. Sooriyaratchchi, introduced me by name and village. He also said I was an actress from *Desa Nisa*. The Prime Minister asked me what electorate I belonged to, and I told her Yaphuwa. We have been issued with one set of our uniforms, lovely batik cloths and white *borichchi* (FRILLED) jackets; these are to wear on special occasions. To work in, we shall have trousers and shirts and the cloth for them has arrived although they haven't been made up yet. We wore our batiks and *borichchi hatta* for the first time to welcome the Prime Minister, and the girls looked beautiful! There was a welcome-procession, in which we carried shouldered mammothies (THE UNIVERSAL LOCAL AGRICULTURAL TOOL, SORT OF HEAVY SHORT-HANDLED DRAWHOE). There will probably be a picture in the papers.

Bis was still full of the Prime Minister's visit (and of the batiks and the *borichchi hatta*) even two weeks later, when she wrote to me. She had nothing to add; but here is some of the rest of her letter.

BIS to H.K. (24.3)

What a great deal of money the Corporation has spent on us! But the girls looked so pretty....

We presented our Variety Entertainment for the third time the night before the Prime Minister came, when our own Minister Mr. Sooriyaratchchi arrived with some foreign friends. Mr. Abey-

sekera came too and left the next evening. He made a tape record of my song and also of a speech made by a friend of mine before the Prime Minister. My friend is a very nice girl, rather like Dingiri Akka. A party from Switzerland also came to see our colony—

When are you coming to see us? We have looked forward to it so much. It is all right for anybody to come now, and friends and relatives of several of the girls have already come. Sunday is the day appointed for visitors. But let us know.....

Do send us copies of the *TRIBUNE* in which our letters appear, we are very eager to see them. We shall soon be able to, shan't we? We are happy you are using our letters for we haven't misrepresented or exaggerated anything but simply told the truth. And that you write proudly of us is a pride to us in turn..

You know, I am sure, how willing we are to work. How hard we worked even at home! But without water at the right time—or too much water at the wrong time—there was just no joy in it. For us it is no longer like that: we have our reward in proportion to our work (UNCONSCIOUSLY, THAT CLASSIC DESCRIPTION OF THE SOCIALIST SOCIETY!) At the moment, however, water from the river (THE MAHAVELI, A COUPLE OF MILES AWAY) is not available. It seems some work as still to be completed (PART OF THE MAHAVELI EXPLOITATION? IS THIS AN OMEN? IS THE LOWER RIVER PERHAPS GOING TO BE PERIODICALLY DEPLETED TO MAKE 'UP THE MIDDLE RIVER'S BOUNTY?') but when that is finished we shall have no trouble at all (!)

Indeed I am proud of my *duvas*—Pinhamy's *duvas* too! of course—and indeed I do know how hard they work: like most of the girls in the village infinitely harder, or at least more steadily and patiently, than most of the boys; even at the traditional male labour of agriculture. In a sense I am prouder still that although our girls at Kantalai seem to put in a full eight hours stint in the field (which is quite something in that East Coast climate)

they still seem to have leisure, energy and enthusiasm left for Cultural Pursuits!

UKKU MENIKA to MUTU MENIKA (7.3)

Do you remember, Akka, you once told me about a book that you said would make a good play, and related to me the story? It seems to me that the plot you outlined is very relevant to our times and problems, and I should like to produce a play based on it. Akka, could you make an acting script out of the book and send it to me? Or if you would prefer it, or haven't the time, send me the book and I'll write a script. The boy—and girl—employees of our Corporation are hoping to arrange a drama festival, and a few of us are thinking of putting on this play if we can.

Although Ukku Menika calls herself and companions 'girl-employees' of the (TOBACCO) Corporation, and so they are, in the sense that the Corporation pays each of them Rs. 150 a month as Dairy Assistants, the scheme at Kantalai is in fact a deal more sociologically interesting than that. It is, in effect a regular Collective; save that the 'infrastructure'—let me always use the *mot juste*—and the guaranteed salaried employment which the Corporation supplies provide a sort of grant-in-aid *cum* insurance-policy.

(This makes such criticism of the scheme as one sometimes hears, that the rates offered the Dairy Assistants are uneconomic businesswise, irrelevant. For the scheme is two-fold: not only to run a dairy; but also to habilitate a hundred—and, later, several hundred more—young people by not only settling them on the land but by also making it possible for them to stay settled despite the initial difficulties that usually break such schemes: lack of experience and lack of money to see them through. In a sense it is a generous welfare scheme as well as an imaginative public-relations one. And good public relations is good business, one has always been led to think. Whether girls, subject as they are to special pressures (such as marriage) towards becoming drop-outs, were the likeliest

pioneers to choose—they are certainly the most challenging—is another question).

To the hundred girls, or thereabouts who form the pilot group have been apportioned about eighty acres of paddy land about twenty of high land; and this will eventually provide their mainstay. They will exploit this land as they themselves, and they alone, agree; although the Corporation will help with advice and in such practical ways as making available the seed, fertilizer and implements the Collective will purchase and buying up or helping market what the Collective will produce. In addition, the girls will have various odd jobs open to them—weeding contracts, for instance, or reaping contracts like the one they have just completed—the pay for which will be their own. Their own. That is the operative word. How they will distribute it, how spend it, how much work each girl will contribute, all on their own initiative and by all (with their single commitment to the Corporation dairy) their own decision. Their domestic arrangements will be their own, their plans for recreation or self-improvement, their own. Yet, not the 'own' of one but of a hundred-in-one. It sounds unpromising? unworkable? If you think that, think of Ukku Amma and Ukku Menika and Biso going back 'all these leagues away' at the very time when the village will be really buckling down to the business of the New Year's celebrations, the very best village time of all the year, and doing so though with aching homesick hearts nevertheless full of faith, hope and—yes—charity!

But the girls are the same girls and the same as girls everywhere:

UKKU AMMA to THE FAMILY (25.3)

Last week twelve of us from one dormitory were given a trip to Trincomalee. We went to three or four shops, but the price of cloth there was very exorbitant and we bought none. We went to Konesvaram Devala (SIC) too—it is a most picturesque place, on a crag by the sea, gorgeous when you climb to the top—but we didn't stay long. We went to the jetty also.

Darling Ukkuwa! On pleasure bent (and on an 'educational tour' conducted) yet, though she is at the moment with a month's stipend behind her and another month's and her share of a reaping contract before her quite a moneyed young lady, of a frugal, Ehetuwewa mind! She goes to Trincomalee, a historic town she has studied concerning, read about, been told so much of, for the first, time in her life; and what does she do? Goes shopping for New Year red! gifts for the family, obviously. And then doesn't buy them, because she is sure she can do better elsewhere! Darling Ukkuwa, and Bis, and Ukku Menika, I am sure you will do well anywhere. But perhaps Kantalai (as you yourself said in those first days: 'this is the biggest thing that has happened to us!') was the place to begin.

* * *

SOMEWHERE IN THE EAST—1

Allen Abraham

— mentor of teachers —
by R. C. Thavarajah

*"They looked up and saw a STAR
Shining in the East, beyond them
far."*

These words of the popular Christmas Carol, 'The First Noel' reminded me very forcibly of a very bright Star—not a celestial body belonging to any of the constellations or galaxy in the sky but to an effulgent example of sheer grit, dedication, and scholarship.

I refer to no other than a great Mentor of my teachers, the late Mr. Allen Abraham, B.A. (1865-1922). Born of a very respectable Tamil family from Karainagar, Mr. Abraham had his early education as a Tamil teacher and, after graduating in 1896 in English, Philosophy and Mathematics, joined the Staff of Jaffna College, Vaddukoddai, as Head of the Department of Mathematics. He was a pupil of two cultured American teachers, Dr. W. W. Howland and Mr. Hitchcock who made very lasting contributions to the field of education in the North.

Recently, whilst on a very brief visit to Vaddukoddai, I called on one of my gurus, Mr. Lyman. S.

Kulatungam, Retired Vice Principal, Jaffna College. I found him with God's grace still mentally and physically alert at the age of 73. He is at present engaged with indefatigable enthusiasm in the compiling of the History of the American Ceylon Mission and the Jaffna Diocese of the Church of South India from 1919 to the present time. Having had the privilege of studying English and Latin under his inspiring dynamic tutelage, I feel that the Authorities could not have entrusted this exacting and monumental task to anyone else for the fruition of a perfect effort.

I say this for the reason that Mr. Lyman S. Kulatungam had always been an avid reader of Religion, Philosophy, Literature and History. How often has he kept us all enthralled by his penetrative Morning Assembly talks and the sermons at Vespers in the evenings on Sundays. I remember, in particular, his reference to the story of the 23rd Psalm. He related that a very proficient actor most talented in the histrionic art challenged the local parish priest for a contest in recitation. The subject was the 23rd Psalm which begins with the words:—

*"The Lord is my shepherd,
I shall not want
He maketh me to lie down
in green pastures....."*

With flawless pronunciation, enunciation, diction, accent, which is the "soul of the language", and all the elocutionary excellence he recited the Psalm like Sir Laurence Olivier or Richard Burton. The crowd present responded with a tremendous ovation. The parish priest, when his turn came, closed his eyes as if in prayer and repeated the assurance of the Psalmist recorded for posterity. There was absolute silence. It seemed, as Oliver Goldsmith put it, "Truth from his lips prevailed with double sway, and fools who came to scoff, remained to pray." A humbled actor went up to the Priest and meekly said, "You win, Sir. I know the Poem but you know the Shepherd."

THE SCHOLAR. The late Mr. Allen Abraham was chiefly responsible for introducing Tamil into the curriculum of the classes preparing for the Cambridge Certificate Examination in those days. He was also responsible for starting the London Intermediate Class

in Arts at Jaffna College. He was a stern task-master, religiously dedicated to the divine task of imparting knowledge. He was irritated by the un-enterprising and those slow on the uptake.

On my return from Jaffna by train, I had the good fortune of meeting Mr. I. P. Thurairatnam, M.A., B.S.C. (Lond), retired Principal of Union College, Tellipallai. I was able to gather that Mr. Abraham was his teacher at Jaffna College, Vaddukoddai and unreservedly endorsed every word of what Mr. Lyman Kulatungam wrote in the article entitled "Our College Home, 1922-19247" in the Jaffna College Miscellany (Jubilee Number) published in 1947. "We students of the Bicknell period respected and esteemed various teachers for various qualities but we did not come across another who combined in himself the brilliance of a student, the ability of a teacher, the love and care of a fond parent, the thoroughness and punctuality of a well-disciplined life, the nobility and great-heartedness of a generous nature, the upright character and Saintry conduct of a perfect Christian gentleman like Mr. Allen Abraham".

CHASED AWAY FROM COLOMBO. Mr. I. P. Thurairatnam who was Principal of Union College, Tellipallai, for an uninterrupted period of twenty nine years, had some very interesting things to tell me. In one of his Prize-Day Reports, Mr. Thurairatnam referred to Tellipallai being the first place where the Pioneer American Missionaries reached on October, 15th, 1816.

Like the Pilgrim Fathers, who sailed to America in the "Mayflower", they had come to Ceylon by ship to Colombo. Effusive with the spirit of evangelism, they had approached the Head of the British Government and expressed their eagerness to start their missionary work. There did not appear to be a ready response. Instead, they were told in no uncertain terms to get out of Colombo to any place furthest away from the Capital as fast they could.

(To be Continued)



POINT OF VIEW

Small Is Beautiful

by Kumar

SRI LANKA is a small island in the Indian Ocean, inhabited by Asians with a long history and culture. Today the people of this beautiful island are suffering without adequate food clothing and shelter. It is our duty to think out how we can provide our basic requirements.

The 20th century, in which we are privileged to live, has seen advances in knowledge unparalleled in history. It is estimated that in the last fifty years more scientific advance has been made than in the previous five hundred years. For example, science has developed to such an extent that information can circle the entire earth in a matter of seconds and forces in charge of mass media can influence thought and events almost at will. The rich industrialised countries, led by the USA, have advanced technology and are using it to monitor instantaneously what is happening in the world. Naturally, they use this power in their own interests.

It is impossible for poor industrially under-developed countries like Sri Lanka not to be influenced by this barrage of propaganda put out by this powerful mass media. The most successful propaganda is the one that is masked. As one American commentator put it, "Gone is the time when American propaganda tried to convert the heathen masses to capitalism. Today the emphasis is on selectivity, reaching government people and multipliers of opinion, the Press, Teachers and Students, with information and such nuts and bolts journalistic service as background briefing, -press kits and speech texts, seminars and library facilities for scholars." So without even being aware of it the key people are being indoctrinated. The theme is that the "developing" countries, (as if the rich countries are not developing—indeed they are developing much faster), more honestly called poor countries, need support from the rich industrialised countries to develop.

It is very necessary for poor countries like Sri Lanka to think out for themselves what

sort of a country they want to develop into. Do they want to become industrially developed countries exporting their products in competition with the rich industrially already highly developed countries? It should be plain to even the meanest intellect that we can never beat them at their game. Will it not be wiser for us to decline the honour of getting into the rat race of producing goods for export and concentrate on providing our basic needs using our own resources and our manpower?

THE IMPORTANT QUESTION immediately arises: Can a small poor country like Sri Lanka provide our basic needs using her own resources and man power? The *Centre for Radical Studies, Colombo*, has made a study of this problem and put out a publication entitled, **ARE WE READY FOR WORKERS' AND PEASANTS GOVERNMENT?** It examines the crises facing Sri Lanka: There are two. One the inability to produce our basic requirements in food, clothing and shelter, and second unemployment, an obvious contradiction which needs to be resolved. There are a million openly unemployed and another million partially employed and under-employed in rural areas in Sri Lanka. So far we have said this was due to lack of "capital" for development and employment and lack of foreign exchange due to falling prices of our exports and rising prices of our imports. To remedy this we urge the people to save to develop "capital" for development and invite foreign capital to develop our resources.

What is "Capital"? We usually think some person or state has to accumulate the money to buy the land, pay for the raw materials and labour and sell at a profit, with which to again buy raw materials, labour etc. The goods produced must bring best profits, not supply need. The *Study by the Radical Centre* states that the problem of "capital" arises because of the capitalist frame work in which we work today and the hunger for foreign exchange is due to our present export-import economy, which is wasteful of material resources and man power. If we can mobilise our existing

human resources we can produce all our agricultural imports immediately and about 75% of our industrial imports. This will finally free us from the export-import plantation economy which has so far bound us hand and foot to foreign imperialism. The study suggests we should change from an exchange-value economy, where goods are produced and exchanged for money, to a use-value economy, where producers decide on what goods to produce according to the need of the people, not according to the price they will fix on the market.

The Study points out that in Sri Lanka we already have the "capital" we need. In a typical village most people below 30 years of age can read and may have learnt elementary maths, geography, civics and hygiene. In a short while they can adapt themselves to become useful workers. Even today many handle complicated machinery in ply-wood, textiles and steel industry and do advanced agriculture and fishing—as shown by the way they handle mechanised boats and man agricultural research centres.

THESE YOUNG PEOPLE, whether employed or not, are today fed, clothed and lodged in villages. Thus a trained and trainable labour force exist and our production already copes with how to feed, clothe and lodge them—however inadequately. In many villages a large amount of developed land with roads, electricity and water is unutilised. In most villages there are means of production of industrial goods. For example, there are blacksmiths which can make tools for agriculture. There are clay and brick kilns to make paper and bricks. Engineering repair shops can produce bicycles, if geared to that task. Carpentry workshops can make carts. The value of the bullock cart for short travel is being realised and, if improved in design, can become competitive with the best within a radius of 5-10 miles, for most country-side haulage. The carpentry workshop can also make most wood structure needed to construct cattle sheds, chicken farms, and even village houses. There are already a number of village crafts. Most of all these are running at a fraction of their capacities. So lack of "capital" cannot mean

we do not have the means of production of goods, because what we have is largely idling.

It will thus be seen that the potential to provide our basic needs are already available, if we are prepared to use the resources now idling in the villages. These are small but if we realise that we do not need big projects requiring foreign exchange and advanced technology to provide our basic needs, the entire atmosphere will change. Now we do almost anything to earn foreign exchange.

I was interested in an article written in the Weekly Tribune of March 13th by Mr. R. Kahawita, one of our distinguished retired engineers. He writes about Tourism. There is nothing basically wrong in Tourism. It is nice to have people from other lands come here. We can learn from them and they from us. Once we have provided our basic needs of food, clothing and shelter we will be happy to have them visit us, share our homes, eat the food we eat and enjoy the scenic beauty in this island of ours bathed in sunlight all the year round.

What I dislike is what Mr. Kahawita complains about. He points out: "We are putting up hotels for tourists costing Rs. 100,000/- per bed room, we provide new luxury cars for their use, air-conditioned buses and rail cars, imported food and wine, grand roads to take them to holiday resorts and whatever they ask they have it, while you and I grind through the mill, waiting in queues, bus stands or around broken-down buses, co-op. shops and go about searching for the basic food and clothing" to quote Mr. Kahawita.

Mr. Kahawita did something which we who do all the things listed dare not do. He went with three friends to dine in one of these hotels and had to fork out nearly Rs. 500/- for the one meal. He left a sadder and, I hope, wiser man.

We beggar ourselves in all these ways to get the foreign exchange the tourist is disposed to spend here and make it so urgent to us that we pay back sixty five cents for every rupee the tourist spends in Sri Lanka. Who pays the sixty

five cents back. We the people of this country who are being asked to make sacrifices in the name of our children", to quote Mr. Kahawita again.

I go along with all that Mr. Kahawita says above. But I do not agree that all this is being done in the name of socialism, as he seems to suggest in the article under reference. Building bed-rooms costing Rs. 100,000/- each has no more to do with socialism than dropping an atom bomb on a nation already on its knees has to do with Peace. Tourism, of the brand we enjoy, is more the brain child of capitalism and Mr. Kahawita is a strong supporter of the UNP, I gather from his writings.

It is idle for the UNP to pick holes with the SLFP and vice-versa. It is almost a national pastime among the political parties in Sri Lanka. It will be less frustrating if all who genuinely desire to raise Sri Lanka from the mire of poverty get together and see how we can provide our basic needs without selling our souls for foreign exchange, utilizing our own re-

Surplus Staff of 24,000 in TNEB

New Delhi,

The Union Finance Minister, Mr. C. Subramaniam, told the Lok Sabha to-day that it had been estimated that nearly 24,000 out of the one lakh employees in the Tamil Nadu Electricity Board were surplus. As soon as the Advisers took over the administration they went into the affairs of the State Electricity Board and found the staff to be surplus, he said while replying to the debate on the State Budget for 1976-77. This showed that the Board had been used for the purpose of providing jobs for DMK men. More shocking than this was that there were eight Chairmen of the Board in nine years. How could there be any worthwhile administration without a Chairman continuing for a reasonable period, he asked.

—Samachar.

sources, already available and largely idling. They will be small projects—among others, restoring village tasks, controlling stream to get water under control to grow our food, hydro-electric power for domestic use and to power hand looms to make all the cloth we need, small brick kilns and cement factories to build our house using local materials and village smiths to turn out the tools we need, including even two wheel tractors, importing only essential components till we learn to make them ourselves. These projects will not earn foreign exchange.

They will be Small and Beautiful.

SPIRITUAL

The True Significance Of Astrology

by Sri Paramahansa Yogananda

The article was sent to us by Mr. K. Ramachandra of Talangama, one of *Tribune's* most enthusiastic and unfailingly regular readers. It presents a view of astrology which debunks the professional and the charlatan. It is also a challenge to the rationalist who refuses to accept anything he cannot perceive—and to whom the unexplainable was only present ignorance.

This is not the usual run of *Tribune* articles but we cannot ignore the Believer (to use leftwing jargon) and his world.

"Mukunda, why don't you get an astrological armet?"

"Should I, Master? I don't believe in astrology."

"It is never a question of belief; the only scientific attitude one can take on any subject is whether it is true. The law of gravitation worked as efficiently before Newton as after him. The cosmos would be fairly chaotic if its laws could not operate without the sanction of human belief.

"Charlatans have brought the stellar science to its present disrepute. Astrology is too vast, both mathematically and philosophically, to be rightly grasped except by men of profound understanding. If

gnoramuses miread the heavens, and see there a serawl instead of a script, that is to be expected in this imperfect world. One should not dismiss the wisdom with the 'wise'.

"All parts of creation are linked together and interchange their influences. The balanced rhythm of the universe is rooted in reciprocity," my guru continued. "Man, in his human aspect, has to combat two sets of forces—first, the tumults within his being, caused by the admixture of earth-water, fire, air, and ethereal elements; second, the other disintegrating powers of nature. So long as man struggles with his morality, he is affected by the myriad mutations of heaven and earth.

"Astrology is the study of man's response to planetary stimuli. The stars have no conscious benevolence or animosity; they merely send forth positive and negative radiations. Of themselves, these do not help or harm humanity, but offer a lawful channel for the outward operation of cause-effect equilibriums which each man has set into motion in the past.

"A child is born on that day and at that hour when the celestial rays are in mathematical harmony with his individual karma. His horoscope is a challenging portrait, revealing his unalterable past and its probable future results. But the natal chart can be rightly interpreted only by men of intuitive wisdom: these are few.

"The message boldly blazoned across the heavens at the moment of birth is not meant to emphasize his universal thralldom. What he has done, he can undo. None other than himself was the instigator of the causes for whatever effects are now prevalent in his life. He can overcome any limitation, because he created it by his own actions in the first place, and because he has spiritual resources which are not subject to planetary pressure.

"Superstitious awe of astrology makes one an automaton, slavishly dependent on mechanical guidance. The wise man defeats his planets—which is to say, his past—by transferring his allegation from the creation to the Creator. The more he realizes his unity with Spirit, the less he can be dominated by matter. The soul is ever-free; it is deathless

because birthless. It cannot be regimented by stars.

"Man is a soul, and has a body. When he properly places his sense of identity, he leaves behind all compulsive patterns. So long as he remains confused in his ordinary state of spiritual amnesia, he will know the subtle fetters of environmental law.

"God is Harmony; the devotee who attunes himself will never perform any action amiss. His activities will be correctly and naturally time to accord with astrological law. After deep prayer and meditation he is in touch with his divine consciousness: there is no greater power than that inward protection.

"Then, dear Master, why do you want me to wear an astrological bangle?" I ventured this question after a long silence; I had tired to assimilate Sri Yukteswar's noble exposition, which contained thoughts very new to me.

"It is only when a traveller has reached his goal that he is justified in discarding his maps. During the journey, he takes advantage of any convenient short cut. The ancient rishis discovered many ways to curtail the period of man's exile in delusion. There are certain, mechanical features in the law of karma which can be skillfully adjusted by the fingers of wisdom. All human ills arise from some transgression of universal law. The scriptures point out that man must satisfy the laws of nature, while not discrediting the divine omnipotence. He should say: 'Lord, I trust in Thee, and know Thou canst help me, but I too will do my best to undo any wrong I have done.' By a number of means—by prayer, by will power, by yoga, by meditation, by consultation with saints, by use of astrological bangles—the adverse effects of past wrongs can be minimized or nullified.

"Just as a house can be fitted with a copper rod to absorb the shock of lightning, so the bodily temple can be benefitted by various protective measures. Ages ago our yogis discovered that pure metals emit an astral light which is powerfully counteractive to negative pulls of the planets. Subtle electrical and magnetic radiation are constantly circulating in the universe; when a man's body is being aided, he does not know it; when it is being disin-

tergrated, he is still in ignorance. Can he do anything? This problem received attention from our rishis; they found helpful not only a combination of metals, but also of plants and—most effective of all—faultless jewels of not less than two carats. The preventive uses of astrology have seldom been seriously studied outside of India. One little known fact is that the proper jewels, metals, or plant preparations are valueless unless the required weight is secured, and unless these remedial agents are worn next to the skin.

"Sir of course I shall take your advice and get a bangle. I am intrigued at the thought of outwitting a planet!"

"For general purposes I counsel the use of an armlet made of gold, silver and copper. But for a specific purpose I want you to get one of silver and lead." Sri Yukteswar added careful directions.

"Guruji, what 'specific purpose' do you mean?"

"The stars are about to take an 'unfriendly' interest in you, Mukunda. Fear not; you shall be protected. In about a month your liver will cause you much trouble. The illness is scheduled to last for six months, but your use of an armlet will shorten the period to twenty-four days."

I sought out a jeweller the next day, and was soon wearing the bangle. My health was excellent; Master's prediction slipped from my mind. He left Serampore to visit Benares. Thirty days after our conversation, I felt a sudden pain in the region of my liver. The following weeks were a nightmare of excruciating suffering. Reluctant to disturb my guru, I thought I would bravely endure my trial alone.

But twenty-three days of torture weakened my resolution; I entrained for Benares. There Sri Yukteswar greeted me with unusual warmth, but gave me no opportunity to tell him my woes in private. Many devotees visited Master that day, just for a drashan, ill and neglected, I sat in a corner. It was not until after the evening meal that all guests had departed. My guru summoned me to the octagonal balcony of the house.

"You must have come about your liver disorder." Sri Yukteswar's gaze was averted; he walked to and for, occasionally intercepting the

moonlight. "Let me see—you have been ailing for twenty-four days, haven't you?"

"Yes, Sir,"

"Please do the stomach exercise I have taught you."

"If you knew the extent of my suffering, Master, you would not ask me to exercise." Nevertheless, I made a feeble attempt to obey him.

"You say you have pain; I say you have none. How can such contradictions exist?" My guru looked at me inquiringly.

I was dazed and then overcome with joyful relief. No longer could I feel the continuous torment which had kept me nearly sleepless for weeks; at Master's words the agony vanished as though it had never been. I started to kneel at his feet in gratitude, but he quickly prevented me. "Don't be childish. Get up and enjoy the beauty of the moon over the Ganges." But Master's eyes were twinkling happily as I stood in silence beside him. I understood by his attitude that he wanted me to feel that not he, but God, had been the Healer.

I wear even now the heavy silver and lead bangle, a memento of that day-long-past, ever-cherished-when I found anew that I was living with a personage indeed superhuman. On later occasions, when I brought my friends to Sri Yukteswar for healing, he invariably recommended jewels or bangle, extolling their use as an act of astrological wisdom.

I had been prejudiced against astrology from my childhood, partly because I observed that many people are sequaciously attached to it, and partly because a prediction made by my family astrologer: "You will marry three times, being twice a widower." I brooded over the matter, feeling like a goat awaiting sacrifice before the temple of triple matrimony.

"You may as well be resigned to your fate," my brother Ananta had remarked. "Your written horoscope has correctly stated that you would fly from home toward the Himalayas during your early years, but would be forcibly returned. The forecast of your marriage is also bound to be true."

A clear intuition came to me one night that the prophecy was wholly false. I set fire to the horoscope scroll, placing the ashes in a paper

bag on which I wrote: "seeds of past karma cannot germinate if they are roasted in the divine fires of wisdom." I put the bag in a conspicuous spot; Ananta immediately read my defiance scornfully.

It is a fact that on three occasions before I reached manhood, my family tried to arrange my betrothal. Each time I refused to fall in with the plans, knowing that my love for-God was more overwhelming than any astrological persuasion from the past. The deeper the self-realization of a man, the more he influences the whole universe by his subtle spiritual vibrations, and the less he himself is affected by the phenomenal flux." These words of Master's often returned inspiring-ly to my mind.

Occasionally I told astrologers to select my worst periods, according to planetary indications, and I would still accomplish whatever task I set myself. It is true that my success at such times has been accompanied by extraordinary difficulties. But my conviction has always been justified: faith in the divine protection, and the right use man's God-given will, are forceful formidable beyond any the "inverted bowl" can muster.

The starry inscription, at one's birth, I came to understand, is not that man is a puppet of his past. It's message is rather a prod to pride; the very heavens seek to arouse man's determination to be free from every limitation. God created each man as a soul, dowered with individuality, hence essential to the universal structure, whether in the temporary role of pillar or parasite. His freedom is final and immediate, if he so wills: it depends not on outer but inner victories.

Sri Yukteswar discovered the mathematical application of a 24,000 year equicoctial cycle to our present age. The cycle is divided into an Ascending Arc and a Descending Arc, each of 12,000 years. Within each Arc fall four Yugas or Ages, called Kali, Dwapara, Treta, and Satya, similar to Greek ideas of Iron Bronze, Silver and Golden Age.

My guru determined by various calculations that the last Kali Yuga or Iron Age, of the Ascending Arc, started about A.D. 500. The Iron Age 1200, years in duration, is a span of materialism; it ended about

A.D. 1700. That year ushered in Dwapara Yuga, a 240-year period of electrical and atomic-energy developments, the age of telegraph, radio, airplanes, and other space-annihilators.

The 3600-year period of Treta Yuga will start in A.D. 4100; its age will be marked by common-knowledge of telepathic communications and other time-annihilators. During the 4800 years of Satya Yuga, final age in Ascending Arc, the intelligence of man will be highly developed; he will work in harmony with the divine plan.

A Descending Arc of 12,000 years, starting with a descending Golden Age of 4800 years, then begins for the world; man gradually sinks into ignorance. These cycles are the eternal rounds of maya, the contrasts and relativities of the phenomenal universe. Man, one by one escapes from creation's prison of duality as he awakens to the consciousness of his insurmountable divine unity with the Creator.



YUGOSLAV VIEW

Fifth Conference Of The Non-Aligned

—Tasks And Expectations—

by Djordje Milosevic

Belgrade.

Extremely intensive preparations are underway in Yugoslavia for the Fifth Conference of the Heads of States and Governments of the non-aligned, which will be held in August in Colombo. Engaged hereon are not only state and diplomatic organs but also the Yugoslav Parliament, the highest forums of the social and political organisations and other institutions.

According to Yugoslav assessments, the Colombo Conference will represent an event of exceptional importance not only for the non-aligned but for the whole world. This conclusion is reached because the policy of non-alignment has become a decisive factor in world politics and international problems—political, economic and others—cannot be solved without

the participation of the non-aligned, for they make up the greater part of mankind.

JUBILEE OF THE NON-ALIGNED. The Colombo Conference will be a jubilee occasion for it is to be held 15 years after the first gathering of the non-aligned in Belgrade. It will be the opportunity to draw up a balance of the fifteen year struggle, the development of the movement and the policy of non-alignment, and will also be a chance to define the priority directions of activity for the coming period.

The preliminary proposal for the agenda has already been sent to the member countries. It shows the basic strategic directions for the activity of the non-aligned countries: the struggle for peace security, independence, the democratisation of international relations, the struggle for the construction of a new international economic order.

In the framework of the struggle for peace, Yugoslavia places the accent on activities for the solving of existing crises, first and foremost in the East and in South Africa and in other regions, with the direct engagement of the non-aligned. In the same category there is the battle for the prevention of armament piling and against disarmament, against interference in the internal affairs of other countries, against new and old forms of economic and political pressure, aggression, neo-colonialism and hegemonism.

The problem of disarmament is worthy of special attention. The Yugoslav foreign minister, Milos Minic, recently expressed the opinion that the non-aligned countries in Colombo should give an assessment as to whether the moment has come for initiatives to be taken on the calling of a special session of the UN General Assembly or disarmament. "I think that the moment has now come" announced Minic.

NEW ECONOMIC ORDER. The battle for the construction of a new international economic order will represent one of the central themes of the Fifth Conference in Colombo. Yugoslavia is of the opinion that the Conference can in this domain, and also in the domain of the closer economic links among the non-aligned, go a step further than the previous

conference in Algeria, for in the meantime many important international gatherings have been held. The opinion is expressed in Belgrade that Colombo can open up a new stage of increased organisation on the part of the non-aligned countries and greater success in the search for concrete solutions to the main world economic problems.

It is also considered that nothing can strengthen the solidarity and unity of the non-aligned as much as the construction of a real and concrete platform and action programme for the solving of international economic problems.

SUPPORT FOR UNITED NATIONS. It is to be expected that the non-aligned in Colombo will stand up in defence of the United Nations from attacks and pressures which transformed the world organisation for almost three decades into a voting machine. The Fifth Conference of the non-aligned is to demonstrate, as was recently stressed by the Yugoslav Foreign Minister, Milos Minic, that the UN has its main force in the non-aligned countries and that this organisation can depend on them to fulfill its historical role and mission in the preservation of peace, the development of international co-operation and the construction of a new system of international political and economic relations.

Wide consultations among the non-aligned countries, which are underway and which will become more and more intensive, are to enable the positions on the decisions to be passed in Colombo to be brought into line. It is quite natural that among the non-aligned there is also a difference in opinion on certain questions but it is essential that their positions should always be in line in the questions of the global strategic directions of activity on the international scene.

Yugoslavia and President Tito have paid a great contribution to the development and the strengthening of the policy of non-alignment. Therefore, the role and responsibility of Yugoslavia in the course of the preparations for the Colombo Conference is extremely important and this event is regarded as one of the most important tasks of the foreign policy of the country.

The conviction is held in Belgrade that the Fifth Conference in Colombo will adopt decisions which will reflect to the greatest possible extent the needs of the modern world and the joint interests of all non-aligned countries. The conviction is also expressed that the next summit will strengthen the unity and solidarity of the non-aligned countries and lift their ability to influence the solving of acute and long-term international problems to an even higher level.

—Tanjung



A BRITISH INNOVATION
IN SRI LANKA

The Mail Service

—early beginnings—

by T. M. G. Samat

A BRITISH INNOVATION IN SRI LANKA

Passing through the postal channels incredible feats are performed by the authorities to clear the volume of Christmas mail often capable of burying one. It takes only 19 hours for mails from Colombo to London to reach their destination. In old Ceylon it took about the same time to carry mails 13 miles! Yet the conveyance of mails then was a feat in other ways and no less impressive.

Mail services conveying mails in the island were manned by mail runners. Mails went to India by Catamarans which plied between Point Calimere and Kankasanturai until this service was replaced in 1899 by a steamer service as a precaution against Cholera.

Relays of Mail runners carried the mails over country covered by thick forests in which wild animals roamed freely. Mail runners carried iron rods with bells, the sounds to warn animals to keep out and spikes and firelocks to serve as weapons of self defence. They wore charms and anklets and at night carried chulu lights. They walked singly during the day and in pairs at night and were in constant fear of molestation by bears, leopards and other wild animals.

The man eating leopard of Punnai when shot and cut open revealed GPO buttons and a red post office tag.

A famous Mail runner was Sinnar of Batticaloa who had to contend with animal cunning once. He lived in the 1880s. There is the story that one night he was trotting along with mail bag on his head and iron rod with bell in one hand when a "rogue" elephant confronted him. There was no tree near at hand he could climb and Sinnar took refuge under a culvert nearby. A few moments after he saw a proboscis searching. Soon to his dismay the animal rolled a huge boulder blocking the culvert and began to dislodge the culvert brick by brick. Fortunately some veddhas passing with lighted torches and shouting succeeded in driving away the "rogue."

Ceylon's first Royal Mail Coach, a light four wheeled carriage drawn by a horse started its run on 1st February 1882. The *Colombo Journal* commented thus:—"We have taken the lead of All India and shown what energy and perseverance may effect in introducing English manners and customs into this remote quarter of the globe!"

The journey of this Mail Coach from Colombo to Mahahena a distance of 37½ miles was performed in 6 hours. In consequence the Kandy mail was delivered three hours earlier than was the case before.

The daily carriage to Mahahena was discontinued and instead the service was extended to Kandy, on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, the journey took about 14 hours up and 12 hours down.

For several decades the mail coach to Kandy did service in carrying not only mails but also "shoals of planters and planters and load of specie" and other Mail Coach services were started and eventually after some 40 years in August 1867 was replaced by the railway.

The post office is first mentioned in Governor North's despatch of January 30th 1800 to the Secretary of State for the Colonies.

The despatch refers to Anthony Bertolacci as having made "great improvements in the post office." He was later appointed PMG and in four years had instituted an immense increase of "celerity and regularity."



LETTER

**Clerical
Laymanship**

Sir,

In defence of clerical laymanship, which is plaguing the Catholic Church today, Fr. Reginald Perera quotes a 5th century reference to Pope Celestine I. But why doesn't he say that the very first priests, the Apostles, were themselves in lay dress, and why doesn't he quote later enactments of other Popes imposing a religious garb on the clergy? Why doesn't he quote from Canon Law which prescribes a distinctive religious dress for priests? Why doesn't he quote the words of Pope Paul VI on the same subject? Or is he picking out only what suits him? If it is right to accept the teaching of one Pope, it is right also to accept the teaching of other Popes—in the context of their times.

If the religious dress has no significance and only the intrinsic worth of the man matters, why does Fr Reginald wear clothes at all? In a warm country like ours, it would be the most convenient thing for people to attend public functions in spancloth or bikini, or simply in the nude. If symbolism and convention have no value, the piece of cloth called the flag of a nation makes no sense.

If people show respect and reverence to a priest, it is not Fr Dick, Tom or Harry, or his religious habit they honour, but that which they believe to be sacred in him, the Priesthood he has received from Christ, however unworthy he may be. The religious dress is a symbol of the Priesthood he bears.

The cowl does make the monk in the sense that it is the symbol of his state of life and his dedication, whatever his personal life may be, though he is no doubt expected to live up to his calling. But of course the cowl does not make the monk when one has abandoned the monkhood as well as the cowl.

Pahan

Colombo.
15.3.76

Confidentially

On Beggars

IS IT NOT A FACT that *Operation Beggars* has been launched by the Fort Tourist Police? That this exercise was intended to clean the city of beggars? That cynics and others say that this campaign had only a limited purpose so far as Colombo was concerned? That was to make the city "different" during the days when delegates, newspapermen and VIPs from many countries will be here for the nonaligned tamasha? That action was being taken until recently—legally at any rate—under an obsolete Vagrants' Ordinance promulgated in the last century by the British (colonialists, if you remember)? That more recently action has been taken, at times, under other Emergency laws? That proposals are now pending to enact more up to date laws to cope with the beggar problem in the country? That impressive newspaper reports have appeared in some papers in recent weeks proclaiming the good work already done by the Tourist Police and also the Social Service Department to rid the city of beggars by sending them to camps in different parts of the country? That the public have been regaled with boasts such as these: "...many beggars have fled to the outskirts of Colombo and tourist resorts such as Negombo, Hikkaduwa and Trincomalee in the wake of the drive launched against them by the Tourist Police..."? That the report did not say whether any action was being taken to save the tourists from these beggars in resorts like Negombo, Hikkaduwa and Trincomalee? That this looks very much like keeping Colombo free at the expense of outstation centres which are now frequented by tourists? That it is interesting to read some of these reports in our pro-government media? That according to the Fort Tourist OIC, "soon after the beggars are rounded up inquiries are made from their families about their antecedents: that if it is revealed that the beggars have no means of livelihood (would they be beggars if they had?) they were produced before

a magistrate within 24 hours: that they were sent to Ridiyagama near Ambalantota to a former insurgent camp....."

That a great deal has been said about these rehabilitation camps for beggars in the Press and the Parliament not very complimentary to the authorities? That even harder things have been said about the manner in which people "suspected" of being beggars have been arbitrarily rounded up? That ghastly mistakes have also been made in regard to some people who were taken into custody as beggars? That some of these enthusiastic newspaper reports have betrayed attempts at socio-economic profundities? That one report had claimed: "...the round-up of beggars has revealed that some beg because they do not like to work, others because they like to roam about and still others because they have no means of livelihood...the Police also suspect that cripples and maimed are being used by mudalalis to make money...in the course of their drive the police ran into a number of twilight women haunting bus halts, the Fort railway station and in some cases hotels..."? That it is funny that these matters should be put forward as new discoveries unearthed by Police researchers? That it seems to have escaped the attention of those who write these reports for the newspapers that during the last 20 years (and more) a number of authoritative reports have been prepared by governmental agencies and departments about the "beggar problem" and the way "mudalalis" have organised the trade (that is what it is) to exploit the sentiments (religious and otherwise) of ordinary people (the rich have many escape conduits to keep beggars at arms' length) daily on the streets and their doorsteps and also at times of religious and other festivals? That over the years, there has been agitation in many quarters that the "beggar problem" should be tackled on a "scientific" (if that were possible) way? That the first step was to curb the activities of the mudalalis? That there have been a whole series of recommendations as to how the beggar nuisance could be reduced or eliminated? That some of these reports and recommendations have been published and been referred to in debates in the Parliament? That at least one of them was part

of a sessional paper (or at least a published document)?

That in spite of all these studies and reports nothing has been done all these years? That one reason for this lethargy is that some of the "mudalalis" in question are very "respectable" thugs and have been some of the most active (and eminently effective) election agents of parliamentarians (successful and unsuccessful)? That whatever be the reason no action has been taken against the mudalalis? That a recent newspaper report said that the Police were trying to discover the identity of these mudalalis? That nothing could be funnier? That it is impossible to believe that the Police were not able to spot these mudalalis? That the beggar nuisance stemming from "professionals" organised by mudalalis cannot be eliminated unless the mudalalis are dealt with? That a more recent newspaper report boasted that 983 beggars had been rounded up in Colombo by the Tourist Police and had been sent to rehabilitation camps by the officials of the Social Services Department? That the report also stated: "...the police are investigating the whereabouts of beggar mudalalis who had been employing crippled and maimed persons as beggars new legislation was also under way, officials said to close the loopholes in the Vagrancy law under which beggars were being rounded up...it would also provide condign punishment of beggar mudalalis..." That all this sounds promising? That beggars are a blot on the country's landscape and the invisible beggar mudalalis are worse? That it has been (very rightly) pointed out that this present activity may not last very much longer than the Non-aligned Conference? That it was recalled that for the ceremonial opening of the Mahaveli project 2000 "destitute persons"—beggars in other words—were invited to participate in the proceedings? That in the pseudo-religious sub-conscious of our politicians and the top brackets of the Establishment there is tucked away the belief that one had to relieve the distress of "beggars" in order to earn "merit" for a better life in the next birth? That there is much to be said about this beggar problem? That there is much more than meets the eye?

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