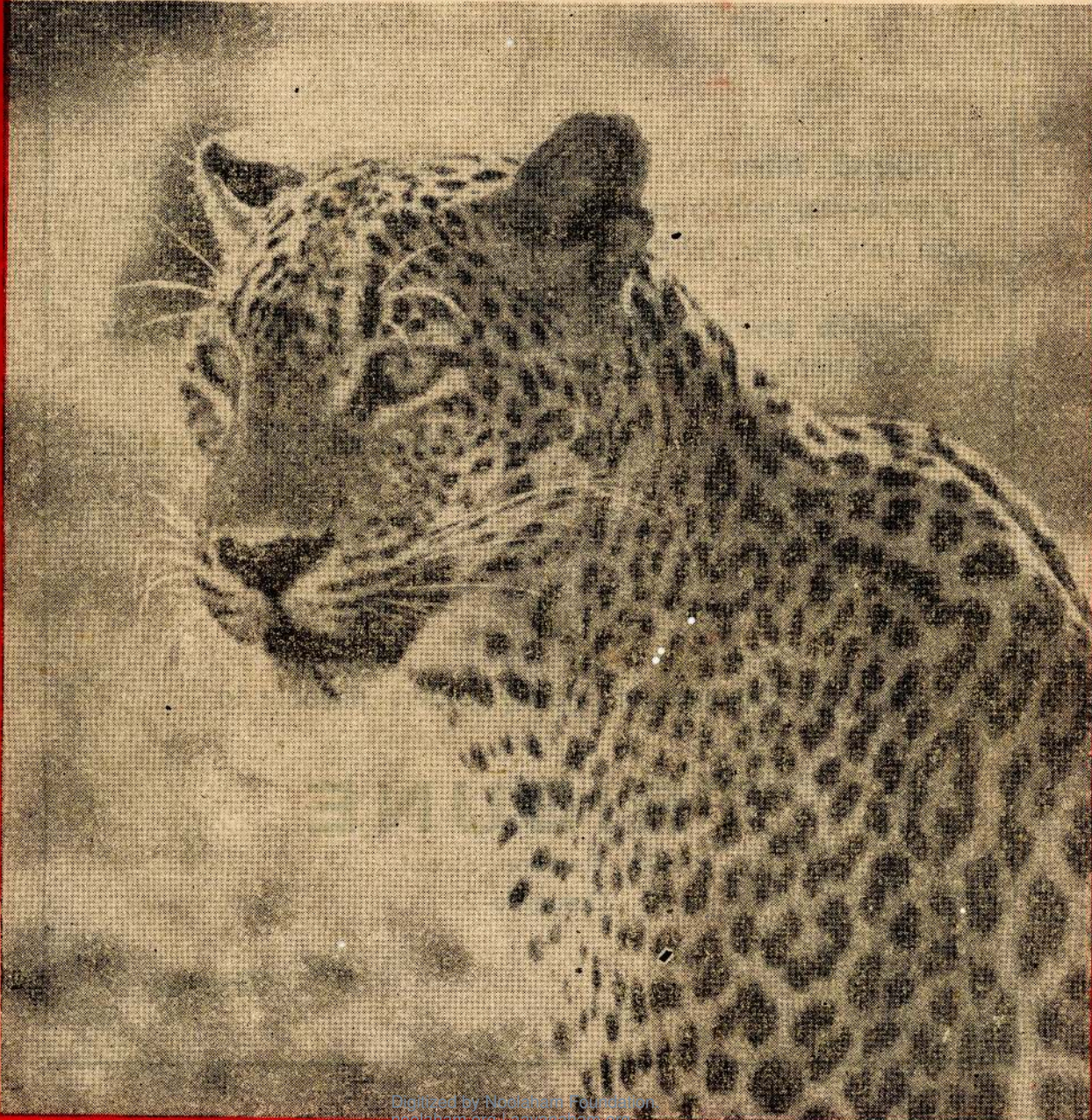


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Letter From The Editor



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CONTENTS

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

—PM's Trip, UF's Regime p. 2

BETWEEN THE LINES

—Media And Credibility p. 6

CHANGING WORLD

—USA & Cambodia p. 8

CHRONICLE

—May 17—23 p. 13

VILLAGE HOUSE

—Coupon Clipping p. 16

CONFIDENTIALLY

—Train Derailments p. 20

ON THE COVER this week we have a picture representative of one of the original inhabitants of this island. The leopard, or more correctly, the cheetah, belongs to a tribe which has probably been in Ceylon from the dawn of time. They had roamed over the land as the Veddhas had done. They had helped Nature to maintain a balance in animal life with one predator living on the flesh of another and also by preventing the overpopulation of animals like deer and monkeys which take a regular levy from man who had settled down to cultivate the land. Man had killed leopards which stole his cattle. All this was part of life. For countless centuries life had gone on thus, unimpaired. But today the situation is different. The leopard has all but disappeared. A few are still found in our sanctuaries where the diminishing or the disappearance of other forms of animal life has compelled the leopard to go outside in search of food. And here, and often in the sanctuaries also, the leopard is faced with an enemy against whom he has no defence—the man with a gun or a rifle. Even after the Government decided that leopards should be protected, the killing continues because the profits which accrue from the export of leopard skins. Not so very long ago the authorities discovered a large collection of skins all ready for export, cut and tailored to make garments in the certain affluent countries of the world. What is discovered is only a fraction of the amount smuggled out. There is no doubt that our Wild Life Department has not been able to protect the slow annihilation of the leopard as it has also failed to protect many other valuable species of fauna. It is not enough to keep game wardens inside sanctuaries, because animals like the leopard cannot be contained in the sanctuaries alone. There are very simple measures which can be taken to protect animals like the leopard, but there seems to be total disinclination to afford such protection.

THE LEOPARD has all but disappeared from Sri Lanka, but it is yet not too late to make a serious effort to save this animal. The callous and indifferent attitude many of us have so far adopted towards the conservation of the most beautiful and worthwhile in Sri Lanka has already destroyed a great deal of what should have been preserved. Our obtuse insensitiveness has not been in regard to the animal kingdom alone. Many of our social graces and decencies which have come down traditionally from our ancestors have, also like the leopard, all but disappeared. The inquiry into the ragging of mathematics' teachers at the Vidyalkankara campus has revealed what the youth of this country has lost. This debasement of human values is not confined to Vidyalkankara alone. The ragging in other campuses is no less virulent although they have not yet enjoyed the notoriety and publicity Vidyalkankara has got. It is difficult to put into print the abnormalities and perversities which the cream of our youth in our university campuses seem to consider "mild ragging." The youth are not to be blamed for this. It is elders who have created the climate and atmosphere for depravity of this kind. For some years now the corrupt manipulator, insensitive to the virtues man has valued through the centuries—values enshrined in the *Dhammapada*, in the Bible, in the *Koran*, in the *Bagavadgita* and in the rationalised humanistic ethics of materialist philosophies—has been able to climb to positions of eminence and wealth. It is the techniques these charlatans have adopted to ensure quick success that has driven many of our youth, in the grip of frustration into behaviour of depraved degeneracy. We have glorified the traditional smuggler who had illegally exported gems for decades by making him respectable with amnesties and CRAs. Can we then complain about what goes on in our universities campuses? We have legalised blackmoney into white through dubious devices under the pretext of balancing budgets (which was never done). And, can we complain if our youth want to legalise the robbing of passengers in buses and trains by seeking asylum in our jungles under the pretext of making a Revolution? The disappearing leopard is only symbolic of values we have lost. Can anything be done? Or must we wait in patience for the Deluge—with nothing left to fill a new Noah's Ark?

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

- PM's Trip
- Five Years
- Maithri In Jaffna

PRIME MINISTER, MRS. SIRIMAVO BANDARANAIKE, returned from her foreign tour on Tuesday, May 20. She had gone to Iraq and Guyana on official state visits, she had represented Sri Lanka at the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Summit in Jamaica, and also had paid an unofficial visit to Great Britain.

The Ceylon Observer had a scoop about the outcome of the PM's visit in its late edition of Tuesday, May 20, that is the day of her return itself. The other evening daily, the Times of Ceylon missed the story completely and only had a small piece about her return with the beating of Magul Bera and a pirth chanting ceremony.

We cannot do better than quote the full report from the Observer to indicate the extent and scope of the success of her trip. The headings, spread over seven columns on the front page read: 24 COMMONWEALTH LEADERS PLEDGED PM SUPPORT FOR NON-ALIGNED SUMMIT....IRAQ GIVES LANKA 500,000 TONS OF OIL...ON DEFERRED TERMS OF PAYMENT.

Sri Lanka Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike, has successfully negotiated for a massive half a million tons of oil from Iraq during her recent visit to that country. Mrs. Bandaranaike, who returned from her visit to Iraq, Jamaica where she attended the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference, a state visit to Guyana and to the United Kingdom, this morning told the 'Observer' that her negotiations with Iraq were very favourable from the point of view of the amount offered and the concessionary deferred terms of payments granted by Iraq. This, most observers note, amounts to about half of Sri Lanka's annual requirements of oil.

Mrs. Bandaranaike also entered into an economic and technical agreement with Iraq under which Sri Lanka will be able to send her skilled personnel to Iraq. Answering questions whether the crucial

issues regarding the British-owned sterling companies were taken up during her meeting with the British Prime Minister, Mr. Harold Wilson Mrs. Bandaranaike said her talks with Mr. Wilson as well as Mrs. Judith Hart and other key personalities were of a vital nature. "We would be announcing the outcome of these discussions soon," she said. Replied further to questions about the fruitfulness of the Jamaica Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference, Mrs. Bandaranaike said that it was the consensus among the 33 heads of Commonwealth States present at Jamaica that this year's conference was one of the most successful ones in recent years. "From the point of view of Sri Lanka the conference proved to be of tremendous importance as 24 of the 33 Commonwealth leaders present came from the developing countries who were expected to attend the Non-aligned Summit in Sri Lanka next year. I was able to discuss with everyone of them the crucial summit conference of 1976 and it was quite rewarding to have been able to meet and discuss this conference with them, she said. They pledged full support for the non-aligned conference. The Commonwealth conference was also of great significance because it brought into focus some of the major issues facing the Commonwealth nations. The South African question, Rhodesia, Mozambique and allied subjects came up for review. "The African leaders showed an emphatic determination to come to grips with these burning issues and we were able to have a good insight into these problems at the conference" she said. She said that developed nations like Canada, Australia, UK and New Zealand seemed inclined of view some of the problems facing developing nations with more understanding and to bring about a realistic approach to these problems. Canada and New Zealand were sympathetic to the issue of brain drain—they are some of the largest recipient countries. That fact attracted a great deal of attention from the Commonwealth leaders she said, Canada, New Zealand and other countries conceded the fact that that was a grave problem for the developing nations. It was significant that the leaders took a very realistic

and sympathetic view, she said. The question of a new economic order for the world community with the interest of the developing nations being viewed in the proper perspective was also one of the topics taken up and "I was able to focus attention on the question of trade—especially fair prices for tea, rubber etc. Implementation of a program of action to counter the inherent weaknesses of the present trade and pricing practices for most commodities would also be pursued in the near future," she said.

Sri Lanka, India, Bangladesh, Pakistan and others highlighted the impact of the harsh economic climate affecting commodities, the aftermath of the fuel crisis etc and these discussions were of great importance to the third world she said.

Mr. Harold Wilson and the leaders from these countries were able to study the implications of the British entry into the European Common Market and what steps were needed to safeguard the exports of Commonwealth countries into the Common Market she said. She said that the African leaders of the Commonwealth were determined to come to grips with the problems facing them. "We pledged our full support for their just struggle" she said.

Mozambique seems to lack trained administrators and I have assured them to train their would-be administrators in our Academy of Administrative Studies in Sri Lanka, she said.

Regarding South Africa and Rhodesia she said it was decided to see the reaction their line of action would bring about. The African leaders were awaiting what response our joint action would precipitate and they were willing to take whatever measures—even harsh ones—if that response was not favourable she said.

She also said that most of the leaders present at the Commonwealth parley viewed the progressive changes brought into being in Sri Lanka during the few years with sympathy, admiration and great care.

Her visit to Guyana was very fruitful and forged bonds of friendship between the two countries—Guyana and Sri Lanka. "We were given an overwhelming and most

touching welcome—exceeding all expectations and it was a most fruitful trip," she said. Guyna leaders were giving us their full support for the 1976 Non-aligned summit, she said.

There is no doubt that the Prime Minister has done extremely well not only to put Sri Lanka's point of view on current matters so forcibly and convincingly but she has also got half a million tons of oil from Iraq on deferred terms and on rates of interest which are very advantageous to Ceylon. This is a big achievement judged by any standards.

In this connection one is compelled to remark that several Ministers of the Government had gone on trips to the Middle East and elsewhere but they did not meet with the success the PM has achieved. Minister Baduidin Mahumud had been on two round trips through the Arab and Muslim world and all that we have had so far are "promises" of aid. Minister Felix Dias Bandaranaike went to Teheran and after negotiations were said to be have been finalised the Prime Minister had also gone there and though some concrete promises had been made nothing has yet been forthcoming. Minister Subasinghe also had an extended tour of the Middle East without getting anything concrete being realised.

The signal triumph scored by the Prime Minister on this trip is no doubt something noteworthy. The question now is how she will deal with the difficult problems which confront her at home, notably the one which relates to the formulation of the Finance Bill.

THE THIRD ANNIVERSARY of the founding of the Republic was celebrated on what was said to be an austere note last week. The March Past and Parade on the Galle Face Green was a distinct improvement on earlier shows. Last year, rain had spoiled the function, and this year the rain kept away except for a short drizzle towards the tail end of the parade. Tamashas apart, it is yet too early to say whether the new Constitution, as it stands, will meet all the needs of the country. There has been only one constitutional amendment of significance so far, and that was to increase from 75,000 to 90,000 the number for the new delimitati

of constituencies. It is not yet known whether another amendment to disbar MPs who resign voluntarily from contesting again during the lifetime of the same Assembly will be brought before the House. *Tribune* has always been of the view that the Constitution needs amendments in many fundamental matters, and time will show whether we have been correct in our evaluation.

On May 27th, the Government completed five years of power. Normally, the life of the Government should have ended on May 27th and fresh general elections should have been held. But the Constituent Assembly, which had adopted the Constitution, had extended the life of the Assembly elected in May 1970 by a further two years, that is five years from the date of promulgating the new Republic. The life of this Assembly should therefore end on May 22, 1977, and the Prime Minister and some Ministers of the Government have stated in categorical terms that elections will be held in 1977 although one minister threatened to extend the life of the Assembly still further. The UNP has, however, argued that though the Government was "legally" entitled to continue until 1977, it did not have any "moral" justification for continuing beyond May 27th, 1975. In pursuance of this policy, Mr. J. R. Jayewardene has resigned his seat in the Assembly. The question now is whether a by-election will be held in the normal course, or whether it will be postponed KKS-style for a long time until perhaps the General Elections, or whether the Constitution will be amended in order to discourage MPs from wanting to indulge in resignation as gimmicks to achieve sectarian ends.

There is however no doubt, that the United Front Government has done a great deal in the last five years to bring about socio-political and economic changes. It can be said that the quantum of change (if the world quantum can be used) in this period of five is one of the greatest in the modern history of this island. Not since the British occupation of the island and the changes introduced by them (and regularised through the Colebrooke Commission in 1833) and thereafter by other legislation, have so many changes been crowded into so short a period of time. What the impact of these changes effected between 1970-75 (and maybe 1977) is difficult to say. Many volumes have to be written to bring into focus the results that will flow from them.

This island has a new Constitution making it a Republic for the first time in history. From the beginning of its history, Ceylon has been a monarchy, with two and often three kingdoms within its small compass. During the two thousand odd years of its recorded history it has been unified under one monarch only for very short periods of time, and that at very infrequent intervals. A single kingdom has not been able to survive for any length of time. It was the British who were able to bring about a political and administrative unification of the island under the distant British monarch. And although, the Crown became a constitutional figurehead after 1948, it was the Republican Constitution which formally severed Ceylon's link with the British Crown. This was no doubt a major and historic landmark. But whether

AIR CEYLON

IS THERE NOT A GREAT DEAL OF SPECULATION as to why Mr. Sam Silva has resigned as Chairman of Air Ceylon? That there is even greater speculation as to why the resignation took place from Paris even before negotiations with the UTA for the new agreement has been concluded? That another Air Ceylon official was in Paris also for these talks? That some say this and some say that about Sam Silva's resignation? That everybody who claims to know has a theory about it? That whispers reaching *Tribune* suggest that Sam Silva's resignation may have stemmed from differences of opinion concerning the new Air Ceylon-UTA agreement which is said to be in the offing? That there may be other causes also for the resignation but that this cause was worth investigating? That many expect the Minister to make a statement on this matter? That knowledgeable circles will now want to study the new agreement very carefully?

the 1972 Constitution will be able to sustain, develop and build on the colonial-type unity imposed from on top on the heterogenous, multi-racial, multi-linguistic, multi-religious and multi-caste groups and communities in the island, only time will show. But it is significant that the overwhelming number of the Tamil people have not yet become reconciled to the UF type of "unity" based on Sinhala pacts with Tamils like Kumarasuriy, without fundamental rights being enshrined in the Constitution itself. Unity has to grow from the grassroots and this is the challenge facing the country today.

It must be mentioned that these five years have been one of major difficulties. The Insurgency of 1971, unexpected and far-reaching, cost the Government nearly Rs. 400 million and set the clock back. In addition, global inflation and recession has caused economic difficulties over which the Government had no control. It was in this period that the world monetary system collapsed finally and the strongest currencies have been kept floating for a long time. The two reserve convertible currencies are no longer what they were. The pound is ailing and the dollar has weakened. A basket of sixteen currencies favoured by the IMF has not been able to provide an alternative. And the IMF's SDRs are only a stop gap remedy. Whether the Sri Lanka rupee is linked to the dollar or the pound, makes little difference, but it is the strength or weakness of the pound that still matters with the bulk of our tea trade and other commercial transaction centred on our connections with Britain. Whether the policies adopted by the Government to cope with these economic problems were the best is a matter for argument. The Government claims that no one could have done better, but this claim has been challenged.

It is not possible to examine all the changes effected in this five year period, but mention can be made of them in order to show the extent, depth and dimensions of the changes. From the new Constitution has been evolved a system of Political Authority rule where selected parliamentarians of the ruling party have been vested with near-total control of the administration of different zones. This, it is claimed, will help to broadbase the administration, but

it is also possible that the system of Political Authority rule will also accentuate already existing fissiparous tendencies. Already the administrative unity left behind by the British has been corroded by the system where each MP is a little monarch in his electorate having an overall say in all administrative and economic matters. The system of Political Authority only groups these MPs' Raj into zones with sub-heads. In the colonial period, it was said that everything was Planters' Raj. In the days of the Kings, it was the Chieftains' Raj—Vidanes, Ratamahatmayas, Dissawes, Mudaliyars, Udayars, Vanniars and so on and so forth. The question is whether the new regime of MPs Raj, without the normal checks and balances of modern constitutional rule, will bring good government. Whether this system is superior to and more acceptable than either the British system of planter's raj through civil servants or the older system of ratamahatayas and dissawes because the present system is based on periodic elections based on adult franchise. But it is a moot question whether the present system will help in the attempt to bring a new kind of national unity or tend to accelerate the fissiparous tendencies which have manifested themselves. It must be remembered that all governments up to 1970 which took over from the British colonialists have attempted to develop a new kind of unified Ceylon under the impact of language, religion and race. After 1970 there has been, under the impact of leftwing participation in the government, a concerted attempt to utilise economic integration as a method of binding the different parts of the country and the different communities into a united nation. Whether the leftist strategy of economic integration will be able to supercede the sharp differences which have arisen as a result of the language, religious, and racial distinctions which have been entrenched in the Constitution and which have been forcefully implemented administratively (in the matter of recruitment for jobs, admissions to the university, and other matters) is problematic.

To mention a few of the other changes that have been effected in the last five years: the legal system has been completely amended and re-structured; a new system of land tenure has been introduced; ceilings have been introduced in respect of house property; new taxation laws have been adopted with a ceiling on incomes; public sector undertakings have been vastly extended; the import trade has been brought under total state control; state trading, both wholesale and retail, has become a dominant factor in all commercial transactions; a successful Shipping Corporation has been established; the nationalised petroleum industry has ventured into oil exploration; tourism has been given a fillip which had not existed before; public servants have been given political rights; a new food production war has been launched; new irrigation projects like the Mahaveli Diversion and the like have been expedited, and a serious attempt has been made to check corruption and eliminate foreign exchange malpractices. In the field of foreign affairs, Sri Lanka has acquired a new status and the next summit meeting of the nonaligned nations will be held in Colombo in August 1976. The PM's proposal for making the Indian Ocean a zone of peace has found world-wide acceptance. Nearer home, Sri Lanka has improved relations with India, and the question of implementing the Sirimavo-Shastri pact has been resolved. Even the difficult question of the ownership of Kachchativu has been solved with the definition of the median line between India and Ceylon in the Palk Straits—by which Kachchativu was recognised as part of Sri Lanka's territory. It is difficult to record all that has been done in the five years in a short note. The working class has received many benefits which will be enshrined in a Workers Charter. Wages of workers have been pushed up—but whether real wages have gone up is another question. A large number have been given employment in public sector undertakings and in the government service, but the unemployment problem is still large and acute. A new system of administration for the plantation industries has been established with a Tea Board and a Coconut Development Board

The Companies Ordinance has been amended to make its scope more comprehensive; to bring within its purview all companies operating in the island including companies registered abroad which had so far been exempt from local registration. The Bandaranaike Memorial International Conference Hall, a gift from the Chinese Government, is a showpiece and has become the venue of a large number of international and regional conferences.

ACTING PRIME-MINISTER Maithripala Senanayake together with a group of other Ministers had successful sojourn in Jaffna on May 9. With him in the Party were Ministers K. B. Ratnayake, Kalugalle, Kumarasuriar and Acting Minister Lakshman Jayakoddy. The TUF had not registered their usual protest against this Ministerial visit. It is known that Mr. Maithripala Senanayake does not arouse the opposition which some other Ministers do in the North. Moreover, the visit was not preceded by the kind of propaganda by local supporters of the SLFP and the TUF which provoked the TUF and general Tamil public into counter-demonstrations.

The Ceylon Observer of May 11 reported the visit of this Ministerial team to Jaffna. The report emphasised the desire of those who had participated in the meetings to strengthen national unity.

The Acting Prime Minister, Mr. Maithripala Senanayake, charged that politicians had created a "communal" palmyrah curtain to separate the Sinhala and Tamil communities in the country. He said that those responsible for that situation were found on both sides of the fence and quipped that 'communal' harmony was a prerequisite for national prosperity. Mr. Senanayake was addressing a public meeting that followed the laying of the foundation stone for a Pilgrims Rest at Sri Naga Vihara.

Mr. Senanayake, who scotched various misleading propaganda by certain quarters, said one such canard referred to the Valayaravur bridge project at Batticaloa. Disruptive forces there had carried out a propaganda campaign to the effect that the proposed bridge was a prelude to a planned settle-

ment of Sinhala people in that area. Another mischievous canard was that in the guise of exploration work at Pesalai a planned program to give employment to Sinhala people and settle them there was being carried out. Nearly all the employees at Pesalai, except technical officers, were Muslim and Tamil people of that area, he said.

"The pilgrims Rest to be set up would be an embodiment of Sinhala-Tamil brotherhood that would serve to mirror the unity among the various communities. So far only Tamil well-wishers had donated monies for this project. I hope those in the South will also follow the good example set by their Tamil brethren, he said. The project had been declared as an approved charity and donations to it were exempt from tax. He also opened the South Asia Tourism Year in Jaffna and attended a public meeting at the Jaffna Town Hall premises.

The Mayor of Jaffna, Mr. Alfred T. Duraiyappah, said 'Mr. Senanayake has preached and practised unity as no other man has done and unity was the main theme of his recent speeches both at Batticaloa and at the May Day Rally. It is strange but true that not even the most rabid of our demagogues have ever connected your name with any injustice or grievance, real or imaginary,' he said.

The Acting Prime Minister who arrived at the Palali Airport was received by a huge flag-waving and slogan-shouting crowd. Sports Minister, Mr. K. B. Ratnayake, Shipping and Tourism Minister, Mr. P. B. G. Kalugalle, P.C.S. Minister, Mr. Chelliah Kumarasuriar and Acting Minister of Defence and Foreign Affairs, Mr. Lakshman Jayakoddy, also arrived with Mr. Senanayake.

On hand at the Airport to receive them were Mr. Chinniah Arulampalam, MP for Nallur, and Political authority for Jaffna District, Mr. C. X. Martyn, MP for Jaffna, Mr. Arumugam Thiagarajah, MP for Vaddukoddai, Mr. M. C. Subramaniam, MP (Apptd.) and Mr. A. Visuvanathan, MMC and Chief LSSP organiser in Jaffna. Mr. Senanayake who was driven in a motorcade was greeted by garland-waving crowds throughout the

drive. The atmosphere took on a festive air with a number of elaborately decorated pandals erected on the way. At certain points Mr. Senanayake's car was mobbed by people waving garlands. Apparently tired but obliging Mr. Senanayake always returned to his car covered with garlands.

In the ten-mile stretch from the airport to the Sri Naga Vihara, Mr. Senanayake was accorded warm receptions at the Vasavilan Junction, Punnalakkattuan Junction, Urumbirai TC, Kondavil CTB Depot, Kondavil Junction and the Tinnaveli Junction.

Reports reaching Colombo indicate that Minister Kumarasuriar seems to have lost the *locus standi* he had enjoyed among the SLFP and pro-TUF groups in Jaffna. The MP for Vaddukoddai, Mr. Thiagarajah, who has now been appointed the SLFP organiser for the Vaddukoddai electorate, is said to regard his area as coming solely within his jurisdiction. The MP for Nallur Mr. Arulampalam also said to guard his electorate jealously from all intrusion. In the not too distant past, Minister Kumarasuriar had claimed and exercised an all-Jaffna, in fact, all-North, all-East and all-Tamil, jurisdiction. But his one-time SLFP colleagues Arulampalam and Thiagarajah seem to view matters very differently from Mr. Kumarasuriar, today, who seems to be left with only Kilinochchi as his only fiefdom. There are clear indications that SLFP politics in the North have entered a new phase, and interesting developments are expected to ensue.

WITHOUT COMMENT CANCELLED

The Education Minister had ordered the cancellation of recent selections made for teaching jobs as Dance teachers. This follows protests to the Minister against the selections. Around 100 applicants were selected. An Education Ministry spokesman said yesterday that those selected had however, not been given their appointments. The Minister has ordered that a new interview board should make the selections.

— Ceylon Daily News,
21/5/75

BETWEEN THE LINES

BY SERENDIB

• UNP • Credibility Gap • Press

THERE IS NO INDICATION, at the time of writing these notes, what action this Government proposes to take in regard to the resignation of the Leader of the Opposition. Although there was a great deal of noise when Deputy Minister Ratnayake's resolution to disbar MPs who resigned from re-contesting at by-elections was brought before the UF parliamentarians for endorsement. In the meantime, the Speaker of the Assembly, it is reported, has written to the Chief Whip of the UNP, Mr. Premadasa, requesting him to take steps for the election of another Leader of the Opposition. No official reply has been reported in the Press, but something may be tabled when the Assembly meets on June 3. In the meantime, there is a great deal of speculation as to what the Opposition is likely to do. The indications are that the Opposition will decline to elect a Leader of the Opposition, even an acting Leader, with the threat of the constitutional amendment to disbar resigning MPs hanging over them. It must be remembered that without a Leader of the Opposition, even the Republican Constitution of Sri Lanka cannot function in the way it was intended. Unless the Government and the UF make it clear that they do not propose to adopt the totally unjustifiable and undemocratic constitutional amendment, the Opposition is likely to adopt intransigent and even recalcitrant postures.

In this connection, the Editor has informed this columnist that responsible UNP circles had told him that the reference in this column last week to Mr. E. L. Senanayake and Mr. Premadasa was incorrect, though the story was given headline publicity in the Sinhalese weekly ADA. It would appear that there was no contest as such and that had been no vote-counting as between the two of them. In the context of persistent stories of inner-squabbles in the UNP—and which exists in all parties

—not only on policy matters but also because of personal ambitions—the story that there had been an "election" for the post of the Leader of the Opposition in the UNP had been believed. Reports from all Opposition groups indicate a unanimity of view that no leader of the Opposition should be elected until the by-election to re-elect J. R. Jayewardene was announced to enable him to come back and take the post again.

WITH THE GENERAL ELECTIONS only two years away and JR's resignation which, in the normal course, should bring a by-election soon, there has been a great deal of public interest in matters political. With all *Lake House* publications having now become no more than gazette-like purveyors of selected news, often with a slant, there is thirst for political news. In a country like Sri Lanka which has developed a tradition of free and frank newspapers the present dearth of news has created a vacuum in which gossip and rumour have begun to play a dominant role. The *Times* group is no better than the *Lake House* group in this matter and both organisations are known to suppress and blackout news for strange and unjustifiable reasons. Such suppression does more harm than good to the people and parties in whose interest such blacking out or slanting is done. The *Dawasa* papers have been silenced, temporarily we still hope. There is no doubt that when they were in publication they indulged in twisting and slanting news, in concocting news reports on half-truths, in selecting only news to suit their current policy and also in suppressing vital news which showed the flaws in the logic they sought to uphold. But with all these defects they published stories which *Lake House* and the *Times* either played down or suppressed. This enabled readers and the public to get an overall picture of the situation. The fact that *Dawasa* has been silenced does not mean that the public believe what the *Lake House* and the UF party papers say. In fact, the opposite seems to have happened and there is a big credibility gap between the government mass media and the general public.

It was therefore refreshing to read in the *Daily News* on 20/5/75 a front page report under the

heading GOSSIP AND RUMOUR, MORE EFFECTIVE THAN MASS MEDIA. For the record we publish this report.

Gossip and rumour—the traditional person to person method of communication—is far more effective in a national campaign than mass media—the radio, press and TV. This was the consensus at the weekend seminar on "Village in Transition—some implications for a communications strategy" sponsored by the Ministry of Information under the Family Planning Communication Strategy project. The radio and the press, particularly in Sri Lanka, came under heavy fire from many of the researchers and specialists who participated in the seminar. The radio, they alleged, had its priorities mixed up and a yawning credibility gap had been created as a result. Few took the radio seriously and most persons used it as a means of entertainment and amusement.

Where the press was concerned the greatest criticism was on the grounds that it was "manipulated." There was a conflict between its own interest and the national interest as a result of which a national service could not be rendered. There was selectivity in news and views and the elimination of some information and the exaggeration of other information according to the likes and dislikes of editors and the management. Participants complained that where vernacular newspapers were concerned the serious reader was overlooked. There was not enough intelligent reading material in the Sinhala newspapers in particular for the large section of the educated the the country between the ages of 25 years and 35 years.

The second day's sessions of the seminar were chaired by Mr. Chandra Wijewardene, Senior Assistant Secretary of the Ministry of Information. Mr. Wijewardene, who is also Press Commissioner under the Press Council Act said the Press Council had investigated the possibilities of providing a university-course for journalism. The problem was the lack of job opportunities for those who successfully completed such a course. In the alternative it was proposed to provide a short time course for those already in the profession.

Here too there was the problem of financing the project....

The organiser of the seminar and its project director, Mr. Anura Gunasekera, Assistant Director of Information, was assigned the task of preparing the reports on the seminar.

The Tribune, for a long time now, has been making the same point about the credibility gap enveloping news media. We had in 1954-55 stated that Lake House propaganda would boomerang on Sir John Kotalawala and the UNP—and this was in no way due to the fact that the Times and Lankadipa had in the last few weeks before election day switched their support to the SLFP. For the last twenty years we have consistently pointed out that slanted, twisted, manipulated and 'managed' news reporting only created a credibility gap.

THE VACUUM presently created by the big national daily paper groups has given rise to large number of political periodicals in Sinhala. The party organs of the UF partners, like the Aththa, and the Janadina focus attention on partisan news. The party-aligned weeklies like the Nation (weekly) and the Forward (occasional) endeavour, like the party dailies, to supplement and complement what is missed out or kept out by Lake House and the Times. The UNP has its journals, but they are still of poor quality in editorial content and also in competent journalistic presentation.

To satisfy the reading hunger of the public for political news, venturesome groups have started papers like SINHA KODIYA a fortnightly (so far). This paper is brightly written with punch, but its sympathies for the UNP (at least its antipathy to the UF) are clear. It has also a very pro-Sinhala approach to all questions. But every issue has political news of significance, and it is not difficult for anyone to detect the bias and the twist. Another weekly which has recently appeared is the SAMAGIYA. It is the organ of the new Vimukthi Balavegaya started by Mr. Prince Gunasekera, Mr. O. L. de Kretser and Col. Udugama. It plays a straight anti-UF line from an ultra-left angle. Though wordily written, its stories and comments are read avidly by those who have become fed up with corruption, family nepotism and stogery. The ADA

and the JANAVEGAYA are established weeklies both claiming to be SLFP, the former advocating centrist policies (with a touch of pale pink left) whilst the latter claiming to espouse the cause of the SLFP left (trying hard to hide any traces of the ultra left).

It would be an interesting exercise to analyse the views and comments expressed in some of these periodical and weekly papers, including the ASA (Eye) which seems to be chiefly concerned only with the alleged corruption inside the SLFP trade union movement. Such a

EDUCATION

PROBE ALL APPOINTMENTS

Weekly ADA's demand

IS IT NOT TRUE that the weekly paper ADA in its issue of May 4, 1975, had a soul-rearing story about the Ministry of Education? That this ADA story was a sequel to news reports that the Private Secretary to the Minister of Education was alleged to have been caught in a bribery trap and that after a short spell in remand he has been enlarged on bail? That a translation of the ADA piece makes interesting reading:

The Ministry of Education is a very important Ministry. It moulds future generations of the country. It is very unfortunate if unfit personnel are appointed to handle this task of moulding the future generations of the country. A disturbing news report has reached us from the Ministry itself.... A private secretary is appointed solely at the discretion of the Minister. A private secretary must be very reliable and is expected to perform various duties for the Minister. It is in the nature of things that a private secretary is expected to carry out his duties with the knowledge of the Minister.... Mr. A. M. H. Farook, Secretary to the Minister of Education, Al Haj Baduddin Mahmud, and one I. A. Saleem have been remanded on an allegation that sum of Rs. 1500 was solicited for an appointment of a Sinhala teacher to a Tamil School and also for having accepted a sum of Rs. 1000 for this purpose.... From reliable sources the ADA understands that the incident was as follows: On a complaint received on the night of 29/4/75 an official of the Bribery Commissioner's Department disguised himself as a cousin of the complainant and proceeded to meet Saleem on the morning of 30/4/75. Later Saleem took these two men and introduced them to the Private Secretary; and a sum of Rs. 1000 was paid as an advance outside the Ministry with a promise that the balance Rs. 500 would be paid once the job was given.... Soon after the incident Saleem was arrested and on being questioned had stated that he took the sum to be given to Farook to obtain the appointment. On this statement Farook was arrested and on being questioned it is alleged that he had said that though he did not demand this sum as a bribe yet Saleem had given him this money as a "santhosam". These were produced before the Chief Magistrate of Colombo and had been remanded until 14/5/65..... This incident has perturbed the whole Department and questions have been raised whether all appointments to teaching posts since 1970 were given on this basis. Who is responsible for this corruption? What is the position of the Minister of Education if his Private Secretary is found guilty? Will those responsible accept the responsibility.... Bribery Commissioner, Mr. Ian Wickremanayake, and other officials of his Department deserve credit and the respect of the general public for detecting corruption of this nature which occurs in high places.....

IS IT NOT A FACT that while a suspect must be held innocent until the contrary is proved (this general proposition has several exceptions in the new law that has been evolved in Sri Lanka), there is nothing anyone can do to prevent gossip and rumour spreading like wildfire in the bazaars, marketplaces, corridors and the canteens? That right from 1970 there had been unsavoury stories about the appointments made in the Ministry and Department of Education? And that is probably the reason why the ADA wants a review of all the appointments made since 1970?

TRIBUNE, May 31, 1975

survey will help one to get an idea of the developing trends in political thinking which have begun to surface in this period.

It must be mentioned that in the Tamil language sector, there has been no proliferation of such political newspapers. This may be because the *Virakesari* and the *Eelanadu* provide a fairly full and comprehensive coverage of news and views of the different political trends. The *Sutanivan* continues to beat the ultra-Tamil line of the old FP, which the new TUF seems to have dropped in favour of more realistic postures, at least for public consumption.

It would be also interesting to make an analysis of the way Government and other big advertisers spread out their advertising. In Sri Lanka, advertising, ever since the UNP came to power in the forties, has been politically-oriented and this tradition has continued to this day. The *Ada* has recently been hammering away at the way government advertisements have been handed out. It would be useful for Government to acquaint itself with the ground rules on which Government advertisements are given in India, where even papers bitterly (and viciously) opposed to the ruling Party and the Government get their quota of advertising on a principled basis.

In Sri Lanka, the political basis for the distribution of governmental as well as private sector advertising has become more marked since the UF came to power. The UF has followed in the footsteps of the UNP in an attempt to create a partisan loyalist press and not help to develop a free press where there will an opportunity for the growth of a wide spectrum of thinking within the constitutional and legal framework of the country. Any attempt to promote news media partisanship through administrative action and advertising will recoil on the perpetrators of such a policy—as it has happened in other countries and in Ceylon before.

THE CHANGING WORLD

BY KAUTILIYA

Vietnam, Cambodia and Mayaguez

IT IS NOT POSSIBLE within a few pages each week to recount, analyse and interpret world events. Magazines like *Time*, *Newsweek* and the *Economist* use a large number of pages each week to keep track of events that occur throughout the world with a touch of interpretative backgrounding. Daily papers cannot hope to report all the significant events in every part of the world even if several full pages are used, especially if they also wish to have some explanatory or analytical articles. Within the short compass of *Tribune* and its many limitations, it cannot do more than seek to look at the more important changes occurring in different parts of the world as viewed through non-aligned Sri Lankan eyes. This column will operate within this circumscribed orbit.

Events in East Asia still continue to attract most attention. What has happened in Vietnam, Cambodia and now Laos has had a tremendous impact on Sri Lanka as it has on other countries especially those in Southeast and South Asia, apart from the visible and invisible revolution that has ushered in a new era inside the USA itself. President Ford had commented when the evacuation of Saigon was completed thus: "this action closes a chapter in the American experience." He had wanted Americans to forget the past and "to close ranks and to avoid recrimination about the past..."

It was easy enough for President Ford to ask Americans to forget the trauma of the Vietnam war, but it was a totally different matter for the US to formulate a new Asian policy. In the wake of apparent total communist victories in Indo-China, the United States will formulate a new Asian policy after close consultation with its remaining Asian allies, the Secretary of State Dr. Henry Kissinger, had said at a press conference at the end of April.

He had also stated that President Ford already had reaffirmed US commitments to Japan. Those reassurances had been given during the recent official visit to Washington of the Japanese Foreign Minister, Mr. Kiichi Miyazawa. Dr. Kissinger had further declared that the US also would have close consultations with leaders of Singapore, Australia, the Philippines, Thailand and South Korea in determining what future US policy in Asia would be. He said that US relations with south Vietnam and Cambodia would remain in abeyance. "We will have to assess the impact of Indo-China upon our allies and their perception of the US," he said. Any future US policy toward Asia must be so constructed that it can be supported by the US public for several decades, he said. "A foreign policy must be sustained over decades if it is to be effective" he had said in his nationally broadcast news conference, which was delayed nearly five hours as the evacuation of Saigon was being completed.

Asked if he felt other Asian nations now were imperilled from communism because of the loss of Indo-China. Dr. Kissinger had said it was too early to make any assessments. But he added: "There is no question but that the action in Indo-China will have a serious effect. To deny those consequences is to deny the opportunity to deal with them. We are determined to deal with them." He also made it clear that he was personally opposed to granting any humanitarian aid to North Vietnam, whom he has accused of making—with Soviet and Chinese aid—a shambles and mockery of the Paris Peace Agreements. "I do not favour American aid for rebuilding North Vietnam." Dr. Kissinger said.

Dr. Kissinger has made many more statements since that time, but it is not yet clear what course the US was likely to follow. REPORTS FROM WESTERN EUROPEAN CAPITALS indicated that there was relief when the war was over when President Thieu quit and the Saigon administration surrendered. Human carnage, it was felt, would end and the people of Vietnam, for better or worse, would have peace, under no doubt a more articulate, dedicated though ruthless government dominated by the

* * *

communists. For a long time before the final downfall of Saigon, West European news media had begun to regard President Thieu as a blinkered anti-communist fanatic whose stubbornness and inflexibility had sealed Vietnam's fate. Like Dulles, he had thought of the struggle against communism as a holy crusade, and like all fanatics he had finally quit the stage a sorry and pathetic figure. Many, however, think, of Thieu only as another unfortunate creation of American foreign policy.

The *Le Monde* in Paris had stated that what was collapsing in the Far East was that American policy which had been called "external fascism". While remaining a liberal democracy at home, the United States had applied methods totally opposed to democracy in its international relations—dictatorship, permanent repression, violence, terror, crushing by iron and fire. The tyranny of Mr. Lon Nol and Mr. Thieu probably would not be replaced by a democratic regime. But said *Le Monde*, at least, there would not be tyranny exercised in the name of "free world and of human rights". An immense hypocrisy was thus ending in South East Asia, which had done the West more wrong than all communist propaganda.

An observer on current affairs writing in the *Hindu* had stated:

The "*Le Monde*" echoes the sentiments of most West Europeans. There is so much disenchantment and such a feeling of let down by results of a decade of American foreign policy. Most West Europeans one talks to agree that either temperamentally or intellectually the American administrations lack the capability to defend the cherished heritage of European civilisation, which is democracy. It is against this background that "*Le Monde*" concludes "for Europe the lesson is clear—to refuse to have a "free world" resting on dictatorships, even anti-communist ones, and to accept only democratic regimes under the sign of democracy. This should from now on constitute the foremost rule of diplomacy". British and German papers are much more subdued in their comments, although most of them solemnly echo doubts about the wisdom of American foreign policy in the third world countries. But in West

European capitals today there is a sudden surge of a new feeling that somehow Western Europe must again begin to reassess its own priorities in the third world countries. In this respect the French Government is already blazing a new trail trying to establish an independent dialogue with the third world countries without the Atlantic strings.

But in spite of everything that has happened, the US is still unwilling to make major policy changes in Asia or elsewhere in the world. The US Defence Secretary, Mr. James Schlesinger had said on May 1 that it was "plainly inopportune" for the United States to make the major changes in its foreign defence stance in the wake of the collapse in South Vietnam. He acknowledged that events in South-East Asia had shaken the confidence of many countries in American power. "It is plainly inopportune to contemplate any major changes in the United States posture abroad," he said. His statement applied to South Korea, where the United States maintains 38,000 troops. He said he did not anticipate any challenge to the U.S. presence in Korea. The Defence Secretary, assessing the likely effects of the collapse in South Vietnam, said the U.S. forward defence areas were still Western Europe, South Korea, and indirectly, Japan.

The United States had commitments to the Philippines, which he would not expect to be militarily challenged. He did not expect any challenge to US treaties with Australia and New Zealand. He said the United States had what he called an obligation of a moral nature to Thailand, where American forces are to be reduced. Any North Vietnamese pressure on Thailand would reflect the balance between internal and external affairs as decided by Hanoi, he said. Mr. Schlesinger said Taiwan was part of a defensible island chain and that as long as US Treaty obligations remained in force, it would be protected.

Cambodia had declared its neutrality and that may well be respected, he said. In Laos one may hope the settlement may be respected." But he said this would be a test of North Vietnamese forbearance and the outcome could not be told with precision.....

The Defence Secretary said "Detente has been far more successful in terms of direct relationships of the central powers than it has been in providing regional stability elsewhere in the world, either in South East Asia or in West Asia."

He estimated that more than \$ 5,000 millions worth of military equipment and installations had fallen into the hands of the North Vietnamese but added "much of this equipment will be unusable," because of lack of spare parts and previous maintenance by the South Vietnamese. The North Vietnamese had refrained from attacking Saigon during the final evacuation of the city because of "the mixture of self-restraint, diplomacy and prudence that has characterised North Vietnamese military operations these past years", he said.

It was under the impact of these time-worn foreign policy imperatives that the Ford Administration has sought Congressional authority to expand the military facilities in the Indian Ocean.

THE US SECRETARY OF STATE, Dr. Henry Kissinger had said at St. Louis (Missourie) on May 13 that failure in Indo-China did not invalidate the US commitments elsewhere. Observing that although the US was "no longer predominant, we are inescapably a leader", Dr. Kissinger had warned that "if in the aftermath of Vietnam we flee from responsibility as uncritically as we rushed into commitment a decade ago, we will surely find ourselves in a period of chaos and peril that will dwarf all previous experience." The US must carefully study, he said, the consequences of new engagements around the world, avoiding to overextend itself, "promising what is not either in our interest or within our capability." Dr. Kissinger talked about what he called the domestic dimension of foreign policy and said the greatest obstacle hindering the US leadership role in solving international problems "paradoxically is not resistance abroad but division within our country." Americans, he declared, "came out of World War II a united people. We have come out of Vietnam a divided nation. It is time indeed — it is more than time — for us to put a stop to self-doubt

and self-punishments." He urged both Congress and the Administration to put an end to "the divisiveness and distrust that has come to characterise their relationship. "It is no exaggeration to say that a possible paralysis of leadership in America is the greatest fear today of all those who look to us for international leadership."

Dr. Kissinger harped on the expanding Soviet military power and said that Moscow's eagerness to exploit what it called strategic opportunities "constitute a heavy mortgage on detente". Despite such deficiencies, the policy of detente must be pursued and Americans must resist the temptation to blame the Soviets for every setback in US foreign policy he said. The US remained "determined to resist pressures or the exploitation of local conflict," Dr. Kissinger said, and noted that it was a hard fact of life that "where a vacuum exists it will be exploited." He mentioned Portugal, West Asia and Indo-China where "difficulties have resulted as much from local conditions or inadequate US responses as from Soviet intervention. We cannot use detente as a 'substitute for our now effort and determination'".

Such are the perspectives of US foreign policy at the present moment. In regard to the same St. Louis (Missouri) speech the UPI drew attention to some remarks Dr. Kissinger had made in regard to the Indian nuclear explosion of last year.

Dr. Kissinger said the detonation of a nuclear device by India a year ago "raises anew the spectre of an era of plentiful nuclear weapons in which any local conflict risks exploding into a nuclear holocaust. . . The withdrawal or weakening of the American security mantle would accelerate this process. It would give an additional incentive to many countries to seek their security in the development of nuclear weapons," he said, Dr. Kissinger, who at one time in the 1950s suggested the possibility of using small-scale nuclear weapons under certain conditions, made no mention of this and instead sharply criticised the Indian Government for developing a "nuclear bomb."

Whilst this is the situation so far as US attitudes are concerned, it is not easy to write about deve-

lopments in Vietnam and Cambodia itself. It is clear that the takeover in South Vietnam has been comparatively orderly, but the Khmer Rouge takeover has been completely chaotic. While the Vietnamese have a well trained army who can easily fulfil the role of administrative cadres, there is no comparable force among the Cambodians. A report in the *Far Eastern Economic Review* of May 23 stated: "the Cambodian revolution is proving tough and traumatic. The grim stories brought in by the bedraggled foreigners who spent two uncomfortable weeks in the French Embassy compound in Phnom Penh confirms the worst fears of those who believed that the Khmer Rouge would be the most ruthless bunch of peasant ideologues ever to seize power in Asia. Their policies clearly follow the Chinese model, in their emphasis on countryside over cities, but lack the Maoist feel for reconciliation. It would be fair to point out that Khmer Rouge face more serious problems in 1975 than did the victorious Chinese communists a quarter of century ago. The major problem was the over-populated seat of capitalism in Phnom Penh, now cleared of the bulk of its citizenry. Many of these people are now being forced to scratch an unaccustomed living off the land. Nor has there been in Cambodia the measure of public support for the communists which emerged in a war-weary China. The Khmer Rouge has brief, and until recently, undistinguished history; its leadership is virtually unknown.

"Refugees from Phnom Penh remarked on the difference between troops who first entered the city and those who marched in a few hours later. They told graphic stories of looting and wanton destruction as the bemused peasant guerillas came face to face with urban life. Many of the more blood-curdling atrocity stories can probably be discounted, but the adverse foreign reaction to the 'liberation' (contrasting so graphically with the glowing reports from Saigon) stung Information Minister Hu Nim into condemning 'militious propaganda against the Cambodian nation and people. Otherwise, it looks as though the new Cambodian government did not care. Its declaration of neutrality and non-align-

ment, followed by the expulsion of foreigners—even Soviet diplomats whose Government belatedly recognised the regime—heralded a period of xenophobic isolation. Seizure of the American container ship *Mayaguez*, may have been due to an unexpected local initiative but it was indicative of the Government's mood...."

WHY THE KHMER ROUGE seized the *Mayaguez* is a mystery? It was seized 60 miles from the Cambodian coast, but within 12 miles of the Wai Islands in the Gulf of Siam which is claimed by Cambodia, Vietnam and Thailand. Cambodia claims a 12-mile territorial water jurisdiction whilst the US still recognises only a three-mile limit. It is accepted that Peking has the greatest influence with the Khmer Rouge and it was considered strange why the Cambodians had acted in this way—with Peking's detente with the USA. Before the USA took direct military action to rescue the ship, it had "called on Peking to mediate in the dispute. . . President Ford sought intervention of the Chinese and the Prince to engineer the ship's release before resorting to force. The Chinese were officially non-committal. A spokesman for the Prince denied any knowledge of the incident. But there seems to have been some behind-the-scenes activity. While protesting that they could not get involved in a purely Cambodian affair, the Chinese appear to have consulted Sihanouk who maintained public silence despite reports that, privately, he was embarrassed by the seizure of *Mayaguez*. . . When the initial diplomatic moves failed, US Marines were flown into U-Tapao in Thailand as Washington appeared ready to mount a military expedition to free the ship. . ." (*Far Eastern Economic Review*, May 23, 1975).

The *Economist*, 17/5/75, whilst admitting that "the *Mayaguez* had been seized when it was well away from the Cambodian mainland but close to some islets claimed by Cambodia and thus arguably within its territorial waters", had stressed that Mr. Ford, not minded to bow to 'an act of piracy' had taken "a nicely calculated risk over the *Mayaguez*, and pulled it off. . . This was a fresh reminder that brinkmanship is sometimes necessary and sometimes works—even when it is hard on the nerves."

Thailand had protested most vigorously because the US had used bases in that country, and the US had very promptly sent its regrets and apologies to Bangkok promising that such an occurrence would never be repeated. Thailand has accepted the apology and the matter has been closed.

There were no serious protests against the US action except from Peking. Many, including people in the USA, deplored the use of force, and the Tokyo paper Yomiuri Shimbun queried: "why did the US have to use a cannon to shoot a chicken?" It was only towards the end of the rescue operations that Phnom Penh had insisted that Mayaguez was part of a CIA spy operation, but the US and the ship's owners have denied this. And the Cambodians during the three days the ship was in their hands (with the crew off the boat) had not discovered any equipment which could be classified as espionage gear.

It is also clear that the US had expected China to intervene in the matter to resolve the dispute. *Time*, 26/5/75, was distressed that the Chinese had "'returned the notes" of protest, "signifying that they would not accept them... Still, US officials speculated that the Chinese had passed Washington's demand to the Cambodians, perhaps even a message of adding a their own urging that the ship and crew be returned. If that is so, the episode was another indication that China wants the US to maintain a substantial position in Asia in order to counterbalance Soviet influence..." Why does the US China think that China wants the US in Asia.

OBSERVERS OF THE ASIAN SCENE tend to believe that Soviet influence was predominant in Hanoi and North Vietnam and that while the Soviets also had contacts in South Vietnam too among the PRG, it is Peking which is said to have the main influence among the Vietcong. How far this is correct is hard to say, but, there is no doubt that in Cambodia, the Soviets have no influence at all. They had recognised the Lon Nol regime until the very last days before its collapse. Washington therefore thinks that China would like to have the US around to

counterbalance Soviet influence in Hanoi and Vietnam.

But the Mayaguez seems to have brought doubts into US thinking. *The Time*, 26/5/75, went on to speculate: "but the diplomatic efforts provoked no rejoinder from the Cambodians. In fact, Ford and his advisers were pessimistic all along because the US analysts believe that the Chinese do not yield much influence yet in Phnom Penh." A report from Edith Lenart from Paris, published in the *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 23/5/75, however, stated "official sources here say that communications between Phnom Penh and Peking are functioning, and that China is the only country which has some influence on the Khmer leadership. The Chinese are very tactful about this, however, and do not want to give the impression that they are telling the Cambodians what to do..."

But there is no doubt that wiser counsel has prevailed among the Cambodians after President Ford had mounted the massive assault. Even with all the cannon, the whole effort would have ended in a fiasco if the Cambodians had not voluntarily returned the crew. This is how the *Time* 26-5-75 summed up the situation: "...The cannon was effective, of course, showing the world that the US will not accept humiliating provocations. But the US success owed as much to luck as skill in combat. If the Communist Cambodians had dug in and refused to release the Mayaguez crew, the military mission might well have aborted..."

Some observers tend to think that it was Peking's quiet advice to the Cambodians that was responsible for the release of the crew. They are also inclined to think that the Mayaguez incident, whether caused by a trigger-happy band of young fanatics or whether prompted by promptings from above, has enabled Peking and other powers in East Asia and elsewhere to judge for themselves just how far the US would go at the present juncture in taking a beating. For Peking, this information will be useful in regard to gauging just what the Ford Administration might do vis a vis any confrontation regarding Taiwan or South Korea.

There is no doubt that the rescue of the Mayaguez, though it

may have "set in motion a controversial train of events", it had "significantly changed the image of US power in the world—and the stature of President Gerald Ford." (*Time* 26/5/75). *Hindu's* correspondent in the US, Easwar Sagar had wondered why the Khmer Rouge had done what they did—they had warned several ships earlier to keep the 12-mile limit from the Wai Islands, but they had seized the Mayaguez. "Equally puzzling to observers here is the Khmer Rouge Government's motives for

SMUGGLER'S (?) 'PHONE

IS IT NOT A FACT that Minister Kumarasuriar has taken upon himself the task of cleaning up the Augean Stables which has grown, unnoticed by him, in the Posts and Telecommunications Department? That he has started on this Herculean job by sending on compulsory leave two officials for an attempt to diddle local and international officialdom? That in this connection he should be careful not to permit a white-wash inquiry by a personage whose extended service in government had, it is believed, been secured by one or two now on the mat? That this kind of inquiry cannot be handled by anyone in semi-senile dotage at the tail end of an over-extended service in government? That in the meantime Minister Kumarasuriar must pay some attention to a news report that has been prominently featured in the daily press that a phone connection to well known smuggler in the North, which had been cut, was mysteriously restored? That only the name of the subscriber was changed but the premises were the same? That this re-connection was effected on a high priority basis? That the Minister must find out how this line, which was cut at the request of the joint anti-smuggling operational headquarters, was restored? That the Minister must satisfy himself if the usual ITR's report was called for? That he must also find out if his own (the Minister) name was used, without his knowledge, by some official to order the re-connection?

seizing the American ship. Is it to protest the delivery of arms which the ship was reputedly carrying to neighbouring Thailand or is the action intended as a bargaining chip to get back Cambodian assets and properly removed to the US by General Lon Nol and others in his Government before their regime fell. The Secretary of State Dr. Kissinger, himself told reporters last night that there would be no quid pro quo deal in efforts to get the ship back. Congress for once is now united behind the Administration and feels that the Cambodians should be induced to return the ship, though there is no unanimity on how this should be achieved." This was written immediately after the seizure of the vessel.

Easwar Sagar, writing after the Mayaguez episode had been "happily" concluded, while admitting that the image of the US and also that of President had been "refurbished" as a result of the military action, had pointed out some of the consequences of this action which were likely to have far-reaching consequences both within the USA and in the outside world. "The successful rescue of the American ship, Mayaguez and its crew has understandably raised President Ford's stock at home several notches. Mr. Ford's despatch of American Marines to Cambodian waters—a military venture which some liberals in Congress were against only 48 hours ago—it now being hailed by both doves and hawks, with almost unrestricted enthusiasm. While it is conceded, that luck as much as pluck played great part in making the military response a success, Mr. Ford, who until now was regarded as a wishy washy leader by many within his own party, is being given high marks for his decisiveness.

"Coming so soon after the fall of Indo-China—which the hawks lament and the doves secretly feel guilty about—the Mayaguez episode has come as tonic to a nation which was beginning to feel that it was after all, to use a Nixonian phrase, a 'pitiful giant'. Conservatives and liberals alike are therefore now pointing to the Cambodian affair as a reassertion of American power and influence in far away hostile places, and as a notice to both foes

and friends that the US is still very much a global force which they should not either trifle with or write off Indo-China notwithstanding.

"This brand of extreme euphoria however is not shared by all. Some American commentators, noting that the Ford Administration would understandably 'milk this incident for all its political value' have warned that Washington would be in error if it used its military success to go on an unrestrained jingoistic binge, because, viewed in its proper perspective, it all really boiled down to the use of the 'Seventh Fleet' against seven small boats' the world's, most powerful nation pitting itself against a small nation of peasants.

"While Mr. Ford finds the Congress and the country mostly united behind him on the first military venture of his career as President, he is being criticised by some for ignoring Thailand's protests and using its territory as a base for military operations against Cambodia and thus possibly creating an irreparable rift between the US and its hitherto faithful ally in South East Asia. But others defending Mr. Ford contend that his forcefulness in Cambodia may have the opposite effect, and avert the drift of countries like Thailand, Indonesia, the Philippines and Malaysia, in the wake of Indo China, towards neutralism and away from the US now that they have seen a demonstration of the US's will to remain, a Pacific power. Much of this of course is in the nature of self-fulfilling speculation. As one newspaper editorial put it today, on the morning after the triumph: 'The US has not suddenly reinstated itself as a full-fledged four star super power capable of commanding the respect of big and small powers alike. It has only enjoyed a brief interlude of happily successful, high adventure before turning, as it must, to the real world.'

All these speculations apart, the greatest speculation in perceptive political circles throughout the world is just how the Khmer Rouge and the Vietcong are likely to work out their social, economic and political changes in their respective territories. This is perhaps

the first time that Communists mainly under Chinese ideological influence will have an opportunity of developing territories outside China under conditions of total control. Reports are still scarce, but reports from Cambodia show the young Khmer Rouge have launched a campaign to compel everyone to go back to the villages from the towns and thus begin a process of re-education. Will this work? It is not yet clear how the Vietcong have set about their work and whether they will be willing to follow some of the experience of the more industrialised North in regard to the agricultural South. An aggressive outburst of xenophobia has manifested itself in Cambodia, but in Soute Vietnam there seems to be serious attempts to impress foreign newspaper correspondents that there was an endeavour to usher the revolution peacefully and in an orderly fashion.

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

SATURDAY, MAY 17: The National Advisory Committee on student affairs yesterday decided that from the beginning of the next academic year all undergraduates entering the University of Sri Lanka should undergo four months field training; the design of this program is to make the students sensitive to the socio-economic conditions of the country and bring students and the community together in an effort to foster national unity—CDN. A top level conference presided by the Minister of Finance yesterday decided that the Monetary Board of the Central Bank in future will have to get the approval of the Minister of Finance before introducing any drastic changes in the monetary policies affecting the banks in the country; the discussion at yesterday's conference centred round the situation that had arisen following the issue of two circulars by the Central Bank in regard to the relaxation of the credit squeeze—CDN. Commenting on a report by a group of British Members of Parliament that workers on tea estates in Sri Lanka suffer malnutrition, poor living conditions and rising infant mortality, the *Times of London* said that the grinding poverty of the Tamil workers of Sri Lanka's tea lands is rooted in conditions in Sri Lanka—CDN. The Central Bank has announced that greater investment is necessary if lands taken over under the land reforms are to make a significant contribution towards easing the problem of balance of payments—CDN. The Government decided to increase the price of the gazette to Rs. 1 for a complete volume and cents 60 for a section: the present price is 50 and 30 cents—JD. Mr. J. R. Jayewardene, President of the UNP, has summoned representatives of the party youth leagues and other organisations for a conference to be held in Colombo next week at which Mr. Jayewardene will explain the next step of the party regarding the demand of the Opposition to hold general elections this year—VK. The US pulled out all the 1,100 marines, airlifted into U-Tapao Air Base south of Bangkok for the 'Mayaguez' recovery operation. The Pathet Lao has accused the United States of carrying out reconnaissance flights over Pathet Lao-controlled territory in Northern Laos.

SUNDAY, MAY 18: Mr. P. S. Harihara Ayyar, a United Nations Development Program Expert, who has studied the rain fall pattern and climatic conditions in Sri Lanka had forecast plentiful rain and no adverse weather conditions for the Yala and Maha crops for the next three to four years—CO. The Ministry of Social Services had discussions with the Government regarding aid from the World Food Program for ten severely drought affected areas picked for assistance: viz. Anu-

radhapura, Vavuniya, Mannar, Trincomalee, Jaffna, Matale Polonnaruwa, Badulla, Moneragala and Puttalam: the WFP has agreed to gift 23,000 tons of flour valued at Rs. 70 million to be distributed among the drought stricken people in the ten areas—CO. There is a difference in opinion in the UNP about following the president Mr. J. R. Jayewardene's policy of resigning seats in the NSA: a pro-JR section is of view that other Members, of parliament in the UNP should follow JR and resign their seats in the NSA while the pro-Dudley group does not favour JR's policy of resignation—JS. Another unsuccessful attempt had been made by a gang of youngsters to waylay and rob passengers of a CTB bus plying between Jaffna and Trincomalee—VK. A second attempt had been made to derail the Kankesanturai-Colombo train at Omanthai: linesmen discovered a section of the rails removed and prompt action was taken to replace the track thus avoiding a second major derailment—VK. It is likely that the Ginger Group MPs of the UF will be appointed to an Opposition to be named by the Government: Government proposes to take this action to thwart an attempt by the opposition parties to show the world that the activities of the NSA are being carried out without an Opposition LD. The police will give a reward of Rs. 10,000 to any individual who gives information that will lead to the arrest of the culprits responsible for the derailment of the Kankesanturai-Colombo night mail on April 26 at Medawachchiya—LD. Singapore's foreign minister, Mr. S. Rajaratnam, said that United States and other big powers will remain in Asia despite the defeat of the American policy in Indo-China. Lebanese Premier Rashid Al Solh, tendered the resignation of his six-month-old government to President Suleiman Franjieh. Thousands of Viet Cong and North Vietnamese troops rolled through Saigon on military vehicles yesterday in a huge victory parade at which PRG leaders spoke of the unity of Vietnam.

MONDAY, MAY 19: Majority of the countries participating in the non-aligned summit to be held in Colombo in 1976 have expressed willingness to hold the summit between August 10 and 20: this will enable the Arab leaders participating to return to their countries in time for the Ramazan festival—CDN. Mr. Harold Smedley, UK High Commissioner in Sri Lanka, addressing a meeting of the Press Association of Ceylon and the Sri Lanka Foreign Correspondents Association said that the problem of inflation and high prices has afflicted Britain as well—CDM. The Ministry of Health last week submitted the names of nearly one hundred doctors who had passed their final examination at state expense but failed to report for duty at Government hospitals, to the Director of Public Prosecutions: under the Compulsory Services Act a doctor who fails to serve the obligatory period of service in state institutions is liable to a fine of Rs. 150 per day and the Ministry of Health has requested the Director of Public Prosecutions to take early action to prosecute these doctors—CDN. The All Ceylon Hindu Congress along with the SLFP MP for Vaddukodai, Mr. A. Thiyagaraja, has protested to the Minister of Cultural Affairs against the proposed Hindu Temporalities Draft Bill—CDN. The Acting Prime Minister, Mr. Maithripala Senanayake, inaugurated the three-day South Asian Housing Ministers' Conference at the BMICH this

morning—CO. By devising machinery locally the Sri Lanka engineers of the Ceramics Corporation helped to save Rs. 2,100,000 in foreign exchange that would otherwise have been used for the importation of these machinery—TOC. More Police reinforcements will be deployed in the Jaffna peninsula on May 22, Republican Day in view of the threat of the TUF to launch civil disobedience, closing of shops, boycotting of schools etc.—VK. The Ministry of Agriculture is currently framing regulations whereby paddy farmers will have to compulsorily insure their crops under the Agricultural Insurance Scheme, farmers who fail to insure will be punished according to the proposed Regulations—DM. Mrs. Junko Tabei, 35 year old Japanese housewife, became the first woman to climb Mount Everest, the highest mountain in the world. US Secretary of State, Dr. Henry Kissinger defended the use of force to free the US merchant ship 'Mayaguez' and its crew of 39 despite the casualties involved. A report from Singapore quotes the captain of the seized US Ship 'Mayaguez' as having said that baby faced Khmer Rouge teenagers all about 13 or 14 years old, armed to the teeth captured the ship. Pakistan's Opposition called for demonstrations against what it described rigged elections in Pakistan held in Kashmir.

TUESDAY, MAY 20: The Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike, arrived in the island this morning after attending the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference held in Kingston, Jamaica: in an interview to the Observer the Premier said that the leaders of 24 Commonwealth countries had pledged support to her for the non-aligned conference to be held in Colombo next year: she also said that Iraq had agreed to give Sri Lanka 500,000 tons of oil on deferred terms of payment—CO. The British Parliamentary delegation which recently examined the conditions of the tea estate employees in British owned tea lands in Sri Lanka has criticised the "World in Action" program shown on Granada TV in Britain recently as distorted and rigged: the report of the delegation has been made public by the British Department of Trade—CDN. Following ragging incidents in the Peradeniya Campus of the University of Sri Lanka five students are admitted to the Kandy hospital and several other students received outdoor treatment—CDM & CDN. The South East Asian Housing Ministers now meeting at the BMICH were yesterday unanimous in their call for solution when they agreed that the ever-increasing influx of the rural population to the urban areas was one of the common problems faced by many South East Asian countries—CDM. Republic celebrations this year will be on an austere note—CDN. From today onwards for a period of two months the Government decided to slash the price of NPK fertiliser by 50 per cent—CDN. The CJC (Exchange Frauds) yesterday made order that Sir Oliver Goonetilleke, a former Governor General of Ceylon, in his absence from the inquiry, was not entitled to be represented by counsel—TOC. Seventy eight packages of luxury goods believed to be worth over Rs. 700,000 were seized by a Customs raiding party from the Gajabahu, the flagship of the Sri Lanka Navy at the Port of Trincomalee over the weekend—TOC. Following several complaints of sabotage and poor services the General Manager of Railways had taken action to appoint a committee to travel to various places in the island and investigate the complaints—ATH. The number of pro-

posed additional recruits to the Police service in view of the non-aligned summit conference to be held in Colombo next year has been reduced to 500 from 3500 owing to lack of funds—ATH. Mr. Kasi Anandan, Chief Organiser of the TUF, and three other Tamil youth were arrested and remanded at Batticaloa yesterday following Police action on those who distributed pamphlets requesting the Tamil speaking people to boycott the Republic Day celebrations—VK. The Minister of Education is now investigating a complaint to the effect that a group of influential lecturers of the University of Sri Lanka are misrepresenting facts to the public and students on varsity education—JD. US Defence Secretary James Schlesinger said in an interview that if North Korea invaded the South the US would hit back harder than it did during much of the war in South Vietnam. The Arab nationalist newspaper Al-Liwa said that Arab states would not hesitate to use the oil weapon in a new Middle East war if necessary. Appearing on a television program the Shah of Iran defended his prediction that price of oil would rise in the autumn and asked Western countries why they have not developed alternative sources of energy.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 21: For the year commencing July 1975, the Government of Iraq will make available a sum of Rs. 55 million (approximately Swedish Kroner 35 million) to the Government of Sri Lanka—CDM. Marshalls of the Peradeniya Campus of the University of Sri Lanka are keeping round the clock vigil following severe ragging and eight undergraduates are now warded in the Kandy hospital—CDM. According to a study report published by the People's Bank, petroleum imports took up as much as one fifth of the total value of imports into the country during 1974 and in 1973 petroleum imports accounted only for 10 per cent of the imports—CDN. Commodore D. B. Gunsekera, captain of the Navy, will meet the Prime Minister, Mrs Sirima Bandaranaike, today to acquaint her of the facts regarding the alleged smuggling of goods by some personnel of the Gajabahu, the Navy's flagship—TOC. Mr. A. S. Abeygunesekera, an ex-member of the UNP, has filed action in the District Court of Colombo, against the President of the UNP, Mr. J.R. Jayewardene, and Mr. Anura Tissa de Alwis, Secretary of the UNP, claiming damages in a sum of Rs. 10,000 for sacking him from the party allegedly for no reason—JD. All names listed for appointment as Music Teachers are cancelled by the Minister of Education, Dr. Badiuddin Mahmud, following several complaints that the recent selection to the posts of Music Teachers were not in order—DM. The US Senate voted narrowly yesterday to lift a three-month old embargo on US arms shipments to Turkey, giving Secretary of State, Dr. Kissinger, a show of support he had sought before his visit to Ankara this week. UN Secretary General, Kurt Waldheim, named Mr. Rafeuddin Hamed of Pakistan to be his executive assistant, with the rank of Assistant Secretary General. According to the North Vietnam News Agency, the Viet Cong will publish their official newspaper in Saigon today.

THURSDAY, MAY 22: Professor George Koduwakku, President of the Peradeniya Campus of the University of Ceylon, said yesterday that deterrent action will

be taken against all university undergraduates detected at ragging and offenders would be suspended indefinitely even without inquiry—CDN. Commodore D. B. Gunsekera, Captain of the Navy, reported to the Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike, that both naval and customs investigators were satisfied that what was found on the "Gajabahu" by a customs raiding party on Saturday was not contraband: the Captain of the Navy said that the items consisted were personnel goods of the 205 naval personnel of the flagship "Gajabahu"—CDN. Granada, the producers of the controversial television film on working conditions on British owned tea estates in Sri Lanka, has denied allegations by a team of British MPs that its program was distorted and rigged—CDN. Mr. Stanley Tillekeratne, Speaker of the NSA, has sent a letter to Mr. R. Premadasa, Chief Whip of the Opposition, asking him to take action to appoint a leader of the Opposition as early as possible to facilitate the business of the House—CDN. Dr. Colvin R. de Silva, Minister of Plantations Industry, has called for the list of names of the Indian repatriates waiting to leave the country but are unable to do so owing to certain delays in getting money that is due to them: the Minister will intervene in the matter to expedite the repatriation of these personnel—CDN. The third anniversary of the Republic of Sri Lanka will be celebrated today and the main function where the leaders of the country will take part will be held in Colombo—CDN. Private sector banking institutions are banned from opening any new branches anywhere in the island—JD. Most of the schools were closed in Batticaloa yesterday and the hartal organised in the Northern Province against the Republic Day celebrations were a complete success—VK. The Ministry of Education decided to establish agricultural centres in all schools throughout the country—ATH. The Ministry of Agriculture and Lands, Mr. Hector Kobbekaduwa, has removed Mr. S. B. Senanayake, from the post of Chairman, Land Reforms Commission—ATH. The Minister also decided to cancel all temporary appointments made to the Land Reforms Commission—DM. A court in Cairo lifted the ban imposed on a play three weeks ago because it allegedly made fun of the Soviet Union: the Soviet Embassy protested that the play appeared to caricature the work of the Soviet experts in Egypt. Official sources in New Delhi said that India is prepared to consider

proposals for a bilateral agreement with Pakistan denouncing the use of nuclear force as part of an overall security arrangement.

FRIDAY, MAY 23: The Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike, in the Republic Day message to the nation said that this is not a time for arid constitutional arguments or empty gestures: she further said in the message that this is a time for urgent constructive action in developing the country's natural resources speedily and fully: the third Republic Day celebrations were held yesterday at the Galle Face Green where large crowds gathered—CDN & CDM. In the Northern province the civil disobedience campaign and the procession were banned by the police soon after it got underway and the volunteers participating along with the leaders of the TUF sat on the centre of the road and performed Satyagraha: no incidents were reported: Police and Army armed with rifles and other weapons patrolled the Jaffna peninsula—VK. Mr. R. Premadasa, Chief Whip Opposition, said that he would place the request of the Speaker regarding the appointment of a leader of the Opposition before the Opposition Parliamentary Group—CDN. The Sri Lanka Trade Union Federation has protested to the Prime Minister alleging that the Workers' Charter announced on May Day had taken away from the workers the little facilities what they hitherto enjoyed without the Charter—ATH. The new South Vietnamese authorities disclosed that they were meeting some violent resistance from elements loyal to the old regime. The United States Government has agreed to close down its aid missions in provincial Laos as a first step to abolishing the whole US aid mission in the country. Prince Nordom Sihanouk said his Cambodian Government was not informed of any diplomatic steps by the United States government to secure the release of the American freighter, 'Mayaguez', last week. The Portuguese Socialist Party announced that it would boycott the Government until the country's military leaders ended a communist stranglehold on the press, trade unions and local administration. President Valery Giscard of France expressed confidence that preparations could be completed in the next few months for a fruitful conference between oil producing and consuming nations.

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BUILDING A VILLAGE HOUSE—34

Coupon—Clipping At The Co-op

By Herbert Keuneman

Why does nearly everything in Sri Lanka start off with a bright ideal, or at least a practical and humane aim, and almost immediately begin to degenerate into a racket?

I am moved toward this rather platitudinous truism by my failure—for the last three weeks as I write this the 4th of May—to obtain from the local co-operative my rations of free rice and subsidized sugar. And, believe me, I need them: I need them (free hand-out, subsidy, and all) as much as any villager; because of the villager—financially at all events—that I have become. I therefore write with some passion! Dispassionately, I hope; but nevertheless with passion: under the stress of (mild) suffering.

YOU ASK why I thus suffer? under a devotedly public-spirited Government such as ours, by the people for the people? You are as naive as that? Then you are as naive as I used to be, and as, possibly, some of the architects of our methods of local governments still are, and you must let me enlighten you (and perhaps even them).

Only, let us drop the word 'suffer'—which, after all, *could* be no more than the expression of a subjective state of mind—and describe the situation in the ugly terms it objectively rates: we villagers, and not we of Ehetuwewa alone..we villagers, and not villagers alone..we People are the victims of a deliberate, cold-blooded cheat. I have no doubt the cheat is recurrent, universally applied and merely typical of all the varied cheats the co-operatives practise. But let me tell you especially of this latest local one concerning which I know best.

Let us also not labour at this moment—its time will come—the matter of the sugar. True there was the delay in issuing the May ration; and as far as my own hardship goes only three weeks have passed since I drew my April ration—late—on

9.4.75. Though I was lucky to get it; for last month—the month of the New Year celebrations—the Ehetuwewa Co-operative claimed only to have enough sugar to issue about half the ration to which a household might be entitled, yet as far as I know all the other co-operatives in the area (Gallewa, Makullewa, Divulgane, Hiddewa, Embogama, Walatwewa and maybe others I may not have heard of) had no difficulty in meeting their full commitments. Apart from pointing this out, I have for the present only one sugar question to ask: How is it that although, for a whole week now, we who depend on the Ehetuwewa Co-operative have tried (and failed) to get any, it has been available—well dampened—at local *kades* for the approved off-ration price of Rs. 7/50 a pound ever since this concession was announced? (Don't tell me it was bought privately, transported, and sold for the buying price. *Mudalalis* don't do such things; they sell for instance flour at Re. 1/15 a lb., and only because coupon-holders sell it for Rs. 1/00. The source was the Co-operative to a moral certainty.)

But the rice question. Since about the end of April householders applying at the Ehetuwewa Co-operative for their due issue have learnt to their surprise, disbelief and indignation that in about half their books the coupon for the free half measure was 'missing'. In my own case—and my household officially consists of one, so that I sometimes qualify for some quite ridiculous micro-fractions of an ounce of some commodity or another—in my own case, my free-rice coupons have been pronounced missing since the 16th of April.

THERE IS NO WAY for the uninitiated to check this. Coupons seem to be cut out as though by the rules of some cabalistic society at some cryptic game. I have just had news from a boy I sent to try his luck at the Co-operative today that my ration of free rice has actually been delivered. When he went this morning (after the three weeks of 'missing' coupons) the numbers left in my book—we are still on the old series—were:

432:	434:	436:	438:	440:
	302:	344:	386:	428:
	300:	342:	384:	426:

When he came back triumphantly with the free rice as well as the merely subsidized half-measure (Hallelujah! I'm a bum) two coupons had been cut from the middle and the remaining numbers ran:

432:	434:	436:	438:	440:
	302:			
	300:	342:	384:	426:

There must, I suppose, be some logical pattern in this coupon-clipping thing; but I am no cryptologist nor mathematician, and I cannot trace it. If there were indeed coupons missing and the refusal of the ration not an arrogant lie exploiting the coupon-holders' bafflement, one would expect a continuity of some sort between the missing coupons and those which were clipped once the regular issue caught up: an unbroken space across the bottom or up one or another of the sides. If this reasoning is wrong, the reasoning there is is too subtle for many people. So, why does not Government publish the numbers of the coupons valid in each given month? It would be at least as useful as the market prices of ash plantains and brinjaals to villagers unable to realize them owing to lack of transport facilities or accredited purchasing agents. I am at a loss to explain.

But it is not so difficult to explain how coupons might be abstracted if need or greed be. Such crowds stormed the co-operative this time for the New Year buying—there was cloth to be had at a fairly reasonable price for the first time in years; and one had to collect for the festivities what food supplies one could—that it must have been a simple matter for any dishonest clerk (or Manager) to clip away a little more than he should. He could always claim a *bona fide* mistake, in the rush.

DISHONEST CLERKS (and Managers) in co-operatives are not uncommon; in Ehetuwewa we have them about once a year. The lack of sugar—and its availability with local blackmarketeers—at first at vastly inflated prices, Rs. 12/50 to 15/00 per lb. later at the official rate of Rs. 7/50 which, as I have said, indicates its origin, so enraged the 4,000 or so coupon-holders against one of our local specimens that about a dozen or so (an unusually high percentage) of petitions were sent against him and the

adyaksaka mandalaya is said to have instituted an Inquiry, found serious shortages, and decided he must go. This is heartening news, if only temporarily so. But it is also said that the miscreant —there's a good word that is too much out of fashion these heretical days— has offered to make good the loss. So it remains to be seen whether he will. His predecessor did have to go. But then, he was intemperate and enriched himself by close on Rs. 16,000 in the course of a few months; so it was more economic to go than to hand round hush money.

One mortifying reflexion is that an employee of a co-operative can even raise hush money straight out of his store: all he need do is juggle his stocks and figures a little more and a little more carefully. Greediness is what betrays.

Another advantage enjoyed by the crooked co-operative employee is the built-in aids to malpractice provided him by the system, or lack of it. For example, you might imagine that with a known number of customers (each store has a known number of coupon-holders, who seldom or never refuse to purchase their major rations) and a foreknown quantity, only, of each commodity due to each purchaser the accurate forward provision of adequate commensurate stocks by the *gabada* (a local branch of the CWE whence all the co-operatives of a region are supplied) would be simplicity itself; and that provisioning the co-operatives first would be an unbreakable rule. But no such thing! The boy whom I had hopefully despatched today for my long-awaited ration of sugar returned without it: the excuse, only 10 cwt. of sugar had arrived at the *gabada* this week and the *Ehetuwewa* Co-operative's share of it was already sold. Yes; but to whom? As I say, the private *mudalalis* have sugar; just as they have condensed milk (at Rs. 3/65) a fard canned fish (at Rs /) although condensed milk has been in very sporadic supply, and canned fish has not been available for months.

THE CANNED FISH question is intriguing, in itself. Several cases of it were seen to have appeared in the *gabada* just before the New Year, and everybody was looking forward to a tin of it. Yet

the fish never appeared on the shelves of the co-operatives. It all went to a *mudalali* in Embogama (who sold it at a considerable profit, of course) and even so it was snapped up so fast that I, for one, could buy not a tin though I sent for some as soon as I heard it was on the market.

Is it Quite impossible, in this land of Enlightenment, Democracy, and Welfare to find half a dozen un-venal persons who would constitute an EFFECTIVE 'flying squad' that would descend WITHOUT WARNING on *gabadas* and co-operative stores alike and uncover their various malpractices while they are being practised and before they can be hidden? I think there is supposed to be a Flying Squad already in existence; but evidently it is either not effective or it hasn't heard of *Ehetuwewa*. And I know there are Co-operative Inspectors, or whatever they are called; but perhaps they are entirely too co-operative! I know there are the *adyaksaka mandalayas* who are supposed to keep an eye on things; but there are also Political Agents who keep an eye on the *mandalayas* as well as everyone and everything. Nothing seems to work! Nothing but the racket.

In fact—in competition with the Customs and the Police, possibly the Co-operative Department must be, of all Government Departments, which can recruit a large proportion

of their minor personnel from the less academically qualified, amongst the most corrupt and lucrative. The minor Co-operative staff, besides, is locally appointed. No wonder so many long for such a post and so many 'low achievers' secure them. I can think offhand of no less than 9 of the little boys and girls my wife and I used to love all those years ago who have had Co-operative jobs. And I can think, alas of no less than 4 of those 9 who have been actually sacked for dishonesty (which implies they must have been very dishonest indeed) and one who was sacked and reinstated (a common Co-operative proceeding) and one who was simply transferred (an even more common proceeding; as though it did not matter if you were dishonest, so long as you were dishonest somewhere else!)

Post Script
11.5.75

Still no sugar. But the boy who went for it for me brought the good news that he had heard a 'Co-operative *mahattaya*' (an official of some sort) tell off our errant employee in no uncertain manner. However, he brought at the same time the bad news that this same employee had, as I feared, been put back on the job. That's the Department of Co-operative Development for you!

INANIA *Of This, That and The Other*

" SANGARAWELLA "

— 48 years down the drain —

By INNA

Education could be like a mathematical problem which defies solution. Take $EGC + CGE$ and you get $NGCE$ or HSC !. Give up a few letters like GCE or GEC and you come up with $NGCE$. But there's more to it than that. Our educational system looks like memorizing but real education is learning how to learn. It is the right of every man, of every Sri Lankan. While on the one hand there is the elitist, meritocratic system of education inherited from the CCS -lovers called of the colonial era, on the other, efforts are being made to update and share as much as possible of the benefits of a fuller formation for the whole man. Sometimes, rabid educational policies, the people regardless, can blind people in power.

TAKE THE CASE of a mission school informant tells me). It had run by catholic nuns in the served the region for 48 years, "Sangarawella" area (as my had blundered at the time of the

'Take-over' in the early roaring 'sixties; had even, due to a whimsical lawyer (so the story goes) challenged the powers that were (coinciding with the powers that be). For twelve years the ding-dong battle went on, until last week, one final morning, the place was in a state of siege. The school-boy like officer (DE) ordering women out of their own house (and swearing that the present set-up has no intention of discrimination against Religion)!!! Women, dedicated women, who in the final pangs of a chequered existence FOR people, had switched over policies from being Sisters in academic schooling, to Sisters helping develop the entire region, because they discovered suddenly in a Reflexion two years earlier, that the Government is interested in People, and anyone interested in People had a right to live on and work for people.

They started a project of practical farming education for the people: over 31 girls of all types, of all religious persuasions from far and near, the villager, the peasant (long-suffering Kandyan peasant), all were to come, but the Powerful hand of Unintelligent power, coarse with vengeance struck one morning last week: a state of siege, a flood, without a flood, the Sisters asked to regale themselves on the upper floor soar into the air without taking any doorway! Here was the reverse of the Colombo Congress of Religions; here were petty task-masters having their way sabotaging the present regime by their picayune ways in dealing with people. "No one sees no one knows so left's interpret things our way. If it topples we'll be in the next boat; if it works, we just go ahead. Throttle, full steam ahead"—may well be the kind of thinking that goes on in their empty spaces between their ears.

A GROUP OF RELIGIOUS BROTHERS had their "outdated" school in the same area. The daughter of the principle had a topclass wedding, the brothers relegated to the end of the house. Much wine and dining; school-the entire staff—closed because all asked for leave the same day—no one to teach, and so the wedding was a first class show, NCGE or GCE/EGC regardless.

It's quite simple for saboteurs with their narrow provincial outlook, far away the from centre of things. The pioneer of the Common Man would never have stooped as low as these men and women (for there are women-teachers who have long past the term 'lady' teachers). In fact SWRD would have been shocked to see these un-educated educators, in some few of our provincial towns and villages.

KAZI—9

In The Mawanella Area

By ANATORY BUKOBA

March 22,

MAWANELLA is past Kegalle on the way from Colombo to Kandy. There seems to be hilly country all round, and traversing the land, I wondered if it would be mountain warfare or jungle training that would fit troops best for advancing through the terrain in the face of a hostile reception. In the end, I thought it would be neither, but rather, that kind of warfare that went on in the Bocage country of France after the Normandy landings, in 1944, where the armoured vehicles just could not get of the road. The place I went through looked a well-wooded Kyber Pass, hence those first thoughts of mine. Here was a place where infantry would have the advantage, if they were determined and agile.

There seemed to be prosperity here. I gathered that the holdings were small, the families large in comparison, and that very many of the able-bodied found work outside the area, and that those, who had not gone to distant colonization schemes, came home at night! So, with money drawn into the area, through their pay, they were well off. It is youths who have these advantages, and lack others, the facilities to exploit what they have got, who are drawn into so-called seditious movements. Whatever activity there was here in 1971 did not last long, for Mawanella, and its neighbourhood, was too much on the beaten track or near it. These regions are a part with a character of its own.

Where I was, there were children, maybe about twenty of them belonging to one home, but not one family, except in the wider sense, for they were a family. They ran their own show, or they seemed to. They nearly always knew what to do whether it was studying, going to school, or doing some household chores. They gave you the impression that they belonged here in a very real sense, and not merely because of the tolerance of their mummies and daddies.

They knew how to talk, but I would not say they were noisy. They were not bashful when they spoke, but they spoke with a kind of power each his own person. I am sorry if I am eulogizing this particular household; they had that kind of effect on me. The adults about the place were about as many as you would find in a small family, I mean in the generation above that of the children, and they were not particularly old themselves, in fact, I would say, they were very young. In addition to their home life, there was the land, and I had the impression that they were very attached to it. These children go a long way to school, down the mountain side, along a footpath, with the long trudge up again, some of them looking not much more, if I may speak wildly, than tiny tots.

THIS WAS A FAMILY, and so, if any of that crowd read this I hope they will not take it amiss, if I speak indiscriminately of adults and children. It would be tiresome, and boring, to try to distinguish between them all the while. Two or three of the older ones, helped by one or two of the middle ones, were on the hillside putting up a wire fence. This was to keep wild boar out and to discourage human beings from trespassing, should they have anything nefarious in mind. That hillside had been planted with plantain, coconut and papaw, and to my mind, it was some distance from the house; hence the need for security. The hill was steep, as steep as those in the Cumbrian Lake District where I had helped fence off Forest Commission forests. A young European farmer was there; and I saw him pollinate passion fruit, a daily task which had to be done at a certain hour, and then the flowers died off, during the day,

giving way to the fruit; and I also say him mix fresh cowdung with water, into a liquid, to manure the tomato plants. Very old rubber trees had been felled to make way for new planting, and although there is a use for rubber trees as firewood in Colombo, these were too remotely situated to be cut up and transported, and I heard that would be disposed of by burning. I was surprised to learn that such massive trunks would burn.

The rice this large family eats is what they have grown themselves. Fruit was always served after each meal. Water was piped from springs. There was a solitary heifer there, of the Ayrshire breed, served, and due to calve in about nine months. They hope to enlarge the herd.

There were one or two fine books circulating from hand to hand at night before they went to bed, the sort of book, with illustrations and photographs and a great variety of maps, which would give a child a fairly good idea of what the world is, and well-kept these books were. Now and again, a group would say their lessons, homework, aloud together, but not in such a way as to disturb the others. I certainly enjoyed listening.

IN THAT REGION, I heard the story of some donkeys strangled by their own hatters; not slip knots, but by being unable to regain their feet after slipping on steep slopes or slopes steep enough to give them no chance to manoeuvre after they had fallen. I mention this only to make others, who may acquire donkeys, beware, or rather, be aware of the danger. Mules were used by the Chindits in Burma, and near the south Pole, and donkeys used to be used for transport in mountainous Cumbria, but I have been told that the best pack-animal in the world is still man, or we used to think so in the army.

In the neighbourhood, in the valleys, paddy had been harvested and threshed, and there was still more to cut. The lads I met were fine sons of the soil of Ceylon, and well able to hold their own on meeting strangers.

Towards Gampola, the bus went along narrow roads, with a sheer drop on one side: no parapets, no protective trees, the roads steep,

wide enough, it looked, to take only one vehicle, with no room to pass. Slow or fast, and the buses did travel fast, the journey ought to have been nerve-racking for driver and passengers, but the drivers took it in their stride, and so did the passengers some carrying babies looking only months old. With the frequent bends, there was no warning of oncoming traffic, you just slammed on your brakes, and reversed up hill, even reversing up Z-bends, as our bus did. Hats off to the C.T.B, and to the busses, old busses, maintained by them. Many were the hills that were bare, lying fallow, old tea land, and lying just as it was left after the bushes were removed. For all the danger that they ran, bus drivers and conductors looked far from careworn. I have noticed that people who endanger life and limb, seem to keep an eternal youth: they do not grow old easily.

Newspapers did not penetrate these remote areas, and I do not think people listened much to the news, either. One person did get a weekly from afar, a Farmer's Weekly. Browsing through it, and learning about who sold sugar beet for sowing, and grass seed, I found useful. I shall come back some other time, God willing, to this grown-up little army of small children, a community, free if ever there was one, disciplined as to be almost self-disciplined, responsible, considerate and polite.

ALTERNATIVES

Tomorrow's World Today

London,

Ways of making food from waste products, saving fuel with simple engine modifications and revolutionary new building methods and materials are among the examples of alternative technologies gathered into "Tomorrow's World Finds Other Ways of Doing Things", a Design Centre exhibition which has opened in London. All the products and processes on show have been chosen because they represent a simpler, cheaper or more efficient way of doing neces-

sary things. Some of them are the result not of advanced technological innovation but of the intelligent and appropriate application of long-established principles. Others have been designed to take account of the growing scarcity and cost of energy and natural resources.

In the conservation field there are examples of good protein made from straw, paper and plastics developed by the Paper Industries Research Association and the Manchester University Medical Biochemistry Department. The Applied Nutrition Department has developed a screw-press which extracts protein-rich juice from cut grass for pigs; the remaining pulp can still be used as cattle fodder.

An exhaust valve modification claims to cut fuel consumption in cars by up to 30 per cent, while another fuel-saver is a versatile small tractor which runs on propane. Among several new ideas in fabrication are instant buildings—sections can be bolted together to form a large structure in less than a day—and steel-box modular housing in strong, lightweight, fireproof materials. There is also "knitted wall" stretch fabric which can be used in interior decoration in place of conventional plaster, wall paper or paint.

Alternatives to normal energy sources are evident in the UK Atomic Energy Research Establishment's "Fluidine" machine, a liquid-piston engine developed from a 19th century idea, and economically-produced and priced solar cell panels marketed by International Research and Development Co Ltd.

HELD OVER

The second and the concluding part of the article on

The Local Collaborators of the Foreign Exploitation of the Plantation Industry —

The Brown Sahibs

by Tissa Balasuriya, O.M.I.

will appear next week

Confidentially

On Train Derailments

IS IT NOT A FACT that government departments and corporations think they can get away with murder by refusing to permit the usual news reporting of important events through the undemocratic process of getting the mass media under government control and under government influence (advertisements, licences and what not) to blackout such news? That not so long ago the United Front in the Opposition had shouted itself hoarse about the slanting and blacking out of news by the capitalist monopoly press of the Wijewardenas and the Gunasenās? That the Wijewardenas have been expropriated whilst the Gunasenās have been put into deep freeze? That instead of press freedom we now have greater slanting and blacking out of news? That on May 10 *Tribune* had pointed out that the train derailment at Medawachchiya had been played down where it was not completely blacked out in all the organs of mass media controlled by government? That the *Times of Ceylon* which occasionally publishes news which Lake House blacks out had a piece on the Medawachchiya derailment on May 7th? That the report was under the heading: **DERAILMENT CAUSED BY SABOTAGE?** That the report read as follows: *The CID and the Railway authorities have questioned a dozen employees of the Railway in connection with the derailment of the Colombo-bound Kankasanturai night mail on April 25. The "Times of Ceylon" understands that as sabotage has been proved several other railway employees will be taken for questioning. It is understood that the engine and eight passenger compartments had jumped the rails where fish plates linking stretches of the line had been removed. It is believed that these fish plates could be removed by railway employees. Government sources stated that one of the chief motives was to be rob passengers of their valuables, as it was the Government servants' pay day but this was prevented by the timely arrival of the Police?*

That apart from this neither Lake House nor the SLBC have reported about these train derailments? That the *Times* and the *Daily Mirror* occasionally have a small played-down paragraph whilst the *Virakesari* makes a heroic attempt to report all the news? That at the moment, the Tamil reading public is well served by the *Virakesari* and the *Eelanadu*? That the *Thinakaran* has become a joke among Tamil readers? That speaking of train derailments the *Eelanadu* had a frontpage story last week that the morning *Valdevi* from Colombo to KKS on Tuesday May 13th had been derailed at Pallai: and that some compartments had been derailed? That passengers on this train have also talked about this derailment? That when inquiries were made from the Railway authorities there was a total denial that anything had taken place at Pallai? That when the *Eelanadu* story was mentioned it was dismissed as an exaggeration? That the Railway authorities stated that there had been a "little trouble" with one compartment at Pallai and that this had led to some delay, and there was nothing more to it? That if this was so, the CGR should make an application to the Press Council to bring the *Eelanadu* to book for publishing false and exaggerated reports? That in the first instance the CGR should deny the *Eelanadu* story over the SLBC and in the Government papers?

That the CGR should also make complaints against the *Virakesari* and the (UNP) *Journal* for reporting and commenting on a whole series of other train disasters? The *Journal* refers to a "breakdown of services" between Mahe, Batticaloa and Trincomalee? That the *Virakesari* on Sunday May 18 had a front page piece under the heading **ANOTHER ATTEMPT TO DERAIL TRAINS ON THE NORTHERN LINE!**? The report stated that there was another attempt to derail northbound trains at a point between Vavuniya and Omantai? That this was on May 15 and that the timely discovery of this attempt had prevented a disaster? That the vigilance of a linesman had been responsible for the discovery of this act of sabotage? That the *Virakesari* report stated that the line had been tampered with at the 162nd mile along the rail track? That the alertness of the linesmen

had prevented a derailment? That he had also notified the authorities so promptly that the lines were set right quickly and thereby avoided any delays in the service? That the *Virakesari* had commented that there was a spate of such acts of sabotage on the northern line and that nothing had been done as yet? That no arrests had yet been made?

That whilst the *Aththa* has been hinting that it was sabotage by UNP-minded trade unionists still left in the Railways the UNP *Journal* has been throwing it back asking the "communists" to find out who was really responsible? That LSSP's *Janadina* thought it was sabotage but did not make any accusations? That it is not difficult to trace the source of the sabotage? That it is known that a foreman of a gang working on the northern line claims that he had "lost" his set of tools for tightening and opening fishplate bolts and nuts about a week before the Medawachchiya train disaster? That it is admitted that he had not reported the loss to the Railway authorities as he was required to do—for the Railway to take precautionary measures to guard the track? That this foreman claims that he had reported the matter to the "Police"—no doubt in the hope that the Police might recover the tools before his Railway bosses heard of the loss? That it was after the Medawachchiya derailment that the Railways became aware of the loss of this set of tools? That it is not known what action the Police had taken, if any action was taken at all? That it is also not known why the Police did not inform the Railway about the reported loss of the tools? That it will be interesting to know to which Union this foreman who lost the tools belonged? That as long as this set of spanners and tools to work on fishplates are not recovered, train travel will constitute a greater hazard than it has been for sometime in the immediate past? That whilst long distance train commuters are getting alarmed and apprehensive about these acts of sabotage on the northern line, Lake House and the SLBC blackout all news? That when something leaks out it is slanted to provide a cover for responsible officials? That whilst this ostrich-like hiding of facts in the sand continues, gossip and rumour have taken over?

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