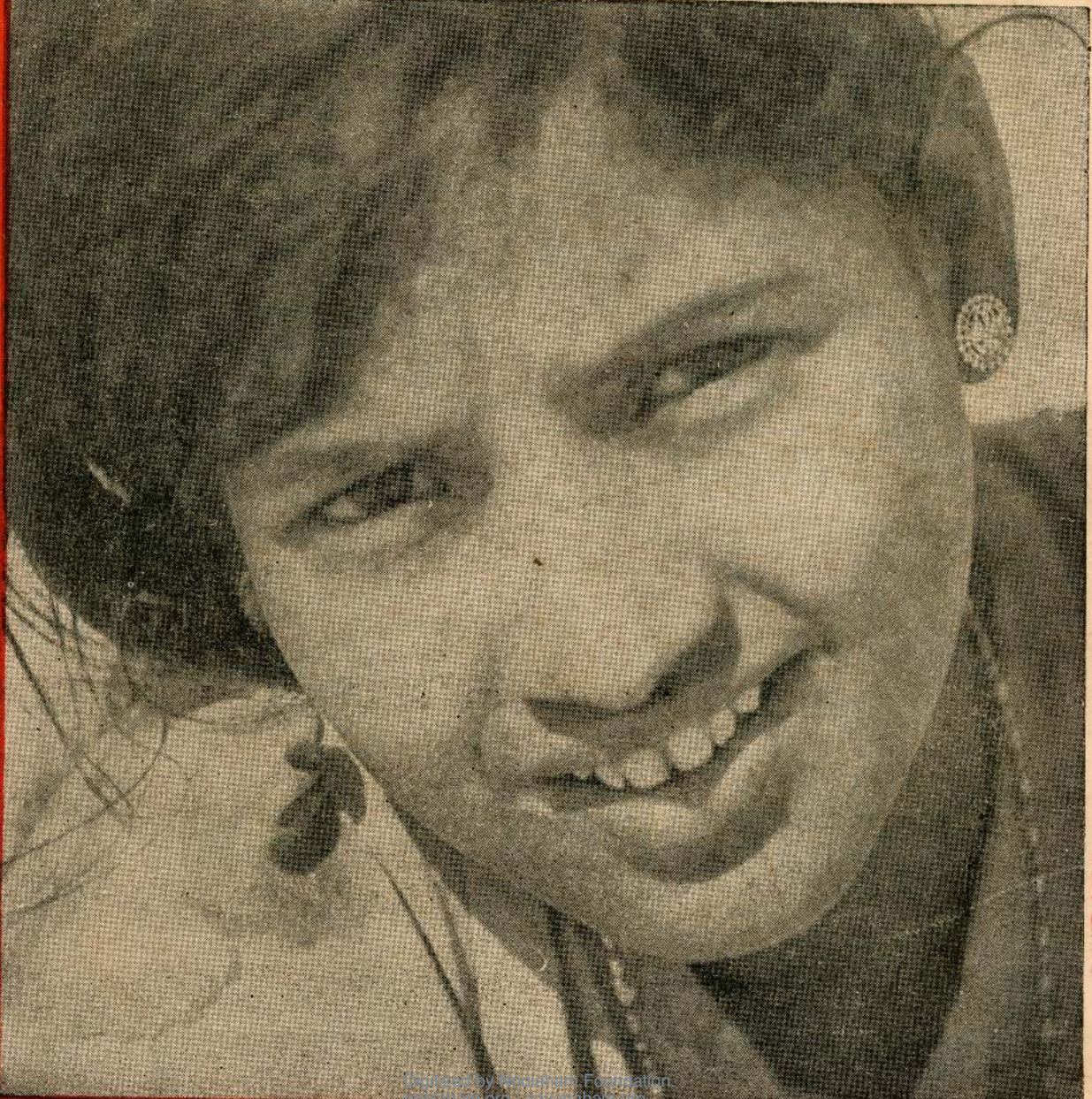


Vol. 24 No. 18 — November 10, 1979 — No. 2-50

TRIBUNE



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Letter From The Editor

Many may wonder why we have a pretty face on the cover this week with an enticingly sweet smile. Is it because we expect a sunshine budget next week—a budget that will make the young to be wreathed in smiles? Or is the *Tribune* on the verge of sponsoring an all-island beauty contest? Readers who look carefully at the picture will see that neither the face nor the smile is bland or vacuous. The penetrating gaze piercing out of a doe-eyed face combined with a knowing smile (hovering tantalisingly over her parted lips) makes our cover a symbol of Sri Lankan youth able to see through all the skulduggery that is going on and fully aware that there is much more than meets the eye in what the “managed” newspapers publish as news. The stunning headlines to describe promises of what Ministers hope to do in the future only evoke smiles with a touch of cynical scepticism. The youth are still pleasantly excited about the visits of businessmen from the four corners of the world—from Finland to Japan, from France to Singapore—on promises held out to them (the aliens) that our island is a good place to invest capital for quick returns with its low-cost labour and favourable (devalued) exchange rates. All these visits have still not improved the quality of life for the family—in fact life has become harder. With too many consumerist baubles to buy, the family has less to spend on food, and food is several times more expensive than before, and this is no smiling matter. It is not food, clothing and shelter that alone concern this teenager. This generation grew out of the Insurgency of 1971 and they are not only intensely curious about everything happening around them, but they are also aware of the meaning and significance of such events. The young titter when they hear about Cabinet reshuffles today. They have heard it from the beginning of this government. Except for shuffling a few departments, with many of them coming under the Presidential umbrella, there has been no significant change. Ministers who should have been sacked for inefficiency and/or corruption still continue to plague the country. Ministers, who should have resigned in shame, see nothing wrong in preaching homilies on good conduct to all and sundry. Ministers whose departments are in shambles and who should have been sent packing long ago (and not even kicked upstairs to ambassadorships) continue to get new cars with radio telephone facilities—to talk no doubt to the ghosts they have spawned. And, the impish smile on the face of the young lady on our cover is just the kind of smile that would flit across the faces of thousands of our youth when they read Minister Nissanka Wijeratne’s famous words: “.....it is impossible to find even one single efficient administrator in the Ministry of Education.....” Nissanka Wijeyeratne as Minister of Education is a blot on dharmista. It is a disgrace and a shame no nation, no people, can tolerate. So the youth are saying. Very soon everybody will say it. Our youth will keep smiling only for a little while longer. Anger, indignation and fury are welling up inside millions of people in this country. It is the corruption—naked, open, unashamed—that is incensing people now. Soon it will be the failure of many Ministers to deliver the goods. One President cannot make up for the lapses of half a dozen Ministers.

TRIBUNE

Ceylon News Review

Founded In 1954

**A Journal of Ceylon and
World Affairs**

Editor, S. P. Amarasingam

Every Saturday

November 10, 1979

Vol. 24 No. 18

TRIBUNE

43, DAWSON STREET

COLOMBO — 2.

Tel: 33172.

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EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

Bangladesh

Colombo, November 6,

The visit of Bangladesh President Ziaur Rahman to Sri Lanka this week is a happy augury for countries in the South Asian region—all of them are really part of the Indo-Gangetic sub-continent—anxious to get together not only as a regional grouping but also to develop bi-lateral trade and co-operation in a big way. The fact that President Ziaur Rahman was able to make this visit to Sri Lanka—he has been to other countries earlier especially the oil-rich Arab States—is an indication that Bangladesh which had suffered an overdose of instability and uncertainty has now reached a stage where its governmental leaders can endeavour not only to present a new image abroad but also take positive steps to develop trade and economic relations.

In the days when colonialism had reigned supreme in this area, bi-lateral relations between subject countries were never encouraged—all trade, commercial and especially political relations were channelled through the imperial mother country. In the last decade, bi-lateral relations among countries in the South Asia region have grown but not as fast or firmly as in other areas—in South East Asia, or the Middle East, or Africa or the Caribbean or South America. There are big regional groupings and smaller groupings within them, like the ANDEAN group in the South America.

But in South Asia regional co-operation has been more difficult. This is no doubt because the British, as the supreme colonial and imperial power in the region, had sowed the seeds of dissension (to divide and rule) so skilfully that the land which was one under Asoka, Akbar and the British is now in three—India, Pakistan and Bangladesh—with fissiparous, separatist and divisive trends within each of them. Sri Lanka, fortunately, has always been out of the political orbit of the Asokan and Akbarian paramountcy although the island is geographically, ethnically and culturally part of the sub-continent.

Serious efforts have been made in the last two decades to build an effective South Asia regional organisation, but the innate suspicions and hostility towards India entertained by the smaller countries (constantly inspired by imperialism and now neo-colonialism) have tended to prevent such an organisation from coming into existence. Successive governments in New Delhi have failed to display the statesmanship, magnanimity and tact necessary to bring about such a grouping. Even more importantly, India had not been able to persuade the smaller countries that the greed of the now powerful and successful Indian bourgeoisie would be kept under constant and permanent check. India has, however, taken many meaningful steps to make amends and make friends—but they have not gone far enough to overcome the currents and under-currents of fears, misgivings, apprehensions and suspicions that exist.

The current visit of the Bangladesh President to Sri Lanka is one more step in the current efforts of the South Asian countries to reach a higher degree of co-operation between themselves than before. It must be remembered that such understanding and agreement has to be worked out in the context of Asian and global geo-politics. It is also necessary for all South Asian countries to develop firmer ties with the underdeveloped countries in areas that are around the Indian Ocean—in Southeast Asia, in the Gulf and Arab mainland, in East Africa and also with developed and affluent Australia.

At the banquet in honour of the Bangladesh President, Ziaur Rahman, President Jayewardene touched on all the salient points relevant at this time. First, he brought a touch of sentiment to connect Bangladesh and Sri Lanka: "Your visit to Sri Lanka has a special significance, as this is the first visit by a President of Bangladesh to this country. It has also a very unusual significance on which I would like to say a few words. We in Sri Lanka believe that the Sinhalese people came to this country with Prince Vijaya from the North Eastern area of the Indian Sub-Continent, that is to say, from an area which today includes Bangladesh. This is a legend which is accepted as part of the history of Sri Lanka, and your visit will therefore remind the people of this country of the links between the people of Bangladesh and

Sri Lanka going back to the mists of antiquity. Indeed, we would like to believe that the links between our peoples are not merely historic and ancient, but rather that they are constituted on a special bond of fraternity."

President Jayewardene then went on to point out that ".....it would be quite understandable against this background and also against the background that Bangladesh and Sri Lanka belong to the same South Asian region, that Sri Lanka should be very interested in Bangladesh." He paid a fitting tribute to President Ziaur Rahman: ".....More specifically, I would like to say that we have a special interest in the achievements of Bangladesh under your leadership. We are aware that your country went through a period of unusual travail, after which the foundations for stability and progress were laid under your leadership.....". After referring to the brave efforts of Ziaur Rahman's government to rebuild the economy of Bangladesh and the challenges that faced both countries, he said: "It is a commonplace that all of us, are today living in an increasingly interdependent world, in which economic developments in some countries affect the economies of other countries. It might indeed be appropriate to talk about a world economy, considering the fact that economic developments in one country or a group of countries can affect, and do in fact affect the economy of the entire globe. All our Governments in the developing countries have been quite well aware of this fact for many years. For many years now, the impact of what has been happening in the developed countries on the underdeveloped part of the world has been largely adverse, and it appears that it will continue to be adverse for the foreseeable future. It will be acknowledged by everyone that it is certainly regrettable that countries such as yours and mine, which have been able against great odds to bring about a growth rate of over 8 per cent should have to face this situation. We can only hope that North-South economic relations will improve, and that meaningful measures will somehow be taken to promote a new international economic order.....Particularly in the difficult period ahead for the world economy the development of South-South economic relations has to be regarded as an imperative. I would like to say,

in this connection, that since my Government assumed office in 1977, we have been emphasising the importance of regional co-operation, that is, co-operation amongst the countries of South Asia, including Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. We are aware that you yourself consider that regionalism is an option that could be used for the benefit of all the countries in South Asia. Sri Lanka is looking forward to developing economic relations with Bangladesh and promoting regional economic co-operation as well....." *It will be noted that President Jayewardene has adopted the concept of South-South economic relations which had emerged forcefully at the Havana Summit.*

Then he went on to praise the foreign policy of Bangladesh. "We are aware, your Excellency, that you have given importance not only to the development of relations of Bangladesh with other South Asian countries but also to the development of relations with South East Asian countries. We have been interested in this orientation of your foreign policy, which in our view derives naturally from the pivotal position that Bangladesh has between the two regions of South and South East Asia, a fact which gives great geo-political importance to your country. Your country is also a valued member of the Non-aligned Movement and, like Sri Lanka, attached the greatest importance to the strictest adherence to the fundamental principles of Non-alignment. Indeed, Afro-Asia is going through a period of turmoil, in which countries like Bangladesh and Sri Lanka can hardly remain indifferent to what is happening. While we have to be primarily concerned with our own areas, we remain an integral part of the world and cannot remain indifferent to what is happening. While we have to be primarily concerned with our own areas we remain an integral part of the world and cannot remain indifferent either to the grave international problems, such as the proliferation of the most dangerous weapons, which even threaten the continual existence of mankind. We look forward to working with you in the Non-aligned Movement and elsewhere to bring about a more satisfactory international order.....".

President Jayewardene concluded his speech on an emotional note: "We are sorry that both of you have not been able to spend

more time with our people and see more of our country. But, such as we are able, we will show you as a small nation, with a very ancient history whose independence we defended for 2,400 years; we have something to learn from the great sub-continent of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, and we also have some that we can show others to learn from us. To be friendly with all of you, We have no enemies. (I hope we have no enemies). We want to be friendly with all, and enemies of none. And Bangladesh is very dear to our hearts, because we feel that we are kith and kin and we come, as an ancient chronicle written about 2000 years ago says, we come from Vangadesa which I think is Bangladesh. We feel that you and we are part of one Community..... "So our hearts throb as one and we talk the same language, and that is the languages of peace and non-alignment....."

In his reply, President Ziaur Rahman, after the customary reiteration of goodwill and admiration for Sri Lanka stated: "As fellow members of the Non-aligned Movement, both Bangladesh and Sri Lanka are committed to friendship and peaceful co-existence with other countries of the world based on the principles of sovereign equality, territorial integrity and non-interference in each other's internal affairs. Bangladesh firmly believes that the principles of the Non-aligned Movement, enshrined in her Constitution, reflect the just aspirations of the developing nations of the world and present a unique forum for them to defend and promote the cause of peace, freedom and justice. In keeping with our keen desire to forge close and friendly relations with all our neighbours, Bangladesh has been unflinching in its efforts to promote peace and stability in the South Asian region through creation of a climate of natural trust, understanding and co-operation. Occasional stresses and strains in our region have not deterred us in our resolve to promote good neighbourly relations. We believe that our common efforts in this direction will make a positive contribution to the cause of peace and stability not only in our region but also in Asia and the world....."

"The challenge of development of our countries is both immense and urgent. While as developing countries we continue to strive to achieve a better life for our peoples, we at

the same time share with you the growing sense of concern over the rapidly increasing disparity between the rich and the poor nations of the world thus largely affecting our own development efforts. The causes of this unhappy situation are embedded in the present inequitable world economic order. It is therefore, imperative that this existing order be restructured without delay through the establishment of the New International Economic Order based on justice and fairplay. Bangladesh believes in peaceful solution of all problems and it is our desire to see complete elimination of all causes of tension and friction in various parts of the world including our own. We also extend our support to all efforts aimed at the ultimate goal of general and complete disarmament on a global basis. It is in pursuance of this policy that Bangladesh fully supports the establishment of a Zone of Peace in the Indian Ocean and emphasizes the need for continued participation of all littoral and hinterland states in the consultations and arrangements towards its realization....."

It is yet too early to say what the final outcome of the Sri Lanka—Bangladesh talks will be. Bangladesh is precariously poised between China (and Burma) on one side and India on the other. Bangladesh is also the closest neighbour of Southeast Asian countries with a land connection. All the problems of South-east Asia centred around Thailand, Vietnam, Kampuchea and Malaysia will impinge on Bangladesh more than any other South Asian country. Burma which is an immediate neighbour with a land frontier has now become a virtual no man's land and has even found an excuse to quit the Non-aligned Movement (in spite of Singapore Rajaratnam's advice to "stay inside and fight Castroism"—vide Far Eastern Economic Review) to resist the pressures from many quarters to do this or that inside the Movement.

How dexterously Bangladesh can walk the tight rope between India and China on the one hand, and the Super Power involvements in South as well as South-east Asia, on the other, is yet to be seen. President Ziaur Rahman is making a heroic attempt to do this. Sri Lanka's experiences in this direction may assist Bangladesh in the conduct of its foreign relations, and Sri Lanka may be persuaded to follow Bangladesh in same matters.

☉ **Coconut Oil Scandal**

☉ **Ulhitiyawa-Maduru Oya**

***BELIEVE IT OR NOT**, a Sri Lankan State Trading Organisation, viz., the BCC, has been led up the garden path and the country is faced with a loss of several million rupees. A news item in the *Daily News*, 23/10/79 under the heading **COCONUT OIL LIES UNCLAIMED IN US** read: ".....A consignment of Sri Lanka coconut oil worth about Rs. 14 million shipped by the State-owned British Ceylon Corporation (BCC) Limited is lying unclaimed and unpaid for in a New York storage tank for the past two months trade sources said yesterday. The 895 tonne shipment was made in mid-August. BCC Limited Competent Authority V. P. A. Perera said the buyer had let the Corporation down by not providing funds against documents presented to his New York bank for transfer to Sri Lanka. Mr. Perera said the Corporation had been selling coconut oil to this particular buyer on a regular basis and the Corporation considered him reliable. The Corporation would have to review its future export procedures and perhaps transact business only on the basis of Letters of Credit. The title to the oil remained with the Corporation and efforts were being made to dispose of it through the Corporation's New York agent. The Corporation would have to incur a loss on the transaction due to storage and other miscellaneous charges, Mr. Perera added. The New York buyer may have decided not to accept the consignment because of a drop in international prices for coconut oil during the period the shipments was being effected, he said."

There is no doubt that the CA of the BCC has made a valiant efforts to cover up the tracks of the completely unbusinesslike procedures followed in this transaction (and may be other similar transactions) by promising to make amends in the future.

But matters cannot be left at this. Newspapers in New York (e.g. *New York Trade Report*) have also published reports about

this shady coconut oil deal worth many million rupees. This deal involves approximately, 1000 metric tons of Sri Lanka Coconut oil. (BCC says it is 895 tons, but New York reports round it off at 1000). A few details of this transaction between the BCC and this black-listed Sri Lankan, who has a history of similar problems regarding payment with other State-owned Organisations in Sri Lanka, will make anyone wonder why the BCC entered into this deal. Reports also indicate that this "buyer" has suits against him in many countries for similar dealings. It is common knowledge in trading circle in Colombo that this individual operates through numerous window-dressed Companies, around the world. Another Emil one will be tempted to say.

The BCC had sold this coconut oil at approximately US \$ 1185/- per metric ton C and F New York. If this was realised on a normal business transaction, Sri Lanka Government would have received about Rs. 18 million. However, when the shipment arrived in New York the coconut oil market had dropped to about US \$ 910/- per metric ton C & F. Since the shipment was to this party, that too without a L/C, the buyer had refused to take up the documents or pay for the freight to the Shipping Company. The BCC obviously has no other alternative but to sell this oil at a lesser price if it could. This lot of oil is now at the New York Tanks, incurring heavy charges. The Sri Lanka Government has been compelled to bear the demurrage charges to the New York Port authorities, freight to the Shipping Company amounting to lakhs and also the differences in sales price and the market price, which amounts to about Rs. 5 million. In the meanwhile, it is reliably understood that a big chief in the BCC had wanted permission to proceed to the New York and "study" this problem. It is learnt that the Minister of Plantation Industries had turned down his request

Believe It Or Not. many questions are being asked in political and commercial circles: (a) Does anyone in Sri Lanka have a special interest in this deal? (b) Why were precautions not taken when this buyer was black-listed before by the Coconut Marketing Board to see that he was able to buy without opening

a L/C? (c) Why was coconut oil shipped to this party when it was known that he was an internationally known slick operator?

It is time that something is done to eliminate such malpractices that stem from bureaucratic control in the coconut oil trade. Reliable trade circles in Colombo assert that when the BCC sold the shipment to the new Sri Lankan Emil at \$ 1185 a ton, on credit, there were other buyers willing and able to buy their lot for cash or against irrevocable L/Cs. Why this preference for the particular buyer? Nobody can be blamed for smelling a rat in the whole business.

***BELIEVE IT OR NOT**, that whilst tiresomely repetitive sunshine stories about the great happenings in the Mahaweli crowd out more newsworthy matters in the Lake House papers, two old Mahaweli hands have written to the Editor. Their letters and memoranda were sent on to Sherlock Holmes for investigations. *Tribune* investigators are now busy looking into this matter. In the meantime, it may be useful to open the matter by publishing the letters received from one of them. From all inquiries made the two persons, who are making an issue of an important matter, are reliable old stagers reputed for their integrity, D. F. Abeywardene of Kauschito, Kundasale and M. M. Ismail of Sammanthurai (presently in Colombo). The first letter was from D. F. Abeywardena on 16.9.79. His letter read: "In keeping with the objects and motives of two unknown old codgers—at age 75 and with considerable experience in land development, you will note our decision to break out into open at this *eleventh hour* regarding the technical blunders etc., of the Ulhitiyawa-Maduru Oya complex leading to future shock and tragedy. As it is time that the people should be kept informed, we appeal to you to make a careful study of the booklet sent herewith and to launch out on a vigorous and dynamic campaign through editorials and leading articles. Apart from technical blunders, I hope you will note the possibilities of potential bribery and corruption. We look forward to success with your help. A public commission as a last resort is called for."

Unfortunately, the letter and the manuscript (which he calls a booklet) were received at the

office when the Editor was out of the Island.

Mr. Abeyewardene wrote again on 26.9.79—when the Editor had just returned from Havana. This letter read: "I sent you a booklet and special letter regarding the technical blunders etc., in the adoption of the tunnel in the Ulhitiyawa-Maduru Oya complex in preference to a superior trans-basin canal with a saving of Rs. 109 million and appealed to you to take up the worthy cause. Whilst appreciating that you require time to assess the problems through your investigative reporters, I am disappointed that you have not yet done anything about it. As we are at the eleventh hour, dynamic action is called for in the name of the national interests. We look forward to your valuable help and wish that you will appreciate our efforts. Considering that the planning process has to be compressed for 30 years to 6 years—a very formidable task and challenge to the worthy accelerated programme of government—all concerned should be doubly careful to ensure that hasty, adverse decisions are not made as in this particular case. Mr. Kahawita, an esteemed consultant with long associations as the leader of the investigations on the Mahaweli Project, has dealt with the subject in a comprehensive manner in a series of articles in the *Tribune*. He has drawn attention—as I have done—to the monitoring of construction equipment that should be brought into the country by the various construction agencies. Under pressure, we accept machinery sent from aiding countries to keep their production lines moving to sustain their economy. We pay for them, so we must have the choice, but we succumb to the subtle pressures of bribing. I plead with you to make a careful study of my booklet and enter into the fray on our side on behalf of the vital interests of the country."

The Editor wrote to Mr. Abeyewardene on his return from Havana and the following reply dated 12/10/79 was received: "Many thanks for your letter of the 1st. I appreciate the reason for the delay caused by your long absence at Havana.... The subject in the booklet is free from technicalities, as that the layman could easily appreciate the problems involved; it is supported by two simple and clear plans on the basis of visual representa-

tion. Although I have dealt with all aspects of the subject in detail, I cannot help inviting your attention to para 3 (c) and para 4 of Memo 2. Our group is in the opposite camp and we are fighting hard in the interests of future generations, so that it is the sacred duty of the press to give us the fullest support. Taking the project as a whole, the engineering consultants have let down the government by their boastful and unrealistic advice, which culminated in a glamorous slogan and declaration that the 30 year programme will be accelerated and compressed to six years! Consequently, the government will soon lose their credibility and have to face political ridicule. Certainly, the programme should be accelerated with a determined effort, but realistically. The consultants/advisers did not have the requisite experience and encyclopaedic knowledge of the overall aspects of the project and they pandered to the wishful thinking of the government and did not have the courage to stand up for their technical honesty and proficiency. In this connection, according to the NEDECO report, (vide Chronicle, September 17, page 9 of Tribune of 6/10/79), it will take 90 years to complete the Mahaweli Project.

"As regards the Ulhitiyawa-Maduru Oya complex the subject of my booklet—which is a sizeable unit of the Mahaweli Project, the hasty decision in the adoption of the tunnel is a serious reflection on the planning process. Our efforts re the trans-basin canal in preference to the tunnel should be considered as a valuable contribution to the planning process. We—you, the Press, in particular—must fight to the bitter end. Mr. Ismail, who has been requested to contact you carries on obstinately and should be admired for the sincerity of his technical conscience and his motives as a selfless nationalist from the Muslim community. The commencement of the execution of a project depends on the progress of planning. Sizeable integrated units—such as Kotmale and Victoria Reservoir are the Ulhitiyawa-Maduru Oya complex—could be undertaken simultaneously provided basic planning has been completed, in order to accelerate the progress for good reasons. In the process of accelerating the programme of planning, the designers have a very responsible task and should be doubly careful. The tendency to adopt a first solution—as the tunnel in this case—should be weighed against

all alternatives. When Mr. Ismail at a very late stage, came up with the very much cheaper and superior proposals—basin canal in preference to the tunnel, the designers should have readily reacted, instead of adopting a snobbish attitude and throttling tactics—in which case, as I have pointed out, the programme would have been accelerated as we have the local resources for the construction of a canal. As it is, we are awaiting the release of funds for the tunnel and it will take another year to import the sophisticated machinery, which will result in a serious loss as it cannot be used elsewhere. Now that there is a lull after the storm, created by our studies, all parties should assemble at a round table and thrash out the vital issues involved. A Presidential Commission, which you can advocate, is called for. On our part, we look forward to a very favourable decision and the happiness we shall derive from all our efforts on behalf of the interests of the country and ritual to the settlers in the Ulhitiyawa-Maduru Oya complex? Believe It Or Not, our investigators say that what Mr. Abeyewardene and Mr. Ismail have to say deserve the widest publicity.

Sherlock Holmes

**The Land Acquisition Act (Chapter 460)
As Amended By The Land Acquisition
(Amendment) Act No. 28 Of 1964
Notice Under Section (7)**

Reference No. 25/3/65

It is intended to acquire the land described in the schedule below for a public purpose. For further particulars please see the Gazette of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka No. 62 (part III) of 09-11-1979.

W. M. T. B. Menikdiwela
Assistant Government Agent,
Kegalle District.

The Kachcheri,
Kegalle.
22-October-1979

Schedule

Situation:— Situated in Panakura Village, Atulugam Korale (East), Panawal Korale and Atulugam Korale (East) D.R.O.'s Division in Kegalle District.
Plan No:— F.V.P. 727 A—Supplement No.1
Lot No. **Name of Land.**
211 Noori - watta.

LETTER

Afghanistan

Sir,

The Sunday Observer (16/9) had a two-column spread for a story allegedly from Dushanbe the Soviet Tajik capital and captioned it "Genocide charge against Taraki government". Although datelined Dushanbe it was obviously from Islamabad from which the second Afghan story immediately after this one was despatched. This is a good example of what UNESCO Director General Anadou Mohthar M'bow termed "information colonialism" while speaking at an international seminar of journalists at neighbouring Taskent in the first week of September which by Reuter's criterion was not news. Perhaps precisely because the UNESCO chief criticised the western monopoly media as "iron-curtained"?

Back to "Taraki Government's genocide". The dispatch refers to this charge having been levelled at "the closing stages of a three-day seminar in Dushanbe, capital of Soviet Tajikistan.....". Why did Reuter not care to cover this "a three-day seminar" at Dushanbe? Even when manipulating this "clash" to project this anti-Afghan piece, it conveniently left out what this seminar was all about.

The three-day seminar, convened by the Muslim Religious Board of Central Asia and Kazakhstan, was in connection with preparations for making the dawn of the 15th century Hijra, and was attended by 23 foreign delegations, including those from Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Lebanon, Algeria, Libya, Iraq, Iran, Pakistan, South Yemen, Guinea, India, Bangladesh etc.

That had to be blacked out. Because reporting an international Muslim seminar in Tajikistan is not the purpose of Reuter bureau's "Mission to Moscow"! Pestilence, genocide, persecution and what-have-you is the stock-in-the-trade. Not such a positive event as an international Muslim seminar.

Two delegates from Saudi Arabia and Pakistan went on the defensive according to the report when the Afghan de legate explained the situation in his country and accused foreign countries of supporting reactionary mullahs, and tribal and feudal chiefs of seeking to engineer the fall of the present regime through arms and terror. What did the rest of the 23

foreign delegations do? Reuter is conveniently silent on that!

The Afghan revolution irrespective of its ideological content, is singular for its secularism and uncompromising commitment to the eradication of medieval oppression. I think Prof. Jamal Kidwai was right when he said: "The new regime has picked up the flag of modernisation where it fell from the hands of Amir Amanullah 40 years ago. It has only broadened social base of the revolution which Amanullah began and has given it a strong egalitarian orientation."

During all the years of its existence how many feature and news materials has the Sunday Observer carried about Afghanistan? Since the April revolution when it thrust itself into the focus of attention, did the Sunday Observer care to present any objective picture or assessment of Afghanistan?

Well if it is "muslim" opinion, that opinion des not exhaust itself with a Saudi official or a Pakistani apologist of Zia. Air Marshal Asghar Khan, Chairman of the Tehriq-i-Istiqal, Ghaus Baksh Bizonjo, Chairman, Pakistan National Party, Farouk Loghari, Acting Secretary General, Pakistan Peoples Party—all good Muslims are linked up on the other side of the barricade! And there is a Reuter bureau in Islamabad!

Syed Abdullah Bukhari, Shahi Imam of Delhi, Jama Masjid, Prof. Anwar Jamal Kidwai, Vice-Chancellor, Jamia Millia Islamia University, Delhi, Badar-ud-Din Tyabji (ex-ambassador and ex-Vice Chancellor of Aligarh Muslim University) are outstanding names in the Muslim intellectual world. They are on the side of the Afghan revolution. Why doesn't Reuter quote them? Many of them have visited Afghanistan—but they are not asked for their views.

The time when Riga correspondents could discredit revolutions are over! But "information colonialism" dies hard.

Colombo.
25/9/79

Quo Vadis



Oct. 24 — Oct. 31

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

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

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 24: A National Spice Board is to be established soon by the Ministry of Agricultural Development and Research to help increase production and export of spices and to ensure maximum benefits to producers, a Ministry spokesman said yesterday. Twenty one wholesale outlets of the State Distilleries Corporation will replace the country's arrack taverns from January 1, 1980. About 270 Rural Councils will take over the administration and functions of the country's 83 Town Councils and 549 Village Councils. President J. R. Jayewardene has directed the Ministry of Labour to give Air Ceylon employees the highest priority in the matter of selecting employees for airline and other vacancies in the Middle East, a spokesman for the Airports Authority said yesterday—CDN. CID investigators were yesterday probing the likelihood of certain employees of the Education Department being involved in the GCE Advanced Level Examination answer script scandal. The CID yesterday took into custody two more persons in connection with the alleged plan to throw bombs at the President Mr. J. R. Jayewardene which was uncovered last Friday CDM. Bombs found at the SLFP's Trade Union headquarters last Friday were connected with a raging internal feud in the party's trade union federation; evidence gathered so far by CID detectives probing the alleged attempt to assassinate President J. R. Jayewardene apparently points in this direction. The identification of narcotics and drug abuses will be taught in all teacher training colleges from 1980.

A recommendation has been made in the General Assembly to pass a decision on convening an international conference in 1981, in Colombo at which specific arrangements would be made on measures for the real transforming of the Indian Ocean into a zone of peace—SU. Rs. 60 million worth of unsold paper is stuck at National Paper Corporation; the Corporation's daily sales have come down from Rs. 1 million to Rs. 6 lakhs; the reason for this is that under the liberalised economy private traders are importing paper—DM. The Presidential Commission to inquire into Corruption charges against MPs and government officials may never materialise; a large number of government's top supporters have pointed out that this would damage the government's popularity and the good name—JD. A group of people are trying to get Rohana Wijeweera a ministership in the coming cabinet re-shuffle—DK. The leader of the opposition A. Amirthalingam, when questioned about the ministerial posts the government is thinking of giving TULF MPs, said that positions were not important to them, only principle was their aim—VK.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 25: Government yesterday approved a draft bill to compel private-sector employers to pay the increased allowance of Rs. 55 to their employees from September 1979; this allowance is at present paid to all government and public servants and employees of Boards and Corporations. Government yesterday approved and decided to present in Parliament the Marine Pollution Prevention Law. The Government Analyst, in his report to the CID has said that the three hand bombs found at the SLFP Trade Union Headquarters last Friday could have endangered human life if thrown at close quarters. On the invitation of the Government of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, General Suharto, President of the Republic of Indonesia, will make a state visit to Sri Lanka from 17th to 19th November, the Foreign Ministry said yesterday. The Central Bank of Ceylon will continue providing incentives for agricultural and industrial development, Dr. W. Rasaputram, Governor, Central Bank of Ceylon said yesterday.—CDN. Heavy penalties will be imposed on any person who seeks to influence or interfere with Government tenders; the directive is the sequel to the

proposal made by Mr. Lalith Athulathmudali, Minister of Trade and Shipping that an authority be established for the registration and licensing of Sri Lankan companies, firms or individuals acting as agents of foreign companies in matters relating to government tenders or contracts or in relation to any government agency—CDM. President J. R. Jayewardene on Tuesday conferred with a delegation from the Sri Lanka Freedom Party led by its leader Sirimavo Bandaranaike on matters relating to local government elections; the President indicated to the SLFP delegation that the Government was now re-thinking whether pending elections to local authorities should be for Rural Councils or should be on a broader concept for District Development Councils. The Insurance Corporation has uncovered a massive racket in the staging of accidents by motor-car owners to make false insurance claims; this comes in the wake of the crash of the second hand car market, with many of the auto owners being unable to recover their initial investment. Government has appointed a Sub-Committee consisting of the Plantation Industries Minister M. D. H. Jayewardene, Finance Minister Ronnie de Mel, Public Administration and Home Affairs Minister Montague Jayewickrema and Rural Industrial Development Minister S. Thondaman to examine problems arising from the misuse of the guaranteed price scheme for tea by some factories, it was officially announced yesterday—SU. Security Service personnel in government departments, state corporations and statutory boards are to be given specialised training by the Army and Police in modern security measures, unarmed combat and the use of firearms; this follows a proposal made by the Deputy Minister of Defence Mr. T. B. Werapitiya, at a recent Security Council meeting, to protect state property and eliminate theft—CO. The Cabinet has accepted a proposal to set aside a sum of Rs. 5 million for the Colombo and Jaffna Universities—EN. The People's Bank has decided to write off Rs. 137 million of unpaid Agricultural loans but the Solicitor-General has not approved this move; he has questioned the bank how they plan to regain their losses—LD. The government has advised the Food Department to sell imported rice at the cost price and not at a subsidised price; a measure of imported rice will cost about Rs. 4/50—DV.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 26: Sri Lankan engineers as a body, had failed to convince the government that they were capable of doing the work the government wanted done, their president said yesterday; A. R. P. Wijesekera President of the Institute of Engineers told the Institute's annual session yesterday that it appeared to him that their major failure had been in the direction of winning the confidence of the politician. Representatives from the Kuwait Fund, the Federal Republic of Germany, the Asian Development Bank and the Indian Government, which are providing assistance for the Urea project, have expressed satisfaction on the work so far completed on the project and on measures adopted by the Government to promote greater consumption of urea, an official spokesman said yesterday—CDN. The government has decided to put an end to family bandyism in trade and industry; with a view to enforcing its pledge to broad-base trade and industry, the government has decided to impose heavy taxes on private companies which are monopolised by families. The Minister of Regional Development, Mr. Chelliah Rajadurai has obtained financial provision of Rs. 30 million to undertake special development projects in six districts—Amparai, Batticaloa, Jaffna, Mannar, Mullaitivu and Vavuniya next year—CDM. The proposed Cabinet reshuffle is now expected to come in the form of reallocation of subjects, functions and public corporations under the various Ministries. An official trade delegation from Finland led by Foreign Trade Minister Eske Kekola is due in Colombo on October 31 to examine the possibility of assisting Sri Lanka in the Accelerated Mahaveli Scheme and the Free Trade Zone—SU. Mystery surrounds a luxury yacht believed to have been carrying two Belgian millionaires which was found drifting off the coast of Kachchuveli (near Trincomalee) yesterday with all its occupants missing. Legislation will be introduced in Parliament forcing government servants to declare their assets—DP. Opposition Leader A. Amirthalingam has made a complaint to President Jayewardene in regard to the withdrawal of the land lease approval in the Vavuniya district—VK. The Minister of Public Administration has accepted a proposal by MPs for the setting up of a separate unit with power in all 24 districts to accelerate government development programmes and to detect and inform on corruption, at-

tempts at sabotage and irregularities; these units will work as a secret service and will report on any effort to sabotage development work, corruption etc. The new National Insurance Corporation will commence operating from next year. From the 1st of next month 5,000 people will be given on the Job training; these people will be paid a salary on their training period; this will be implemented on a special directive from the President. 60,000 Indians who have taken passports to go to India under the Sirima-Sashtri Pact are hiding in the country, most of them in Vavuniya; the Department of Immigration has decided to implement a special programme to deport these people—DV. Under Ronnie de Mel's Pakistani style budget a gallon of petrol will cost Rs. 47/50, a pound of flour Rs. 2/- and a pound of bread Rs. 2/15—JD.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 27: The Presidential Commission on the devolution of power headed by the Law Commission Chairman Victor Tennekoon is awaiting the political decision of the Government on the question of replacing the proposed Rural Councils with District Development Councils to finalise its report. Government sources said yesterday: President Jayewardene has conveyed the idea of replacing the Rural Councils with District Development Councils to several government and Opposition MPs who met him this week; the President is carefully assessing their reactions before making a final decision, the same sources said. President J. R. Jayewardene will today participate in the traditional Vap Magul ceremony in the vicinity of the historic Tissamaharama temple inaugurating the 1979-80 Maha Cultivation Season at the auspicious time of 10.40 a.m. With the country's forest cover dwindling fast and desertification no longer an idle threat, the government has armed law enforcement officers with new penal provisions to launch an all-out war to combat felling of unleg and the illegal transport of timber, the government said yesterday. Police and the Government Agent, Trincomalee were yesterday investigating the disappearance of crew and passengers of the luxury fibre glass yacht Solona, have found three passports, two guns and some other items in the yacht—CDN. There will be no teacher appointments next year; this decision has been made by the Government in view

of the recruitment of an unusually large number of teachers over the past few months; it has been revealed that the number of teachers appointed during this period is in the region of 22,000. President J. R. Jayewardene yesterday agreed in principle to a suggestion that promotions denied to old entrants in the public sector due to the official language issue should be given to them by creating sufficient supernumerary posts with retrospective effect. Police will rigidly enforce laws against nudity in public in order to combat nude bathing by tourists in popular beach resorts—SU. An investigation by a special committee has revealed that condensed milk manufactured by the Polonnaruwa government milk factory is not suitable for drinking as it is produced incorrectly; the committee has recommended that it is only suitable for the manufacture of sweets—DV. A number of foreign countries and institutes have agreed to provide a loan of Rs. 3,360 million for the setting up of settlements in 200,000 acres under the accelerated Mahaweli Development project; this loan will be given outside the aid for the five reservoirs—DM.

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 28: President J. R. Jayewardene, addressing the nation shortly before stepping into the Tissamaharama fields to take part in the UNP Government's third Vap Magul, said that it was his Government's intention to introduce District Development Councils headed by District Ministers on the lines of the "Rata Sabhas" of old to guide development projects at the district level—SO. The President, Mr. J. R. Jayewardene yesterday advised the people to make use of various oils used by the people as in the olden days to light their households lamps instead of using kerosene oil which might have to be stopped some day if the prices of oil kept on increasing—ST. Sri Lanka's telecommunication network has now been infiltrated and manipulated by a Mafia-style group posing a security risk to the whole country; they are mounting surveillance on "marked" phones through an "army" of their highly paid agents who have the facilities to listen in and interrupt any telephone conversation; this operation is taking place in the Test Rooms and Auto Exchange of the city's telephone exchanges posing a constant danger and in total violation of a citizen's right to privacy; this is the startling

discovery made by detectives of the CID. Bilateral talks are to be held shortly between India and Sri Lanka to prevent the large-scale smuggling between these countries—WK. A sum of Rs. 120 million will be set aside from the Budget for the security arrangements of the country; out of this Rs. 8 million will be utilised for the purchase of arms for the army and the police—CM. Most of the public employees have chosen 8 a.m. to 3.30 p.m. as working hours—SM. The government is to implement a plan to transfer officers who have served in Colombo for a long time to rural areas—RR.

MONDAY, OCTOBER 29: A special Court which will have jurisdiction to try cases of corruption, pilferage, wilful damage of articles and other irregularities, committed in the Port of Colombo is to be set up shortly; this is part of a scheme now being worked out by Trade and Shipping Minister Lalith Athulathumudali to end all forms of corruption. The Government Surveyor's Association (GSA) whose members numbering some 900 which has been on a work-to-rule campaign from September 29, has stepped up its agitation to launch direct action effective from November 1 an official spokesman said yesterday—CDN. The office of Ombudsman, which the Government is now taking steps to establish, could be held by any person only for a five-year period, and that person will not be eligible for reappointment, Cabinet decided last week. Several students of the Jaffna University are on strike in protest against the suspension of nine of their colleagues and the disciplinary action taken by the Vice Chancellor Professor S. Vidyanathan over incidents of ragging. Victor Ivan Podi Athula will be the United Left Front (ULF) candidate for the Galle by-election—SU. Obtaining government approval before leaving for employment abroad will be made compulsory; the necessary clause will be included in the Legislation that would have control over the Foreign Employment agencies in the country—DP. It has been more or less confirmed that the report by the Presidential Commission for the devolution of administration will be presented to government not later than 3rd November; work on the preparation of the report is being expedited now as the misunderstandings in certain important points have now been cleared—VK.

The government has decided to set up a massive Handloom factory with the collaboration of 10 top private sector handloom manufacturers. The GCEC predicts that by 1983 100,000 jobs could be created in the FTZ—LD. The Minister of Textile Industries has decided to call world wide tenders to sell all textiles and yarn stocked at textile factories; the stock is worth about Rs. 60 million—DM.

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 30: A special fund called the Coconut Cultivation Development Fund is to be set up shortly by Coconuts Industries Minister, Harold Herath to assist the coconut cultivators and manufacturers—on the recommendation of the three-member committee headed by Controller of Imports and Exports B. S. Wijeweera which went into all aspects of the coconut industry—CDN. Sri Lankan fishermen earn as much as Rs. 500,000 each time they carry a boat load of imported goods to India and return with textiles, opium and motorspares; this is the assessment of the Indian authorities who have informed the Sri Lankan authorities that our fishermen are heavily involved in a two-way trafficking of contraband—CDM. Some candidates obtained GCE (A/L) passes without even sitting the examination; this is one of the startling discoveries made by CID detectives probing the GCE (A/L) examination scandal. Top level investigations are underway by the Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications into a complaint that Prime Minister Premadasa's Temple Trees telephone was tapped—SU. Several lakhs of rupees worth of drugs gifted by the UNICEF are lying in the customs warehouses for the past two years and are getting deteriorated—DP. Differences of opinion have appeared between the LSSP and the CP who are members of the ULF and it is feared that the unity in the ULF might break up—VK. The government is planning to fill all seats of workers boards which are to be set up to involve workers in the administration of government departments, corporations and boards only from the UNP unions; Non-UNP candidates are being transferred to give pro-UNP candidates an open field to get all seats—ATH. The government has decided to set up Ratta Sabhas instead of Rural Councils as planned before; the TULF has agreed to this move which is seen by political observers as a deterioration in the government's administration.

at the rural level—DK. The Water Resources Board and the Water Distribution Board are to conduct a survey on unused waterways and streams to provide water to areas which do not have water and to set up small scale hydro-power electricity generating plants—LD. The government has decided not to issue any permits for any district for chena cultivation because large amounts of forests have been destroyed by the chena cultivators—DV.

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 31: The one-man commission appointed by President J. R. Jayewardene to investigate the Loftleider Icelandic Airways DC 8 crash here last November in which 183 people died has said in its report the probable cause of the accident was the flight crew's failure to conform to laid down approach procedures. The World Health Organisation is giving Sri Lanka an outright grant of 100,000 dollars to develop a cancer research and prevention program, Health Minister Gamani Jayasuriya said yesterday—CDN. The government has decided to seek foreign and local aid to finance university development—construction of buildings and equipment of laboratories and libraries. Health Minister Mr. Gamani Jayasuriya, has appointed a five-member committee to draw up plans for the new 1000-bed hospital which is to be built in Sri Jayawardenapura as a gift from Japan. The budgetary expenditure of the government for 1980 will be Rs. 20,374 million according to the Appropriation Bill issued by the Minister of Finance Mr. Ronnie de Mel, last Friday. In a determined bid to put the tottering handloom industry on its feet and to place nearly 150,000 self-employed handloom weavers on a sound financial footing the government will direct a major part of the Rs. 240 million which will be received as aid to revamp the textile industry—CDM. Stringent security measures will be enforced in the Colombo Port to combat the growing incidence of pilferage of cargo which has become a major obstacle to the development of the import export sector, the measures were adopted at a high-level conference on port security chaired by Trade and Shipping Minister Lalith Athulathmudali on Monday—SU. Lectures are to be started from next October in the newly set up University Campus at Batticaloa—VK. Government has banned the export of old iron and unusable machinery with immediate effect;

old iron is raw material in the production of Billets which is essential for development work; a new factory at a cost of Rs. 140 million will be set up next year to produce a wide range of iron products from old iron. The government is to introduce new laws to protect those who illegally transport timber and illegally cut trees—DM. The special committee appointed by the government to put forward suggestions to improve the coconut industry has proposed that the price of coconut products should be increased immediately to give coconut planters a reasonable income; if the prices are not increased immediately the coconut industry will further decline—LD. The CID is taking steps to file court cases on 10 or 15 investigations on the exam racket as they have obtained enough proof to file the cases; the CID is also investigating about 14 teaching appointments given in the past. The government has been able to get a full report on inside fighting among the SLFP members and in trade unions when the CID investigated an alleged threat on the President's life—JD

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SEPTEMBER RAINS

Came From Space

by V. Buvanandaram

August 1972 was severe drought for Sri Lanka.

The high temperature of the flare would have burnt away the cloud droplets, before they could coalesce to form rain. Vavuniya, Mannar and Maha Illupalama did not have any rain for this month, while Diyatalawa, Anuradhapura, Jaffna, KKS, Puttalam and Trincomalee did not receive even 10% of the normal for the month. Even rainy Ratnapura was in drought with only 71% of its normal rain for August 1971.

Then came October, when the debris of the flare had settled into our atmosphere, providing condensation and freezing nuclei in abundance. The heavens now poured forth in abundance and the whole island had double its normal rainfall for October. Puttalam and Vavuniya had trebled their normal rainfall. Puttalam normally receives 6.84"

In October and Vavuniya 8.18" but in October 1972, they received 24.21" and 28.77" respectively.

Though, recent information about solar flares are not available. it is very unlikely that they had caused this extraordinary fall in September this year, for the heavy falls were distributed longitudinally as if they had been caused by narrow troughs, moving east to west and not island-wide, as after a solar flare.

When seas and oceans oscillate with the tides caused by the Sun and the Moon, there is no reason for our very elastic atmosphere, weighted at the bottom, not to respond in addition, to the pull of planets, particularly those of the mighty ones, Jupiter and Saturn. The mass of Jupiter is $2\frac{1}{2}$ times that of all other planets put together and Saturn's mass is a third of Jupiter's. Jupiter is the only other planet besides our earth that has magnetism of its own. The recent probe on Jupiter by *Voyager* has revealed that this magnetism sometimes interlocks with our own, when charged particles flow from Jupiter to Earth. This *Voyager* has revealed many more startling facts about Jupiter, like its sending out more energy than what it is receiving from the Sun and of the active volcanoes in its satellites. When *Voyager* finishes with Saturn, we may get some startling news of it too.

THE LAST TIME Jupiter and Saturn got together in the same position of the Zodiac was in 1921/2 when there were abnormal rains in some places and some of those records are still unbeaten in 70 to 100 years of observation: 1921 January 8, Kalmunai, 11.50", Kebitigollewa, 8.29" 9th, Horuwapotana 11.46", Minneriya, 11.57"; December 27, Marichchukkaddi 9.20" 1922 February 12, Mantota, 11.65", Mannar 11.21", Chettykulam 11.01", Puvarasankulam 10.35"; November 2, Tabuwa tank 9.85".

The Flash flood of February 12, 1922 occurred on the very first day of our month of Massi/Navam and it was a full moon day. The Moon was moving under Leonis Regulus (Makam), the brightest star in the constellation of Leo, pearly white in colour, Jupiter and Saturn were together then in the neighbourhood. The Sun entered the constellation of Aquarius, the water carrier on that day. It was under Delphenus (Dhanishta, Aveddam), a clustered group of stars and was in opposi-

sition to the Moon.

When the Sun is in opposition to a planet, which will happen only to the major planets Saturn and Jupiter, they are closer to earth, than when they are in conjunction with the Sun. The inner planets like Venus and Mercury move with Sun and Uranus, Neptune and Pluto are far away and their masses too small to pull our atmosphere.

So that Jupiter and Saturn would have been close to Earth on February 12, 1922. The greatest rainfall for a day that ever occurred in Sri Lanka was 31.72" on 15th December 1897 at Nedunkerni, which is very close to Thanimuripu, whose name is very significant regarding rain. This too occurred, when Moon was moving under that bright star, Leonis Regulus, but the Sun was then in exact trine position, in the constellation of Scorpio, where is found Soo X-1, the first discovered and the most powerful X-ray source.

THIS SEPTEMBER TOO the heavy falls began on 5th/6th, the full moon day. Colombo 6.4cm on the 5th, earlier Diyatalawa had recorded 7.85cm on the 2nd, with the passage of a trough. However, the highest rainfalls came in, when Moon was transiting the Crab Nebula in Taurus on the 15th and 16th. The moon was then square to Sun. Murungan, 15.65cm on the 16th, KKS 11.32cm on the 15th and Kayts 10.29cm on the 16th. Kayts also responded to the new moon on the 23rd with an identical fall of 10.29". Marichchukkaddi, as its name signifies responded last, with a fall of 12cm on the 17th. Likewise, the other quarter of the moon too gave heavier falls.

Crab Nebula is a supernova—an exploded star. The Chinese noted its explosion on 4th July 1054 A.D. Judging from the rate of its expansion of 0.18 angular seconds per year, this star should have exploded 900 years ago, which is in perfect agreement with the "birth of a new star," as noted by the Chinese astronomers of that time. This nebula is 5000 light years away, therefore the actual explosion must have taken place at the beginning of civilisation on our earth. If the energy released by this explosion is compared to a hydrogen bomb, then the explosion of ordinary stars (novas) will release the energy of an atom bomb.

Novas are rather common but not so the supernovas. Since the Crab Nebula, only two explosions of that magnitude have taken

place. One in AD 1572 in the constellation of Cassiopeia, described by Tycho Brahe and the other in AD 1604, observed by his assistant Johannes Kepler. It is claimed that a supernova was observed on 15th March, this year. From the 12th to the 16th of March, not a single place in Sri Lanka had even a trace of rain, but on the 17th, this drought was broken by a fall of 3" at Eheliyagoda. The southwest monsoon begins with the passage of our Sun under this Crab Nebula and ends with its transit under the black hole in Virgo, into which all cosmic radiations can be drained.

OUR ELASTIC ATMOSPHERE is like a thin rubber strip weighted to the ground. The effect of an upward pull is to stretch it, and an unequal horizontal force is to twist it. This pull is by the Sun, Moon and the Planets and the twist is by the rotation of the Earth. The atmosphere near the equator will have a greater linear velocity than that away from the equator, so that the twist has to be anti-clockwise in the northern hemisphere and clockwise in the southern hemisphere. In both cases, the air is made to rise. A stretched atmosphere will have its temperature lowered all along so that the water vapour will saturate the atmosphere and condense.

During this September, there were almost daily variations in the temperatures of our atmosphere and on the 14th evening, they were incredibly low. The temperature at 700mb (10,000 ft.) is usually about 10c or even more but on the 14th it was only 4c and so were all other temperatures up to 200mb (40,000 ft.) It has been noticed that this pull first starts at upper levels in the region of 92 east and when we rotate ourselves into it, with the slip of our gaseous atmosphere it would have become an upper cyclonic circulation at 500mb (18,000 ft.) or even down to 850mb (5,000 ft.)

A few years back, an Air Ceylon plane coming from Singapore was cruising happily in clear blue skies at 30,000 ft. in that region of 92 east, when suddenly he dropped a few hundred feet. The air-hostess hit the ceiling and all crockery was smashed up. The aircraft had got into an area made less dense by a pull from above. Perhaps, it is this pull that finally on the 29th September at 18.30 GMT fissured the sea bed 250 miles of west Indonesia and 750 miles southeast of Sri Lanka.

It is a curious fact that flash floods seem so favour, once fertile lands, now turned semi-arid. Rajasthan, with its historically famous cities Jaipur and Udaipur is now a desert. It was reported on September 16th; "Unprecedented flash floods, worst in living memory, submerged about 2000 villages in five districts of the desert state." Mantota, now a mangrove was centuries ago a mango orchard and so were all other places in the dry zone that received heavy rains.

Voyager's probe of Jupiter and Saturn, may help to solve many riddles of weather but this riddle, Science can never solve.

Concluded.



WATER RESOURCES BOARD—4

Who'll Win The Race?

by A Tribune Investigator

For a long time—for nearly two years now and even before that under the old regime—politicians and bureaucrats had exhorted people to sink tube wells and had also made lavish promises that government will set the example in a big way.

Tribune archives are full of newspaper cuttings, of such grandiose promises. We will refer to only one or two such reports. The Ceylon Daily News of September 4, 1979 had a three column spread on page 12 under the heading SINK TUBE WELLS ON COCONUT HOLDINGS—ADA (Agricultural Development Authority) CHAIRMAN. (The report was from the "Nattandiya Special Correspondent"—a versatile person who provides lengthy reports of the verbal outpourings and other performances of the Coconut Minister Herat and a few others so regularly that sub-editors in the CDN evidently haven't the heart to prune such excellently written copy down to size). The report is cited below in full:

"Chairman of the Agricultural Development Authority and Secretary to the Minister of Agricultural Research and Development Ranjan Wijeratne told a conference of agriculture officers, chaired by Harold Herat,

Minister of Coconut Industries that nothing tangible could be done in respect of the coconut plantations and other agricultural crops due to the extreme dry weather conditions experienced in the past few months. It was obvious that the growers could no longer depend on monsoon rains and they must, therefore, look for alternative underground water resources. He said Nattandiya was an affluent electorate and since most of the coconut holdings were large it should be possible for such owners to afford a tube-well so that such lands could be irrigated in times of prolonged dry weather. In that regard, he said he had discussions with the Chairman of the Water Resources Board and had suggested that a meeting be convened in Nattandiya with coconut land owners to study the feasibility of introducing tube wells into the coconut holdings. The MPs of Nattandiya and Wennappuwa should also be present at this meeting along with the officials of the State banks. Mr. Wijeratne said that sinking tube-wells in lime-based areas was very successful, but such wells could be sunk in other areas where there were sufficient underground water. The average cost of sinking a tube well was in the regions of Rs. 25,000 to Rs. 35,000 depending on the quantity of water available. However if in desert regions these wells had proved a success, there was no reason why in a country like Sri Lanka it should not be a success. Two Indian firms were negotiating to sink tubewells here and the Agriculture Ministry was pursuing the matter.

"Mr. Wijeratne said that in the case of paddy too vast extents of Yala crop were devastated by lack of irrigation facilities, especially those areas which depended on monsoon rains. As most of the paddy fields had high water tables he would suggest that wells be dug in order that water could be pumped into the paddy fields during monsoon failures. The distance from well to well in fields would depend on the irrigable areas taking into consideration the capacity of water in the well. The farmers themselves could dig such wells and the building up of the wells could be carried out under the decentralised budget. Water pumps for this purpose could be purchased on a community basis between the farmers and the pump be held in care of a farmer chosen from amongst the co-owners. The ADA would seek the assistance from the banks for the farmers to purchase the water pumps.

Mr. Wijeratne suggested that in areas where such irrigation was not possible or in areas where irrigation facilities would not be sufficient for the cultivation of paddy, pulses and coarse grains such as maize, cowpea, green gram and sorghum be cultivated. His Ministry hoped to introduce a floor price scheme for such grains in the near future and that would be an incentive for farmers to grow such crops. He had noticed some new cultivation of vegetables under coconut. It was imperative that intercropping with vegetables be done on a much larger scale in other coconut holdings as well. That would be possible with the installation of tube wells and the digging of wells in areas where the water table was high. Mr. Wijeratne also said that cocoa, coffee, pepper and soya bean could be successfully grown under coconut. There was a ready market for these and the owners could earn an extra income. A person owning an acre of coconut land could easily earn Rs. 1000 a month from these cash crops, besides, Rs. 850 he got for 1000 nuts. Mr. Wijeratne pointed out that livestock was another profitable avenue of making money. He had noticed large and small units in the Nattandiya electorate. Poultry rearing, bee-keeping and rearing of pigs should be encouraged in coconut holdings. In an endeavour to extend poultry rearing to the poorest sector of the population, the Agricultural Manager was requested to liaise with the larger farms in the area so that a scheme could be worked out for the supply of stock and supervision of rearing by such farmers.

"Mr. Harold Herat said that coconuts could not be measured with a bushel like paddy, as the size of nuts varied from estate and district to district. The price of Rs. 850 per 1000 nuts was fixed for nuts of highest girth. The nuts that were little bigger than arecanuts could not fetch that price. To produce nuts of maximum girth, judicious manuring and proper care were absolutely essential. Though most of the small holders had evinced a keen interest in developing their holdings, some of the big land owners did nothing but pocket the money from the produce only. The State would take over all such neglected land and the owners would be given the balance management charges were deducted, he said. As a result of the

drought that prevailed during the past six months, next year's crops would definitely come down from 1800 million nuts to about 1200 million. After meeting the demand for local consumption which was 70 per cent of the total production, there would be nothing left for export. With the rains round the corner, all coconut land owners big and small should go all out to increase the production, by fertilising their holdings."

The ADA chief has been talking about sinking tube wells, ever since the ADA was set up, but nothing was done (except talk in conferences) by this super-duper organisation (disbursing many millions) about exploiting ground water. The ADA no doubt expected the Water Resources Board (WRB) to do the job. And the WRB, as we have pointed out, was mainly concerned with publishing massive advertisements to educate people on the rudiments of wind-mills (we shall examine one of these advertisements later) and the miracles of IPIL IPIL (why the WRB took upon itself the task of promoting the growth of this "tree" is a mystery). If instead of speech-making the big guns of the WRB, the ADA and even the Coconut Ministry had concretely done something about sinking tube wells, millions of coconut trees in the Puttalam District would have been saved.

EVEN AS LATE as the October 31, the ubiquitous "Nattandiya Special Correspondent" pushed another story into *Daily News* on the page devoted to "General World News" entitled EXPLORE OTHER SOURCES OF ENERGY —ADA CHAIRMAN.

"Chairman of the Agricultural Development Authority and Secretary to the Ministry of Agricultural Development and Research, Ranjan Wijeratne told a conference of mill owners, agriculturists and the general public that at the rate trees were being felled a time would come when the country would be denuded. There would be a shortage of firewood for the tile and brick factories as well as for the domestic hearth. He said the resultant effect of deforestation would bring in its wake atmospheric complications affecting rainfall and thereby affecting agriculture. As such an alternative source of energy should

be explored and exploited to prevent detrimental consequences. Mr. Wijeratne said that mountains of our coir dust found in the premises of fibre mills could be utilised as fuel to feed factories that used firewood. Experiments using coir dust as a fuel had proved to be a success. The only snag was the cost of converting coir dust into briquettes was slightly on the high side. The initial cost of installing machinery for the production of coir dust briquettes was in the region of Rs. 55,000 but in the long run it would be more economical than firewood. Mr. Wijeratne said that our dust contained about 80 percent moisture and it needed drying before it was turned into briquettes. This initial cost should not be taken very seriously as coir dust briquettes would be an alternative source of energy. Referring to the coconut industry Mr. Wijeratne said that the ADA was doing its best to assist the Ministry to develop it by co-ordinating in its activities. *The coconut*

The Land Acquisition Act (Chapter 460) As Amended By The Land Acquisition (Amendment) Act No. 28 Of 1964 — Notice Under Section (7)

Reference No. 25/3/41

It is intended to acquire the land described in the schedule below for a public purpose. For further particulars please see the Gazette of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka No. 62 (Part III) of 09-11-1979.

W. M. T. B. Menikdiwela
Assistant Government Agent,
Kegalle District.

The Kachcheri,
Kegalle.
22 October 1979

Schedule

Situation:— Situated in Madeiyawa village, Ward No. 6 Madeiyawa within the Urban Council Limits of Kegalle, Paranakuru Korale D.R.O.'s Division in Kegalle District.

Plan No.:— P. Plan No. 1369

Lot No.	Name of land.
1	Ambaghamula watta
2	Hitinawatta
3	Baladurayalage hena
4 & 5	Galkotuwa

plantations were badly affected by the drought. However, the Minister of Coconut Industries, Mr. Harold Herat, had gone all out to revamp the industry by giving the producer better prices and subsidies for the maintenance of the coconut holdings.

"Minister of Fisheries, Festus Perera said that the ADA was doing a great service. Water was an important factor for agriculture. Due to the failure of the monsoonal rains production had been badly hit. To offset this, he suggested that tube wells should be sunk in coconut areas to provide a regular source of water. Dr. Leslie Herat, Chairman of the Water Resources Board, said the sinking of tube wells for irrigating coconut estates was a feasible proposition. He outlined how tube wells should be sunk. The machinery needed for the purpose was rather costly. However, it was the best alternative when the monsoon rains did not fall in time. If the Ministry of Coconut Industries could foot the cost of the machinery needed to sink tube wells, the cost incurred by an individual would not be prohibitive. Minister of Coconut Industries, Harold Herat said that every conceivable step had been taken by his Ministry to develop the coconut industry to the fullest extent. Since his appointment as Minister, he had given the most favoured treatment to the producer, who for decades had been treated in a stepmotherly fashion. He had already raised the price of 1000 coconuts from Rs 650 to Rs 850. He had granted subsidies to the growers for stepping up production."

Ranjan Wijeyeratne's kindergarten lessons on forest denudation, energy, coir dust and the like is academic and need not concern us overmuch. But what WRB Chairman, Dr. Leslie Herath, had to say reveals the total bankruptcy of thought and action that has overtaken the organisation of which he is the boss man. Minister Festus Perera, according to the report, had suggested that tube wells should be sunk in the coconut areas, especially because of the drought in 1978 and 1979 (until September). Dr. Herath's reply was a repetition of the useful platitudes: tube wells were feasible he said, and outlined how they are sunk. Then, he mentioned that the machinery was costly and argued that the Ministry of Coconut

Industries should foot the bill.

On this alone Dr. Leslie Herath deserves to be sent packing to Timbuctoo. If there is one thing for which the World Bank, IDA, ADB, FAO and other world lending and aid agencies provide money and equipment freely, it is to sink wells—tube, surface, bore, etc. etc.—for agricultural, industrial and domestic (drinking) purposes. All that it means is that the WRB has failed to formulate project and feasibility reports which would have brought the necessary aid and equipment.

We shall refer to some of the aid schemes for tube wells in other countries in a subsequent article. In the meantime, the President should ask the WRB, ADA and the Ministry of Coconut Industries why they have fallen down on the job of sinking tube wells—in time to save the coconut trees of the Puttalam District.

IN THIS CONNECTION, it is well known that there is limited water in sand and alluvium areas in the coconut belt. And the enterprising planters have found their way to exploiting it. For example, Jobin of Bours had dug a hole with an auger at Palugaswewa and he got water at 40 feet under artesian conditions for 8 months and at 4 feet for the rest of the year.

To him it was only a hole in the ground. And that is what a tube well is—six-inch hole with the PVC or stone, or S-lon tube with slits at the base to admit water. It is gravel packed round to prevent clogging at the entry points.

There is no mystery about a tube well. But the mystery is why nothing has been done about sinking them. But, soon, this neglect might be ended much to the chagrin of the WRB. Already Prime Minister Premadasa has through the Drainage and Water Supply Board has started sinking wells for domestic and drinking purposes. This is only one step away from bore and tube wells for agricultural purposes. Go-getter Prime Minister Premadasa saw how simple it was to sink a well when he witnessed a much publicised well dug to get water for Victoria Park.

It is also known that Minister Thondaman had got under an Indian team under the ITEC

programme (Indian Technical and Economic Co-operation) which has already helped the NLDB (National Livestock Development Board) in several ways. Whispers in Ministerial circles indicate that a senior hydrogeologist, Dr. V. Ramesan, from the Central Ground Water Board at Bangalore was in Sri Lanka for a short time in August/September 1979 to investigate the possibilities of supplying ground water to the NLDB coconut estates in the river basins of Deduru Oya, Maha Oya, Karamalan Oya and Ratmal Oya basins.

Whispers also indicate that all the investigations have been completed and that the report would be in the hands of Minister Thondaman even before this issue of *Tribune* is out. It would appear that the Indo-Sri Lanka Joint Economic Commission for Economic, Trade and Technical Co-operative in their sixth meeting held in June 1978 made the recommendation to tap groundwater resources to facilitate the growth of fodder and the better upkeep of livestock. It was in pursuance of this that the survey under Dr. Ramesan was started and culminated in his final visit to Sri Lanka at the end of August 1979.

What does the Ramesan report say? Have concrete ways been set out for the NLDB to tap and exploit groundwater without the deleterious consequences of over-exploitation as well as groundwater pollution from unrestrained farming practices?

In the meantime, the WRB is going hammer and longs at IPIL IPIL. One advertisement (we shall quote in a later article) makes the ludicrous suggestion that an Ipil Ipil will keep out the gaze of Peeping Toms (advertisement copy has to be serious if it is to be taken seriously—but who takes the WRB seriously?)

In the next article, among other matters, we will endeavour to show why the WRB has to be completely changed and re-structured if any results are to be expected. Good money is being thrown away in pandering to the whims and fancies of technocrats and bureaucrats who had shown no positive results during the many years they were in the Irrigation Department earlier. Why these men were seconded to the WRB is as much a mystery as to why other men who had made a notorious mess of other organisations were brought into this?

Political observers have noted that four Ministers are directly concerned with sinking tube and bore wells for agricultural purposes: *first*, Gamini Dissanayake who is in charge of the WRB, *second*, E. L. Senanayake in charge of the ADA, Harold Herat in charge of Coconut Industries and Thondaman in charge of the NLDB. Premadasa (with his water and Drainage Board) is an outside runner in this ministerial race for exploiting groundwater.

Who will deliver the goods? Who will win the race?

As matters stand, Thondaman seems to be way ahead with the Ramesan Report and the ITEC. The WRB is a millstone round Gamini Dissanayake's neck. E. L. and the ADA only make speeches and publish supplements. So also Harold Herat.

X X X

Notice Under Section 7 Of The Land Acquisition Act (Chapter 460) As Amended By The Land Acquisition (Amendment) Act, No. 28 Of 1964.

Reference No:— 11/7/792

The Government intends to acquire the land described in the Schedule below, for a public purpose, for particulars, please see part III of the Gazette of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka No. 62 of 09-11-1979.

Schedule

District	: Anuradhapura	
D.R.O.'s Division	: Nuwaragam Palatha	South
G.A.'s Division	: Tulana No. 11A	
Name of land	: Palugollegama Kele, Palugollegamawela	etc.
Plan No.	: F.V.P. 338 (Suplt. No.1)	
Lot No.	: No. 6-74	
Name of village	: Palugollegama	

W. M. Jayathilake
Acquiring Officer and
Anuradhapura District Land Officer

The Kachcheri,
Anuradhapura.
18/10/1979

FIDEL'S SPEECH—3

by S. P. Amarasingam

THE FINAL PART of Fidel's speech was devoted to questions of economic significance—again from the angle of the under-developed and non-aligned countries: "Even though the underdeveloped countries, which suffer from poverty and very low living standards and life expectations, have the least to lose in a war, we cannot be insensible to the need for world peace. If we were, it would mean giving up hopes of a better future for the peoples. We do not support the thesis that a world nuclear war is inevitable. That fatalistic, irresponsible attitude is the surest path to the annihilation of mankind in a universal holocaust. Never before has mankind had that technological possibility. We cannot be so stupid as to ignore it. For the first time in history our generation has had to confront these risks. In our world today, mountains of ever more deadly weapons are piling up along with mountains of problems of underdevelopment, poverty, food shortages, squalor, environmental pollution, school and housing shortages, unemployment and an explosive population growth. Such natural resources as land, water, energy and raw materials are beginning to be in short supply in various parts of the world."

It will be noted that Castro did not indulge in the futile exercise of examining indices, statistics, GNP, bank rates and the other mumbo jumbo which is today the stock-in-trade of those who choose to deliver inaugural addresses and other important statements. To Fidel, poverty stemmed from war and the expenditure involved in the armaments that rich and even poor countries were not compelled to incur in the name of national security.

Then Fidel touched on a matter which I feel very strongly is something that has to be further spotlighted and elaborated by the leaders of poor and underdeveloped countries: "The developed capitalist societies not only created wasteful and untenable models for standards of living and consumption but also, unfortunately, propagated them throughout a large part of the world. Many countries in our area

conceive of development only as the aspiration to get to be and live like New York, London or Paris."

It is the wrong sense of values, the wrong status symbols and the mad desire to acquire the expensive electronic gadgetry and the attractive consumerist baubles that has distracted new countries emerging into nationhood from pursuing policies that will in the long run bring good healthy life and happiness to their people. The advertising splendours of western commercialism and insidious impact of what is known in non-aligned circles as cultural colonialism (imperialism and neo-colonialism) has reduced even proud independence-minded peoples in Third World countries to be caricatures of what a human being should be.

Castro, after pointing out: "One way or another, the world economic crisis, the energy crisis, inflation, the depression and unemployment oppress the peoples and governments of a large part of the earth. Very few, if any, of the members of our Movement are free from these difficulties, because we bear the brunt of these calamities;" and after declaring that: "the struggle for peace and for a just economic order and a workable solution to the pressing problems that weigh on our peoples is, in our opinion, increasingly becoming the main question posed to the Movement of Non-aligned countries", he plunged straight into a discourse on Peace in the context of the current international situation: "Peace, with the immense risks that threaten it, is not something that should be left exclusively in the hands of the big military powers. Peace is possible, but world peace can only be assured to the extent that all countries are consciously determined to fight for it—peace not just for a part of the world, but for all peoples. Peace, also, for Vietnam; the Palestinians; the patriots of Zimbabwe and Namibia; the oppressed majorities in South Africa; Angola; Zambia; Mozambique; Botswana; Ethiopia, Syria; Lebanon; and the Saharan people. Peace with justice, peace with independence, peace with freedom. Peace for the powerful countries and the small countries. Peace for all continents and all peoples. We understand

perfectly well that we will not achieve it without a tenacious, resolute struggle, but we should believe in the possibility of achieving it in spite of imperialism, neocolonialism, racism, Zionism, expansionism and the other regressive elements that still exist in the world. The strength of our united countries is very great. Never before have the forces of progress and the advanced political awareness of the peoples attained such high levels. Even within the imperialist, reactionary countries themselves, important progressive sectors are determined to struggle for the same ends. The important role that the people of the United States and world opinion played in ending the criminal imperialist war against Vietnam should never be forgotten."

TO ACHIEVE PEACE, Castro insisted: "We must demand peace, detente, peaceful coexistence and disarmament. We must demand and win them, because they will not come about by spontaneous generation, and there is no alternative in today's world, if we are to preserve the very existence of mankind. We encourage every step that leads along this path. Therefore, we should welcome the SALT II agreements between the Soviet Union and the United States and the future steps that are promised in this field. At the same time, we should denounce the reactionary forces that support the cold war and that, mixed up in the dirty business of arms sales, destruction and death, oppose the ratification of these agreements in the US Senate. We realize, however, that, though these steps are positive and important, they are still far from the ideal of denuclearization that continues until all nuclear weapons have disappeared—which, in the end, would be the only fair and equal state of affairs for all nations and would mean the end of the arms race. The day should come when mankind resolutely condemns arms production and trade."

Next he succinctly summed up what the expenditure on armaments cost in terms of schools, factories, hospitals, employment and other concomitants of a good life: "\$ 300 billion could build 600,000 schools, with a capacity for 400 million children; or 60 million comfortable homes for 300 million people; or 30,000 hospitals with 18 million beds; or 20,000 factories with jobs for more than 20 million workers; or an irrigation system for

150 million hectares of land—that, with the application of technology could feed a billion people. Mankind wastes this much every year on military spending. Moreover, consider the enormous quantities of young human resources, scientific resources, technicians, fuel, raw materials and other items. This is the fabulous price of preventing a true climate of confidence and peace from existing in the world."

Castro did not miss this opportunity to interpolate a little ideological homily: "We Marxists consider war and weapons to be historically and inevitably tied to the system of man's exploitation of man and to that system's insatiable greed in seizing the natural resources of other peoples. Once, in the United Nations, I said, 'Put an end to the philosophy of plunder, and the philosophy of war will be ended.' Socialism does not need arms production to keep its economy going: it doesn't need armies whose purpose is to seize the resources of other peoples. If the slogan of unity and fraternity among all peoples and men reflected today's reality, there would be no need for arms either to attack and oppress people or to win freedom and defend it. No matter how long or utopian the path may seem and no matter how harsh the setbacks and even betrayals within the progressive movement, we should never become discouraged or stop persevering in our struggle to attain these objectives. It is absolutely necessary to demand in all international forums and organisations that we move from rhetoric to deeds."

He said: "These questions lead us directly to the topic of economics. More and more statesmen and leaders in our Movement are stating the need to place this matter at the center of our concerns. You are statesmen who wrestle everyday with the knotty economic questions of your countries. You know full well what the great difficulties are: the constantly rising foreign debt, a shortage of foreign currency, the soaring prices of fuel and other import products, unequal terms of trade, low prices on the foreign market that constantly and increasingly rob us of the products that are the fruit of our people's labor, inflation, the rise of domestic prices and all the social conflicts that arise from this state of affairs."

At this point it was only logical that Castro should turn to the states of affairs in the economies of under-developed countries which had come under the grip of foreign debt and the IMF: "Progressive governments that are making a noble effort to develop and increase the well-being of their countries are overwhelmed and may even be wiped out by economic difficulties and unfair, unpopular conditions imposed by the international credit agencies. What political price haven't many of you had to pay because of the rules laid down by the International Monetary Fund? We Cubans, who were excluded from that institution because of an imperialist dictate, aren't quite sure whether that exclusion was a punishment or a privilege. Some governments placed in power by the people's revolutionary struggle suddenly find themselves faced with horrifying conditions of poverty, indebtedness and underdevelopment that prevent them from responding to even the most modest hopes of their peoples. I'm not going to tell you half-truths, nor am I going to hide the fact that social difficulties are much greater when, in any of our countries, a small minority controls the basic wealth and the majority of the people are completely dispossessed.

"In short, if the system is socially just, the possibilities of survival and economic and social development are incomparably greater. Some countries present the phenomenon of growing economies with equal growing poverty, illiteracy, the number of children who have no schools to go to, malnutrition, disease, begging and unemployment—all of which show in no uncertain terms that something is wrong. The underdeveloped countries—some optimistically prefer to call them developing countries, when, in fact, the gap separating their per capita incomes and standards of living from those of the developed countries is constantly widening—contain 65 per cent of the world population but account for only 15 percent of total world production and only 8 per cent of industrial production. The conglomerate of countries in this category, which have no natural energy sources, now have a foreign debt of over \$ 300 billion. It is estimated that around \$ 40 billion a year goes to servicing this foreign debt—more than 20 per cent of their exports. Average per capita income in the developed countries is now 14 times greater than in the underdeveloped countries. In addition, the underdeveloped countries contain more than 900

million illiterate adults. This situation is untenable."

FIDEL CASTRO then examined the all important **energy crisis** and attendant consequences from the angle of the non-oil producing underdeveloped countries: "One of the most acute problems facing the non-oil-producing underdeveloped countries—the vast majority of the members of our Movement—is the energy crisis. The oil-exporting countries—all of which are in the underdeveloped world and almost all of which belong to the Movement of Non-aligned countries—have always been supported by the rest of our countries in their just demands for the revaluation of their product and an end to unequal terms of trade and the wasting of energy. These countries now have a much greater economic potential and negotiating capacity with the developed capitalist world.

"This is not the case of the non-oil producing underdeveloped countries. Sugar, bauxite, copper and other solid minerals, peanuts, copra, sisal, tea, cashews and agricultural products in general are terribly underpriced on the world market. The developed capitalist countries selfishly raise their tariffs against those few products that our countries manufacture and even subsidize goods that compete with ours, whenever possible. The European Economic Community and the United States do this, for example, with sugar. The prices of the equipment, machinery, industrial articles and semifinished products that we import are raised constantly; the privileged exporters of these goods charge ever higher prices for them. It is easier for them than for the underdeveloped countries to pay for fuel. They even export tens of billions of dollars' worth of arms annually and often buy oil with this money. The Shah of Iran was one of their favourite multimillionaires clients, until he was rightly overthrown not long ago. Most of the surplus money from oil sales is deposited and invested in the richest, most developed capitalist countries. These funds are also used to supply them with fuel. But what recourse do the non-oil-producing underdeveloped countries have?"

STATING THAT A SOLUTION had to be found, he said: "It is absolutely necessary to be aware of this reality, because the situation

of many countries, a large number of which are members of this Movement, is truly desperate. We should consider and discuss this matter. **A solution must be found. Imperialism is already manoeuvring to divide us; it is trying to isolate the oil-producing countries from the rest of the underdeveloped world, blaming them for the economic crisis—whose cause really lies in the unjust order established in the world by the imperialist system. And, what is even more dangerous, it is looking for pretexts and covering up its aggressive plans against the oil-exporting countries.**"

He illustrated the point he made by referring to Cuba's experiences in this connection: "Cuba isn't bringing this topic up in order to defend interests that affect it directly. Of course, we suffer from the indirect effects of the international economic crisis and the low prices established for our products in western markets, but we have an assured supply of oil which we purchase with sugar, whose price is directly proportional to the price of oil and other articles which we import from the socialist area. Nevertheless, we should point out that, if all the sugar produced in Cuba—nearly 8 million tons in the 1979 harvest, the largest production of cane sugar in the world—had been sold to the western world at the price now being paid on the so-called world market—around 8 cents a pound—it wouldn't have paid for the fuel that Cuba uses, at its present price."

THE CONCLUDING PARAGRAPHS of Castro's speech though brief to the point of inadequacy (deliberately perhaps) outlined a new strategy of possible action: "We appeal to the sense of responsibility of the large oil-exporting countries in our Movement, asking them to strike out courageously, firmly and boldly in implementing a wise and far-sighted policy of economic co-operation, supplies and investments in our underdeveloped world, because their future depends on ours. I am not asking you to sacrifice your legitimate interests; I am not asking you to stop all-out efforts to develop and raise the well-being of your own peoples; I am not asking you to stop trying to safeguard your future. I am inviting you to join us and to close ranks with us and struggle together for a real new international

economic order whose benefits will extend to all."

It was a clear call to the rich oil-producing countries in the Non-aligned Movement to join hands with poor underdeveloped non-oil-producing countries to solve the problems that faced them, and he rounded off this appeal with a little homily: "No money can purchase the future, because the future lies in justice, in our consciences and in the honest and fraternal solidarity of our peoples. The solution to the economic problems faced by our countries requires a tremendous, responsible, conscious and serious efforts of a world nature."

The penultimate paragraph of the eighty-five minute speech contained the essence of the strategy: "*Those of us meeting here represent the vast majority of the peoples of the world. Let us close ranks and unite the growing forces of our vigorous Movement in the United Nations and in all other international forums to demand economic justice for our people and an end to foreign control over our resources and the theft of our labour. Let us close ranks in demanding respect for our right to development, to life and to the future. Enough of building a world economy based on the opulence of those who exploited and impoverished us in the past and who exploit and impoverish us today and on the poverty, the economic and social underdevelopment, of the vast majority of mankind. May a firm determination to struggle and concrete plans of action come out of this Sixth Summit Conference; deeds, not just words.*"

Though details were not spelt out, those who were aware of the current stage of the international efforts to resolve the problems of poverty that presently burdened all underdeveloped countries and who could read between the lines realised that what Castro wanted was a new united front of all non-aligned countries together with all poor underdeveloped countries—to conciliate and negotiate with and, if necessary, confront the rich affluent countries that controlled and exploited the vast resources and wealth of the world. Castro wanted a kind of South-South dialogue and a Third World co-operation to give the never-ending North-South negotiations a new meaning, and a new dimension.

He concluded the speech with the words already referred to earlier: "Perhaps this speech inaugurating this conference has been somewhat undiplomatic, not quite in line with protocol, but no one should doubt the complete loyalty with which I have spoken."

Castro's speech was enthusiastically received. He had touched chords deep down in the hearts of the overwhelmingly majority of the delegates from non-aligned countries.

(To be continued)

Next Week: The Egyptian Interlude and President Jayewardene's Statement.

O O O

WINDOW ON INDIA—18

Forthcoming Elections

by R. Varadachari

Press Trust of India Correspondent in Colombo

THE STAGE HAS NOW BEEN FIRMLY SET for the elections to the Seventh Lok Sabha (Lower House) of Indian Parliament. The Chief Election Commissioner, Mr. S. L. Shaktiher, has announced two days for the poll, January 3 and 6 next year, removing the undercurrent of misgiving among a section of the Indian public that the elections may not after all be held in due time. Though two days have been fixed for the massive operation, it will be over in a single day in several states of India. Notification by the President's Secretariat calling upon the 542 parliamentary constituencies to choose their new Lok Sabha representatives will be issued on December 3. Counting of votes will begin on the morning of January 6 and the final results will be available by January 8. The new Lok Sabha will be constituted by January 10 and can meet the next day, ending six months of caretaker government at the Centre, formed after the vertical split in the Janata Party and resignation of Mr. Morarji Desai from Prime Ministership.

Of the 542 seats for which elections will be held, 119 are reserved—79 for Scheduled Castes and 40 for Scheduled Tribes. The number of reserved constituencies have gone

up by three following the latest delimitation. The total strength of the Lok Sabha has however been pegged by law at 544, including two nominated members to represent the Anglo-Indian community, until the year 2000. About 350 million voters are expected to exercise their franchise in this biggest election in a free democracy. In six constituencies—three in Jammu and Kashmir, and one each in Uttar Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh and West Bengal—which may be snow-bound on the announced dates, polling may not be completed till the weather permits. This possible delay will not however hold up the convening of the new Parliament and formation of a ministry at the centre. The old system of booth-wise counting of votes will be revived. In the last elections ballot boxes were collected at a convenient central place in each constituency and the counting of votes was held there for the entire constituency. The revival of booth-wise counting is expected to expedite announcement of results as under the outgoing system some delay was inevitable in transfer of ballot boxes from the booths to the central counting stations.

Mr. Shaktiher could not persuade the State governments to agree to his proposal for a one-day poll throughout the country. They pleaded administrative difficulties though all the major political parties in the election fray preferred a single day poll throughout the country, sprawling 3.3 million square kilometers. Arrangements for adequate security arrangements and enlisting of enough manpower for a one day poll were the main constraints which weighed with the Election Commissioner in opting for a two day poll. Mr. Shaktiher told a press conference that the elections to the Gujarat State Assembly were also expected to be held along with the elections to the Lok Sabha. The Gujarat Government had already informally intimated him that it would like the elections to the state legislature to be held simultaneously, and an official communication from it to this effect is expected to be received by his office before the deadline of November end. Mr. Shaktiher said that steps were being taken to ensure that every voter was enabled to exercise his franchise freely and fearlessly. He cited the setting up of polling booths in Andhra Pradesh even for 80 to 100 voters to see that the weaker

sections voted in their own locality to avoid intimidation from others. He said that six national parties namely two Congresses, two Janata Parties and two Communist groups—and 26 state parties had been recognized by the Election Commission for allotment of symbols. The Election Commission has not recognized the newly formed Party of some film stars and also the Jan Sangh revived by Mr. Balraj Madhok as they did not conform to the regulations governing recognition. Till the poll date announcement there were apprehensions among a section of the Indian people that the caretaker ministry of Mr. Charan Singh might postpone the elections under one pretext or the other. These apprehensions grew in dimension when the Working President of Mr. Charan Singh's Lok Dal, Mr. Raj Narain, publicly demanded postponement of the poll in view of the acute drought conditions in several parts of the country.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC, MR. SANJIVA REDDY had himself to come on the air few days prior to the announcement of the poll dates by the Election Commissioner to dispel such reports. While Mr. Reddy's assurance in a national broadcast that the elections would be held as scheduled had been welcomed by all the opposition political parties, his action would appear to have thrown up yet another irritant in his relations with Mr. Charan Singh. *The Indian Express*, in a revealing report says: "Available information suggests that the President's broadcast text was not approved by the Cabinet. Nor was a copy of the speech sent to the government in advance for information. Enquiries show that no consultation took place between the President and the Prime Minister on whether the President should go on the air and what he should say in his address. Mr. Charan Singh is reported to have expressed to his friends his surprise and unhappiness over the President's decision to go on the air and give the assurance about holding of the elections in due time..... Apparently Mr. Charan Singh has taken the President's decision to broadcast as a reflection on his government's intentions to hold the elections. Mr. Charan Singh is reportedly of the view that a Presidential assurance is not necessary after he himself had stated that the Government had no plans to put off the elections. Mr. Charan Singh however has not

taken up the issue with the President, Mr. Sanjiva Reddy has also not chosen to comment on what the Prime Minister has reportedly said about his decision." *The Indian Express* further pointed out that the President's action presupposed his autonomous action till such time a representative government assumes office. "Nowhere has the President really spelt out how he proposed to guide his relations with the Caretaker government which he installed in power three months ago by a controversial decision. But on two occasions, Mr. Sanjiva Reddy seems to have hesitated before signing on the dotted line. One was his decision to call for the minutes of the Cabinet which approved the Ordinance providing for preventive detention of hoarders and profiteers. The other was his holding back for a day his signature to the Ordinance for increasing the corpus of the Contingency Fund of India."

The latest instance is his decision to go on the air about the elections without getting the clearance of the Caretaker Government. More such occasions are bound to arise till an elected government is installed in office after the poll. With the Indian Constitution having not spelt out the nature of relations between the President and a Caretaker Government which has no mandate from the Parliament to govern, conventions are now being built up for the first time for the framework of this delicate relationship. Mr. Reddy seems to be asserting his authority and evolving the principle that the President is not a figurative Head of State, under a Caretaker Government, and that he is entitled to use his discretion in full measure on national issues of great and grave importance.

WITH THE ANNOUNCEMENT of a firm date for the Indian poll, political parties are galvanizing themselves to finalise mutual alliance and adjustments, to give finishing touches to their election manifestoes and to finalise the lists of their candidates. At this crucial juncture, the ruling Coalition is faced with a split in its ranks. Mr. H. N. Bahuguna, Finance Minister, has resigned from the Cabinet at the instance of the Prime Minister, Mr. Charan

Singh, who had demanded his exit in the "public interest". The main reason for this not-altogether-unexpected development was the insistence of Mr. Charan Singh for the total merger of the Congress for Democracy of Mr. Bahaguna with the Lok Dal, the main constituent of the ruling coalition. Mr. Bahaguna was elusive and was also exploring the possibility of his party having an electoral understanding with other parties like the Urs Congress and the Janata. The utmost he was prepared to go was for an election alliance with the Lok Dal, and had cited the example of Urs Congress' relationship with the Lok Dal in this connection.

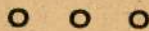
Mr. Charan Singh who was growing suspicious of Mr. Bahaguna's motives was not prepared to wait indefinitely. He was also incensed by the alleged attempts of Mr. Bahaguna to consolidate his party at the expense of the Lok Dal, particularly in their home state of Uttar Pradesh. Mr. Bahaguna is a left-leaning politician and his exit from Mr. Charan Singh's Cabinet has thrown a spanner in the emerging alliance between Lok Dal and the Left parties. Mr. Bahaguna has also sizeable support among the Muslim community and if he ultimately decides to pull his party out of the ruling Coalition, Mr. Charan Singh will be deprived of the much needed support of this community in the forthcoming polls. Mr. Bahaguna also wants a more socialist-oriented foreign policy pursued and is in favour of recognition by India of the Vietnamese-backed Samrin regime in Cambodia. Mr. Charan Singh's government has not recognized either of the two rival regimes in this Southeast Asian State. Mr. Charan Singh had once accused Mr. Bahaguna of subserving Russian interest as a KGB agent and even though he had later withdrawn the charge, bad blood continues to scour personal relations between the two.

The Urs Congress and the Janata Party of Mr. Jagjivan Ram are now wooing Mr. Bahaguna but the Indira Congress has not yet made any overtures to him. As one opposed to authoritarianism and communalism, Mr. Bahaguna's natural preference should be the Urs Congress but the latter's continuation in the ruling Coalition is the main stumbling block. He is thus in a political dilemma and is not in a position to take a new plunge immediately. With the poll date now fixed, he

cannot be a cat on the wall for a long time. Meanwhile, both the Congresses are trying to pull Mr. Jagjivan Ram to their side in view of his immense influence with the one hundred million Harijan population of the country. Mrs. Indira Gandhi is reported to have already promised him Prime Ministership if he joins her party and throw his weight behind her for an electoral victory. He has been promised this coveted post till 1982 when he could assume the Indian Presidentship with the expiry of the term of Mr. Sanjiva Reddy.

The Urs Congress is pressing Mr. Ram to leave the Janata Party and lead a fresh combination of all anti-Indira and pre-split Congressmen. Here again the Urs Congress' membership of the ruling Coalition has complicated the matter. But an influential section of the Urs Congress headed by its former President, Mr. Swaran Singh, is prepared for the exit of the party from Mr. Charan Singh's government if Mr. Jagjivan Ram puts forward this course of action as a condition for his leading a new anti-Indira Congress combine, including Mr. Bahaguna.

Mr. Jagjivan Ram as a shrewd politician who had been in the Indian Cabinet since the country's independence in 1948, is in no hurry to make up his mind. For him the stakes are high and he cannot afford to make mistakes at this crucial juncture. Hence he is keeping his options wide-open and is playing a hide and seek game and in the process is giving anxious moments to other political parties. The unsophisticated Indian voter is bewildered by this merry-go-round in the political scene and is looking for a silver lining in the distant horizon. One should hope that in the next two months there will be clear cut crystallisation of political forces so as to render his task easy and his choice rational and meaningful.



BOOK REVIEW

Sinhalese Buddhist Nationalism

RITUALS OF THE KANDYAN STATE
by H. L. Seneviratne (Cambridge, at the University Press, 1978, pp. 190, no marked price). In a sense it is a pity that this well written monograph on Sri Lanka's premier religious

festival with its marked socio-political undertones will fail to draw a wider audience if for no other reason than that the island's name has not been added to the title. Who in the world after all knows the existence of 'the Kandyan State' except those interested in Sri Lanka and a few South Asian specialists. The style is easy flowing, the description vivid and the narration captures the attention of the reader from start to finish. Though primarily it is a work of ethnographic value, there is much that is of social and political significance that can be extracted from it.

The Kandyan state, the last of the Sinhalese kingdoms to fall to the western conqueror, the British (the Portuguese and Dutch failed miserably in their attempts), in 1815, still retains its magnetic mysticism, political and religious, for the Sinhalese, both lowland and Kandyan. Political aspirants and social climbers who seek to satisfy their desire for upward mobility often find Kandyan spouses. The Kandyan Sinhalese *radala* (*goyigama* aristocracy) command an open market in this area which they have still to exploit. It was not wholly an accident that the Kandyan aristocrat, Sirima Bandaranaike, was elected Prime Minister on two different occasions and ruled the country for a total of around twelve years, sometimes in the style of Kandyan monarchs. Nor is it without relevance that another Kandyan, William Gopallawa, remained nominal head of state for the longest period ever, 1962-1978.

WHAT IN EFFECT Seneviratne seeks to convey in this book is that the quintessence of Sinhalese Buddhist nationalism (ethnocentrism?) makes its effects felt in all parts of the Sinhalese country from its epicentre which is the annual Kandy Perahara. "If one had a close look at the Perahara", he writes, "one had a close look at Kandyan society itself" (p. 108). More to the point would be that an examination of this religious pomposity provides insights into the workings of the Sinhalese (both low country and Kandyan) social structure ("so and so must do such and such"—by virtue of the stratifications of caste). (p. 120) As he rightly states, it (the Perahara) "was a pre-eminent representation of the caste system....." (p. 112). It knit together in the past the sprawling kingdom of Kandy just as in the present day it is the emotional focus of an all-island Sinhalese nationalism.

Seneviratne rightly observes that the festival had an appeal to four sectors of what this reviewer thinks are politically the most important in Sinhalese society: (1) the Kandyan aristocracy, (2) the new nationalist elite, (3) the westernized elite and (4) the peasantry (p. 136). And despite the many radical changes in egalitarian directions in recent times, Seneviratne's considered conclusion is that "the ritual shows little sign that it has ceased to exhibit status cleavages" (p. 167). In the post-1970 phase, competition for the key lay positions in the religious bureaucracy have taken the form of sharp and bitterly fought contests, between candidates of the two major parties, the present ruling conservative United National Party and the Social Democratic Sri Lanka Freedom Party.

THE SPIN OFF EFFECTS of this Kandyan Sinhalese mixture of royalty, religiosity and caste specificity can be witnessed even in contemporary Sri Lanka. The Sinhalese mind presumably understands monarchy better than the Westminster model with its division between Bagehot's "dignified aspects" (the nominal President or *Janadhipathi*) and "efficient aspects" (with the effective ruler, the prime minister or *agamathi*). So today when the country has its Gaullist-style Executive President, he visits Kandy from time to time to make strategic announcements of policy changes etc. under the shadow of the Temple of the Sacred Tooth Relic of the Buddha (it is this Tooth Relic that is taken on the back of the most majestic elephant among the pageant of elephants at the annual Perahara). The Executive President proclaims his earnest desire to establish a *dharmista* (righteous) government just as Seneviratne writes that "it was on the righteousness of a *Ksatriya* king that the country's well-being depended" (p. 96). And the common populace often call the President's official residence today *rajagedara* (King's house) instead of using the former nomenclature of *Janathipathi Mandiraya* (President's house) in the same way that they referred to and continue to refer to, Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike as the *mathini* (the "respectful" lady almost as if she were close to royalty).

This carefully analysed study of a state cult which has refused to decay or phase itself out is a reminder to the unsuspecting that the Sinhalese Buddhists

look on themselves as a chosen race. "In Sinhalese belief the Buddha foresaw Ceylon to be the place where his Dharma would shine" (p. 96); and Seneviratne agrees that this legendary myth became for Ceylonese history "a self-fulfilling prophecy" (*ibid*). The "hated Tamils" as Seneviratne states elsewhere (p. 96) had even taken possession of the Sinhalese monarchy. In all these observations there lurks evidence of the origins of present day Sinhalese-Tamil antagonisms.

All in all Seneviratne has accomplished a firsthand sociological probing of the ever widening ramifications of Sri Lanka's leading religious festival. It may have been helpful if Seneviratne had explored the connections between this festival and similar cults in the neighbouring South Indian state of Kerala—ironical though it may seem that a Dravidian cult continues to be partly utilized as a symbol of the anti-Tamil aspects of Sinhalese Buddhist nationalism. There is also the view that the Perahara was in part the celebration of a Sinhalese victory over the Tamils. But these were not within the scope of this useful work.

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27, September 1979

NOTE: This review will appear in **The Journal of Commonwealth and Comparative Politics** January 1980 issue.

X X X

THE WORLD

by Acquarius

- Era Of Turbulence ● Japan
- South Korea ● EL Salvador
- Morocco

The world is already in the grip of a period of unbelievable stress—of unresolved economic crisis and unbelievable political turbulence. In addition, nature too seems to be in an angry mood—with floods, droughts, hurricanes, typhoons, cyclones and earthquakes now occurring in all parts of the world with increasing frequency. Western political scientists

are not able to offer any satisfactory explanation for the current instability in the entire capitalist sector including satellite and client states. The socialist world too is now afflicted with dissensions between major states hurling propaganda blasts of intense ferocity against each other. Marxists say that all the troubles of the world stem from the continued capitalist exploitation not only of the poor underdeveloped countries of the Third World but also the working people of the rich affluent nations. Non-Marxists dismiss this as an over-simplification far removed from actualities and realities.

Significantly, many seem to find solace and comfort in esoteric religious cults which preach that man must return to God if turmoil is to end—cults like Hare Krishna, Sai Baba, Divine Life, Transcendental Meditation, Jehovah Witnesses and several others. Many others see the upheavals in the world today as part of a global karmic transition reflected in the passage of the planets through the zodiac amidst the constellations. Mundane astrology is dismissed by the rationalism of successful materialist affluence of western capitalism as obscurantist mumbo-jumbo.

The vast majority of intelligent and thinking people, however, puzzled and baffled by the tumultuous turn of events, are hard put to find explanations. Most of them have stopped looking for explanations—they just note what happens and wait for the next upheaval. Over-simplified short-range explanations naturally suggest themselves in the frame of reference of the person concerned, but before the explanation becomes a theory or even a hypothesis, other events supersede which completely knock the bottom out of this speculative exercise.

TAKE THE CASE OF JAPAN. It is one of the richest countries in the world today with as near total employment as is possible in the capitalist world. Yet the political crisis in the ruling hierarchy has reached levels that threaten to destabilise the political structure. There is no doubt that the samurais of Japan's industries and commerce will be able to patch up the edifice for a time, but for how long can such politicking sustain the kind of democracy that the USA and McCarthur had ordained for Japan? Will the samurais of the Armed

Services take over in collaboration with certain powerful sections of Japan's industrial-cum-banking complex? A military dictatorship seems inevitable in Japan in the not too distant future.

Something like this happened in South Korea which is regarded as capitalism's show-piece for Third World countries to emulate. After ten years of "free world" democracy a military dictator had taken over in 1961, and in spite of "concessions" (under US pressure) to have the pretence of a civilian democratic government, military dictator turned civilian — Park Chung Hee — ran one of the most brutal and ruthless regimes the contemporary world has known — much to the embarrassment of human-rights-sloganeering Carter.

There are suspicious that the Americans used the KCIA chief to rid the "free world" of dictator Park Chung Hee and that the current take-over by the armed services is only to establish a new civilian government with the trappings of "democracy" to present a new image of South Korea to the world. *To ensure that the transition in South Korea and in Japan take place smoothly (in accordance with US wishes), the US has moved a new Armada to the region. If any party or group seeks to bring to power, even democratically, a government that will not suit Washington there will be US intervention on the ground that "subversive" elements, backed by foreign powers were attempting to seize power.*

AT THE OTHER END of the Pacific another curious development has taken place — in El Salvador. The country was ripe and rotten for a revolution on the lines of the Nicaraguan revolution. In Nicaragua, the US had made last minute efforts to persuade Somoza to withdraw and to bring in a "moderate" government that will fall in line with the USA. But Somoza had refused to accept US advice until it was too late and Washington could not prevent a revolutionary junta coming to power.

Similarly the US had made efforts to persuade dictator Romero of El Salvador to set up a "democratic" facade, but like all dictators he had been reluctant. Then there was a military coup on October 15 and a pro-US army man took over and sought to come to terms with the revolutionary left (or at least some opposition groups) to have a moderate gov-

ernment that could be "sold" to the world as a democratic government. News and information filters in only very slowly from El Salvador and soon it may be possible to reconstruct the anatomy of this new kind of government-making.

The latest coup in Bolivia which was also heading for a real revolutionary capture of power, is even more puzzling than other similar events. Washington has rejected the new government of Col Nautush and announced that all aid to Bolivia would be cut — except food aid. Whether this is only a sub-plot to hide the US trade-mark on the coup is not certain. But even the fact that some sections of the armed service are reported to have attacked the new government may be only part of the scenario. *Today, new coups and changes in countries regarded as allies, clients and satellites of the USA are viewed with suspicion by all observers of international events.*

A GERAT DEAL OF CURIOSITY has also been roused by a Washington report of October 31 (vide *Ceylon Daily News*, 1/11/79) entitled: CIA PREDICTS KING HASSAN'S FALL: "A.U.S. Government intelligence report has forecast that King Hassan of Morocco could be overthrown within a year because of ineffectual leadership and involvement in a Saharan war which he cannot win. The report was compiled by the State Department from assessments by four government agencies which were divided over how long the monarchy could survive but agreed that the King was in danger. It also predicted that whatever happened to King Hassan, Morocco would depart from its present pro-western foreign policy. The report prepared for the Carter Administration and made available to *Reuter*, said widespread corruption in the Moroccan government and economic difficulties could prompt a coup against the King by the security forces.

"It said the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) was the most pessimistic about his prospects. The CIA reported, 'Hassan will lose control of events — probably within a year — and eventually lose his throne'. State Department experts believed however that he could remain for several more years. The National Security Agency (NSA) agreed with the CIA and Pentagon analysts said they expected the King would continue in power 'at least over

the next year.' The report said, 'major economic difficulties have combined with fallout from an unwinnable Saharan War to weaken King Hassan's position and prospects for losing his throne are greater than at any time since the early 1970s'. The overall threat to the monarchy is serious and the political fallout from an unwinnable Saharan war is the most likely catalyst for a direct challenge to the King, it said. Moroccan forces are fighting guerillas of the Algerian-backed Polisario front, which is trying to win control of the Western Sahara from the Rabat government. The report was prepared before President Carter's decision last week to supply sophisticated arms to King Hassan to encourage a negotiate settlement of the Saharan conflict."

Every government is entitled to receive Intelligence reports, and the USA like all other countries are secretive about such "classified" documents. But the release of

the report and its timing is most puzzling. Only a short time ago, Carter extended military aid to King Hassan to fight the war in Western Sahara—although the OAU (unanimously except for Morocco) had decided to recognize new Polisario-led west Saharan government.

Is South Korean type of a coup in the offing in Morocco to forestall a pro-hardline Arab revolutionary upsurge that will overthrow Hassan and establish an Algerian or Libyan type government?

Then there is also some mystery about the atomic bomb blast in South Africa. Pretoria has denied it, but nobody believes it. The US which first alerted the world has now put forward theories that it might have been caused by a charge from a flash of thunder and lightning.

What next?

QUIDNUNC

- **Hambantota Project**
- **Bogala** ● **N. S. B.**

A QUIDNUNC, according to the Shorter Oxford Dictionary, is "one who is constantly asking "what now?", "what news?" hence an inquisitive person, a gossip. The word comes from the Latin, "quid" (what), "nunc" (now)—what now?—and is defined in Webster's Dictionary as "one who seeks to know all the latest gossip." Our own era, especially in Sri Lanka, is admittedly the Quidnunc's Golden Age. Gossip is now a marketable commodity. The stories our Quidnuncs bring are based on a substratum of truth enough to provoke investigation.

*A QUIDNUNC who spends his time in the corridors of political skulduggery and who prefers to call himself **Brickbats No Bouquets** has raised some very pertinent queries about the **HAMBANTOTA DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT PROJECT**: "His Excellency the President's Ministry", he says, "was questioned in the People's Assembly by the last scion of the Bandaranaike stables. Very correct, the

district development project of the Hambantota District is a People's Project but prepared not by the people but by a capitalist firm located in exclusive Galle Face area having a whale of a busy time minting money after this Government came into power in July 1977. The crux of the Bandaranaike questions was really to expose yet another corrupt selection of a tender which seems to be the order of the day in Sri Lanka. The underlying point in the four questions asked was how the Secretary, Plan Implementation Ministry, gave the consultancy tender worth about 4 lakhs of rupees to his Finance Company brother. Of course if the tender had been fairly evaluated and selected the fact that one brother is a key bureaucrat in Government should not surely stand in the way of his elder brother's legitimate business.....

"But what is now known which the questions in the Parliament failed to reveal is that the bid was awarded to this Finance Company because it set out a very competent team of 12 to identify suitable projects for development of the district, but in actual practice five of the most competent and senior experts refused to work for the small fees offered. This is how the company is supposed to have made a 65% profit on this consultancy assignment.

"This is a matter which should be investigated before small brother gives more consultancy work to big brother, specially because the Ministry of Plan Implementation is directly under His Excellency the President. If everywhere else corruption is having a field day at least let history record that Junius Jayewardene kept the ministries and departments directly in his charge, free of suspicious or allegations of corruption. If the Plan Implementation was under the Ministry of Education or Agriculture it would not have mattered."

Need anything more be said?

*SEVERAL QUIDNUNCS from Fort have a legitimate grievance about the way nearly 28 tenants are being turned out at short notice out of **BOGALA BUILDINGS** near the Clock Tower. Most of them have been in occupation for over ten years, but there is one who has had continuous tenancy for 60 years, viz., the firm of Eric Rajapakse, the well-known opticians.

Bogala buildings had belonged to the well known E. P. A. Fernando. When he died the Public Trustee looked after it on behalf of the heirs. The famous Pettah merchant known as Potato Shanmugam (now resident in Horton Place) bought the building for Rs. 1.75 million on October 31, 1974. The heirs had questioned the validity of this sale by the Public Trustee, but nobody seems to know the outcome of this protest was. Mr. Shanmugam, the new landlord, increased the rent five to six times. The new rents were more realistic but at the same time he gave notice to every tenant to quit. But the law did not permit tenants to be thrown out in summary fashion. Shortly after the new Government came to power there was talk about the compulsory acquisition of this building. Eric Rajapakse had written to the President about this and he had received a reply from the President's Private Secretary: "I am directed by His Excellency the President to acknowledge receipt of your letter dated 26.7.78 and to advise you that the proposal to acquire the Bogala building has now been stopped." Everything went on smoothly until one fine day in October, the third of October 1979 to be exact. By a Special Gazette Notification No. 56/10 of 3.10.79 the Bogala Building was acquired by Government for the Central Bank.

The Quidnuncs say that the purchase price was Rs. 7.8 millions. This is a fair price by present values—but Mr. Shanmugam is up by Rs. 6 million because it was bought by government. No private party would have paid this price without vacant possession and Mr. Shanmugam could not have got vacant possession either without paying heavy compensation to the tenants or getting them suitable alternative accommodation.

Now, the 28 tenants will be on the streets soon. They are all business firms, and some like Eric Rajapakse's have been associated with Bogala Building and Upper Chatham Street for decades. No tenant can fight the government. What they want to know is whether a *dharmista* government will either help them to get suitable alternative accommodation before they are thrown out or some compensation from the Rs. 6 million the seller got only because the government was the purchaser (on the basis of vacant possession which only a government can enforce because of government's supreme powers). Is there not something in *dharmista* that can help the tenants of Bogala Building who will be thrown out soon? Many others are in a similar plight.

*A QUIDNUNC who has an eagle-eye for legal anomalies has sent us an Application Form for Fixed Deposits in the National Savings Bank. At the bottom of the form are two conditions but the catch is in the final pledge which the Quidnunc has undelivered: ".....I agree to comply with and be bound by the rules pertaining to such deposits for the time being and which may come into effect from time to time."

One does not need to be a legal pundit to know that this "compliance clause" is bad in law: How can one possibly agree to something "which may come into force from time to time"?

What if the National Savings Bank decides to freeze or expropriate? Would people deposit money in the NSB if they knew that they are thus compelled to agree to anything the chieftains of the NSB decide to do at some later date?

Whilst special guarantees are enshrined in the Constitution for foreign investors, local investors are left to the mercy of bureaucrats with powers to bring in new rules as and when they think fit.

Confidentially

Orchids And ADA—4

IS IT NOT TRUE that in the last three articles we have shown that in the ADA Orchid Project only the suppliers of plants and cuttings would have made profits whilst the overwhelming majority of growers would be faced with losses and bankruptcy, when, after three years, they attempt to sell cut flowers? That there is nothing in the ADA's Project Report to establish the contrary? That having said this we must refer to reports our Investigators have brought in on various aspects of what had been originally termed AN ORCHIDACEOUS VENTURE (it should really have been called MISADVENTURE)? That in the last issue we had said that the "partner" (supplying plants and cuttings) in the VENTURE was an entrepreneurial firm called ORCHID ACRES, that its vast acres were sited at Nattandiya and that its Colombo Sales Centre for seedlings and plants was at 232/3, Havelock Road, Colombo 5? That a leaflet (No. 1) issued on December 1, 1976 from Nattandiya had set out that the Colombo Sales Centre would be open on Week days between 12.30 p.m. to 1.30 p.m. and from 5 p.m. to 6.30 p.m., and on Saturdays and Sundays from 8.30 a.m. to 12.30 p.m. and 4 p.m. to 6 p.m.? That this means that the Sales Centre was being looked after by some person or persons during their lunch interval and after office hours on week days?

That in the trade it is well known that *Orchid Acres* is one of the largest orchid farms in the country and that *James Storeiei* and *Semirete Vandas* constitute a large proportion of its orchid population? That it is also known that *James Storeiei* and other *Arandas* (like *Maggiei Oie*) are on their way out in the world orchid markets? That for example it is known that Singapore is setting fire to six acres of *Maggiei Oie* to establish more productive and profitable varieties? That it is also known that *Semiterate Vandas* do not travel well and therefore cannot command a substantial export market? That they are also known to fade as a cut flower and tend to discolour while still

on the plant? That it is said that a government expert in orchid culture was recently called in by one of the largest growers of *Semiterete Vandas* in the country to tackle the problem of discolouring and that no solution was forthcoming? That it is therefore strange that any orchid development project should have been based on these three varieties which anyone knowledgeable in orchids would have considered a thoroughly unsuitable *product mix* for any type of project, let alone an export-oriented project? That our Investigators have found that this *product mix* was unequivocally condemned by the technical advisers appointed by the ADA as its experts in orchid culture? That it is well known, while *Arandas* like *James Storeiei* and *Maggiei Oie* are on their way out of the world scene, the future of tropical orchids lies in varieties like *Dendrobiums*, *Aranda Christines*, *Oncidiums* etc.? That a highly progressive orchid project started with very little fanfare by a private sector organisation in this country relies greatly on *Dendrobiums* and makes very little use of the varieties picked for the ADA project?

That in the next instalment the spotlight will be turned on the firm of ORCHID ACRES and the guarantees on which they were preferred to other suppliers? That as a curtain-raiser to what we will call THE GREAT HOAX we refer to the ADA letter in which we are told that "this Authority advertised calling for suppliers of orchids prepared to participate in this project. Orchid Acres was selected as they were in a position to offer the best terms, which included various guarantees and purchases of flowers as detailed in the Project Report? That before we examine the guarantee set out in the Project Report, we are prepared to hazard a guess that many orchid growers responded to the ADA's advertisement and we are prepared to hazard another guess that the prices offered by most of those growers were well below those of Orchid Acres? That with regard to guarantees and other terms which the ADA now speaks of we are prepared to hazard one more guess that many reputable orchid growers would have done better than Orchid Acres had they been consulted? That the role of *Orchid Acres* in the ADA Project in a saga in entrepreneurial skulduggery?

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FOREST COVER

- * **IN INDIA**, there is a great concern that the forest cover has reached a low of 20%.

INDIA'S FOREST COVER of 67 million hectares out of the total land area of 329 million hectares represents a low 20 per cent against the optimal level of 33 per cent which is required to maintain the appropriate ecological balance. This fact was recognised even a decade back but mighty little has been done so far to rectify the situation. Such a gap in policy is particularly exemplified by the low rate of regeneration; the growing stock per hectare is only 28 cubic metres against the optimal 110 cubic metres while the average annual increase is 0.5 cubic metre per hectare against the world average of 2 cubic metres....

—Editorial, *The Hindu*, 31.10.79

- * **IN SRI LANKA**, there is still far too much complacency about the fast dwindling forest cover—9% a short time ago, but now around 6%.

—it's not the disappearing chena cultivator who responsible for this, but the big timber contractors who still illicitly fell the best of the little that's left under the protective umbrellas of politically powerful mafias—which make it possible for contractors to cut and remove five to ten times the quantity mentioned in their permits.

- * **IN SRI LANKA**, so far, only the small fry are caught, and unless the big sharks are eliminated immediately, the forest cover will shrink to zero.

—Something must be done soon—something more than talk.