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Letter From The Editor

THE ONLY SATISFACTION that one can draw from UNP's Third Budget is that the attempt of a few mudalali-type traders to make black covert profits by pre-budget hoarding of sugar, flour, arrack, matches, kerosene and a few other durables was thwarted by the Minister of Finance & Planning by not raising the prices of any of these items. The government, as well as the public, were aware that for some weeks traders in big and small towns (and even in village areas) were hoarding these items. This hoarding was so widespread that the Opposition papers were certain that a price hike was imminent. When these hoarded stocks are depleted and the same traders start making purchases again, the Finance Minister will probably announce the new increases through gazette notifications. (Incidentally the fact these traders were able to make such large-scale purchases is only an index of the blackmarket money still in circulation even at the lower end of the capitalist apex. The traders also received help from governmental minions: for instance bus crews helped to transport arrack to distant rural areas handing over two bottles of arrack to each passenger at a district town and collecting them at the other end with the mudalali's agent ready to take them over. The police also extended their good offices to keep rustic bumpkins from hijacking the precious liquid). Whilst the Minister thus prevented up-and-coming mudalalis from making a little money on the Budget, he has enabled big-time entrepreneurs, especially those involved in the gem trade, to make not millions but billions in black money under cover of a counterfeit bastard (anti-people's) legality of tax holidays, tax concessions and the like. He has ordained that a handful of millionaires should become multi-millionaires in double quick time. But this quick transformation will not promote economic growth that will reduce unemployment or increase the health, wealth and happiness of ordinary people of Sri Lanka. Black money oligarchs in certain trades will sky-rocket into the multi-billionaire class in the next year or two. No one grudges these shooting stars in the new UNP economic firmament their good fortune—but all thinking people are aghast at the spiralling inflation (which will soon near the 40% mark in spite of professional Central Bank jugglery with statistics to peg inflation at 15%), the decrease in the production of plantation crops, the total collapse in the rural agricultural sector and the growth of corruption on a scale never known before—many times more than the worst during the seven bad years of the SLFP. Corruption is today in the million-rupee category—the ratio of increase even at the village and district level is in the same geometric progression. In the SLFP era the schedules were comparatively low. Today the 50-cents peon of yester year wants Rs. 50 to do a job. A MP's chit then cost less than Rs. 1000—it was generally around Rs. 500. Today, Job Bank employment cost Rs. 10,000 each. And these rates are at the lowest end of the schedules. Better things cost more. Who says all the black money has been sucked in by Tax Amnesties?

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EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

● MDH's "Revolt" ● Galle ● Suharto

Colombo, November 20,

The smug complacency of the UNP High Command was shaken to its foundation when former Finance Minister M. D. H. Jayewardene blasted Ronnie de Mel's Third Budget today in Parliament. This speech revealed the first parliamentary crack of a major kind in what has so far been claimed to be a monolithically homogenous UNP Cabinet and parliamentary caucus. Under cover of supporting the Budget to satisfy the Government Whip, MDH made the first public criticism of the Budget from inside the UNP. MDH's views no doubt reflect the sentiments of the old national (big and petty) bourgeoisie which has provided the leadership and the rural base for UNP's electoral victories.

There is no doubt that the new post-July 1977 UNP economic and monetary policies are intended to promote the interests of the new class of entrepreneurial speculators (all of them black market operators in the main or at least in part) — and who were created by CRA and FEECs economy of the last government. This class, in the ultimate analysis, has no popular roots or base—and in all countries these monstrous creations of IBRD-IMF policies have been compelled to rely on police ruthlessness to stay in power or military dictatorships to sustain their hold.

Though MDH did not analyse the socio-political and economic implications of the current UNP policies on the *diktat* of the IMF, the revolt inside the UNP which MDH has surfaced is a reflection of what the conservative but liberal bourgeois elements in the country, who still believe in the ethical values of honesty and integrity, feel about the current situation. So many honest-to-goodness UNPers are so shocked by the fantastically high levels

of corruption and misuse of power now prevalent in the country that they have begun to talk openly about the evil days that have befallen the UNP as a result of the gem merchants, smugglers and the like who have become kingpins in UNP's economic strategy.

All the exposure stories of corruption in high places that reach *Tribune* (only a small fraction is published) come from impeccable UNP sources—not from Opposition or Left circles. MDH's outburst is due, no doubt, to the pressure from the thinking sections of the UNP that want the rot stopped at any cost. A sizeably large percentage of the UNP MPs are alleged to be dishonest and corrupt. Only the tip of the ice-berg is sometimes revealed. The resignation of the UNP MP for Kamburupitiya, D. E. Mallawaarachchi, is due to the findings of the Committee of Inquiry (set up by the Party) that had held against him in regard to serious allegations. Three or four other UNP MPs are likely to suffer a similar fate soon. For every UNP MP who will be censured (or punished) in this way, there are likely to be ten who "don't get caught." In the twenty five years of *Tribune's* existence, corruption has never reached the scope, extent and intensity it has now attained.

THE FACT that the dominant group in the UNP has had to fall back on the lovable free-lancing nondescript politician Dahanayake to ensure victory at the Galle by-election (after discarding the former MP and other UNP loyalists) is also another indication that all is not well within the UNP. The fall-out from the UNP choice for the Galle by-election may bring the most surprising repercussions in the next few days, unless the former Galle M.P. is selected for the Kamburupitiya seat.

The UNP may derive a little satisfaction by the fact that the SLFP too suffered similar stresses and strains in the choice of its nominee for Galle. The SLFP Politbureau and its fact-finding Committee (Kalugalle, Ratne Deshapriya, Jayaratne and Sooriyaratchi) had wanted Kullilleke as the Party nominee. Local party branches had also wanted him. Apart from other things, it is said that he would have a large proportion of the Wahumpura community (about 6,000 voters) with him. But Mrs. Bandaranaike, it is reported, does not "like" Kula-

tilleke—who is also not liked by two of her old henchmen in Galle viz., Wijekulasuriya and Junaid. A private fact-finding mission of her own had also confirmed what the Politbureau (of about 18 old-time and new SLFPers) had recommended. Nevertheless, to the surprise of inner SLFP circles, Mrs. Bandaranaike has given the SLFP nomination to Sarath Dias who had contested the H baraduwa seat (the constituency that adjoins Galle on the south) in the 1977 elections. Sarath Dias is said to accept Mrs. B's leadership without question, but Kulatilleke has a reputation of being a Young Turk. The JVP and the LSSP have also nominated candidates thus making it impossible for the emergence of a United Left Front (ULF) candidate. (It is significant that the LSSP has picked an ex-JVP man to be its candidate).

POLITICAL CIRCLES have for some months now been oozing with gossip about Cabinet changes, about new MPs who will be nominated because of resignations caused by violations of the President's Code of Conduct, about new Ministries and Portfolios, about old Ministers who will be kicked upstairs to ambassadorships and about younger Ministers who may be compelled to retire to monastic isolation. Such stories have been in the air for a very long time, without anything happening, that *Tribune* did not pay much attention to them. But now, with the resignation of the Kamburupitiya MP, the imminent resignation of two or three other MPs and the revolt of MDH (whom gossipers had exported to Japan in the company of another old timer to Malaysia—to make way for young sparks acceptable to the gem and jet set), Cabinet changes and reshuffles can no longer be ruled out or postponed. It is also difficult to see how MDH can continue to be in Cabinet after his speech today!

THE VISIT of the Indonesian President Suharto was undoubtedly a more important event than the visit of the Bangladesh Head of State, but the publicity was on a much lower key. Suharto spent a shorter time in Sri Lanka, but spent most of the time in Colombo. Indonesia is the largest of the ASEAN countries and has had the longest and most intimate connections with this island even in contemporary times. Lee Kuan Yew's Singapore's current contacts with Sri Lanka may

last only as long as Lee is boss or Singapore maintains its precarious entreport and commercial supremacy in the context of Malaysian and Indonesian backwardness (which may disappear sooner than many expect).

The Indonesian visit is also an indication of Sri Lanka's increasingly closer ties with ASEAN countries, but economic co-operation is on a bilateral basis (it is not likely to be otherwise in the foreseeable future). President Jayewardene seems to be pushing the regional economic co-operation in a big way—he has signed agreements with India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and now Indonesia. Politically there were no differences even on the ticklish question of Kampuchea. Sri Lanka agrees with the stand taken by Indonesia and Bangladesh at the UN. Sri Lanka is likely to get Indonesian oil from Pertamina on a bilateral basis—a tie-up which the international oil cartels had successfully prevented all these years.

November 21,

As we had anticipated, M. D. H. Jayewardene has tendered his resignation from the Cabinet, and has said that he would serve as a member of the Government Parliamentary Party. According to press reports, the other members of the Cabinet had felt that he had violated the principle of collective Cabinet responsibility and the President in accepting the resignation had also referred to Cabinet responsibility. It is a happy augury to hear, once again, of Cabinet responsibility after a long spell of what had appeared to be Cabinet anarchy—in which many Cabinet ministers had conducted their affairs in a way a powerful zamindar would run his little moghulate. It is also not clear what Cabinet responsibility means in a Presidential form of Government—but that is not a matter that need concern us now.

One version as to why MDH had quit was that in view of the attempt to push him out of the Cabinet or kick him upstairs to a diplomatic asylum, he had said his piece and got out with a halo of bravado. The anti-MDH cohorts say that his Plantations Ministry was in a mess, but those who know say that the responsibility must be pinned on his Secretary Weerakoon, a much over-rated civil servant who had tried to run the plantations

in boutique style with kitchen councils in the JEDB and SLSPC. Anyway, the Cabinet and the Government has lost one of the Ministers against whom there is no allegation or suspicion of personal corruption—something that cannot be said of many others (some of whom preach the virtue of honesty to underpaid subordinates lost in the wilderness of mounting inflation).

The former Galle MP, Albert Silva, who had been unseated on an election petition which did not disqualify him, has been selected for Kamburupitiya. This will resolve the serious differences that had arisen in the UNP regarding the UNP ticket for Dahanayake by overlooking the claims of Albert Silva who is said to have discharged his duties as the MP for Galle with acceptance to the constituents.

x x x

COVER

Moments Of Awareness

THIS IS THE FIRST TIME that *Tribune* has a reproduction of a contemporary painting on its cover. It is one of the paintings of Jayalakshmi Satyendra that will on exhibition at the Lionel Wendt Theatre from Wednesday, November 28, till the following Wednesday, December 5. The official preview is on Tuesday, November 27. *Tribune* was so vastly impressed with her paintings in her last Exhibition some years ago that it was specially interested in her new work for this—and made it a point to steal a pre pre-view glance of the paintings that will be on show. She will exhibit 82 paintings and compared with her earlier work they show a remarkable improvement in craftsmanship, variety and thematic conceptualisation. She has abstracts, impressionist drawings, portraits, landscapes and a large number that are unclassifiable. In all of them there is touch of true creativity that marks her out as an artist who has now crossed the threshold of maturity. One looks forward to her future work with interest.

There is no doubt that nearly all the exhibits are so exceedingly good that they will be snapped up by art lovers who can afford to buy paintings. The picture on the cover (no. 75) is wreathed in a quaint and engaging

Smile that lies buried in the swirling lines that enfold it, but the black and white reproduction does not do full justice to the subtle colours that makes this drawing stand out both as a composition as well as a reflection of a new quality of spirituality that has begun to characterise more and more of her work. Nearly all the exhibits are of such high quality that it would be an invidious exercise to pick and choose a few for special mention. It is only a question of what or which one likes. But on a quick survey, our fancy was caught by a few pictures that have a lingering quality of permanence. The drawings with a Wilpattu setting (nos. 6 and 77) are among the best in their class. The leopards of Wilpattu (nos. 67 and 81) are among the best wildlife paintings one has seen for a long time in this country. One can go on writing endlessly about every one of these exhibits. Those who remember Jayalakshmi's first exhibition many years ago will see how far she has progressed on the road to excellence. Some of her earlier landscapes had a touch of picture postcardishness but all her work in this genre now have a quality of excellence that makes one to stand looking at them for a long time—this is one test of a good picture. Jaffna Lagoon (24), Torch (3), After the Rains (13), Far Away (15), Perahera (25), World End (30), Three Nudes (31), Turbulence (50), Conflagration (55), Expanding Universe (59) and Patterns (78) are pictures that will hold anyone's attention.

There is also a whimsical touch of her own individual personality in all her work. One feels that she is in search of something beyond the ken of ordinary understanding. That is why she has called her exhibition. *Moments of Awareness*. Her future work may reveal this quest for an undefinable quality of ethereal spirituality in greater measure. All interested in art and painting should see this Exhibition. One thing that will impress them is the artist, use of colour—from dull pastel shades to alarmingly bright and brilliantly flamboyant red splashes—which she uses, now with gay abandon and at other times with great restraint.

Critics and artists may think differently about her work and exhibits—the two pundits never agree on art. But there is one underlying factor in Jayalakshmi's paintings it is that they are all truly Sri Lankan, truly Ceylonese.

The 1980 Budget

by
Satchi Ponnampalam

THE BUDGET for 1980, and its curtain-raiser—the Budget Speech came to be delivered in Parliament by the Minister of Finance, Mr. Ronnie de Mel, on 14th November 1979. For sometime now, the practice has been to announce the bonanzas in the budget—to receive bouquets and plaudits and to reserve the burdens to be introduced soon thereafter by Gazette notifications—to allow the wrath and anger of the suffering millions to go unheard and unknown. The present budget too faithfully follows this practice. While bouquets and plaudits have already started pouring in, we are left guessing as to what is in store in the Gazette notifications, which are perhaps already under preparation!

At the level of rhetoric, the present Budget Speech makes a drastic departure from the previous two Budget speeches of the Finance Minister, Ronnie de Mel. *Firstly*, whereas in the previous Budget Speeches, the Finance Minister, with the early flush of ministerial office sought to portray himself as one with a Messianic mission and a Titanic role to redeem the economy and deliver the people and the country from the seven years of "rack and ruin" as he described it, in the present Budget Speech such pretensions seem significantly absent and he assumes no more than an ordinary mortal's mission and role. *Secondly*, the present Budget Speech is completely free of the harsh and vituperative invective which he unleashed against the SLFP and the Bandaranaike family in his previous Budget Speeches. *Thirdly*, no attempt is now made to hide and cover the full-blown capitalist policies of the UNP Government behind any smokescreen of "socialism"; the word "socialism" being completely forgotten, or more correctly jettisoned, as it does not appear anywhere in the Budget Speech. Perhaps "socialism" has outlived its limited usefulness as a cover and a smokescreen. Indeed, the capitalist 'animal', tended and cared, nurtured and grown covertly over the past two and a half years is now so much over-grown that

it has become impossible to hide any further. Hence, it is now being openly allowed its free and unbridled reign. What is now being asserted as the need of the day is protection and proper climate for its fuller growth and development. *Lastly*, and most strikingly, the present Budget Speech makes no acknowledgement of the able, wise and inspiring leadership of President Jayewardene, whereas the previous Budget Speeches were profuse and abundant with such tributes and homilies.

RHETORIC ASIDE, the central thesis of the Budget Speech is the familiar theme of economic growth and economic development. The Finance Minister waxes eloquent at the 8.2% GNP growth rate achieved by the economy in 1979—the year under review. He seems to be unaware that during the period 1966 to 1969, the country registered an annual average GNP growth rate of 5% and the highest growth rate of 8% in 1968-69, but the country's electorate—the voiceless millions—turned out the UNP government of Dudley Senanayake, which achieved those growth rates, in the May 1970 General Elections. *These growth rates, founded upon the prosperity of the favoured few, which the capitalist system actively abets are in reality nothing but a negation of what may be called economic development. The sooner this is realised by our policy makers, the better it is for the country, for there will then be an end to illusions and an honest attempt could at least be made towards genuine development and the improvement in the living standards of the vast majority of the ordinary people of the country.*

Indeed, this myth of economic growth rates as an indicator of the performance of national economies has long been exploded and its remaining adherents are none but a few stragglers who continue to bury their heads like the ostrich. What is important to know is what has been growing and who have been the beneficiaries of that growth. Surely, if the bank balances and the pockets of the favoured few have been growing by ill-gotten gains and anti-national deals, it needs no great ingenuity to know what has been growing and who are the beneficiaries of that growth!

THE BUDGETARY POLICIES in the 1980 budget are widely off the demands of national priorities and the economic realities that confronts the ordinary man in the country. The eyes have been set on grandiose projects,

and monumental edifices at public expense, no matter what the costs are. The building of the new Sri Jayewardenapura with a new Parliament (in this era of Executive Presidential government) and the so-called Urban Development "to beautify the City of Colombo" are among the major capital expenditure programmes of the new Budget. In fact, it is stated that the new Parliament and Administrative building project at Kotte had been given Rs. 338 million in 1979. The land clearing and reclamation for the new Parliament building has cost Rs. 146 million in 1979, according to an earlier government Report.

Under the UNP Government, "economic growth" and "economic development" have become the most over-worked phrases. However, the only understanding that those in power seem to have of these phrases is that

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money must be spent, whether the country possesses it or not and no matter from where it comes and whatever its costs be. It appears that it is this understanding, or more correctly the mis-understanding, that is at the bottom of the whole of the mis-management of the public finances of the country. Over the years, and more particularly from about 1975, the different Finance Ministers have taken the country down the blind alley of deficit financing—the root cause for the present spectre of inflation that haunts the country.

In short, there has been no budgeting for the public finances of the country, although all manner of phoney defences have been set up for their systematic resort to deficit financing. No attempt has been made to plan the public expenditure of the country out of what is raised as public revenue. In fact, what is planned by the Finance Ministers in the budgets has been how much to borrow and from where to borrow. The major borrowing has been the foreign loans—from the IMF, ADB, IBRD, IDA the "Aid Consortium Countries" and the other countries. Locally, the government borrowing has alternated between the Central Bank on the one hand and the captive sources—the EPF, the Insurance Corporation and the National Savings Bank, on the other.

The truth of Sri Lanka's public finance situation is that what the governments raise by way of revenue have hardly been sufficient to finance the day-to-day expenditure side of the budget called the recurrent expenditure. The other half of the budget, called the capital expenditure side has come to be systematically financed by borrowings. The situation is such that if not for the foreign lenders, our governments cannot undertake any public capital expenditure in the country. It is therefore no wonder that our governments and the Finance Ministers have been paying their respects and tributes to the foreign financial institutions and the "Consortium countries." Their efforts must therefore necessarily measure up with what is expected of them by the foreign lender institutions and countries, and not with the aspirations of the people of this country. Their constant utterances of "Pledges

of aid" and foreign institutions "being impressed with our development efforts" becomes therefore easily understandable.

In 1978, the budgetary out-turn or the actual financial situation as unfolded at the end of the year, was as follows: "Total Revenue, Rs. 11,296 million; Recurrent Expenditure, Rs. 11,572 million; Current Account Deficit, Rs. 276 million; Capital Expenditure, Rs. 6,061 million and Overall Budget Deficit, Rs. 6,337 million." Thus, in 1978, what was raised as revenue was insufficient to meet even the Government's recurrent expenditure—comprising the salaries, pensions, interests on public debt and other current out-payment to carry through the day-to-day governmental operations. The capital expenditure incurred was Rs. 6,061 million—the whole of it being financed by borrowing—both domestic and foreign. Hence, the overall budget deficit that year was Rs. 6,337 million.

ACCORDING TO THE PRESENT BUDGET SPEECH, the budgetary outturn for 1979 is as follows: "Total Revenue, Rs. 11,820 million; Re-Curent Expenditure, Rs. 11,746 million; Current Account Surplus, Rs. 74 million, Capital Expenditure, Rs. 8,494 million and Overall Budget Deficit, Rs. 8,420 million." Thus, in 1979 the surplus left over after recurrent expenditure was a mere Rs. 74 million. Again nearly the whole of the capital expenditure for that year too came to be financed by borrowings. The borrowing effected to finance the deficit of Rs. 8,420 million, is as follows: "Appropriation Act Loans, Rs. 2,950 millions; Commodity Loans, Rs. 2,200 million; Project Loans and Grants, Rs. 2,300 million; Trust Fund Loans, Rs. 600 million; and Bank borrowings, Rs. 370 million, making a total of Rs. 8,420 million."

The estimates of revenue and expenditure for the year 1980, as contained in the present budget, is as follows: "Revenue Rs. 12,262 million; Recurrent Expenditure, Rs. 11,219 million; Current Account Surplus, Rs. 1,043 million; Capital Expenditure, Rs. 9,963 million and Overall Budget Deficit, Rs. 8,920 million."

Thus the 1980 budget's estimated deficit itself is Rs. 8,920 million. The actual out-turn of the magnitude of the deficit at the end of

the financial year is bound to be well over Rs. 10,000 million. The trend that is fast becoming established in the public finance pattern of the country is the yawning gap between revenue and expenditure and the mounting deficits from year to year. The estimated Current Account Surplus of Rs. 1,043 million that has been built into the 1980 budget is purely notional, for according to past performances, the actual Current Account out-turn is likely to leave no appreciable surplus to contend with. In any event, it is not unrealistic to assume that in the current year as well, the whole of the capital expenditure operations will be financed entirely by borrowings and not by any public savings. According to the budget, the presently estimated deficit of Rs. 8,920 million is to be financed by borrowings, as follows: "Appropriation Act Loans, Rs. 3,100 million; Commodity Loans, Rs. 2,420 million; Project Loans and grants, Rs. 3,100 million and Trust Fund Loans, Rs. 300 million."

Thus on a review of the country's financial situation, what strikes anyone is the parlous and in fact, the incredibly sorry state of affairs. But, day in and day out, our politicians keep asserting that the economy has been resuscitated, self-sustained growth is in the offing and that foreign governments are so impressed with Sri Lanka government's development achievements that they are running and falling head over heels to give us loans, finance all manner of projects etc.

THE RESORT TO SUCH HEAVY MAGNITUDES OF DEFICIT FINANCING has resulted in the total absence of prudent financial management of the meagre resources; in the total reliance on loans, both local and foreign; and in the build up of a vicious circle in the economy. The recurrent expenditure has been allowed to steadily increase, largely on account of the increases in the payment of interest for local borrowings and the payment of Government salaries. The interest payment on *Public Debt* which amounted to Rs. 1,131 million, as provided in the 1978 budget, increased to Rs. 1,643 million or 15% of the whole of the recurrent expenditure bill in 1979. According to the present budget, the interest payment on public debt is a sum of Rs. 1,959 million or 17% of recurrent expenditure. Thus, over 15% of the country's revenue is being spent annually as interest payment

for local borrowings and the figure is on the increase. The salaries bill, which was Rs. 2,198 million in the 1978 budget increased to Rs. 2,662 million or 24% in 1979 and is stated to be Rs. 3,477 or 31% of the total recurrent expenditure of 1980 budget. Thus, the lack of resources locally to finance capital expenditure is due to the payment of interest on domestic debt and the salaries bill syphoning away about 45% of the revenue of the country. Even though consumer food subsidies were withdrawn from more than half the population by the 1978 budget in the name of generating public savings to finance development, no saving has been made because of the lack of prudent management of the public finances of the country.

Because of the systematic resort to deficit financing, the money supply in the country increased by 35% in 1976, 27% in 1977, 11% in 1978 and 26% in 1979. This has led to huge expansion in the effective demand for goods and services which in consequence is pulling the prices of different essential goods by as much as 30% annually. Such steady escalation of prices compel the poor to continue sacrificing one essential after another and the rich to spend the money as soon as they get it.

To cushion off the effect of steep rise in prices and the inflation generated by Government spending from borrowing, the different Governments of the country have been forced to continually give salary and wage increases—six times between 1970 and 1976 and three times thereafter. The blame for causing this vicious circle in the economy has to be placed entirely in the hands of the Government because of its pursuit of wrong policies of spending by borrowing under the guise of economic development.

AT THE LEVEL OF FOREIGN LOANS, the performance of the UNP government's budgets is even more disastrous. This must be viewed against the indictment that the Finance Minister, Ronnie de Mel, leveled against Mrs. Bandaranaike's government in his Budget Speech of 1978. He said as follows: "During the last seven years, the Sirimavo Bandaranaike Government increased the Debt Burden of

the country in a manner unprecedented in our history since independence. Our total domestic debt rose from Rs. 6,295 million in 1970 to Rs. 12,691 million in 1976. Our foreign debt rose from Rs. 1,578 million in 1970 to Rs. 4,968 million in 1976. Our total debt rose from Rs. 7,873 million in 1970 to Rs. 17,659 million in 1976. A proportion of the foreign debt has been incurred at high rates of interest, and even our future tea crops have been mortgaged to foreign countries! The burden of debt repayment and debt servicing will be a heavy one and will be a permanent drain on the Exchequer. On the one hand, our debts have been increased, on the other there is no production or investment to show for it. Hon. Members will, therefore, see how the Sirimavo Bandaranaike Government mortgaged the future of this country and generations still un-born..... This, was in brief our legacy. This short analysis gives only a little impression of the mess in which the Sirimavo Bandaranaike Government has left this country."

The foreign debt burden left behind by the previous government seems commendable compared to the crushing and enormous debt burden contracted by the present Government within so short a time as two and a half years. The foreign debt burden which was only Rs. 4,968 million or 28% of the total public debt in 1976 has increased to Rs. 14,582 million or 47% of the total debt by 1978. The domestic debt which was Rs. 12,691 million in 1976 has increased to Rs. 16,367 million in 1978 and the total debt has increased from Rs. 17,659 million in 1976 to an unbelievable sum of Rs. 30,949 million by 1978. The present budget for 1980 seeks to increase the foreign debt further by Rs. 5,820 million to finance deficit of Rs. 8,920 million.

From these figures, it seems that if Mrs. Bandaranaike's Government mortgaged the country after seven years, the UNP Government has literally sold the country with no chance of redeeming it, in a matter of less than three years.

(To be continued)



September - 4

Egypt's Position

by

S. P. Amarasingam

Before the Summit plenary sessions began on the second day, Tuesday, September 4, I met a few delegates from Egypt in the company of a journalist. I frankly told them what I felt about Boutros Ghali's intervention—I said it was a *faux pas* to have taken up the matter at that stage. The Egyptians disputed this and asked me whether I was willing to listen to their side of the case. I said 'yes' and that I would set it down in my notes or writings for the record.

I also mentioned that many delegations felt that the Egyptian intention was pre-planned strategy under western inspiration to disrupt the work of the Summit. They hotly denied this. They said that Egypt had not expected Castro as Chairman, in his inaugural speech, to propound a highly partisan view in polemical terms. A Chairman of the Non-aligned Movement (NAM) had to rise above partisan politics—that had been the tradition of the NAM. They said Sri Lanka, whatever its opinion on such a matter, would not have said the things Castro said in the way he did.

They went on to tell me that Boutros Ghali had no prior intention to intervene at that stage, but two statements made by Castro could not be left to go unchallenged. The first was that Sadat had betrayed the Egyptian people and the second was the second-class weapons Egypt was getting from the US would be used against the Egyptian people. Castro could not speak for the Egyptian people—who had fully endorsed the Camp David Agreement and the Egypt-Israeli Treaty. The Egyptian people were happy that there would be no more wars—they were tired of wars and the austerities of a war economy. They had been involved in four wars (1948, 1956, 1967 and 1973) and had achieved nothing. They invited me to go to Egypt and find out for myself whether the people felt that Sadat had betrayed them or whether they feared that the

US arms would be used against them. A visit they said would convince me that the situation in Egypt was very different from what Castro had pictured it to be.

They went on to criticise Castro's speech. His tilting so completely to the hardline Arab States, point of view, they said, was not conducive to settling the conflicts in the Middle East. Hard words from a public platform will not make Egypt change her mind. She was a sovereign state and she could not be pressurised or dictated to. If Egypt had made a mistake, it was for the Non-aligned leaders to point out her mistakes, convince her of her errors and through conciliation and mediation effect a solution of the differences between non-aligned members in the Middle East. Condemnation, such as what Castro inflicted on Egypt, would only close the door to a peaceful solution and make any settlement more difficult.

The Egyptians stressed that there could be no military solution to the Middle East problem. Four wars had shown that such wars ended in stalemates and cease-fires in the current era of detente among the super-powers. Condemnation of Sadat will not make Egypt change her point of view. It was for the non-aligned movement and the hardline Arab states to convince Egypt that her way could not work and offer alternative solutions. No one—no one in the NAM or any hardline Arab state—had suggested an alternative solution. Egypt had not attempted to represent the Palestinians—Sadat had wanted to start talking about Palestine with the Israelis to enable the Palestinians to join in the dialogue to find a solution. Israelis, they pointed out, had taken hardline bargaining positions, but on many matters had retreated to make agreement possible.

And, they asked me "can anyone condemn Egypt for regaining lost territory—something they had not been able to do after fighting?" And, they also stressed that the leaders of the PLO had started talks with the Americans—and though Andrew Young had lost his job, the dialogue he had started was gathering momentum. (Since, Havana, the PLO-USA dialogue has intensified and expanded in every way, and the PLO actually offered to negotiate with Iran regarding the release of hostages

held by the students in Teheran). The PLO was doing exactly what Sadat had done.

Listening to the Egyptians, I felt that if I were an Egyptian I myself would have felt the same way. Finally, they said that the threat of throwing her out of the NAM would not make Egypt change her sovereign right to safeguard her future. Boutros Ghali, they assured me, did not intervene to disturb the agenda but that he could not sit quietly without an immediate protest when his government was accused of betraying the people or of acquiring arms to be used against them.

There is no doubt there is a great deal to think about in what the Egyptians said. I have set down only a summarised gist of what they said.

The second day of the 6th Summit of Non-aligned Countries went on long with 11 speeches. The meeting was recessed at 10.45 p.m. to begin again the next morning. The morning session included speeches by Kurt Waldheim, secretary-general of the United Nations; Josip Broz Tito, president of Yugoslavia; Saddam Hussein, president of Iraq; Hafez Al Assad, president of Syria and Mengistu Haile Mariam, president of Ethiopia. At the evening session, which lasted six hours, speeches were made by Ziaur Rahman, president of Bangladesh; Michael Manley, prime minister of Jamaica; Yasser Arafat, president of the PLO; Forbes Burnham, prime minister of Guyana; Samora Machel, president of Mozambique and Denis Sassou Nguesso, president of the Congo.

During the morning session the delegates also discussed Point 5 of the program, which called for the adoption of the day's agenda. This had been worked out by the Foreign Ministers' meeting prior to the summit and was now approved. The other recommendations the Foreign Ministers' meeting submitted to the Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Non-aligned Countries were also approved in this session. Fidel, as chairman of the Summit, proposed that all sessions begin at ten in the morning, run until two in the afternoon, and after a recess, begin again at four in the afternoon and end at eight in the evening. He said that this way everyone would have a chance to set forth his or her views. He also proposed that they begin to hold night sessions between 9.30 and midnight.

Then, the Secretary General of the United

Nations, Kurt Waldheim, headed the morning list of speakers and preceded the general debate which was later opened by Fidel. Waldheim opened his speech by congratulating the new chairman of the Movement of Non-aligned countries, wishing him success in carrying out his new responsibilities. The secretary-general of the United Nations said that he was "convinced that the strength that guides this Movement depends on the power of the principles it is committed to promote." On the most pressing problems facing humanity, Waldheim said that "the Middle East continues to be one of the most urgent..... There is no doubt that this issue is of central importance to political, economic and military stability in the world." Waldheim insisted that the only way to reach "a just peace in the Middle East is through a comprehensive agreement that addresses all aspects of the issue, including the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. In the long run, all the affected parties will have to participate in the negotiation process".

On the critical question of refugees in the world, the UN secretary-general assured the delegates "that we are dealing with the symptoms, not the cause. The problem of refugees exists for political, social and historical reasons." Waldheim also referred to energy problems and pointed out that "the international community must come up with constructive proposals to meet the progressive depletion of world oil resources." Finally, he said, "I share the hope that the nations represented here will be able to come up with answers to this critical question."

Next Week: Tito's speech.

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FROM THE WORLD PRESS

EL SALVADOR

London, September 28,

More violence, kidnappings and labour unrest seem bound to increase US pressure on the military government. General Romero has few cards to play. At least seven people were killed, according to the Red Cross, in a gun battle between the army and guerillas outside the presidential palace on 25 September. Two days earlier three people

had been killed by crossfire during an attack on a military telecommunications centre in San Salvador. Reports indicate that one of these was a United States citizen, while the other two were Salvadoreans with Californian residence permits. A hitherto unknown organisation, the Partido Revolucionario de Trabajadores Centroamericanos (PRTC), claimed responsibility for the kidnapping of two more businessmen last week. One of them was a US citizen, and altogether 11 businessmen have been abducted in El Salvador this year. Faced with increasing militancy from their workers, meanwhile, several US companies are currently withdrawing from the country.

The labour unrest mainly reflects the increasing activity of the country's leading popular organisations, the Bloque Popular and the Frente Accion Popular Unificada (FAPU), in defence of the country's urban and rural poor (LAER VIII, 15). Despite being a largely illegal coalition, the Bloque held its national congress in San Salvador last week. At the same time, another popular organisation, the Ligas Populares 28 de Febrero, was occupying the ministry of labour in the heart of the capital. *Such actions are almost certain to lead to intensified pressure by Washington on the government of General Carlos Humberto Romero to institute concrete political reforms. (LAPR XIII, 34).*

In response to US pressure, Romero has effected some mild political reform, and has said that he may sanction a civilian candidate in the 1982 presidential elections; but otherwise the regime has apparently learnt little. The independence day celebrations scheduled for 15 September had to be cancelled at the last minute by the government, fearing further unrest as a result of the killing by the army of several demonstrators on the previous day.

Local observers doubt whether Romero is either willing or able to institute the reforms desired by Washington designed to head off 'another Nicaragua.' Either way Romero's options are limited. Further concessions on the political front, let alone, the social and economic reforms which could take the wind out of the popular organisations' sails, would hardly be to the liking of powerful elements in the

'14 families'. At the same time, having paid lipservice to the liberal overtures of Washington, Romero is in no position to pay heed to the demands from Salvadorean oligarchy, that the military be allowed to wipe out the popular organisations, and guerillas, once and for all.

*Latin American Political Report (LAPR)
No. 38.*

San Salvador, October 17,

A six-man civilian military Junta today began forming a Cabinet to rule El Salvador after the overthrow of President Carlos Humberto Romero on October 15 and leftist riots in which 22 people were killed. The Ruling Junta, originally made up of two and then later three army Colonels, took on a moderate centre-leftist hue when three civilians were appointed to it last night. The three are a University Rector, a businessman and a moderate leftist politician.....

San Salvador October 18,

El Salvador's new rulers announced tonight they would open diplomatic relations with Cuba and hold Presidential elections next year to return the Central American country to democracy. The Salvadorean Communist Party would be allowed to take part in the poll, they said. The government led by three Colonels since Monday's coup but broadened yesterday to include three civilians, also said it would set up a commission to probe alleged human rights violations, including torture and abductions by the previous government. The promise of elections—two years earlier than planned by ousted right-wing President Carlos Humberto Romero—came four days after Gen. Romero's overthrow in a bloodless coup.....

London, October 26,

The situation in El Salvador is confused and contradictory. Radio speaks of fighting between army and guerilla units in a number of places. There have been clashes between the workers and the army as well. The US administration appears to have received the news of the coup in an extraordinary friendly manner. French CP journal *l'Humanite* says that overthrow of general Romero has "made in USA" trade mark and points out that White

House emissaries have gone there recently. *Pravda* reports that while the influential Christian Democratic Party declared support for the junta which has taken power, a number of people's organisations came out against it, describing the coup as an attempt of some forces to prevent radical changes in the country by means of sham democratisation. The *People's Revolutionary Bloc* which united factory workers, civil servants and students says that the military officers who have taken power are "flunkeys" of ruling classes of US imperialism. *Prensa Latina* says that the military command of the Armed Forces of National Resistance (FARN) in Salvador described the coup as new adventure of the USA and local oligarchy. The Junta has declared a state of seige and all constitutional guarantees have been suspended for 30 days. All gatherings have been banned and strict curfew has been enforced.

But the revolutionary upsurge of the people goes on. People are demanding real freedom and improvement in living conditions. The political commission of the CC (equivalent of the politburo) of the *Communist Party of El Salvador* has issued a statement on communist position regarding the program proclaimed by the army officers who have overthrown dictatorial regime of Umberto Romero. No government will enjoy the confidence of the people if it will not provide concrete proof of its striving for democracy. The statement puts forward the following demands: (1) Immediate lifting of the state of seige which was proclaimed by the new authorities as under its cover government can carry out wide repressions; (2) Freedom for all political prisoners; (3) Removal of all fascists from the state apparatus, army and security services; (4) Full freedom for political activity and for activity of trade unions; (5) Consultations with all peoples' organisations without exception regarding the ways and means to solve the country's acute problems. The *People's Revolutionary Bloc* and the *Front of People's United Action*—the two democratic organisations—have also put forward similar demands to the military. The Communist Party which had been illegal under Romero is now struggling to come out in the open. It says that the main hindrance in the path of people's advance is the differences that still

exist between the different left forces. The reactionary forces in the country with the support of the US imperialism want to carry on the old policies after discarding the discredited general Romero. El Salvador which has a population of about five million has the following parties in the field but as the situation is in a flux new alliances and combinations are likely to emerge. The Ruling Party has been the *Party of National Reconciliation*, an organisation of the most reactionary rightwing big capitalists and landlords and top brass which supported Romero lately; *Christian Democratic Party* is mainly of the petty bourgeoisie. It says that it stands for social reforms and democracy; *National Democratic Union*, of petty bourgeois small traders but also unites part of intelligentsia and students—it also demands democratisation of political life and radical agrarian reforms; *National Revolutionary Movement* is also a party of the petty bourgeoisie and middle classes but has within its fold part of the workers and peasants of the country and intelligentsia. It stands on anti-imperialist positions and for democratic reforms.

San Salvador, October 28,

Gunmen firing from a car wounded four people yesterday in an attack on leftists holding hundreds of hostages in El Salvador's Labour Ministry, police said. The country's new civilian-military junta was negotiating with the Marxist Popular Revolutionary bloc (BPR) for an end to the occupation of the Labour and Economic Ministries and the release of the hostages who included two government Ministers.

San Salvador, October 30,

An extreme leftwing group was today holding El Salvador Cabinet Ministers and other government officials hostage after releasing more than 200 captives following a day of street fighting in which at least 23 people were killed. Red Cross sources said about 100 members of the Popular Revolutionary Front (BPR) who occupied the Labour and Economy Ministries last Wednesday, released most of their hostages last night. But they held on to the Ministers of Labour, Economy and Planning as well as some 40 government officials until the government agreed to their three pronged demands for information about the fate of political prisoners, wage rises and a price freeze.

The Junta reimposed Martial Law on the capital last night in the wake of the fighting. It had put the entire country under martial law after deposing General Romero, but lifted it later after announcing social and political reforms. Among the reforms announced was a plan to hold free presidential elections next year to end almost 30 years of military rule. Two leftwing groups said they would call a partial truce, but the BPR and other leftwing organisations pledged to step up their activities, maintaining that the new government was not better than the one led by General Romero.



BANGLADESH

Testing Time

New Delhi, October 28,

In Bangladesh, which is heavily dependent on food imports, even one bad harvest can prove disastrous. A long drought has imposed severe strains on its economy. There have been three to four thousand starvation deaths. If the situation is not as grim as it was in the autumn of 1974, it is because India and some other countries have not only been in a position to help Bangladesh but have been eager to do so. Food has become politics. The CIA believes that exportable food surplus gives the US the power of life and death over countries like Bangladesh which have to depend on food imports. The American administration may not openly accept the CIA thesis, but it has acted on the CIA formulation, specially in times of crisis. Washington can pressure any government, which relies on it for food supplies, change its policies by denying them food or delaying supplies.

At the instance of the World Bank and the IMF, Dacca has reduced the subsidy on rice distributed through the rationing system. The argument is that the subsidy helps the urban well-to-do and not the rural poor. No doubt the urban rich stand to gain from the subsidy, but it is not as simple as that. Wayne Wilcox, an American professor turned diplomat said in 1973; "Most observers believe that with better water management and continued economic assistance from the world, Bangladesh's production can keep pace with (or almost

keep pace) with its population growth. Even if it did not, famine would presumably strike the least organized and the most remote elements of the population, and this would not necessarily weaken either the state as a whole or the urban area. This eventually might require authoritarian measures and capacities but they would probably originate from the 'right' rather than the 'left'.

In other words, as long as the urban population is not adversely affected, there is little to fear. So far the new rich and the upper middle-class have been the greatest beneficiaries under the Zia regime and naturally its staunchest supporters. But they are becoming gradually disillusioned with the regime. And Zia knows it. The pro-American lobby has become vocal. Barrister Maudud, Deputy Prime Minister, has said that there should be democracy within the ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP). The BNP is Zia's creation and he has so far done very much what he liked with it. He is right when he reminds ministers that they owe their position to him. They couldn't have even hoped to win in the February general election if they had not been members of the ruling party. Maudud is a political non-entity, but he is very intelligent. If he voices even the mildest criticism about how the BNP is run, he must be drawing his strength from somewhere. Supporters of Moshtaque are demanding his release. The Americans might not want to replace Zia with Moshtaque or Maudud, but they would like to keep the pressure on him. Zia wants the BNP to gain control of the government. With this end in view, Zia asked Dr. Badrudozza, Senior Deputy Prime Minister to resign from the Government and made him the Secretary-General of the BNP. But Dr. Badrudozza still remains his rank of Senior Deputy Prime Minister.

The disbursement of foreign aid in 1978-79, in the words of a Dacca journalist, "the psychological US one billion dollar mark" will reach the US 1,028 billion dollars. The psychological barrier has been crossed. A. M. A. Muhith, a former director of the World Bank and then the Asian Development Bank and at present secretary of the Bangladesh Finance Ministry's external affairs division, believes that aid "will grow in the next ten years and then gradually decrease." But aid does not grow. It creates

its own problems. Developing countries cannot do without the prop of foreign aid, but what happens when the prop is kicked off or the time for repayment comes? Zia is increasingly impatient with his ministers. He is behaving like a man who feels that time is running out for him. The BNP is composed of diverse elements pulling in different directions. He promoted himself Lieutenant General and retired from the army, but he still resides in the Dacca Cantonment. He came to power on November 7, 1975, as a Deputy Chief Martial Law Administrator. Since then he has made himself Chief Martial Law Administrator and subsequently President. Coup attempts against him have failed. But the severe drought this year has created problems for him. So far Zia's luck has held. This November, four years after coming to power, can be a testing time for him.

—Link

October 28, 1979.



ACCELERATED MAHAVELI

Environment And Wild Life-2

by
Thilo W. Hoffman

THE EASIEST PART of land development is the clearing of the forest, provided you have the necessary massive machinery for the job; it is likely that the development will be preceded by a wave of sheer brutal destruction. Not only the elephants will be exterminated in that last one million acres of new land to be opened up in Sri Lanka, but naturally all other wildlife as well. This also includes many thousands of spotted and other deer, sambhur, wild buffalo, leopard, bear, and the smaller mammals, the cats, the civets, the loris, the porcupines all the reptiles like crocodiles, snakes, and the birds. They will have nowhere to go, they cannot escape the destruction of their habitats. Where is the planning in this? The foresight, that major distinction between man and animal?

It is now generally realised that wildlife and wild animals have important ecological roles to play in our environment, and that wildlife, therefore, is relevant to our own

human well-being. Many factors of this concept are not yet properly understood, and need urgent investigation, but it is clear that a healthy environment, a healthy habitat for man must also be healthy for animals (and birds and reptiles, and that it must contain them. Any area or country without wildlife is inhospitable to man. There are numerous examples which prove this point. Even the lowly crocodile, feared and despised by many, is an essential factor in the ecology of our tanks, for instance. As a scavenger it helps to keep these reservoirs clean and healthy. It does not compete with man (as its slaughterers would have it) because it feeds off the more sedentary, low quality fish which are not preferred by humans (e.g. cat fish). A similar example are the snakes. They are a most important factor in keeping down harvest and storage loss of food grain through rodents. This is why all snakes are protected in India and their export is totally prohibited.

Thus every living creature has its proper place in the scheme of things. Only humans arrogate to themselves the right to displace other beings and deny them continued existence by totally taking over their territories. This leads to disaster for man himself. Dozens of species of animals have become extinct during the last 100 years, far more than at any other time in history. Our environment has become impoverished and the losses are our losses. With the present growth of populations and the pace of development, more and more species will disappear from the face of earth unless suitable measures are taken at the local, the national and the international level. There is considerable international awareness of the dangers that lie ahead and many useful last minute rescue operations have taken place in recent years. Some of these are massive, e.g. the international campaign to save the Tiger in India, for which many million, of dollars are being expended. Similar efforts are being made on behalf of primates in Africa, of Rhinos in Sumatra, of Turtles and Whales world-wide, to mention only a few. But do we have to wait till it is so late?

A special paragraph may be devoted in this context to Birds. If man were left to his own devices in dealing with insect pests, he would be quite unable to cope, despite modern chemicals and techniques. Insects

would take over the world. Amongst the most important factors in keeping down insects and in maintaining some kind of balance are the birds. Not too long ago birds were classified as either useful or pests, a kind of thinking which still prevails today amongst the ignorant. If there are birds which cause damage to human interests, then the fault lies fairly and squarely with man who has in the first instance brought about the imbalances. Today we have realised that all birds, including raptors, are useful in the ecology of our environment. Here in Sri Lanka most birds are protected, and only a few can be legally killed. But it is senseless to protect birds by law if their habitats are not also protected. Many species of birds cannot survive in an environment which has been damaged, spoilt and made inferior by human activity. The majority of our birds belong to those which avoid developed areas and are particularly vulnerable to becoming extinct.

On the other hand there are those who thrive in man-made new environments and become dominant, such as Crows, Sparrows, Pigeons, Munias, Parakeets. If we develop our environment on ecological lines, such imbalances will not occur. Birds play a vital role as biological indicators—when they desert an area there is something badly wrong. The establishment of sanctuaries is only a palliative though obviously a more and more necessary measure. But sanctuaries and national parks alone do not make our environment better. They merely preserve some natural ecologies and habitats or examples of biomes. We have to ensure that the entirety of the human environment should remain healthy and sound, which means that it must include elements which allow most or all free-living creatures to co-exist with man. This means that there must be trees, shrubs, forests, free water-courses, ponds, natural ecosystems, all interspersed in developed areas in a balanced manner. This can be attained with proper planning and responsible execution of the plans, without in any way diminishing the economic usefulness of the schemes and of human progress. On the contrary such ecological planning and implementation will make the final result far better in every respect than it would otherwise be.

Whilst in many parts of the world it is too late to change the course of events,



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and corrective measures can only be applied at extremely high cost (which many countries cannot afford), here in Sri Lanka we can still plan our ecological future in a reasonably satisfactory manner; years ago I used to say "in optimal manner." That opportunity has already gone by.

Too much has been destroyed senselessly, unthinkingly, purposelessly, and too little or no attention has so far been paid to environmental ecological planning and implementation. We have been obsessed with mere technical progress. We have been pre-occupied with opening new land and have neglected the existing cleared areas. As a result there reigns chaos today in wide areas of land use in Sri Lanka, notably in the dry and intermediary zones. Very recently a World Bank report has pointed out that 200,000 tons of paddy could additionally be harvested per year if only water was used properly and without waste; 200,000 tons of rice is what we now have to import in order to feed our people. How much more could we produce on existing lands if not only water but all other factors in the production of rice would also be optimally organised (e.g., fertiliser use, weed and disease control, sowing and harvesting techniques, and above all storage)? We would in fact be capable of producing a surplus and all this without one single acre of additional land, with only the areas now actually under irrigated cultivation.

Yet there are hundred thousands of acres of cleared land which are not used or only marginally used; most of this land is suitable for agriculture. Why do we have to use up the last reserves of land and clear away the forests from them (with the danger of climate modification). It is obviously easier and certainly more spectacular to clear jungle and develop new areas, than to mop up and take in hand those innumerable lands where the forest has been destroyed, but which produce nothing. This is true of all institutions concerned with land use. When will someone say, "no more new land until and unless all existing land is tidied up and in good use?"

In concluding this paper, I can do no better than to quote—for the benefit of policy-makers and planners—what the Arahata Mahinda said to King Devanampiyatissa nearly 2,500

years ago: "O great king, the birds of the air and the beasts have an equal right to live and move about in any part of this land as thou. The land belongs to the people and all other beings and thou art only the guardian of it."

Concluded.



DROUGHT IN FLOODS

Current Rainfall Patterns

by V. Buvanasingh

THIS YEAR, the Indian Monsoon failed and so did the MONEX. Most of India was gripped in drought during the Monsoon and then in September came flash floods to inundate over 2000 villages in Rajasthan and for the first time in human history, a child had to be born up on a tree, out of a woman, who had climbed it to escape the floods. Rajasthan is now once again in drought. In this game of the Gods, this alternate cry of drought and flood was heard in our land too, a soft moan, in keeping with the size of our land, yet heard between neighbouring villages. Kurunegala heard it from Batalagoda, the internationally famous rice research station, Dewahuva from Bakamuna and Thannimurippu from Mullaitivu, but CEB's claim that their reservoir was overflowing in September is a far cry even for flash floods. Norton Bridge had received only 90% of its normal rains till the end of September.

In our land, the dry zone and the wet zone are divided by 75" annual rainfall line. Batalagoda lies on it and Kurunegala, a few miles within the wet zone. A further subdivision by the 85" line, brings both into the semi-wet zone. The true wet zone is then the land that receives 85" to 100" per year and Colombo is in it. The 85" line starts north of Colombo, encompasses the hill country and Bibile, avoiding Badulla and Diyatalawa, it reaches down south to Weligama. The inland lands in the southwest quarter and those on the southwestern slopes of the hills annually receive over 150" and they are in the ultra-wet zone.

In the very dry zone, like in the northwest of the island, inclusive of Puttalam, Mannar, Elephant Pass and the islands off Jaffna Peninsula

the rainfall is below 50". The 50" line passes through Point Pedro, Kankesanthurai, Kayts, Jaffna lagoon, rounding Elephant Pass, back into Paranthan and almost straight down to lie between Chilaw and Battulu Oya. All the land west of this line is a very dry zone in the northwest of the island. In the southeast the 50" line starts immediately east of Tangalle, goes north including Bata ata, Tanamalwila, strangely avoiding Kataragama and then into the sea between Kumana and Panawa. This region includes Hambantota and Ambalantota but excludes Panawa tank which on the average receives 61" per year, while Kumana receives only 44".

Batalagoda and Kurunegala being in the semi-wet zone receives rains every month. This year too the rains were there but they were hardly sufficient to even wet the ground and both grovelled in extreme drought by the end of August. September rains that gave flash floods to many places, only wet the trees and not the earth of Batalagoda. It received its normal September quota of 11cm and remained 45% in drought. Kurunegala received an inch a day on the 14th and the 15th, which took its monthly total 4cm above normal and it got within 5% of its annual drought. Bakamuna on the 75" line received only 2cm in September, while close by Angamedilla received 12cm. A strip of land from the extreme southeast, including Panawa (42%) and Uduvile (47%) but excluding Hambantota (58%), going up north through Bibile (36%), Horaborawewa (47%) to Hingurakgoda and even beyond and another narrow strip between Batalagoda and Mahawillachchiya remained in extreme drought inspite of the September deluge. Most of this land is in the semi-wet zone.

This land in extreme drought by the end of September, seems a boundary between the southwest and northeast monsoons. The southwest monsoon seems to have been pushed away and its fringes have been denied the rains that was poured into the northern parts of the dry zone. The rains in the southwest quarter and the hill country were as expected. The tides of the atmosphere only enlivened a dying monsoon, that is usually dead by September. Only a few places of the southwest monsoon lands had their monsoonal rains in excess. The best among them was Sirikandura, Matugama with 22% in excess. It also had

the highest daily fall of 18.72cm. on the 14th. The others with lesser excesses were Galle 11%, Kandy 5% and Ratnapura 4%. Nuwara-Eliya on the border of the wet zone had 26% excess of its monsoon average. Badulla and Diyatalawa in the semi-wet zone had excesses of 11% and 8% respectively.

The unusual rains of this September were in the north. This region hardly gets any rain from the southwest monsoon. Iyakachchi in the Jaffna Peninsula did not have even a drop of rain from 1st May to 11th September. Even that sensational May cyclone, that scared us all the way from Batticaloa to Jaffna, till it struck Nellore, gave it not a drop. Chavakachcheri and Kayts too, received nothing from this cyclone, only Kudathanai in the extreme far east of the Peninsula received 1.2cm in the two days of that scare. 10cm in 24 hours is considered a heavy fall and over 15cm, a very heavy fall, only Murungan of all places in the north had such a fall, 15.64cm

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on the 16th. Heavy falls in the north were received by Akathimurippu (Madhu-Road) 14.12, 16th, Monkey-bridge, Trincomalee, 12.29cm, 2nd; Marichchukkaddi 12.00 17th, Kondavil 11.43 16th, Kankesanthurai 11.32 15th, Thondamanar 10.65 15th, Kayts 10.29 16th, Thinnevely farm 10.20 15th. The trough line oriented north-south has been slowly moving east to west from the 15th to the 16th, against the rotation of the earth from west to east. Marichchukkaddi's rainfall reported for the 17th should really be taken for the 16th. Some rainfall recorders enter the rainfall figures against the day of their measurement as it was done earlier. Rain measured at 08.30 hrs on a day should be entered to the previous day.

Almost all the heavy falls for September had fallen on the days, this trough was moving across the island. On the 14th, it was shown in the east as the only day of rain during this spell. The following places, all lie on line oriented northsouth, Yala 5.08, Moneragala 0.10, Polonnaruwa 0.50, Minneriya 2.11, and Kebitigollewa 1.25. Even including the south-west, the high falls of the 15th and the 16th lie on lines parallel to that of the 14th, 15th—Baddegama 10.36, Sirimewana, Galle 10.79, St. Vincent, Kalutara 11.90, Kankesanthurai 11.32, Thinnevely 10.20, Thondamanar 10.65, 16th—Kayts 10.29, Akathimurippu 14.12, Murungan 15.64, Marichchukkaddai 12.00, St. Leonard, Balapitiya 12.70, Sirimewana 10.15.

Moon was moving under Crab Nebula in Taurus on the 13th. Unlike our earth, the moon has no atmosphere to filter away the harmful cosmic radiation. Its rocks brought by astronauts are palimpsests, over-recorded with cosmic radiation giving the history of the solar system. Moon under Crab Nebula got square (rt. angle) to the Sun, which was still in the constellation of Leo. On that day, a pull occurred on the atmosphere over Andamans, at about longitude 92E. There are three meteorological stations there in a longitudinal row; Coco belonging to Burma, Port Blair and Carnicobar belonging to India. The upper-air observations there showed this pull by a change of wind and a drop in temperature. At 500mb (18,000ft), which is the level of gravity of the atmosphere (the weight of half the atmosphere is below it), the wind was absolutely calm. By the 14th, this change in temperature was shown in every layer of our

atmosphere. The monsoon rains increased, also there were rains in the northeast and in the dry zone. By the 15th, the trough started to move, giving maximum falls, along its trough line. It has been noticed that at times, there is a tiny circulation at the Apex of the trough. Coming from the east, it is in the shape of a ridge. This, more than slow moving large depressions or smaller vortices following one another, defying Fujiwara's theory of combining vortices is more plausible for those fantastic falls of 31.72" that occurred at Nedunkerni on 15/12/1896 and at Mullaitivu, 31.18" on 18/12/1911. It has been suggested that houses at Peheliyagoda collapsed due to one of these circulations descending to the ground. It could have been a tornado spawned by a thundercloud. An inspection of the damage would have revealed the truth.

In October, our island gets into the Inter Tropical Convergence Zone (ITCZ), where the winds of the two hemispheres meet. The winds are light and the atmosphere humid, ideal conditions for conventional, convectional thunderstorms to develop. They develop over mid-country and move to east/west coasts by evening or night and the ideal fishing season begins. This October, two processes seem to have been functioning at the same time. The rising of warm moist air with the differential heating of the ground and the pull at the top of the atmosphere. The thunderstorms, therefore formed at all times and moved to all coasts but we heard of floods only at Anuradhapura. It had a fall of 42cm, which is about 80% more than its normal for October, while close by Mahawillachchiya had only 8cm. Even after these rains, Anuradhapura is still 10% below its normal. Badulla (156%) and Batticaloa (161%) also had more than their normal October rains, yet still they are below their normal rains. Kurunegla, which was receiving poor rains this year, got worse in October receiving only 16cm against its normal of 33cm. Hambantota is worse, after receiving only 6cm. Even Colombo, where workers, who cannot afford an umbrella, scamper for shelter cursing, "Haven't, we got enough", received only 72% of its normal for October.

November is the month of depressions, so far, we have had four of them. The combined pull of the planets, sun and the moon that pulled

an earth quake in Java on Nov. 2nd is still there to pull at our atmosphere. These pulls can when the ITCZ is over us reach the ground and become depressions or even storms. In September, they usually ride the southwest monsoon as upper-air circulations. The strong winds of the monsoon would not allow them to descend to earth level. First of these centred in the bay of Bengal and scared Andhrapradesh with cyclone warnings from satellite pictures. Cyclones can seldom develop out of a pull from above. They have to work themselves up from the humid bottom layers of the atmosphere, to consume the energy required to build up such destructive winds. Besides, satellite pictures are also deceptive. Once a rhombus shaped cloud over the pine woods of Canada alerted tornado warning. It was only the picture of a fog.

Two others passed over us from east to west and centred in the Arabian sea. First of them, on the 6th, giving Puttalam 7.7cm and Kurunegala 5.92cm. It moved north, giving Mannar 12.44cm on the 7th and Jaffna 7.20cm on the 8th and then into southern Tamil Nadu, where it flooded the Tamraparani river and caused tidal waves in the sea off Thirucherdur. The second one passed low over us on the 9th and 10th giving heavy rains at Batticaloa 13.13cm and Kandy 10.17cm on the 9th and Kurunegala 10.83cm on the 10th. It centred in the Arabian sea on the 11th, giving Galle 12.79cm. It is now moving away west to the Maldives after giving moderate rain to the southwest coast, chilaw the highest on the 12th. 6.80cm Kurunegala has been regularly receiving moderate to heavy rains in November. By the end of this month, it should be well out of drought and perhaps heading for an excess. There is another one that has centred itself at about 89E in the bay of Bengal.

In 1922, when Jupiter and Saturn came together in the same place in the heavens, there were many flash floods and the February 12th flash flood gave unprecedented rains from Batticaloa to Mannar and some of those falls are still unbeaten, yet for all, by the end of the year most places had not recorded even their annual average. The reason may have been that it was an year of sunspot minimum, where solar flares that could induce precipitation are also at a minimum. There was an eclipse of the sun on Sept. 21st, 1922, seen

as total in the Maldives and partial in Sri Lanka. This cut-off of Sun's energy for a few hours could not have much affected the annual rainfall, but there was a strange occurrence that year, whose effect on our weather can never be guessed. Comet Whipple was first seen in 1920. In 1922, it wandered into our solar system and moved along with Jupiter. During its close approach to Jupiter, it lost three years of its life, so that now it takes seven years to go round the Sun. It comes within 270 million miles of the Sun and moves away as far as 480 million miles. This is Jupiter's average distance from the Sun, so there will be an occasion in the future, when this Comet and the mighty planet wage their battle.

This year, the sunspot numbers are near maximum. The year began with the number at 100 and recently there were 3 solar flares, all within a day. The first one lasted 46 minutes and reached its maximum on Nov. 6th, 5.25 p.m. local time, the second one lasted 22 minutes and reached its maximum at 3.19 p.m. on the 7th. This was soon followed by a minor flare that lasted only 9 minutes. These flares had occurred, when we were in the dark and the immediate drying up of the atmosphere with millions of degrees rise in temperature may not have been shown but when the debris starts settling into our atmosphere, perhaps by the end of December, then we should have more and more rains, which should take us out of this drought, perhaps into flood.

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FOR THE PUBLIC GOOD

by Grassroots

ONE MAN—ONE JOB

ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT and successful decisions taken by the Jayewardene Government since it assumed office in July 1977 was that *one man should do one job*. We can still recall the SLFP days when certain blue-eyed individuals held several key jobs. The most popular illustration was that of Mr. Ridgeway Tillekeratne who held several jobs at the same time—Secretary, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (as it then was). Director-General of Broadcasting, Chairman SLBC, Competent Authority over Press Cen-

sorship etc. One of the Opposition papers neatly caricatured him with Medusa's head or several heads. The then practice of one man holding several key jobs was as bad as the *Family Tree* that Mrs. B. fostered. Mr. Jayewardene put a stop to this nonsense and established the principle that one man must do only one job—otherwise as the old saying goes he will be “a jack of all trades and master of none”—as happened earlier in many a case. Moreover, Government business, whether it be a Ministry, Department or Corporation, has grown so big and time consuming that it was humanly impossible for high level officers to do several jobs at the same time.

BUT RECENTLY, this Jayewardene *fiat* seems to have been ignored—perhaps without his conscious knowledge. Suddenly we find several key men holding several key jobs—all at the same time and the number seems to be growing. For over the past three months the Secretary, Ministry of Plantation Industries has been Acting as Secretary to the Prime Minister—far too long for any acting appointment—and not that the Plantation sector is doing that well so that he could afford to be elsewhere—and being Secretary to the Prime Minister is no child's play. Then again, the Secretary to the Cabinet is now Additional Secretary Defence. The reason is not clear. For the past two months the Ministry of Industries is without a Secretary and there is only an acting appointment which is not satisfactory. So also in the Ministry of Labour, where since Mr. Satyendra resigned there was no permanent appointment made for a period of three months until last week.

Apart from one Secretary looking after other Government Ministries and Departments it has also now become a common practice for Secretaries to serve as members on several Boards of Corporations and other State sponsored institutions like advisory bodies etc. For example, the Secretary to the Treasury, who is also Secretary for the Ministry of Finance and Planning, must have lost count of the number of Corporations and Advisory Boards on which he serves as a member. When a Secretary is nominated to so many Boards what normally happens is that he has very little time to give serious attention to the very important policy matters that come up. On the other hand his file is maintained and

brought upto date by his subordinate or middle level officers and it is normally the minutes and recommendations that they make on the file that he puts forward as his own views and recommendations. Very few high level public officials will deny that their decision making is largely influenced by what their subordinate officers tell them, because they themselves have very little time to think owing to the routine work they have to attend to every day—quite apart from the political pressures that are brought to bear on them as they sit at their tables everyday, every month of the year.

There are also Chairman of Corporations—particularly one concerned with buildings—who hold more than one full time appointment. No one questions the ability of these individuals to attend to more than one job but the principle—one man, one job—no longer holds good. The exception is now becoming a rule. Medusa's head must not re-appear again. Acting appointments, tem-

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

Reference No. LL/A 7185/A

It is intended to acquire the land described in the schedule below. For further particular please see the Gazette of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, No. 64 (Part III) of 23-11-1979.

Gananatha Abeyagunawardana
Assistant Government Agent,
Ratnapura District.

Land Branch,
The Kachcheri,
Ratnapura. 6th November 1979

Schedule

Name of land:—

Udawatta, Aluketiya Kumbura, Labuliyaddawatta, Joonawalawatta, Dickwatta, Alamullewatta.

Situation:—

In the village of Godigamuwa, Ward No. 5 in the Ratnapura Municipality Limit, Ratnapura D.R.O.'s Division, Ratnapura District.

Survey Reference:—

Preliminary Plan No. 6.86-Lot Nos. 1 to 5

porary appointments, additional appointments can only result in delay, procrastination and often with little work being actually done.

Apart from Secretaries holding several jobs it is now a policy decision that all tenders over a million rupees should be handled by a Cabinet appointed Tender Board. Here again Secretaries are normally appointed to chair these Tender Boards. Often these are time-consuming and while the principle is good, can Secretaries really afford to give so much of their time to such matters at the expense of other work which may be more development oriented? These are some of the issues that the Government should re-consider and find some solutions—quicker the better.

o o o

QUIDNUNCS

● Examination Watergate

● CGR Bloomer

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 is knowledgeable about matters educational has sent us this note entitled "Examination Department Watergate." "...You cannot find a single efficient administrator in the Education Ministry' be-moans a disenchanted Minister—but he has to look into his own appointments to know the reason why. It is simply because he has been carrying during the last two years a mighty band of fence sitters who like Humpty-Dumpty have had a great fall and not all the king's horses or all the king's men can put them to-

gether again. Here is an example of people whose experience lies more in the trapeze act and who pitch their tents on the night of a General Election.

"There was at one time, in the Education Ministry, a handful of officers in the upper echelons who just could not get through the Tamil Efficiency Bar which was a *sine-qua-non* for higher promotion. So they banded themselves together, rigged up the seating in the examination hall, supervised by a subordinate and answered their papers with a combined effort. This case came to light at the marking stage and the then Commissioner, a man of the highest integrity, debarred them from sitting the examination for 3 years which is what any candidate who has been found cribbing is subject to. The supervisor was also debarred from supervising. Then came Minister Baduiddin Mohamed and hey presto! The officers concerned passed the examination, became eligible for promotion and in fact forked out in different directions, up and up the escalator trampling the more deserving and really eligible people in their wake. Two of them, one a true hill country aristocrat of UNP vintage and the other a nephew of a low country senator with close ties with the SLFP, climbed the ladder pretty fast. The Supervisor remained debarred and the files remained in the record room of the Examination Department. With the effluxion of time when there were so many waiting for promotion within the Examination Department itself, one of the two mentioned above was made a powerful Commissar in the Examinations Branch—and he had a way with files. Normally, a file will not be sent down for destruction until 10 years have elapsed but these files like the Pentagon tapes vanished and found a resting place at the Valaichchenai Paper Mills, although they had been only a couple of years among the Examination department archives.

And when senior hands in the Examinations Department are waiting for promotion, a junior man who had been acting for 3 years on a specialised job was not only confirmed but immediately pitch-forked into another top niche in the Examinations Branch over the heads of three Assistant Commissioners. And another official whose record does not bear examination was given a key post in

the new Education Service Commission whose ostensible purpose is to crack down on irregular appointments, transfers, promotions, and malpractices and on corrupt officials and their venalities! Oh temporea! Oh Mores!! There is a Sinhalese aphorism, 'If the fence and the ridge start eating up the paddy to whom can one complain'?

Tailpiece. The "cause celebre" going the rounds among the knowledgeable is about the miraculous manner in which a student—the son of a big-wig—passed the GCE (O) Level with Credits and 4 months later the Advanced Level examination without sitting for it. There is a variant of this story; that he sat for it, but failed and was later 'passed' by special dispensation—much in the same way that the Bishops granted indulgences in the time of Chaucer."

Maybe this story is idle gossip, false and malicious, but so many UNP VIPs repeat it, and it is Gospel truth—that ordinary people want something more than a mere denial to dismiss the allegation or charge as a misplaced joke or a ridiculous falsehood.

*Our *Quidnunc* from Dematagoda (near the Railway yards) has raised some interesting queries about 16 Hitachi locomotives recently imported by the CGR. Were these locomotives of 1650 hp each not especially imported to haul trains with a minimum of 12 carriages on the upcountry railroads? Were these locomotives not imported against the advice of the manufacturers (Hitachi) themselves who had suggested a locomotive of slightly different specifications? Did not the CGR Advisor Mr. B.D. Rampala (who resigned after a few months) not cancel this order because he thought the locomotives were unsuitable—but no sooner he had quit, the order was renewed (this transpired in the evidence of an Engineer before the Corbett Jayewardene Commission)? That when the locomotives arrived and were put on the upcountry lines it was found that they could not haul more than 9 carriages and if there were more than 9 another engine was needed to push the train from behind? That now these locomotives have been put on the coast line where the maximum horsepower needed is only 1000? That these 1850 hp locomotives and the gentlemen who insisted on ordering them are now the laughing stock of the CGR? That they will become the laugh-

ing stock of the country when the facts are more widely known?

We would like to know whether the Railway authorities have anything to say on these queries.

Saradiel

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BELIEVE IT OR NOT

● **Planters' Problems**

● **JEDB**

BELIEVE IT OR NOT, each time *Tribune* has a piece on planterdom it is inundated with telephone calls from different capitals in the hill country. No sooner than the issue of 26/10/79 (Vol. 24 No. 16) was out, we had a phone call from Nuwara Eliya with meaty tidbits about the problems of planters and plantations.

This column had referred to the employment of ageing planters as superintendents blocking the promotional aspirations of younger men. Our caller pointed out the main problem was to find suitable men as Regional Managers on the salary offered to them which was less than that of a superintendent of a 1000 acre. Often the Regional Manager was also the superintendent of a 1000 or 2000 acre estate—and he had not only to look after his estate but also 30 or 40 estates in his region—a humanly impossible task. On the JEDB or SLSPC salaries no experienced planter would want to be a Regional Manager without having also being the superintendent of an estate. He cited various examples: the Regional Manager of Hatton was also superintendent of the 2000 acre Kirkoswald Estate 20 miles away; and the Regional Manager, Nuwara Eliya, was also superintendent of High Forest estate 12 miles away. There were other examples also. In the bad old days, an Agency House looked after 30 to 50 estates but had one Director to look after about 8 estates, but now a one Regional Manager had to look after 30 to 40 estates as well as the estate where he was superintendent.

Naturally neither the Region nor the estate concerned were adequately supervised

or run. The reason for the recurring losses in most tea estates was not due to low tea prices but to mismanagement, irresponsible expenditure, corruption and waste. In some cases, PDs with the connivance of bigwigs in the JEDB and SLSPC, had appointed their wives as accountants. Some superintendents had started largescale business ventures. Many have large vegetable acreages on a personal basis where estate labour, fertiliser and machinery are used. Some have turned their bungalows into guest-houses and use estate transport to transport guests. A few have set up guest houses in other parts of the country and all resources of the estates are diverted to build up this tourist business.

Believe it or Not, that unless something is done to end this state of affairs, our tea and rubber plantation can be written off as dead or frozen assets in a few years time.

BELIEVE IT OR NOT, there are allegations and reports from the planters world that there is a firm in Colombo 13 which is a major supplier to the JEDB and that they are also JEDB transport agents in an outstation area, although they do not own a single lorry.

Believe it or Not, even if stories of this kind are only partially true (there is no smoke without fire), the little bits of mud stick and

snowball into a mighty lump of dirty mud. It will not be difficult for the big bosses of the JEDB to spot this firm and see that its supplies and transport are competitive and efficient, and also ensure that no one in the JEDB headquarters is connected with it.

Sherlock Holmes

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SRI LANKA CHRONICLE

Nov. 8 — Nov. 14

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 Lanka-dipa; JD—Janadina; SU—Sun; DV—Davasa; DP—Dinapathi; CM—Chinthamani; WK—Weekend; RR—Riviresa; DK—Dinakara; EN—Eelanadu; IDPR—Information Dept. Press Release.

My No. LA/1604
Land Acquisition Act (Chapter 460) As Amended By The Land Acquisition (Amendment) Act No. 28 Of 1964.
Notice Under Section 7

The Government intends to acquire the land described in the scheule below for a public purpose. For particulars please see Part III of the Gazette No. 64 of 23-11-1979 of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka.

Schedule

Name of Land: Manalkadu
 Name of Village: Vannarponnai North West D.R.O.'s Div./A.G.A.'s Division: Jaffna
 Lots Nos: 1
 Plan No: P.P.Ya. 1129

M. Panchalingam
 A.G.A., Jaffna District

The Kachcheri,
 Jaffna. 30th October, 79.

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 8: Bangladesh President Ziaur Rahman and Sri Lankan President J. R. Jayewardene noted with satisfaction the development of bilateral relations between the two countries in all fields and emphasised their mutual desire for widening and deepening the areas and scope of co-operation in the economic, trade, cultural, technical, communications and other fields between the two countries, a joint communique issued yesterday said. Proposals for large-scale production of Power Alcohol from sugarcane, which can be used for all energy purposes diluted with petrol, diesel and kerosene will be submitted, jointly by the Ministry of Industries and Agricultural Development and Research to President J. R. Jayewardene shortly. Japan will give Sri Lanka outright grants totalling 2.9 billion Japanese yen (Rs. 203 million) towards economic development in Sri Lanka under an agreement signed yesterday. Public servants are to be allowed to express their views on staffing problems which have ham-

pered the smooth administration of their respective divisions; they would be given the opportunity to make representations to the Staffing Committee appointed recently—CDN. During a "friendly and fruitful exchange of views on a wide range of bilateral, regional and international issues," President Jayewardene and President Ziaur Rahman stressed the need for strict adherence to the basic principles and objectives of the Non-aligned Movement as a vital and important instrument for peace and progress in the world. President Ziaur Rahman of Bangladesh and Begum Rahman left Sri Lanka yesterday at the end of a four-day state visit—CDM. The Ceylon Petroleum Corporation is to set up a mid-sea oil storage complex either off Trincomalee or Colombo to stock the country's oil supplies for next year. The Indian Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) is to conduct a full probe into the alleged racket in the use of stolen and forged Sri Lankan passports by Indians and Pakistanis. Education and Higher Education Minister Nissanka Wijeyeratne said last night that if he was, in the slightest way, an embarrassment to the Government, he was prepared to go—SU. The Minister of Education, Dr. Nissanka Wijeyeratne stated in Parliament yesterday that accusations brought against him, his ministry and departments were baseless—EN. The Minister of Education Nissanka Wijeyeratne might be sent as the Ambassador to France; the Minister has agreed to resign as the Minister and MP for Dedigama and accept the post in France according to reliable sources. The President has advised members of the government not to criticise government policies and plans in Parliament; he has pointed out that if there are any criticism of policies they should be done at the Government MP's meetings—DK. The Minister of Trade will launch a new scheme of giving a percentage of the shares of the new National Insurance Corporation to the employees of the Corporation; if the government accepts the Minister's proposal this scheme will be implemented in other corporations as well—DV.

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 9: The European Economic Community (EEC) would give increased assistance to the tune of about Rs. 250 million next year for the Mahaweli Development. Mr. J. Leoff, Deputy Director-General of the EEC said yesterday; Mr. Leoff, who heads

the 17-member EEC delegation which arrived here for the 5-day EEC-Sri Lanka Joint Commission talks, said the EEC took great interest in the early completion of the Mahaweli project and had decided to increase the present quantum of annual assistance of about Rs. 50 million by as much as five or six times. The Government acting on a recommendation made by the Minister of Lands etc., has decided not to issue any permits for chena cultivation and also move out those having chena cultivations in the country's government owned forests; this is one of the many steps Minister Dissanayake has asked the Government to take to stop the denudation of the country's foreign cover. The Tamil United Liberation Front yesterday decided to allow its MPs to sign the OPEC petition. Sabotage was not completely ruled out in connection with the major fire that gutted cargo at the Queen Elizabeth Quay No. 1 last Friday, Port sources said yesterday. Floor prices governing subsidiary food crops, to safeguard the farmer were announced by the Ministry of Agricultural Development and Research after a proposal made by the Minister E. L. Senanayake was accepted by the Cabinet yesterday—CDN. The government has decided to give promotions and restore the status quo to those officers in the Public Services whose promotions were withheld on ground of non-proficiency in the official language, by the last government. The Cabinet yesterday decided to import 865 buses at a cost of Rs. 247,000,000 to improve the bus service. There has been a sharp drop in the volume of smuggling between India and Sri Lanka during the past year when compared with previous years, due to the vigilance of the authorities, said Mr. M. L. Wadhavan, Director of Revenue and Intelligence, India at a Press Conference held at the Information office, Colombo yesterday—CDM. Sri Lanka will grant Britain and Singapore most favoured nation status for investments here; Cabinet spokesman G. V. P. Samarasinghe told a news conference yesterday that this favoured treatment clause would apply both within and outside the Free Trade Zone. Maritime smuggling between India and Sri Lanka is being carried out solely by local fishermen; a number of them have been arrested by both Indian and Sri Lankan authorities while no Indians have been apprehended here, the Principal Collector of Customs H.

B. Dissanayake told a news conference yesterday. Sri Lanka's gross public debt amounted to a massive Rs. 32,970,821,320 as at September 30 this year, Central Bank sources disclosed. The Minister of Youth Affairs Ranil Wickremasinghe said in Parliament while presenting the National Youth Services Bill that the youth will not be forced to do compulsory service because this was against the policy of the government—DP. The government has decided to give away land free to those who have settled and started cultivating land belonging to the government—VK. The Cabinet yesterday decided to draw up laws enabling the setting up of factories with foreign investment that are presently restricted to the FTZ all over the country—DK. Dr. Colvin R. de Silva said at the New Town Hall that the only way to accelerate the victory of the International Socialist Movement is by Russia and China the two socialist giants of the world working together in unity for the success of the movement—JD. The government has decided to hand over the ownership of land given by the government to those who develop them in a limited time; these lands will be given to those who do not have land and a job. The Jathika Sevaka Sangamaya has complained to the President that the National Milk Board might have to be closed because of large scale malpractices and corruption by high officials of the Board—DV.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 10: A twenty-member French industrial and economic mission is due here next week to study investment possibilities here; the team is scheduled to have talks with Sri Lanka's political and commercial sector representatives. A seven-member trade team from Pakistan led by the Minister of State for Export Promotion, Hamid D. Habib is due here on Monday. Work on the Rs. 36 million Indo-Sri Lanka microwave telecommunications link has got under way with the construction of the 330 foot transmitting tower in Colombo and nine other repeating stations in the districts, Secretary, Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications Mr. C. J. Serasinghe said yesterday. The third stylised peacock to join the Airlanka flock took wing on its delivery flight from Hamburg on 8 November 1979 was scheduled to arrive at Colombo International Airport, Katunayake yesterday—CDM. The Attorney General's

Department is examining the possibility of instituting action against doctors who have left government service before the end of their five-year-compulsory period. President J. R. Jayewardene said yesterday that Education Minister Nissanka Wijeyeratne had shown that he was innocent of many of the charges made against him recently. Sri Lanka Freedom Party leader and Attanagalla MP Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike was yesterday awarded a sum of Rs. 250,000 damages by the District Court of Colombo, following an action instituted by her against the Associated Newspapers of Ceylon Ltd., for defamation. Brazil has agreed to assist Sri Lanka to develop its resources of power alcohol as an alternate source of energy, Foreign Minister A. C. S. Hameed told Parliament yesterday morning—SU. In a bid to speed the development of the Batticaloa district (which was badly affected by the cyclone) steps are being taken to do away with the Batticaloa Municipal Council and bring it under the proposed district development council—VK. The leaders of the UNP and SLFP are thinking of setting up a national government on the promise of recovering the country from economic difficulties; Mrs. Bandaranaike has accepted President Jayewardene's proposal and representatives of both parties are currently having preliminary discussions; an Ambassador of a powerful Western country and a top UNP supporter were the middlemen in the negotiations for the unity of the two parties—ATH. The government has decided to set up Labour tribunals in every district to solve labour disputes quickly; a new labour dispute legislation is to be prepared to set up these Tribunals—DM.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 11: Call it a development budget with substantial subsidies for the poor Minister of Finance and Planning, Mr. Ronnie de Mel said yesterday while he was adding the finishing touches to the third budget he will present to Parliament on Wednesday; twelve billion (12 thousand million) of the 23 billion rupee budget would be confined to development; there is 40 percent more on development expenditure than last year's budget. The Ministry of Trade will meet the consumer on his own doorstep from next year with a series of week-long mobile fairs in all parts of the country. The Bank of America considered the world's largest has

applied to the Ministry of Finance and Planning to open a branch in Colombo, spokesman for the Ministry of Finance said yesterday. The cyclone which mauled the Eastern Province in November 1978 took 915 lives, the highest death toll being in the Batticaloa district where 639 were killed, according to statistics compiled by the Office of the UN Disaster Relief Co-ordinator (UNDRO). The second stage of the Kelaniya Sacred Area Scheme will be declared open by the President J. R. Jayewardene on December 4. Students in 1600 schools will be given Kola Kenda and fish protein to supplement their diet in view of the widespread malnutrition prevalent among school children, particularly in the rural areas and the shanties in the suburbs—SO. Mr. C. Rajadurai, Minister of Regional Development has been entrusted with the task of "promoting Tamil language, culture and the implementation of the Tamil language provisions of the Constitution; provision has been made in the 1980 budget for the promotion of "Hinduism and Tamil language"—ST. Sri Lanka's Free Trade Zone, one of the Government's top Priority projects for national development, is being exploited by unscrupulous business concerns, investigations have revealed large-scale smuggling operations whereby various goods, imported duty-free by IPZ enterprises ostensibly for use in their factories at Katunayake, are being surreptitiously channeled into the local market. Crime prevention has been included as a subject in the curriculum of the teachers' training college in the island. The Special Presidential Commission examining the setting up of District Development Councils will submit its report to President J. R. Jayewardene on November 24. Congestion in the Port will soon end as Colombo's business centre becomes a massive no-parking zone—WK. The loss of Rs. 670 million from the railway, CTB, Plantations, Petroleum Corporation and the Lotteries Board has hampered the development of the country. The ministry of Health has drawn up a scheme to set up sinhala medicine pharmacies abroad and to develop ayurvedic medical system in these countries—RR.

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 12: The Land Reform Commission is coming down hard on land owners who have got rid of additional labour that was employed on their lands

after the take-over by the LRC and vested with the State Plantation Corporations; most these lands were taken over indiscriminately by the previous regime but the owners who had got them back after appeal were now getting rid of the extra labour that was recruited. The government is gearing itself to get the maximum workload from its half million strong public service, clamp down hard on corrupt and shirking officers and reward efficiency and hard work beginning next year 1980 which has already been declared the "Year of Work" in Sri Lanka. A new-look American Peace Corps is understood to be making overtures to come back to Sri Lanka. The Pakistan Embassy here has just received information from Karachi that the Sri Lanka rice delegation now in Pakistan has signed a Rs. 26 million contract for 100,000 tonnes of rice. Tax men from 13 countries in South and South East Asia will meet in Sri Lanka from November 19 to 24 for a seminar on tax systems—CDN. Government will introduce a bill in a fortnight to appoint an Ombudsman to ensure speedy inquiry into public complaints and secure immediate redress from them; the Minister of Justice, K. W. Devanayagam said yesterday that the Ombudsman would be modelled on the lines of the British Ombudsman—CDM. The issue of "Bearer Bonds" by the Government to mop up undeclared money is expected to be among the proposals for the 1980 budget Finance and Planning Minister Ronnie de Mel will introduce in Parliament this Wednesday. Microwave radio equipment is to be purchased by the Sri Lanka Air Force in a bid to fully modernise its communication network. Prospects of a united front of left parties to contest the forthcoming by-election in Galle are dwindling due to the reluctance of the LSSP and JVP, according to political circles—SU. The government last week directed the Legal Draftsman to prepare legislation to prevent the pollution of the seas around the island—CO. The government is thinking of doing away with the 5% import tax on agricultural implements such as marmoties, tractor spare parts; the government has also decided to increase the tax on radios, TV sets and other luxury goods—DP. The front engaged in determining justice and equality among the community has decided to launch a hunger strike in three prominent temples in Jaffna

in protest against abuse of human rights prevailing there—EN. Millions of rupees allocated by the government for cyclone rehabilitation work had been misused and mismanaged by some officials; cyclone affected areas are as they were after the cyclone and very little rehabilitation work has been done. Five left oriented political parties are turning steps to set up a new Marxist-Leninist Left party which will not support either Russia or China; a joint front of the five parties have been set up already and the new party is to be named as The New People's Front (Nava Janatha Peramuna)—LD. The Ministry of Plantations is to implement a new scheme to expand the rubber plantations as natural rubber prices increase in the world market with the oil price increase; the ministry has allocated an extra Rs. 310 million for this new project—DM. The government is to increase the price of a bag of cement to Rs. 55 with the next budget—ATH. The CTB has decided to follow strong policies in a bid to reduce the expected Rs. 150 million lost next year because of the oil price hike—DV. The government has decided not to raise prices of essential food items which will affect the poor in the next budget because of the Galle by election; the price increase will come into effect after the by-election—DK.

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 13: Around 400,000 students will begin their National Service from January; these students are those who have sat the GCE examinations at Ordinary and Advanced Levels and are awaiting results; the National Service Scheme was recommended by the Minister of Education and Higher Education, Dr. Nissanka Wijeyeratne and approved by the Government; it has been made a compulsory activity in the schools curricula from January next year. Sri Lanka's Foreign Minister, A. C. S. Hameed emphasised yesterday the need facing the world today to bridge the gap between the developed and developing countries. The Sri Lanka government and the government of the Swiss Confederation signed an agreement on November 5 in Berne, Switzerland, providing for a loan of Swiss francs 30 million (Rs. 302,6 million) to the government of Sri Lanka. People with black money who availed themselves of the tax Amnesty by the Finance and Planning Minister Ronnie de Mel in his Budget last year have

invested Rs. 9.5 million in Government approved industries—CDN. Any Sri Lankan who makes application or presents himself for an interview to any person other than a licensed employment agency for a job in any foreign country will commit an offence in future; a decision to this effect has been taken by the Minister of Labour, Capt. C. P. J. Seneviratne. Doctors who successfully complete Part II of the examination held by the Post-graduate Institute of Medicine will be given one year's training abroad and the Institute will bear all expenses incurred—CDM. Fire fighting equipment worth 24 million rupees including its first specialised fire-fighting vessel, will shortly be installed in the Colombo Port. Finance Minister Ronnie de Mel will present the third Budget of the present Government in Parliament tomorrow at 2 p.m. District Development Councils geared to undertake administration and development work at district level will come into being from January 1980; these Councils will replace the proposed Rural Councils, which had been the government's earlier thinking for district level development. Patients in paying wards of Government Hospitals will have to pay more from next month—SU. A new scheme for university entrance will soon be launched; a Cabinet sub-committee will work this out on the 22nd of this month—DP. Bus fares will go up by 60% from the first week of January; the government hopes to earn an additional Rs. 310 million from this increase—ATH. The government has decided to appoint Labour Officers in the Middle East countries to look after the needs of Sri Lankans employed abroad; the government has taken this decision as a result of a large number of complaints from those who are employed in the Middle East. The government is to take steps to draw up and implement massive development programmes in all the 24 districts—LD. The Internal Audit Department of the CTB has expressed their protest on the CTB's decision to import 380 buses at a cost of Rs. 190 million without calling for tenders—DK.

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 14: The Rs. 23 billion budget Finance and Planning Minister Ronnie de Mel presents today is part of the Rs. 50 billion four-year investment and employment-oriented program of the government, he announced when he presented his

budget last year; Government circles were confident yesterday Mr. de Mel will bridge the estimated Rs. 11.3 billion deficit when he announces his budgetary proposals in his four and a half hour presentation in Parliament this afternoon. The Government has approved the establishment of a flight calibration unit for Sri Lanka for the regular calibration of airport Instrument Landing Systems (ILS) as required by international standards an official spokesman said yesterday. The Finance Ministry announced yesterday that compulsory saving levied during 1974 and 1965 would be released soon. The UNP Working Committee has appointed a permanent Disciplinary Committee to probe all charges made against party members including members of Parliament. The Ceylon Hotels Corporation has decided to set up joint stock companies with local capital to finance its chain of hotels and resthouses throughout the country—CDN. The State subsidy on the Food Stamp scheme is expected to be much less next year; this is because only about 5 million persons are due to receive Food Stamps in its second issue commencing December 1 this year. The government has decided to double the export duties on cardamoms, cocoa beans and cocoa butter and reduce the duty on tea in packets—CDM. Government has tightened Job Bank recruitment procedures in a bid to ensure there are no malpractices; the more stringent procedure includes a requirement for Members of Parliament in future to personally endorse copies of all Job Bank registration forms released to job applicants. An intensive campaign to rid the Police force of corrupt and irresponsible officers has been launched by the Police Department. All public sector employees will in future have to wear identification badges the Ministry of Public Administration and Home Affairs announced yesterday. Regulations providing for the payment of rewards to informants who assist in the apprehension of traders contravening the Consumer Protection Law will be introduced by Trade and Shipping Minister Lalith Athulathmudali shortly. Aggona Chandare the number one criminal of Sri Lanka was sentenced to 42 years' rigorous imprisonment. The government is considering the restriction of motor vehicle imports—DV.

Indo-Pak, Sikkim, North-East

by R. Varadachari

Press Trust of India Correspondent in Colombo

EVEN AS THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN in India gathers momentum with the firm dates fixed for the polls, the Pakistani Ambassador in New Delhi, Mr. Abdul Sattar, has objected to attempts by the Indira Congress to project the political situation in Pakistan as a side issue in the campaign. In an apparent reference to the postponement of the general elections and continuance of the military rule in Pakistan, Mrs. Gandhi had said at an election meeting that India, as a close neighbour, cannot be unmindful of the recent developments in Pakistan. Coming in the wake of unconcealed expression of sympathy for the wife and the daughter of the late Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, Mrs. Gandhi's references to the internal situation in Pakistan from public platforms give a new dimension and an unsavoury flavour to the Indian election campaign and has elicited the concern of the military regime in Islamabad. Mrs. Gandhi has gone to the extent of alleging that the present caretaker Government of Mr. Charan Singh might try to postpone the elections with the excuse of a possible threat of Pakistani aggression. Mr. A. R. Atulay, General Secretary of the Indira Congress, has gone a step further and alleged that Mr. S. N. Mishra, Indian External Affairs Minister, had struck a "sinister deal" with the Pakistan President, General Zia ul Huq, when both were in Havana for the non-aligned summit to stage "border skirmishes and other incidents" to postpone elections both in India and Pakistan.

Following these allegations, the Pakistan Ambassador, Mr. Sattar, has called on the Indian External Affairs Minister and has expressed the hope that no adverse references would be made to his country during the Indian general elections. In voicing his appreciation of the policy of strict non-interference followed by the past and the present Indian Governments, the Pakistan envoy is known to have put forward the plea that mutual avoidance of official comment on internal developments in the two countries should be logically followed up by political parties and

responsible public personalities in the opposition for giving a bi-partisan character to Indo-Pak relations. Later in a public speech the Pakistan Ambassador had observed that misplaced expression of sympathy for one or other political party in another country smacked of a "presumptuous attitude" that was inconsistent with the principles of peaceful co-existence. A spokesman of the Indian External Affairs Ministry has denied Mr. Antulay's allegations as "totally incorrect and baseless." He has added that there was nothing "sinister or secret or surreptitious" about Mr. Mishra's meeting with Pakistan President in Havana.

A few days later Mr. C. Subramaniam, Indian Defence Minister, described as "totally baseless" rumours that the army was going to be used to create border incidents with Pakistan to get the elections postponed. Inaugurating a conference of Army Commanders in New Delhi, Mr. Subramaniam said, "to suggest that incidents on the border are being contrived to serve political purposes is, to say the least unfortunate and irresponsible." He affirmed that the Indian Defence Forces were completely apolitical and they did not get involved in politics, and added "there is a corresponding obligation on the part of the public, particularly the press, politicians and the political parties not to drag the army into political controversies." One should hope that despite the heat of the election campaign no further attempts would be made to bring in other countries' internal problems into the election campaign or involve the security services in the political crossfire of the campaign.

THIRTY NINE YEAR OLD NAR BAHADUR BHANDARI, leader of the Sikkim Janata Parishad, which was not even recognised by the Election Commission as a political party in the Himalayan state of the Indian Union, has assumed office as the Chief Minister of the State after his party's narrow win in the first elections to the State Legislature after the kingdom's merger with India. The Parishad secured 16 of the 32 seats in the Assembly and got the support of an independent member. The Sikkim Janata Party of the former Chief Minister Kazi Lhendup Dorji, could not even win a single seat while the breakaway group from his party, the Sikkim Congress (Revolutionary) got ten seats.

Some political commentators have be-

moaned the fact that none of the so-called national parties had secured a victory at the Sikkim state elections. But the truth of the matter is that no national party was really in existence in Sikkim. The Sikkim Janata Party led by Mr. Dorji was nothing else but the rechristened Sikkim National Congress which had overnight become a branch of the Indian National Congress headed by Mrs. Indira Gandhi in 1974 and again changed its label in a twinkle after the Janata Party had come to power in New Delhi. Indeed there was a move on the part of Mr. Dorji to further change name of his party into Janata (Secular) after Mr. Charan Singh assumed office in New Delhi. This became infructuous because of stiff opposition within his own party to any opportunistic change in name.

The Sikkim state election cannot also be interpreted as a foreunner to the Indian general elections as the issues which figured in Sikkim elections were essentially local. The merger of the kingdom with India did not also figure as an election issue. The abolition of reservation of seats for the Nepalese community, which constitutes the overwhelming majority of the population of Sikkim, brought about the downfall of Mr. Dorji. Following the new reservation scheme, which also enabled Indians from the plains settled in Sikkim for a long time to vote in the elections on the principle of "one voter one vote", there were desertions from Mr. Dorji's Janata Party and this breakaway group won ten seats. The Parishad cashed in on the Janata split on the eve of the elections and rode to power. The complete rout of Mr. Dorji however marks a tragic turn in the life of a venerable political leader who kept alight the torch of freedom and democracy over the years in Sikkim under the most adverse and trying circumstances.

MEANWHILE PRESIDENT'S RULE has been imposed on the Northeastern Indian Union territory of Arunachal Pradesh for three months following political instability in the border state. The Assembly has been dissolved to facilitate holding of a fresh poll which is likely to take place along with the elections to the Lok Sabha in the first week of January. The first general election in Arunachal Pradesh was held in March last year. The Janata party Government formed after the election fell

about eight weeks ago and was succeeded by the United People's Party Government headed by Mr. Timo Riba. Not long after, five members of his party defected to the Indira Congress, reducing the strength of the ruling party to 15 in the 33-member house. Arunachal Pradesh is the third centrally-controlled territory now under President's rule, the two others being Pondichery and Goa. Manipur, another frontier state in the Northeast, is also experiencing political instability and is also likely to come under President's rule soon. Manipur is however not a union territory and is a full-fledged state and this poses certain constitutional difficulty in the imposition of the President's rule there immediately. But the dissolution of the Manipur State Assembly and a fresh poll to the state legislature does not appear to be far off. The poll in the state will also most probably coincide with the general elections.

THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT is now very much concerned with the disturbed conditions in the entire northeastern region of India. Mr. Y. B. Chavan, Deputy Prime Minister and Home Minister paid an official visit to the area recently to make a personal assessment of the situation. The Indian National Daily, the *Hindu* reported that the Home Minister was taking all possible steps to ensure that the disturbed conditions in the north-eastern region did not get out of control to the point of impeding the orderly conduct of the elections there. "The necessary contingency plans are being drawn up for asserting the authority of the Centre if the State Governments are unable to cope with the local agitations that are assuming ugly proportions. The Governor of Assam, Mr. L. P. Singh has cautioned all the party leaders in the State that he cannot allow the agitation against the alleged inclusion of illegal entrants from Bangladesh in the electoral rolls to be used as an excuse for indulging in acts of violence against all non-Assamese who are Indian citizens."

The *Hindu* continued, "what has been worrying the Centre is not merely the gravity of these allegations but the varied grievances they tend to create in an area that is already subject to all the psychological pulls of sub-nationalism. The anti-Bengali riots in Assam and Meghalaya are matched by the pro-tribal agitations against the plains people of even

non-Bengali origin in Manipur and Tripura, not to speak of the insurgency in Mizoram, Nagaland and elsewhere in the North-east region. The student agitators in Assam are threatening to boycott Government offices, paralyse the administration and prevent the elections, while their counter-parts in Meghalaya are on a rampage threatening all outsiders to quit the state. The terrorists in Manipur and Tripura, deriving their inspiration from Naga and Mizo insurgents, have been ambushing police posts to seize arms, looting banks, committing dacoities and raiding bazaars to create a feeling of insecurity and frighten the so-called pro-Indian section supporting the Government." The *Hindu* went on: "Though Nagaland has been relatively quiet with no recrudescence of violence, the situation in Mizoram continues to be explosive, threatening to cause serious trouble again. The Centre is not concerned so much about the law and order aspects of this situation as the feeling of alienation that the highly emotive agitations are breeding in the north-east region. The Security Forces displayed in this vast area are placed in a difficult position in assisting the local police in dealing with these violent movements and upholding the authority of the State Governments and Union Territory administration. Their exemplary restraint is mistaken for a sign of weakness which only encourages the insurgents and student agitators to indulge in further acts of violence. An attempt to deal firmly with the terrorists and trouble-makers leads to the outcry of police and military excesses against the civil population. The attempts of the agitators to interfere with the elections is 'posing a grave challenge to both Central and State Governments in the discharge of their responsibilities to ensure an orderly poll in this disturbed region.'" The *Hindu* concluded: "The very fact that there is only a caretaker government at the Centre which is constrained from taking any drastic action to forestall further troubles, has been encouraging the trouble-makers to indulge in more violence." This disturbing report in the *Hindu* added a new dimension to the already sensitive situation in this border region which is increasingly plagued by political instability so discouraging to the security needs of the country.

(SLBC talk—17.11.79)

24 Different Nationalities Live In Harmony

by Jovan Vavic

The Socialist Autonomous Province of Vojvodina is one of the two autonomous provinces which form part of the Yugoslav Federation. On account of the diverse nationalities which make up its two million population, Vojvodina is frequently called "Yugoslavia in miniature". This could virtually be considered to be true as living and working there, struggling together, sharing the same joys and sorrows are Serbs, Hungarians, Croats, Slovaks, Romanians, Montenegrians, Ruthenians, Macedonians, Romanies, Germans, Ukrainians, Slovenians, Bulgarians, Moslems, Albanians, Czechs, Russians, Poles, Jews, Greeks, Turks, Italians, Wallachs and Austrians—twenty four nationalities in all. There are also 600 inhabitants of other nationalities and ethnic groups, while slightly over 53 thousand inhabitants did not commit themselves to any nationality. This national mosaic is not considered in this province or in Yugoslavia as a kind of handicap. On the contrary, the nationalities are, and they say it themselves, real bridges linking with other nations and countries in the world, a strong thread in the rapprochement of nations.

In multi-national Vojvodina there are five equal written and spoken languages established by the Constitution of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina: Serbo-Croatian, Hungarian, Slovakian, Romanian and Ruthenian. This year, for example in Vojvodina over 600 different papers, magazines and periodicals will be published in these languages, 745 books and other reading material are published annually in a total of 2 million copies. Novi Sad, the economic, cultural and administrative centre of Vojvodina, has radio and television stations which daily transmit programmes in all five languages. Teaching is carried out in 150 primary schools in Hungarian, in 29 in Romanian, in 22 in Slovakian and in 4 in Ruthenian. Members of the nationalities (the concept of "minority" is not contained in the Constitution) attend secondary schools and faculties where lectures are given in their

mother tongue. Delegates in the Assembly of Vojvodina or in the assemblies of the 44 municipalities have the right, as laid down in the constitution and in the municipal statute, to speak in their own language. This right is being used to an increasing extent.

A new and doubtless important fact was recently reported on the question of the written and spoken languages: at the present time, 79 thousand pupils in Vojvodina learn the language of their social environment on a voluntary basis. This language may be Hungarian, Serbo-Croatian, Slovakian, Romanian or Ruthenian, depending on the composition of the population in each municipality. This fact shows that the consciousness is constantly developing on the need to know the languages of the nations and nationalities, people, neighbours, their environments, for they are linked in life and work by thousands of threads. The draft for a new provincial law is now being discussed publicly in Vojvodina. Three principles of the law attract special attention: (1) the free choice of citizens as to their own name and how it is written; (2) the assurance of the equality of the written and spoken languages of the nations and nationalities in the selection and writing of the name;

Simplicity of procedure in the determination and the writing of the name in the registers of births of multi-national Vojvodina. Especially in the period from 1918, in the twenties and the thirties and during the occupation, the register of births once again underwent changes. Even after the liberation, the registers of births in this province were written in such a way as to guarantee citizen all rights. Many nationality members have however, be written in the register of births by means of phonetic transcription. A decree from the Provincial Secretariat for Justice two years ago gave the registers of births the right to carry out alternations in the registers of births when so requested by citizens. This decree has now, however, been made law. An average of 17 thousand marriages take place in Vojvodina every year, almost one third of which are "mixed". This is, however no longer a subject of interest either for the Vojvodina papers or the radio. This is because it is a normal and natural occurrence for such an environment as Vojvodina where everything is written in—the language of equality.

—Tanjug

Confidentially

- Lake House
- Private Secretaries

WAS IT NOT STRANGE that the *Ceylon Daily News* should carry a half-page advertisement in its issue of November 7 to publicise a book called "From A Soviet Russian Prison Cell" by Oruwela Bandu "To Commemorate The October Revolution?" That it was claimed that the first part (Fifth Year) of the book received the State Literary Award in 1969: that the author has been a lecturer in the University of Ceylon; that another six parts of "From a Soviet Prison Cell" was now ready for printing and that this book will be translated into five languages (except Russian) within three months? That the price of the book was Rs. 12/50? That it is not necessary to go into the credentials and history of the author? That a book should be judged on its content and quality? That there were however a few strange things about this advertisement? That the first strange thing about it was that it is completely anonymous in that there was no address where the book could be bought or the name of the advertiser? That this is the first time anyone has seen an anonymous advertisement of this kind in the *Daily News*? That the second strange point is the timing—it appeared on the page before the Soviet Supplement for its National Day? That in the same issue there was also a report of Prime Minister, Premadasa opening the book exhibition (he made a laudatory speech about the USSR)? That the timing of the advertisement made it political—i.e., obviously to detract from the Soviet National Day? That this is a free country and everyone has the right to publish what he wants? That Oruwela Bandu is entitled to write as many anti-Soviet books as he wants and he can have advertisements in all the papers? That what is strange is that an anonymous advertisement should have been published in a government paper to denigrate a country on its National Day with which the Sri Lanka has good and friendly relations? That nobody would have said anything if the advertisement had appeared on any other day although the

anonymity would have attracted attention? That unless the Government and Lake House have clear-cut policies on advertisements and their timing, we will find many requests to publish advertisements on the Indian, Pakistani, Bangladesh, US, French and other National Days when these countries run their special supplements? That it will be wrong to publish pointedly political and hostile advertisements on such days? That all advertisements, especially those politically motivated, should bear the name and address of the advertiser or at least go under a traceable Lake House box number? That in the absence of such "openness", the government-owned *Daily News*, if it chooses to publish such indirect attacks on friendly countries under cover of advertisements on their National Days, will get a reputation for vicious partisanship? That it will be interesting to find out who paid for this advertisement—was it done in the name of an employee of Lake house? That if this kind of advertising is allowed in the government media, it will promote a new kind of cold war between countries friendly to Sri Lanka behind the smokescreen of anonymous advertisements?

IS IT NOT TRUE that the Minister of Education defended himself in Parliament with vehemence and vigour? That the President endorsed his statement and gave him a clean bill about his integrity and honesty—in a speech at St. Joseph's College in which the President drew a distinction between free opinion and libel? That this cannot be pushed too far because rogues and scoundrels will seek to plead that even truth in the public interest is libel? That the Minister Wijeyeratne made a heroic defence of himself but there is one particular matter he did not touch on—a matter that is going round all political and diplomatic circles in Colombo? That we ourselves will be happy to have the answers before we reveal the news down the grapevine? That the question is how many private secretaries does a Minister need—under various designations, Public Relations Officers, Parliamentary Co-ordinating Secretary etc., etc.? That normally each ministerial dignitary is entitled to two at state expense? That if one Minister is in charge of two Ministries does he need four instead of two? That Minister Nissanka Wijeyeratne should state whether the story going round that he has four private secretaries is true or not, and if true and who they are?

THE LEVER BROTHERS CULTURAL CONSERVATION TRUST

The purpose of the Trust, which receives the profits made from the sale of the Thorana Guide to Sri Lanka, which has just been released for sale is to help to Preserve any aspect of Sri Lankan culture which is in danger of being lost.

The Trust was originally conceived in order to finance a photographic record of rural paintings in temples to aid future restorers, but it was soon apparent that, although this task alone would take several years to complete, there would be a continuing need for other rescue operations. The terms of the Trust have, therefore, been drawn to cover any aspects of Sri Lankan culture which are in danger.

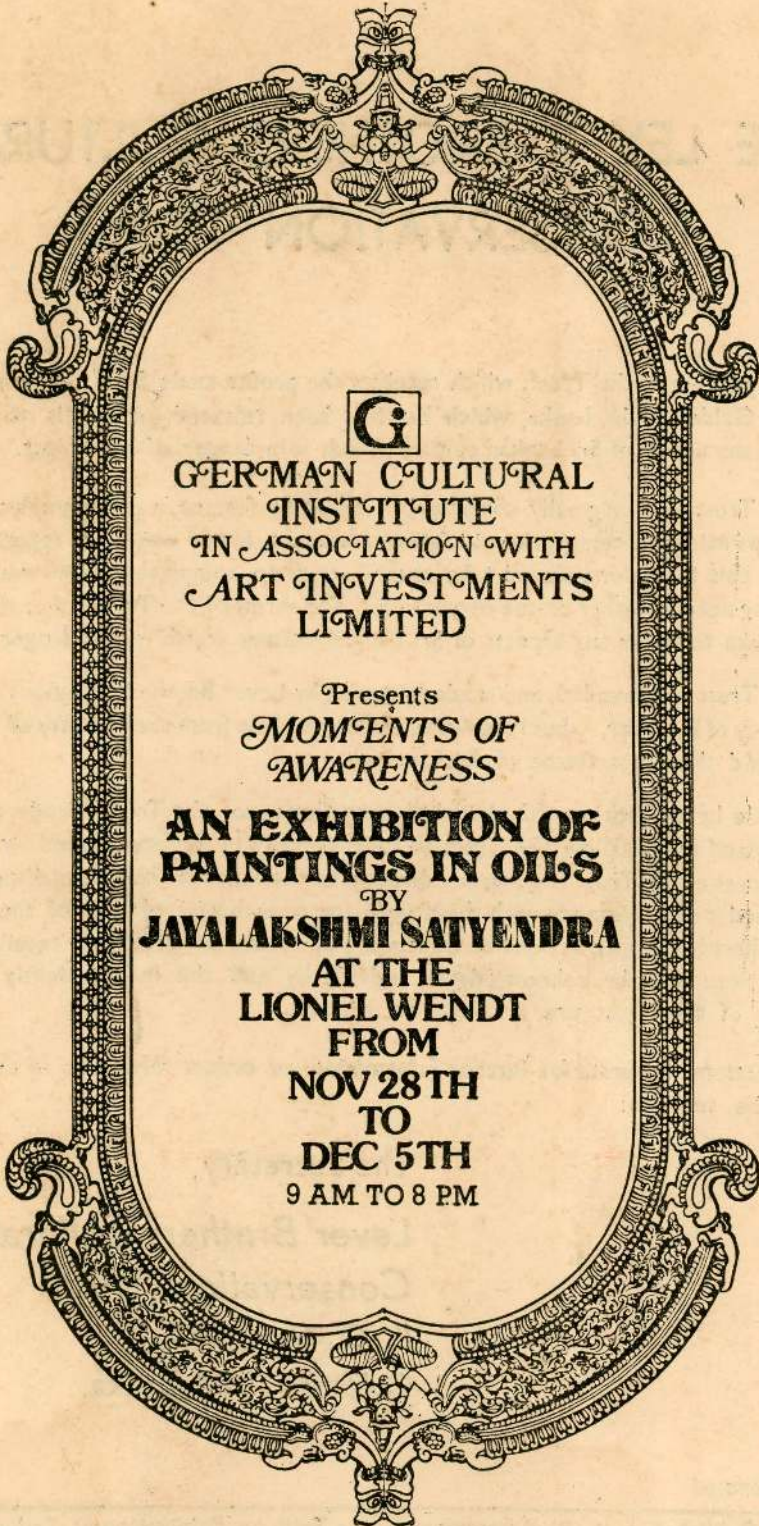
The Trust was founded, and is administered by Lever Brothers (Ceylon) Limited, a subsidiary of Unilever, but it receives advice and help from the Ministry of Cultural Affairs and the Department of Archaeology.

While Lever Brothers (Ceylon) Ltd, contributes to the Trust's funds annually, this by itself would allow the Trust to function only in a very limited way. The effectiveness of the Trust is governed directly by the funds it has at its disposal and, since speed is of the essence with the disappearance each year of more of the nation's cultural heritage, contributions of whatever size would be gratefully received. All contributions will be acknowledged individually and the independently audited accounts of the Trust are available on request.

Donations, requests for further information or orders for copies of the Guide should be sent to:

The Secretary,
*Lever Brothers Cultural
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