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The Life Of Sir Ponnambalam Ramanathan

by

M. Vytilingam, B. A. (Lond)
formerly Principal Hindu College, Chavakachcheri

IN TWO VOLUMES

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79/B, Browns Road, Jaffna
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Letter From The Editor

ON THE COVER we have a picture of a young buffalo calf, newly born, being examined by its elders. We have too few calves being born in this country now because the cattle and the buffalo population capable of increasing the livestock herds have all but disappeared. Recent governmental reports and articles in the *Economic Review* published by the People's Bank on the crisis in the livestock and dairy industry, reveal a sharp decline in the national cattle and buffalo populations with the consequent drop in milk production and consumption. In 1963, it was estimated that there were 1,595,900 cattle and 852,000 buffaloes; in 1969/70 there were 1,593,000 cattle and 736,000 buffaloes; in 1973 the figures were 984,000 cattle and 387,000 buffaloes; in 1976/77 the number were 910,000 cattle and 387,000 buffaloes; and in 1978 it was 750,000 cattle and 325,000 buffaloes. This is a serious decline in spite of the continuing imports of high quality animals especially for breeding. In this situation, shortage of meat and milk become inevitable, and the country for some years now has had to import millions of rupees worth of milk powder and now meat also. This is suicidal for a country which has all the natural resources and the environment not only for self-sufficiency in meat and milk but also an export potential for the same products. This dilemma before the nation has been posed some-time ago in this way: "The alternative challenge for the Government is to substitute local development and production with more and more imports and find more foreign exchange, loans and grants as Aid for this purpose. Already imports of milk foods and cattle are increasing. The Government will have to start importing on a continuing basis livestock feed, eggs and chicken by 1979, and beef and mutton by 1980, if not earlier, unless a major reorganisation is undertaken now as a matter of urgency. Even now it is difficult to supply 4 days of beef and mutton a week in the high consumption urban areas. The C.I.F. prices of all imports except eggs will be more than double current local prices. Therefore by the end of 1980 all prices of livestock products must double. To expect a subsidy on imports will be against the present Government policy, unless to force down local prices. But for how long? If a subsidy is not given imports will be available only to hotels, foreigners and the affluent class. And, whereas we do, a fair price to our farmers we shall be supporting more farmers in other countries. It will be another tiger by the tail like rice and flour The Leather Corporation too will have to import hides and subsidise local footwear with export earnings. In the meantime unemployment will increase in the sub-sector. Let us therefore place the crisis in the dairy sub-sector in correct perspective. There are no solutions for the dairy sector per se. There are very close agro-economic inter-relationships with the beef market, the coconut industry and even the paddy sector. In fact these permeate through the whole agricultural sector. There are no magic or instant solutions either. Nor are there once and for all permanent solutions. A solution today such as say on prices, will certainly need revision tomorrow or the day after when the circumstances in which the decision was taken changes Now, what is the Government doing about meeting this challenge? Apart from importing beef, mutton, lamb and poultry meat, what steps has government taken to encourage the increase of livestock herds in this country and to restore poultry farming to what it was a few years ago? Imported meat cost more and only five star hotels and the affluent class are able to purchase them at any price. But what of the many thousands who do not come into this category of the affluent? Is the local butcher and poultry farmer only to cater to the poor? How long can he go on with the diminishing herds of cattle and goats and languishing poultry industry?

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EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

SLFP And The New Constitution

The new Constitution of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka (DSRSL) is now a fact of history. It will be promulgated on September 7, 1978, and shortly after that Mr. J. R. Jayewardene will take his oaths as President. The National State Assembly—so named after the short-lived Constitution of 1972—will once again be known as the Parliament. The new Constitution is being made operative with a certain amount of understandable tamasha, but it is time that the Government starts cutting down on tamashas and gets down to actual work. Every project, however small, has been inaugurated with the same fanfare and hullabaloo as the fuss made for the bigger projects. People have begun to get tired of the Supplements and Special Issues of the daily papers—these only contribute to the galloping disbelief which is fast overwhelming whatever credibility the daily papers, especially the two government sponsored groups, have enjoyed as a residual heritage.

Government will be well advised to end the era of post July 1977 euphoria and get down to implement the President's dictum 'work or depart'. One step in the right direction is to cut the government and statutory holidays to the barest minimum. When the proposals about reducing holidays are finally made, there will naturally be a storm of protest from certain quarters which have acquired a vested interest in the holiday business. It is a happy augury that government leaders, es-

pecially the President and the Prime Minister have shown welcome determination to persuade, induce and even compel people into doing the work they are paid to do.

To ensure that people turn their minds and attention to the productive effort, the government must end the tamashas, the carnivals and the circuses—whether under religious, cultural, economic or political garb. We have had enough of Kapilavastu, of Peraheras, of Commissions and Rallies. All these gimmicks may help to mobilise the illusion of popular support, but in the long run, experience and history have shown that they boomerang on those who have used them. There is today a danger that Presidential Commission may be turned into gladiatorial circus in which a few selected victims are thrown to the lions.

These victims have often become martyrs and an experienced and astute politician like President Jayewardene will know how easily martyrs are made in the volatile era in which we live. A major faux pas was recently committed when an island-wide poster-cum-publicity campaign was launched to "find and arrest 43 most wanted Tamil youth." This was done presumably because some policemen and bureaucrats had felt that this was one way of bringing the Tiger movement under control. But, the whole thing not only turned out to be a damp squib, and the government only succeeded in creating 43 new Tamil martyrs. It is to be hoped that the Presidential Commission will not prove either a damp squib or become a Tribunal to churn out political martyrs.

If the government does not make mistakes by over-playing its hand,

the SLFP and the TULF—the two opposition parties in the NSA—will fail to make any headway in regard to their opposition to the new Constitution. Take the SLFP. It co-operated with the government in the Select Committee for the reform of the Constitution and only entered its dissent and staged a walkout when it found that the recommendations of the Select Committee would be transformed into a new Constitution and not be merely amendments to the 1972 Constitution. Until that objection was raised by the SLFP at a late stage, everybody believed that the SLFP was in with the UNP on the new constitution.

Tribune has published in full the dissent of the SLFP which was an annexure in the Report of the Select Committee. When the draft constitution was taken for discussion on August 2, the SLFP's leader, Mrs. Bandaranaike, made a statement, on August 3, rejecting the Constitution and thereafter the entire SLFP group in the NSA, staged a walkout. The SLFP did not vote at the end of the second or third reading.

In the statement she read out in the NSA on August 3, 1978, Mrs. Bandaranaike said: "On October 4th 1977, in making a statement on behalf of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party in the National State Assembly, on the Second Amendment to the Constitution which sought to confer on the Hon. J. R. Jayewardene the powers of President and of Prime Minister, I said that that amendment will set our country on the road to dictatorship, and that there will be no way of turning back. I warned that once that amendment became part of the Constitution, the erosion of the democratic process will not only be inevitable, it may also be irreversible.

"It has taken this Government and this Assembly barely ten months

to reach the end of that road. Within a matter of days, or perhaps even of hours, the last remaining lamp of freedom will be snuffed out. The events of the past few months are reminiscent of the last days of the Weimar Republic when Adolf Hitler, using the constitutional process, rapidly destroyed the foundations of the constitutional state. He too combined in his person the powers of President and Chancellor, and then transformed by constitutional amendment a federal democracy into a centralised autocracy under the direct control of Fuhrer. He too, relied on a massive mandate which he had received at a plebiscite, and insidiously removed every constitutional protection contained in the Constitution of the Weimar Republic until finally the only political sanction that remained in Germany was the despot's whim. The people of Germany, and indeed of the world, paid a heavy price for having merely stood and stared. But today, here and now, at the first and possibly the last opportunity I would have of freely exercising my freedom of speech I would like to state, on behalf of myself and of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party, that the day on which the dictatorship of his Excellency Junius Richard Jayewardere is established by means of the so-called Constitution of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, will also be the day on which we begin our struggle outside this Assembly. We will go to the people, and together we will strive to set alight once more the lamps which you have extinguished. I know that there will be against us not only the forces of local reaction to which you have given new life, but also those of neo-colonialism which have at long last been provided with a foothold here in Sri Lanka. I know that the full force of State Power will be used against us, and we will probably be arrested under

your new laws, and brought before your new courts, and locked up in your new jails. But no people fighting for their freedom have been deterred by such acts, threats or fears. The Sri Lanka Freedom Party, which has been sanctified by the blood of its founder, will certainly not be deterred.

"I think I owe an explanation to this Assembly and to the country, for having participated in the work of the Select Committee which this Assembly appointed on October 20th 1977. The motion that was adopted on that day was that a Select Committee of this Assembly be appointed to consider the revision of the Constitution of the Republic of Sri Lanka. A Questionnaire was issued by the Select Committee on the basis of amending the existing Constitution. Evidence was taken before the Select Committee on matters which required amendment in the existing Constitution. In neither of the two drafts placed before the Select Committee was there a clause by which the existing Constitution was to be replaced. The absence of such a clause strengthened our belief that what was intended was an amendment of the existing Constitution. It was upon that fundamental premise that the Sri Lanka Freedom Party participated in the work of the Select Committee with the object of preventing a further erosion of the supremacy of the National State Assembly and a further arrogation of power by one individual who had already placed himself not only above, but also beyond the control of, the Legislature and the Courts. We would not have been so naive as to have participated in an exercise to repeal a Constitution, the drafting of which we ourselves had initiated upon a mandate from the people, and through a popularly elected Constituent Assembly as recently as 1970. Indeed, Constitutions are to be changed with

such rapid frequency, they will lose their claim to supremacy over ordinary law, and each succeeding government will have no alternative but to enact and operate a Constitution of its own.

"This is not the only matter on which we have been deliberately misled. After the report of the Select Committee had been presented to this Assembly and published as a sessional paper, three new sections have been smuggled into the draft Constitution. These sections are so fundamental in nature and so draconian in character that had they even been suggested at a meeting of the Select Committee, the Sri Lanka Freedom Party would have immediately withdrawn, and disassociated itself from further deliberations of the Select Committee. These three sections, in our view, constitute the most diabolical threat to the continued survival of the democratic process in Sri Lanka."

After this preamble, which reveals the *raison d'être* behind SLFP's logic, she went on to examine some of the sections in the new Constitution to which the SLFP was opposed. First it was Section 157, but confronted with the withdrawal of this section (which imposed penalties on those who urged changes in the Constitution except "through Parliament") she resorted to a homily: "The Sri Lanka Freedom Party has never attempted to overthrow a Government by terror, nor will it make such an attempt in the future. The Sri Lanka Freedom Party has never looked benignly whilst conspiracies were being hatched to establish military dictatorships, nor will it ever condone such adventurism in the future. The Sri Lanka Freedom Party has faith in the people of this country. It believes in the power of the people' and no Constitution can ever inhibit that power. Therefore, I would like to state quite

categorically that the Sri Lanka Freedom Party will not be terrorised by the threat which you have written into the Constitution. At the first available opportunity, the Sri Lanka Freedom Party, will, with the power of the people's vote, adopt a new Constitution which will be in accord with our national sovereignty and the twin principles of social justice and—individual freedom."

Then, she went on to condemn section 158 which related to agreements with foreign countries regarding investments in the FTZ. She branded the section as opening the country to neo-colonialism (forgetting that she and Felix had done their darndest to invite the neo-colonialists between 1975 and 1977, if not earlier). This section was amended on August 16 at Committee stage to take part of the neo-colonialist sting out of it.

Third, she pointed to a new section inserted after the Select Committee report which enabled Presidents: "to expel any one or more of his 141 members of Parliament and to substitute new members of his choice. A member of Parliament, having campaigned strenuously in his electorate, having faced the vicissitudes of a general election, having been elected by the free votes of an overwhelming majority of the voters, can now be summarily removed from Parliament and replaced by one or more acceptable to the President by the simple device of expelling him from the party.

"Such a member would not have been found guilty of a corrupt or illegal practice, nor would he have become subject to any other disqualification. His only crime would have been to incur the wrath or the displeasure of His Excellency the President. Parliament will soon comprise, not of members elected by the people, representing their simple aspirations and sensi-

tive to their daily problems, but of the President's nominees, reflecting his conception of a Sri Lanka as another Singapore of South Korea, sharing his dreams of an era of unbridled capitalism, and helping him reach his goal of absolute power. A simple Sinhala farmer from an electorate in the rural backwoods of Sri Lanka can overnight be replaced in this Assembly through the back door, by a Maharajah or Gnanam or an Upali Wijewardene. I would like to ask this government whether it sought a mandate from the country at the last general election to substitute Members of Parliament in this fashion without holding by-elections even before the concept of proportional representation is introduced? As recently as a few months ago, the Hon. Prime Minister challenged me to resign my seat at Attanagalla and face a by-election at which, he said, he would nominate a youth to contest me. Why has this Government suddenly changed its mind and dared to do what has hitherto been considered impossible? The answer is not difficult to find. But I doubt whether the problem of almost certain defeat at by-elections can be overcome by this ingenious solution of abolishing by elections altogether. I also doubt whether dissension within the ranks of the Government, which must escalate as the cost of living continues to gallop, can be stemmed by using the threat of expulsion from Party and Parliament. A Parliament that consists of all the President's men will soon lose its relevance, and neither the President nor his Men will have the strength or the capacity to survive the day of reckoning when the sovereign people of our country rise in defence of their inalienable rights."

Then, she went on to say that though the Party's main objec-

tions to the new Constitution had been set out in the dissent to the Select Committee report, there were a few objections to particular sections that had to be stressed: "We object to the manner in which it is proposed to elect a President. We have consistently pointed out that since the term of the President extends beyond that of Parliament, a very serious constitutional crisis would arise in the event of the President's Party being defeated at a general election. The live, vibrant democracy which we have enjoyed in Sri Lanka for nearly thirty years will be replaced by chronic insecurity when an incumbent President is faced with a hostile legislature." (She forgets that democracy was not vibrant, free nor lively between 1970-1977 when it was a state of permanent Emergency together with the CJC Acts, the elimination of the Rule of Law in the 1972 Constitution and the dictatorship of the Family caucus —Ed.)

(ii) "We object to the manner in which it is proposed to elect a succeeding President when a President vacates office prior to the expiration of his term."

(iii) "We object to the system of preferential voting which is proposed to be used at the election of the President by the people. The draft Constitution requires each voter not merely to vote for the candidate of his choice, but also to indicate his second and third preferences. Having regard to the fact that hitherto our voters have only been called upon to mark a cross against a symbol identified with a candidate or a recognised political party, we think that the proposed method of election is most impractical. In this context, the adoption of the system of preferential voting at the election of the President amounts almost to a disenfranchisement of the simple rural voter—a section of society

SLPF's Objections

which is becoming increasingly disillusioned with the performance of the present Government. The Commissioner of Elections suggested the continued adoption of the "first-past-the-post" system."

(iv) "We object to the President being placed above the law and beyond the jurisdiction of the Courts."

(v) "We object to the adoption of a system of proportional representation at the Parliamentary level without first having ensured a strong and effective system of local government, which enabled the voter to elect directly from his ward a member of his choice with whom he could maintain the same relationship that now exists between him and his Member of Parliament. The so-called people's representative, at the Parliamentary level, will now be a name on a list, a remote figure having no contact with the voter, with no responsibility for the development of any particular area or for the welfare of the people who live therein."

(vi) "We object to the concept of the cut-off point of 1/8 or 12% of the votes cast at any election. Under the draft Constitution, a political party which secures less than 12% of the votes cast for a list of candidates is struck off and such political party is not considered to have even participated at such election. This provision, which is most undemocratic and unreasonable will result in the suppression of strong minority groups and the denial to them of a forum through which they could seek to influence the Governmental process."

(vii) "We object to the concept of a referendum which can be invoked only by the President."

(viii) "We object to the imposition of civic disabilities and the expulsion of Members of Parlia-

ment, by resolution of Parliament, upon the report of a Special Presidential Commission. Such a Commission is not required to inquire and find whether a person has committed a criminal offence. Instead, it has powers only to determine whether an administrative act of a Minister or official could be described, in the opinion of three judicial officers as amounting to political victimisation, misuses or abuse of power."

(ix) "We object to the removal from office of the judges of the Supreme Court and of the High Court. Every Constitution has guaranteed the judge of our highest courts security of tenure and provided that they may be removed by Parliament only for provided misconduct. Every government has so far honoured this provision whenever it has sought either to amend or replace a Constitution. For the first time, the present Government is seeking to remove all the judges of the two highest courts in the country in order to constitute new courts of a particular flavour. This blatant and gross interference with the judiciary can only result in creating courts whose term of office would necessarily have to be limited to that of the government itself."

(x) "We object to the illusion of fundamental rights which is sought to be created by the draft Constitution. In reality, some of the most fascist legislation of recent times, such as the Parliamentary Powers and Privileges (Amendment) Law, the Special Presidential Commissions of Inquiry Law, the Criminal Procedure (Special) Provisions Law, the Proscribing of Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam and other Similar Organisations Law, and the Local Authorities (Imposition of Civic Disabilities) Bill, all of which are totally inconsistent with the statement of fundamental rights so loft-

ily displayed in the draft Constitution, are being entrenched, on the eve of the Constitution, as 'existing law' which will continue to be valid notwithstanding any inconsistency with fundamental rights. In addition, the President is being authorised, in a wide variety of situations to make emergency regulations taking away nearly all of the fundamental rights. In this fashion, far from guaranteeing any human rights, what the draft Constitution does is to authorise rights and freedoms universally accepted as fundamental to be derogated from, restricted and trespassed upon by the President and the State, and this gives the stamp of legitimacy to what would otherwise have been blatant suppression of individual liberty."

After setting out these points she stated: "For the reasons which I have endeavoured to explain, the Sri Lanka Freedom Party will not participate further in the debate on the draft Constitution. When you adopt this Constitution and bring it into operation, you would have emulated Adolf Hitler. You would have made a mockery of the Parliamentary process and made use of it, as he did to enthrone an autocrat. But the life and times of Adolf Hitler should be a reminder to you that neither fascist laws nor the force of arms can ever suppress the spirit of man. When endurance is stretched to its uttermost limits, and human suffering reaches its peak, neither your Constitution, however rigid it may be, nor your professed commitment to Dharmista, however often you may recite it, will protect you from, or help overcome, Nemesis."

This final piece was couched in the language of biblical prophecy Right through the speech, from almost the beginning, she harped on the theme that J. R. was setting out to be another Adolf

Hitler. Too late in the day, she speaks of Hitler. He is a forgotten man and few in Sri Lanka now know what he was and what he stood for. He cannot be made a bogey man by Mrs. Bandaranaike to frighten people in Sri Lanka.

Judging from reactions in the country, Mrs. Bandaranaike's statement on behalf of the SLFP did not have the impact which a party that polled 30% of the votes in July 1977 should have had. In fact, most neutral observers felt, that her speech did not carry conviction. (And why did she and the SLFP walk out?)

This kind of negative gimmickry has so far been the monopoly of the majority of Tamil politicians who boycotted the 1931 Constitution and have been boycotting, non-co-operating, non-participating, partially co-operating, etc., etc., not only with the Government but also with the Constitutions prevailing at the different times. The Tamils have paid a heavy price because of this. Even this time, the TULF seems to have missed the bus.

At this juncture it would be appropriate and pertinent to see what Mrs. Bandaranaike's one-time partners like the LSSP, CP and soloists like T. B. Subasinghe have to say about her and her present policies and strategies. It would also be interesting to examine comments in the SLFP press about its former collaborators. This *Tribune* will do in the coming weeks.

NEXT WEEK:

THE TULF AND THE CONSTITUTION

THE WORLD TODAY

RHODESIA: the descent into chaos

by JULIUS LEWIN

IAN SMITH's pledged himself to bring majority rule to Rhodesia within two years. That was in his sensational broadcast on September 24, 1976. The two years have almost elapsed but his desperate country is still a long way from black rule. Week after week, as the armed conflict goes on, it seems more probable that the country will become a shambles in the months ahead.

In these circumstances the Conservative leaders (according to *The Times*) have already made contingency plans to "rescue" those white people who hold British passports. This operation is designed to benefit only "our kith and kin" estimated to number 100,000, or half the white population. The rest are South African, Portuguese or Greek origin.

David Owen, the Foreign Secretary, is reported to have agreed that "no British Government could stand by and simply watch Rhodesia descend into chaos, with British passport holders facing the threat of massacre." What will the third world think of this ominous report? They will be quick enough to realise that, when British military intervention comes at last, its primary purpose will be to rescue white only. Perhaps they will foresee that, if and when this purpose is accomplished, the British troops will not pack up and return home.

Because power grows out of the barrel of a gun, troops once there are likely to stay in order to enable Britain to preside over the next stages of bringing in a black

majority government. But which blacks? A fresh effort will no doubt be made to induce (Joshua Nkomo and his guerillas who are waiting in Zambia) to help carry out the Anglo-American plan for Zimbabwe's future.

This plan has features which commend it to all right-thinking conservatives. It guarantees the right to private property — a principle which, if embodied in the new constitution, will obstruct the redistribution of land and other radical reforms urgently required. The plan also contemplates the further flow of European and American capital into mining and manufacturing.

No doubt Mr. Nkomo would welcome this, being an admirer of Lonrho and its activities. But Robert Mugabe would not, and this is the reason why attempts to isolate him will continue. However that may turn out, the Anglo-American plan properly provides for a United Nations Zimbabwe Force to play a key part during the difficult period of transition. This element should now be the centre of Labour Government's strategy, instead of exclusive concern about the fate of the white minority.

If David Owen wants to be effective, in the face of Foreign Office duplicity, he must urge the UN to get ready to take control as soon as (if not before) Smith abdicates. He knows that, for neighbouring Namibia, the UN is already prepared to send in 5,000 troops and 1,000 civilians to supervise the coming elections—unless South Africa breaks away from the agreement reached.

Another feature of the Anglo-American plan was to set up a fund of at least £ 500 million, to finance education, health services, and a better infra-structure, especially for millions of peasants in the tribal areas.

Such funds could be spent without delay. Already there is talk among angry whites of a "scorched earth" policy when they are forced to leave. They intend to blow up bridges and electrical installations and set fire to public buildings so that the Africans will inherit a ruined country.

The whole situation is so fluid that it can be turned to the advantage of either Right or Left. The dangers now visible will be averted not by double-talk but only by a policy clear and firm and free from cant.

(By Courtesy Tribune London.)

+ + +

LETTER

Sycophancy?

Sir,

I will not be so unkind as to accuse you of sycophancy; although some may think that such an act will be not unjust in this "Dharmista era". But I must make a few comments; after reading your article which was very proudly and prominently reproduced in the Govt's organ the Ceylon Daily News of 22.7.78.

You must receive the Nobel Prize for it; or locally the J. R. Prize. The two groups of our 'independent and impartial' newspapers and the other 'stooge' group in this one full year could not produce even one article of that type.

But I think you are not foolish enough to believe all the people; at least some of them will take it seriously or believe your article of such unworthy praise.

Are we blind and deaf to all what happened after 21.7.77 and are still happening in all spheres of life in this land under Dharmista. Many, many acts of revenge, reprisals? Thousands of dismissals; punitive transfers—assaults even a few killings? What about thugs operating from "Sirikoth" the HQ of Dharmista; thrashing helpless

varsity students? As our Honourable Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Amirthalingam, very dutifully exposed in the NSA, the assaults of striking Bank clerks by Dharmista thugs. Did he tell an untruth? About the Press Freedom under Dharmista? All three established Groups of Newspapers are Govt. organs. I hope you will not deny it. The Left wing papers are insignificant. Also JR recently said that the "Atha" paper publishes all lies. So he can afford to give press freedom, controlling all the leading papers that matter. Don't people live in fear of losing whatever little benefits of rationed food they got under Adharmista? Can any one other than a Dharmista golaya get a job today? Also you very unashamedly say about Dharmista broken promises that all parties give false promises; and seek to justify their false promises given to obtain the vast majority. JR campaigned against the take over of Lake House. Quite right. But what did he do after coming to power? Did he give it back! No. He took over the other group Times. Damn great of an honest man! Isn't it.

What about the other great promise? Not to give jobs on MP's chits? What is happening now. Are you blind or deaf or both? Or is it that your class-level made you ignore it?

All said and done, please remember that one group of 'Kept' newspaper media did not save the former regime. Two groups and one stooge group or any other sycophantic camp followers will not help this regime.

People judge a regime by its doings. Not by what government organs want them to believe. Henceforth, I will spend my weekly Rs. 2/- for a better purpose.

M. C. J. Perera

42, Adam Street,
Kalutara

A PLEA

A Citizen's Epistle
To The Rulers

Almost an year has passed.
Is there improvement?
What has resulted we ask?
We stuck to our tasks
earnestly and diligently
What changes for us
has it brought.

In the city—
A face lift
the park receives.
In slums and shanties
the promised sunshine
has not dispelled our gloom
We live-on in squalor.

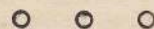
In the deep sea—
Our catch is dwindling
Fish prices are soaring
While foreign trawlers freely
exploited our seas.

In the village—
Uncertain weather
destructive wild beasts
Cause problems endless.
Amidst hardships
We produce—
grains and vegetables
But prices these fetch
are never fair.

Mudalalis exploit, regardless
of poverty, want and illness,
debt and ignorance;
which continually
plague us.

We ask those responsible
All those in power.
Give ear to us—
Innocent people—
reduce the cost of living
Help us,
make ends meet.

— Citizen



At The Fixed

And Controlled Prices

SITTAMS

Dispensing Chemists

259/1 Galle Road,
Colombo - 4.
Tel: 84058

Grama Sastra-13

Scribblings on Uva Villages

Kammala Far Away

by Gamiya

Rain was rare in that area, but it was drizzling and the white cloth announcing the death at the *sohan-ge* (cremation-place) fluttered solemnly with the names of three girls. Slightly faded, it still held and yet looked new, but we were assured: "It hangs here in rain and sun for the last ten months!". Kammala is a little distance away into the shrub and brushwood off Terela, which in itself is three miles from Obbegoda on the Moneragala-Pottuvil road. It was near Kehelpihili wewa that the quiet, unpretentious house held sad faces and mourning even ten months after the sad event of the death of three friends, among whom, two sisters and one neighbour. They worked together, lived together, died together in the same slimy mud of Kehelpihili wewa, dragged down one after the other. As if to clutch at a straw, one raised her hand as she was going down. Thinking it was a beckoning, the second moved closer to her, and the third, they all went down. Memories of the people all centred round the story of how they brought their sheaves home every year, oh, so gladly together. This time too, they had come home from the harvest and had gone to take a bath together, and they did not come back. Mud had turned into slime, oozy, sticky, perilous, like Beira mud. The area people had begged for bathing facilities, but why should they ask? They had only to provide rice for the nation of 1976. Memories are hard and bitter when the people are young, when they could have been saved

and were ruthlessly allowed to be expunged in the prime of their youth. What are we elders doing when some of our youth die by fire, some by the sword, and some in a watery grave as at Kammala, unwept, unhonoured and unsung. One even ventured to say with the aura of goodness that increases after death, the death of the young: "They were pure victims which the Wewa took (Tyagavanthava billak dunna). Gladly the village gave them as victims, so that the land may have harvests all along." Another said: "They are surely protective deities of our wewa." This strange amalgam of the bizarre and the real, of superstition and truth, yet takes second place when we ask our first question: *Why are rural people treated as second-rate citizens by nearly every government?* The very fact that headlines multiply: "*More amenities for the rural sector*", is a counter-indicator that they are not given much autonomy in the rural areas, in the provinces except by foisting bureaucrats from the centre.

Kammala, as its name implies may have provided iron for the swords of the local army fighting the 19th regiment of Wellington. As I was thinking of this, the mother of the two (out of the three) dead girls, came tearfully with a bag of photos and showed them and was happy to share her grief. The manly father cried, saying: "I have them with me in my own garden. At the further end they are buried."

"Asilin, umbath avade"? asked the mother from a young visitor who just entered over the high mud stile of the threshold. "Yes, I just came" *paluwa yandath ekka*" (just to send away loneliness)—referring to her own loneliness without her one-time companions and that mother's pain at losing her daughters. Early death: one of the tragedies of village life of today. How are we involved?

ISSUES, TRENDS, SOLUTIONS—2

- WORK—Past & Present
- SPEAKER—Anandatissa
- TREES—Planting
- RESHUFFLE—Rewards

by Shirley J. Payoe

For two nights this column searched for a suitable maxim. Its here now: "Produce or Perish!" This little motto will here after serve as a useful signpost and a chattering accompaniment to the mind during the lonely process of getting things set on paper.

WORK. We have always felt that work is the major input that leads to production. By this we mean precisely planned, purposeful and sustained work. When activity of such a nature is carried out for a reasonable length of time on a good scale and with honest concentration, it becomes the stuff that builds nations as well as men. Behind every rag-to-riches story and every record of nations that have triumphed against odds, there is always a solid sequence of hard meaningful toil. An 'economic miracle' is only a recorder's term and a mass media superstition. We have only to turn to world events of our lifetime for examples of nations that have willingly 'worked their way' out of wartime devastation, the havoc of natural calamities and the stupefying degradation of seemingly inevitable poverty and backwardness. The splendid attainments of post-war German, Japan, Russia and China come easily to mind. Here men worked for themselves—and improved the quality of their lives—through work related to an overall national framework. Such stunning achievements became possible only because the countries had men who were willing to question,

innovate and work systematically. One thing more is also clear. The nine-to-five mentality, which plagues our Island, was never a part of their development strategy, and the people, whatever the-ism under which they choose to live, found no alternative to hard work.

We can, of course, turn to less enlightened times when work meant undisguised exploitation. In pre-Industrial Britain and in the early stages of the Machine Age itself men, women and children worked for as long as 12 hours a day under conditions which left them physically and mentally broken or which ushered them to early graves.

In Britain there was the exploitation of the Irish (a fact not forgotten yet), of native British farmers during the rural evictions, while in Europe there were the voyages (not of discovery) but of robbery. The Spaniard and the Portuguese robbed Inca gold and the treasures of civilizations that had preceeded their own by centuries. Next, having subdued the Asian civilizations, they scrambled in Africa looking for ivory, slaves, markets, workers for plantations and men who would readily part with their birthrights for heads. Even stamp-sized nations of Europe laid claims to Empires that were several times their own landmasses. Always the Empire-builders had a purpose, a plan and an instrument. The topesclad prospector took his flag and his anthem to the East coast and the West coast of Africa and penetrated up the Nile. He had a uniform to hand out, a Bible or a gun within reach and a fortress or a battleship within sight. The prospector also had something new which could transform the then prevailing conventional wisdom which was static into a current of dynamic action. In a sense he was able to squeeze traditional systems until they yielded a

more nourishing juice. Our readers can turn to sound economic and social history books for a more complete picture.

Nevertheless, for the man from the temperate zones it was devilishly hard work in the torrid heat of the tropics. For the enslaved it spelled even harder work. Often the man enslaved had previously been bound by casteism, tribalism and economic and social bonds (more deadly than slavery itself) which made him unfit to tap the organised resources of his own nation. But the prospector also built. The trains, the plantations, the social upheavals, the economic quickening, even the cash nexus itself, came in the wake of the coloniser's activity. The coloniser was a catalyst. What matters from our point of view is that work, work of the freeman and the slave, alone builds. There is no escape from this fact.

Having put things in this light, readers of this column can set themselves a cosmic poser, a 64,000 dollar question for the month. Has there been in our glorious history a single period of 25 years, just one, during which our nation carried out a sustained effort towards some national goal?

Honesty is recommended for this exercise and our readers are invited to extend their search to the entire length of recorded history. The answer might probably be found in the tank-building era of our ancient kings.

However, nothing resembling a 25-year period of national effort is to be found in our recent history; except perhaps, for the work on the Sinhala dictionary which has plodded on for decades. But who can glorify this as work?

THE NANDA THAT SINGS.
Friday July 14th saw Mr. Ananda

tissa de Alwis, Speaker NSA and MP Kotte relaxing at a mini-soiree held at the mini-Academy run by Nanada Malini. The kids had a whale of a time showing their song and dance routine to an interested gathering. On this occasion Mr. Speaker said that the Arts which formed the peoples heritage must be rid of divisive political considerations. He assured the government's assistance to those engaged in fostering the Arts and hoped that the large number of professionals in his Electorate would make a united effort to bring about a cultural revival similar to that which occurred during the time of the Kotte kings. Recalling the visit of Rabindranath Tagore, he said that the programme on that occasion was entirely of Bengali songs which few in the audience understood. Nevertheless, the visit marked a revival in our country and set the search for a national and Asian identity in our own cultural works.

The Speaker also recalled the visits of Gandhi and Nehru and said that on both occasions he had been among the 10 Anandians selected to recite 'Jayamangala gathas' before the venerated visitors. Stressing the importance of music in moulding the lives of students, the Speaker noted that 6 out of the 10 Anandians had made it to the Parliament at one time or other and represented different political ideologies. The Speaker went on to emphasise that different shades of political opinion must co-exist in a democracy but learn to unite for common national endeavours. He revealed that he had invited the former Speaker and those who had contested him at the polls to participate jointly with him in the reception to be accorded to the Kapilavastu relics at Kotte during this month. Taking his cue from a suggestion by a member of the

staff of the Academy, the Speaker agreed that a seminar on the national Arts should be held at Kotte. He offered his support to organise such a seminar before the end of this year.

TREE PLANTING: Sometimes in Sri Lanka the left hand does not know what the right hand does. While people are busy planting Jak and Breadfruit trees in Colombo there is the danger that a clump of trees in the Municipal Grounds will be felled before the 20th of this month. According to Council sources when the Municipal Grounds was landscaped there was no plan to have the trees. Some mis-guided Mayor planted them and now a not-so-mis-guided Commissioner wants to have them felled. Pray, how do you landscape without trees?

RESHUFFLING THE PACK: Political analysts tell us that after a polls victory there is every winning coalition a natural scramble for the rewards of office. The term winning coalition refers here not to the disparate political parties that come together during an election fight, but to the leverage groups that form a disciplined party. The rewards take the form of Ambassadorships and Ministerships or government jobs and support in other forms. After a time the status quo gets disturbed; either the jobs or the men then have to be shuffled by way of institutional or Cabinet changes. Some cabinet changes have already taken place and more are due.

IN "AN ECONOMIC THEORY OF DEMOCRACY" Anthony Downs puts it this way: "Party members have as their chief motivation the desire to obtain the intrinsic rewards of holding office: therefore they formulate policies as means to holding office rather than seeking office in order to carry out preconceived policies." How true. Going by the complex and

many structural changes that are slated to take place in a small country like Sri Lanka in the central and the local govt. political set up, one is bound to notice that unemployment amongst politicians is being solved pretty fast.

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WILL IT LAST?

Sri Lanka's New-Found Affluence?

UNCTAD must have made a mistake when it categorised Sri Lanka as a nation "most seriously affected" by world commodity price fluctuations. That is the impression bound to be formed by any visitor to this Asian island these days. The shops are full of all manner of consumer goods, most of them imported: the people appear to be well fed and clothed; and the roads, particularly in Colombo, are chocking with brand new cars. These signs, which are usually associated with economic development and prosperity, are in stark contrast to the austerity of a few years ago, when even essential consumer items were hard to get though one had the money. **Critics of the President J. R. Jayawardene's liberal United National Party (UNP) Government, however, claim that what one sees is only an artificial prosperity, a prosperity that cannot last.**

They are right to a degree.

What has happened is that, as part of the new government's economic strategy, foreign exchange and import controls have been loosened. Traders have rushed in to import not only food, textiles, drugs and raw materials but also items ranging from toys, trinkets and carpets to refrigerator and motor cars, which hitherto were regarded as "luxuries" and

allowed in only in very limited quantities. Even television sets are available, although TV will not come to Sri Lanka until next year or later!

Import curbs first came to be imposed in a big way in the late 1950s, with the traditional tea, rubber and coconut not doing too well in foreign markets. Over the years, these came to be tightened, the worst period being during Mrs. Bandaranaike's centre-left regime from 1970 to 1977. All imports were cut to the bone and often foreign exchange was not granted even for study or medical treatment abroad. The global food and energy crisis no doubt played havoc with the export-oriented economy. But blind adherence to socialist policies also contributed to hamstringing the development effort. The "solution" offered by the Marxists in Mrs. Bandaranaike's government was more, not less, socialism, and development through self-reliance. Instead of pushing along this path, she pushed out the Marxists. *But at the elections last July, she too, got pushed out, because the people felt her government could not successfully grapple with the worsening economic situation.*

What President Jayawardene's government has done is to move away from socialism to free-market capitalism. The man who has been called by local Marxists "the Pope of the Private Sector" is certainly living up to his name, by giving free rein to the private sector.

Exchange is now being allowed for the asking for all types of imports and for travel or study abroad; private investors, both local and foreign, are being allowed generous concessions, including guarantees against nationalisation; many nationalised ventures have been handed back to their former owners; and a free trade zone is planned near Colombo.

For the first time in over two decades, any Sri Lanka citizen may buy and sell foreign currency freely without having to get authority. The pendulum has swung the other way so much that Mrs. Bandaranaike said at a recent political rally that "the next logical thing for Jayewardene to do is to hand over the government itself to the private sector." The liberalisation of exchange and import controls and the switch to capitalism have been done on the advice of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, which have agreed to provide a "safety net" of £ 300 million to meet any contingency. A number of Western nations have also pledged about another £ 200 million in economic assistance.

The aid has been made available on condition that the government do away with the costly subsidies on food, education, health and transport. Instead, state revenue should be directed to development, with the foreign aid providing a base to import the needed raw materials and plant and machinery as well as consumer goods. Already, the issue of subsidised rice, the staple food, and sugar have been limited to families earning under £ 10 a month. This has shut out over half the 14½ million population from this facility.

Whether this strategy will work is the multibillion dollar question say the government's critics, mostly by members of Mrs. Bandaranaike's centrist Freedom Party and the Trotskyites and Communists, who were associated with her regime for about five years.

They point to the resumption of "conspicuous consumption" by the richer classes, the "frittering away" of exchange on "non-essential imports" and on holidays abroad, and the rise in the general price level by between 50 and 100

per cent, while few big industries or agricultural projects have been launched so far.

And hardly a dent has been made in the problems of high living costs and unemployment (now estimated at 1.2 million, or a fifth of the workforce). It was the UNP's promise to ease substantially and speedily these problems that brought it an unprecedented landslide victory at the elections, no less than 140 seats in a Parliament of 168 seats. The UNP government's answer is that it was the existence of all manner of controls that had created bottlenecks and hampered the development effort.

What is happening, critics say, is a repetition of what happened between 1965 and 1970, when the UNP was last in power.

If the private sector fails the government, political observers say there could be a sharp reaction not to Mrs. Bandaranaike's party but to the left—the extreme left at that. They say in such a situation the reaction could come much before the governments six year term ends in 1983.

—Courtesy: *New Nation*

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LETTERS

Cashew Cultivation

Sir,

After seeing a letter on the above subject in your issue of 27th May 1978, a Rural Society (not a government-sponsored Gramasangwardena Samiti) in Anapalama (a village 3 miles from Wellawaya towards Moneragala) had a committee level discussion on introducing cashew cultivation to its chena cultivator members. This Rural Society which was found by thirty (30) Chena cultivator families has advised its members not to

cut down thick jungle for chena purposes from this cultivation season of Maha in August-December 1978. Instead the Rural Society has encouraged the cultivator members and other cultivators of the area to start on permanent crop cultivations: viz—coconut, jack, banana, lime and chasew, along with the short-term cash crops.

Normally the chena cultivator moves, from place to place, slashing burning jungle and cultivating short term cash crops. This Society believes that if the chena cultivator is encouraged to do permanent cultivations he will not move from place to place destroying jungle lands. The Society has made arrangements with the Coconut Research Institute to reserve 2000 coconut seedlings which are being made available at .50 cts. each from the Handapangoda CRI Nursery (a few miles from Wellawaya). It will be the first time that these Chena cultivators will plant coconut in this area. The Rural Society says that about 25 members have already handed over the money to the Treasurer for their requirements of seedlings. It is also said that the Society is making arrangements for Banana seedlings to be made available to its members at .40 to .50 cents each. During the cultivation season private dealers come in lorries bringing coconut seedlings at Rs. 3/- to 4/- each. Most of them are from the Matara area. Even Banana seedlings are about .75 cts. each. Therefore this is a great service done by this Rural Society to its members.

Now that was just a little about this society who have decided to promote cashew growing. After the committee decision the Rural Society had written for further advice on the subject, to the Hony. Secretary, cadju Planters Association at Madhu Road. The Society has not received a reply yet althouth

the CPA Secretary has mentioned of prompt reply to the letters they have received on Cadju planting—(Ref. Tribune of 8th July 1978). The Society has written for information on behalf of 30 members and they need immediate information to make the necessary arrangements at their end. The Rural Society feels that the area is suitable for cadju planting as there are a few cadju trees (about 3 only) that are bearing. It should be noted that while speaking and writing about cadju planting and highlighting a few short-comings on the part of the Corporation concerned, the CPA must try to give the necessary encouragement to those interested from the other end of Sri Lanka in whatever possible way the CPA could help. Hope the CPA has sent a reply with the information to the Rural Society by now!

Loghead

Lower Uya Area.
8.7.78



National Milk Board

Sir,

It was strange indeed that the National Milk Board had been left out of your columns during the past many months, as a matter of fact, during the last one year. (An article was published after a long time, in the Tribune of 29/7/78—Vol. 23 No. 5)

The Sun investigations which appears on Sundays gave full publicity to the National Milk Board and its new Chairman quite some time ago. The Chairman replied and he was very arrogant in his reply, in that he was going to take the Sun reporters to task. But what happened was that the Sun reporters took the Chairman, Mr. Walter Gunaratne, of those days

Chairman, now Doctor Walter Gunaratne to task and Dr. Gunaratne slowly slid back into his skin, not a word thereafter.

From time to time news papers carried various reports. The public who visit the Milk Board, see for themselves the chaos, smell and stench and are pushed around before they get their pint of milk. Further, the Milk Board manufactures hardly any yoghurt, ice cream or milk pops. What they manufacture in large quantities is putting imported Lakspray into tins and this too vanishes before it reaches the consumer.

It is now news that the Packing Factory at Welisara and the Condensed Milk Factory at Polonnaruwa and possibly the Spray Drying Milk Factory at Ambawela are to be given over to the Private Sector, this is a very good move, but to really impress my views, what the hell is the Milk Board going to do? Further, the collection of Milk rose to 3½ lakhs per day, it has dropped by more than 1½ lakhs per day. But when the milk supplies were 3½ lakhs per day, how much of it was bottled and given to the consumer?

The appointment of the present Chairman, by this Government, cause confusion, he was Junior to more than eleven Senior Officers who were not only Senior to him, but who had been accepted as more competent than he, because the present Chairman figured in many interviews and he was rejected by the bureaucracy of the previous UNP Government, the famous 7 years SLFP Government and then this UNP Government appoints him over eleven officers referred to earlier to be its Chairman. Why? Is it because of a nuptial that has taken place or is to take place soon. Have there been protests by the staff

of this appointment? Has the Board on many an occasion including very recently taken the Chairman to task? Did the Minister of Agriculture stop him from doing a trip to New Zealand which air ticket he and his spouse were to get from the Ceylon Representatives of a firm supplying milk powder in a big way.

The weevils in the last consignment of a very large tonnage has been completely rejected by the members of the Board of the National Milk Board. The weevils have not only come in the milk, but they have come to stay in the Welisara packing factory, where it is stored.

The questions raised by the Sun newspaper on the present Chairman's loan for the purchase of a car, which he had sold to his wife earlier and the house rent he pays for a milk board bungalow Rs. 35 per month till very lately and a hundred odd rupees now, as we hear, are a matter of utter disgrace for a person holding this appointment. Previous Chairmen of the Board have been people like B. Mahadeva of the Ceylon Civil Service now in Malaysia, Andrew Joseph, now in the UNDP, McHeyzer of the Ceylon Civil Service and D. C. L. Amarasinghe of the Ceylon Civil Services.

We will not speak of the SLFP. Salman who ruined the Milk Board from 1960-1965 and came back to ruin the Milk Board from 1970-1975. He was the Chairman, who according to the latest Auditor General's Reports who took a distress loan of Rs. 7,500/- and the voucher for the loan is missing, What is the financial manager doing about this? Or is he responsible for the missing voucher.

Taking all in all "Confusion worse Confounded" has been caused in the National Milk Board by the appointment of this new Chair-

man, because of his going-to-be-connections with the Hierarchy of the present times. We call upon the Hierarchy not to build any family tree, at least break the branch of the Milk Board and let us know that you are not propping up branches because of family nuptials.

Anti-Family Tree

Colombo.
July 31, 1978

Dept. of Agriculture

Sir,

Since your Journal Tribune is the only one that is fearlessly exposing the faults of the present government, it is time you wrote a special feature on a vital sector of the Agriculture development programme i.e. the Dept. of Agriculture.

This once and mighty proud Department nestling in the salubrious climate of Kandy has unfortunately fallen down over the last few years and is now striferidden without an effective leadership. The Dept. had illustrious Directors like Edmund Rodrigo, Seneviratne, Joachim, Chandraratna and Jinendradasa and thereafter the decline set in. Ernest Abeyratna though a very popular and kindly researcher was a failure as Director because he was too soft and made the mistake of playing favourites. He combined well with the Mahinda Silva/Kobbekaduwa policies but proved to be an ineffective Head. He left a few weeks before the Elections and handed over to the next senior Deputy Bandaranayaka. This person was unfortunately a Vet. Surgeon and was completely lost when it came to making decisions involving crops. Even as head of the animal wing of the Dept. he

was a failure and naturally when he became Director of the whole Dept. it was plainly evident that things were going to get worse. The joke going the rounds of the Department at that time was that as the Dept. had gone to the dogs, they had to get a Vet Surgeon to minister to it. There were a number of occasions when the Secretaries and the Minister discovered Bandaranayakes, limitations but they did not want to get rid off him. Bandaranayake then got a heart attack and went on long leave handing over to the next senior Deputy Earl Jayasekera. Everyone breathed a sigh of relief and hoped that Bandaranayake would gracefully retire from the scene and have younger and more dynamic officers to run the show. But alas to the disappointment of all Bandaranayake got permission from the Minister to step down from the post of Director of Agriculture to his former post of Deputy Director. This is the only instance in the Public Service where an officer has stepped down from the post of Head of a Dept. to a lower post.

There is a general air of lethargy in the Dept. and though work plods along at snails pace, nothing really happens and officers seem to be waiting for changes which are not coming. The talk in the canteens and other places where officers gather for gossiping is that the Dept is run by a "Gang Of Four" who do their utmost to prevent overdue changes and want to cling on to power at all costs. They refuse to delegate a part of their burdensome duties to other senior officers. The younger officers know that as long as this gang is in power, nothing will really make the Dept move fast. The Minister seems to have full confidence in this gang and so they can carry on regardless. Import-

ant positions remain unfilled for years because this gang wants it that way rather than allow younger officers to come up and expose their shortcomings. Another favourite pastime is going abroad on frequent jaunts for conferences, workshops, and seminars. All these gangsters are in their mid fifties. And though Bandaranayake had a hear attack he too was allowed by the Minister to go for a 2 week conference in Bangkok in July. At one stage there was a possibility of a change of Ministers and so the rank and file awaited this welcome change so that there could be some changes at the top but it seems that there will be no change of Ministers and so the gang continues to hold sway.

When will this type of tomfoolery in a Dept which is vitally concerned in the agriculture production of the country be stopped? Why doesn't the President turn the searchlight on to this Department and make the vital changes that are necessary even though it means sending the old gang of four into oblivion.

Young Agriculturist

Peradeniya.
July 30, 1978

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National Languages

Sir,

We have just completed one year of J. R. Jayewardene Administration. The Select Committee on the Revision of the Constitution has unanimously agreed that both Sinhala & Tamil should be the national languages of Sri Lanka and that the status of Tamil should receive constitutional recognition. This is conceptual thinking at its best. It is the kind of thinking that Sri Lankans excel in. But there is need for a different kind

of thinking which could help translate concepts into concrete targets realisable through practical policies. This might be described as operational thinking.

The President and his men have floundered on this. Last month the Govt. Agency of the Jaffna District fell vacant with the transfer of Mr. Lal Wijeyepala. Would not a Tamil speaking CAS officer have fitted in admirably in the context of the Select Committee recommendation. Batticaloa Agency is now vacant. What are the Govt's plans to fill this vacancy. In any case the nominations of Govt Agents are ordinarily approved by the Cabinet. How did Mr. Devanayagam, a member of the Select Committee overlook this factor. Is it the will of the Govt that this provision be embalmed in the constitution?

We seldom see action to match the words. Whenever the Govt has been confronted by the need to take a decision involving a policy innovation the Minister concerned appoints with considerable fanfare a new committee to go into the question. The Govt still does not appear to be firmly and unitedly set on one direction. And it appears to be reacting to needs in a manner too slow for the public's satisfaction. But time is running out. Nevertheless the clause on the National Languages is in the Draft Constitution. This is a good start. If it is taken as the basis of discussion, where does it lead? Can we have a Srikantha as Govt Agent in Jaffna, or a Rajendra in Batticaloa or a Sittampalam in Mannar as in the days of the old.

Thiru Nesaratnam

170, Hospital Road,
Jaffna.
25/7/78



SRI LANKA CHRONICLE

July 30 - Aug. 13

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; DM—Dinamina; LD—Lankadipa; VK—Virakesari; ATH—Aththa; SM—Silumina; SLD—Sri Lankadipa; JD—Janadina; DP—Dinapathi; SU—Sun; CM—Chintamani; WK—Weekend; RR—Riviresa; EN—Eelanadu; IDPR—Information Dept. Press Release; DK—Dinakara; DV—Davasa.

SUNDAY, JULY 30: A Bill to set up an Urban Development Authority with an initial capital of 20 million and empowered, among other things, to formulate and execute housing schemes as well as clear slum and shanty areas has been gazetted. The President said that the Minister of Education would soon find a solution to the problem of private non-feelevying schools. For the first time more than 750,000 farmers are to benefit from the pension scheme that is to be implemented soon.—ST. The President said yesterday that the entire school system will be reorganised soon. The Food Ministry has asked Pakistan to delay the shipment of 80,000 tons of rice to Sri Lanka in view of the large stocks the ministry is now holding—SO. The axe is to come down hard on directorates of corporations and boards which have been running below the mark during the past year. Organised voluntary labour by school children on the accelerated Mahaweli Project will take place for the first time on August 7—WK. The minimum school going age is going to be reduced to 4 1/2 years. The Social

Service Ministry is taking steps to open a 200 acre agricultural farm in which halthy beggars caught in Colombo and the suburbs will be put to work—RR. The request of the TULF Youth League to establish a Tamil National Council was discussed at the TULF convention; it was decided that this Council would be set up when the correct time and opportunity arose—EN. The non aligned foreign ministers conference entered its final day with the nations split over Cuba's right to remain in the organisation because of its role in Africa. Early counting in the Maldivian Presidential referendum was given to Transport Minister Maumoon Abdul Gayoom: between 80 to 90 % of the votes. After PM Morarji Dasai met former Home Minister Charan Singh, reports state that a crisis within the leadership of the ruling Janata Party would be settled—SO.

MONDAY, JULY 31: A resolution for which notice was given by the TULF youth front to set up a Tamil National Council immediately to draft a constitution for Tamil Eelam was rejected by the TULF leadership at the 2nd Regional Convention of the TULF held over the weekend in Jaffna. The State team led by Mr. A. C. de Zoysa is expected to apprise the Presidential Commission of most of the material that is contained in the memoranda reaching the Commission's office when the public sittings begin tomorrow. The Police and armed services now provide guards for buses and trains travelling through bad security zone as part of the Regional Security scheme of the Ministry of Defence—CDN. The administration of all co-operative societies in the island will again revert to consumers in the areas in which they are located. The ACBC yesterday accepted a motion that a buddhist Ecclesiastical Court be established immediately

—CDM. The National Convention of the TULF was inaugurated yesterday by its newly elected President Mr. M. Sivasithambaram; in a statement issued later the TULF claimed that the present government had been ignorant of the hardships of the Tamil speaking people of the country—SU. Mr. M. Sivasithambaram stated at the TULF Convention yesterday that the TULF had decided not to participate in the discussions of the Constitutional Amendment Bill—VK. Dr. N. M. Perera has been elected as the President of the Board of Control for Cricket—JD. About half a million youths who are 18 years of age will exercise their votes for the first time at the forthcoming local government elections—DW. Cuba under heavy fire over its military intervention in Africa sparked off a bitter verbal clash at the non-aligned ministerial conference yesterday by describing several member nationals as servants of 'yankee imperialism'. Zaire and Angola announced that they would establish diplomatic relations at ambassadorial level—CDN. The most senior Cambodian military delegations to visit Peking since the Communist take-over in Phnom Penh in 1975 arrived in the Chinese capital at the invitation of Defence Minister Hsu Hsiang Chien—CDM.

TUESDAY, AUGUST 1: The setting up of an open university which would enable persons to receive education leading up to a degree through correspondence and radio lessons, is likely to be a reality by the end of October. Over 12,000 bushels of paddy had persisted in the Anamaduwa stores recently. City police have been instructed to crack down hard on hoteliers who are making their rooms available to hippie-type tourists to carry out illegal activities. The government has approved a Rs. 110 million project to moder-

nise the telecommunication system in Colombo and in 18 towns of the suburbs—CDN. The debate on the bill providing for a new Constitution which was scheduled to begin tomorrow in the NSA may be postponed; it is equal to two petitions having been filed in the Constitutional Court objecting to the bill. With the passage of the new Constitution the present Supreme Court judges will cease to hold office. The Principal Nayake Thera of the Vidyodaya Pirivena stated at the ACBC meeting that buddhist monks should be banned from entering the university as, after their degrees they usually spent their time in revolutionary activities—CDM. Government has launched a new offensive against all products that are below the specified standards in quality—SU. Mr. S. Rajaurai an office bearer and MP of the TULF said that though they had taken the decision to establish Tamil Eelam over two years ago the youth should realise that it was not wise to bring it into practice so quickly—VK. The restriction on issue of dynamite is going to be removed soon; this will be help to house builders and well diggers—DP. The Indian rupee has been devalued by 1.30% against the pound sterling with immediate effect the Reserve Bank of India announced. Airports throughout Western Europe were floundering in ever-worsening confusion and chaos yesterday because of a work to rule by air traffic controllers—CDN. The non aligned foreign minister's Conference ended one day later than planned; after much deliberation it was decided to hold the next Summit in Havana. PM John Vorster has summoned a Cabinet meeting to decide whether to accept or not to accept UN plans which would ensure an early transition to independence in South Africa—SU.

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 2:

Mr. A. C. de Zoysa told the Presidential Commission that the Sirima Government abused power and authority; he stated that fraud, corruption and nepotism were rampant. The President assured the Government Parliamentary Group yesterday that he will expedite the work of the Job Bank Scheme and provide every electorate with 1000 jobs before the end of this year. Sri Lanka will be aimed the beneficiaries of Britain's decision announced yesterday to write off 9000 million pounds worth of loans and interests from 17 Third World countries. The government has decided to increase the subsidy given for coconut rehabilitation by nearly 25%—CDN. The government is subsidising Lakshapray to the cost of Rs. 87 million annually—CDN. About 300 militant youths staged a procession without police permission in Jaffna on Saturday evening; they went to the venue of the TULF meeting and asked not for job forms but for the liberation march; they later dispersed, after persuasion—SU. Mr. A. C. de Zoysa stated before the Presidential Commission that 16 thousand persons were killed by the former regime and the same number of persons were jailed—VK. The Minister of Social Service is making arrangements to start schools with all facilities to teach the children of beggars—DV. South Africa last night put off acceptance or rejection of the Western-backed UN Plan for independence in S. W. Africa pending a visit to the territory by a special UN envoy—CDN. Jailed Soviet dissident Anatoly Scharansky will shortly be flown to the West as part of a major east-west swap of prisoners. Fresh fighting between Cambodia and Vietnam over the past two weeks has been the heaviest in their border war for some month—SU.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 3:

The PM introducing the second reading of the constitution in the NSA said that it was the beginning of a process which would create a new society pledged to usher in a righteous way of life. The shortage of doctors and specialists is prevalent in most parts of the island; at present the country is short of 600 doctors. Trade between Pakistan and Sri Lanka will be further expanded and diversified through the exchange of new items and the collaboration in major fields of industry. The Second Regional Convention of the TULF which was concluded last Sunday in Jaffna, according to party insiders 'achieved nothing' except transforming the leaders and youths into bitter antagonists—CDN. The President will take his oaths under the new constitution within the chambers of the NSA itself on the same date the new constitution comes into effect—SU. The PM speaking at the NSA yesterday said that the government realised the problems that the TULF was facing as they are in the NSA because of a decision of the people—EN. The government has decided to bring down the price of fertilizer by Rs. 250 a ton. The government is taking steps to get upto Rs. 420 million from the World Bank to import machinery for road repair; the Ministry of Highways has drawn up a plan to repair 12,000 miles of roadway in the next three years—DV. The government is likely to increase the price of a yard of cotton textiles by Rs. 2—ATH. An Afghan dissident group opposing their new pro-communist regime claimed yesterday that its guerillas killed more than one hundred soldiers in a major clash on July 22. The Soviet Union wants at least 3 communist spies detained in the west swapped for jailed Russian dissident Anatoly Scharansky and other Jewish ac-

tivists, sources bargaining for the release said—CDN. Fresh outbursts of violence were reported yesterday in Beirut a few hours after President Elias Sarkis promised to restore national sovereignty over every inch of Lebanese territory—CDM. Police opened fire yesterday to break up a violent mob which attacked a railway station in the western Indian state of Maharashtra. Hundreds of stranded Chinese in Vietnam stampeded into China yesterday in an incident involving border guards on both sides—SU.

FRIDAY, AUGUST 4:

The leader of the Opposition yesterday conceded that the new Constitution had made certain concessions to the Tamil people as far as their language was concerned. Government back-benchers staged a brief walk out in the NSA yesterday afternoon while Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike was reading her statement in the debate on the constitution—CDN. Hereafter no government will be allowed to postpone the elections of the country even one day, declared the President. Mr. A. C. de Zoysa said at the Presidential Commission sittings yesterday that the former Minister of Justice reduced the Ministry of Justice and the Attorney General's department to shambles—CDM. A high powered team of Japanese industrialists bankers and manufacturers are now in Sri Lanka to study the prospects of investing in the FTZ. Immediately after Mrs Sirima Bandaranaike finished her statement on the constitution in the NSA yesterday all members of the SLFP walked out; they were followed shortly by TULF members'—SU. The leader of the Opposition expressed strong disapproval at the 20th clause of the constitution because he said that makes it difficult to amend the constitution and that it goes against democratic principles—EN. A senior Janata Party legislator called for former

PM Indira Gandhi to be called before Parliament and impeached for crimes against the people during her 1975 emergency rule. A gunman assassinated head of the PLO Paris mission in an attack on the mission office; two others were seriously injured—CDN. America's Middle East envoy Alfred Atherton ruled out a quick resumption of direct peace talks between Israel and Egypt—CDM.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 5:

The government through the constitution has for the first time in the political history of this country given the Tamil speaking people not only their language rights in full but all the fundamental rights to make them equal citizens of this country said the Minister of Justice in the NSA yesterday. The leader of the CWC—the sole representative of the Tamil speaking of Indian origin in the NSA—said yesterday that the constitution gave the Tamil minority people concessions they had not enjoyed for the past forty years in this country—CDN. At the rate the Yala crop was being harvested, there would be an excess of 500,000 tons of rice by the end of December and we would not have to import rice next year said the Minister of Trade—CDM. Colombo has been chosen as a location to monitor the atmosphere for pollution in the Global Environment Monitoring System; in this connection two atmosphere monitoring stations have been gifted to Sri Lanka by the UN Environment Programme through the WHO. LSSP Leader Dr N. M. Perera charged yesterday that under the new constitution the President would be 'like a king who can do no wrong.'—SU. The leader of the CWC said in the NSA that there is no mention made in the constitution on what basis citizenship would be granted in future although discrimination between citizens has

been removed—VK. The government is now taking steps to export locally produced medicines. The Minister of Fisheries will soon construct 10 small ice producing factories all over the country so that ice could be distributed throughout the country without delay. A new scheme for the transport of paddy on ferries is being carried out between Muttur and Trincomalee—DV. A large number of factories have closed down and more have reduced the number of working days due to the glut of foreign goods now on the market—ATH. The US has halted new development aid to Pakistan because of Islamabad's refusal to cancel the purchase of French nuclear re-processing facilities. Ministerial talks on economic ties between the US and five non-communist South east Asian countries opened yesterday and immediately focused on America's role in the region after the Indo-China war—CDN. Two Arab gunmen held for killing the head of the PLO in Paris told French investigators they were supporters of extremist Palestinian Abu Nidal; Abu Nidal based in Baghdad and supported by Iraq has been sentenced to death by the PLO—SU.

SUNDAY, AUGUST 6: The President yesterday bluntly criticised government MP's whose inaction had affected party work, especially in rural areas; he was addressing a meeting of the Executive Committee of the UNP. There was no person who had been more involved in corruption than the PM of the previous regime, Mrs. Bandaranaike, although she accused the present government of corruption said the President. Sri Lanka will have full colour television with programmes from all countries of the world and news coverage via satellite from January next year. The private sector will be allowed to

operate domestic air service on a decision taken by the government as Air Ceylon has not been able to increase its services—ST. Government is on the warpath against peddlars of animal skins and has ordered the strict enforcement of existing laws to ban the export of animal hide such as leopard and deer—WK. The TULF has taken a decision at the Avarangal Convention that in order to protect Tamil Eelam, a contribution of 1% out of the income of all Tamil speaking people resident abroad will be collected—EN. The Minister of Irrigation said that under the Maduru Oya scheme water will be diverted to the North—CM. Police today opened fire on a mob of 10,000 harijan demonstrators in Nagpur City, Central India. A West German space expert Heinz Kaminsky said that the Soviet Union may have plans to breed a child in space—SO. Shells slammed into both halves of Beirut yesterday raising fears of a return to the savage artillery duels which killed thousands of civilians during the '75-76 Civil War; Syrian troops and the rightist militias of predominantly Christian East Beirut are locked in what is becoming a war of attrition—ST. The US House of Representatives passed a Compromise Bill authorising 37 billion dollars for arms purchases and research and development of weapons by the Defence Department—WK.

MONDAY, AUGUST 7: Sri Lanka has been compelled to pay nearly two million dollars as compensation to Norwegian shipyard and a private brokering firm because of an irregular trawler building contract entered into by the previous government here. The country's labour laws are likely to be extended soon to bring in more categories of workers who are now not covered by them into their ambit. The

GCSU in official resolutions to be moved shortly has come out with scathing attacks leadership of the old LSSP and CP forces—CDN. The Minister of Fisheries has decided to release in instalments fish supplies from the buffer stock which the Fisheries Corporation holds in a bid to bring down the price of fish—CDM. Legislators from more than 80 nations will assemble in Sri Lanka one year hence for one of the biggest international conferences on family planning. Britain has decided to give Sri Lanka a grant of about Rs. 6 million for equipment to update the existing facilities in the Irrigation Dept, particularly the investigative machinery of the department. Four armed youths are alleged to have robbed about Rs. 2000 from the conductor of a Jaffna bound bus near Killinochchi last week—SU. The Speaker of the NSA said that Kotte, which will be re-named Sri Jayawardenapura will be the capital of this country—VK. A rocket by nearly 20 garment manufacturing firms has been discovered; instead of making use of the textiles imported for the manufacture of garments they have been selling the stuff internally for high profits—DP. The government has decided to withdraw the rice ration book and also increase the prices of petroleum products, milk powder, textiles, drugs and fertilizer—ATH. The National Savings Bank is taking steps to open branches throughout the country. The CWE has stopped importing onions and chillies for the time being because the local chilli and onion season has begun—DV. Bihar Chief Minister Kappoori Thakur held separate meetings with PM Morarji Desai and ousted Home Minister Charan Singh in a bid to end differences between the two. More than fifty people were killed or wounded when Syrian artillery pounded Christian East Beirut early today—SU. A

KLM Dutch airliner was hijacked over France today while on a flight from Amsterdam to Madrid—CDM. Chinese agricultural scientist in Shanghai have produced a new rice strain in test tubes—CDN.

TUESDAY, AUGUST 8: Two major state run trading organisations—the CWE and Markfed—will soon become strong business rivals, a move the government hopes will benefit the consumer. More than 250 students from schools in Colombo and the university campuses left yesterday morning on their first lap to participate in the Mahaweli School's Participation Program. A sum of US 820,000 dollars was owed by Sri Lanka to East-Sea Shipping Company was reduced to US 225,000 dollars due to the efforts of the Minister of Food and Co-operatives on his recent visit to Britain—CDN. The government yesterday decided to delete article 157 of the Constitution Bill now being debated in the NSA; this deals mainly with the amendment of the constitution. Nearly 400,000 persons will qualify to receive the unemployment allowance of Rs. 50 a month from today. The Minister of Shipping and Tourism said that the policy of the government was to ensure equal rights to women; in the changes that the government had made for the working class, benefits were extended to both male and female workers—CDM. Any disputes between foreign investors and the GCEC will be referred to the International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes which sits in the US—SU. It is now known that the final decision regarding the granting of aid for the accelerated Mahaweli Project will only be taken in January—JD. The Minister of Posts and Telecommunications has said that the government was considering making Rs. 500 as basic salary for government servants—LD. Pope Paul VI spiritual leader

of the world's 700 million Roman Catholics died last night after a heart attack. The seven party opposition political grouping, the Pakistan National Alliances announced yesterday it was joining the military government of General Mohammed Zia-Ul Haq. Indonesia and Cambodia have agreed to establish diplomatic relations at ambassadorial level—CDN. Ugandan President Idi Amin attacked a British press report that Cuban troops have secretly arrive in Uganda at his invitation to put down army unrest—CDM. Rumanian President Nicolae Ceausescu flew to the Soviet Union for talks with Soviet leaders just two weeks before he is due to receive Chairman Hua-Kua Feng in Bucharest—SU.

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 9: The PM winding up the debate on the new constitution said that the primary objectives of the new constitution were to usher in an era of unity among the communities, a sense of discipline among the people and to instil in the minds of the population a sense of loyalty to their motherland. The new constitution of the UNP government was passed at its second reading in the NSA with 137 voting for and 7 against. Steps will be taken soon to charge fees from foreigners who seek treatment at the General Hospital, Colombo—CDN. The government has initiated action for the speedy repatriation of 10,000 Indian citizens before the Indo-Sri Lanka ferry service closes for this year in October. The Paddy Marketing Board will not mill any more paddy for the next five months until the present stocks of rice both local and imported are over—CDM. Final negotiations are being held between the Government and the UNDP for 'brains from India and the Phillipines among other countries to overcome problems caused by the acute dearth of doctors and engineers

in Sri Lanka' Government has introduced new wemployment scheme for school drop outs where employers will recognise school progress reports in the absence of an examination certificate as qualification for jobs—SU. The Minister of Trade said in the NSA that the present constitution had granted more rights to the Tamils than even the 29th section of the Soulbury Constitution—VK. All government doctors will have to compulsorily serve at least for three years in backward and under developed areas—DP. Mr. Cyril Mathew speaking in the NSA said that it was the Sinhalese and not the Tamils of this country who did not have rights; they cannot for instance, buy land in Jaffna but Tamils have all the freedom to move around in Sinhalese areas—EN. The government has revised the decision not to give bank loans to government corporations and boards; this decision was taken because increase in production and development work would generate new jobs and also because the government's financial situation has improved considerably—DV. The Presidential Commission has asked the IGP to impound the passports of eight persons till the sitting of the commission are over—DM. The UNP government is now taking steps to give oil drilling rights to an American Company—ATH. China and Vietnam both took a tough line in Hanoi today when they opened negotiations aimed at settling their dispute over the position of ethnic Chinese in Vietnam—CDN. Mrs. Indira Gandhi's opposition congress party today called for a commission of inquiries into allegations of corruption against PM Morarji Desai's son—CDN. Cardinals from around the globe gathered in Rome to bury Pope Paul on Saturday and elect a successor to lead the world's 700 million Roman Catholics—SU.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 10:

The Minister of Trade said that for the first time the people are brought into the administration of the state; he added that there were inbuilt checks preventing for all time a person who holds the office of President from becoming a dictator. The government will move an amendment shortly to enable even non citizens who have been permanent and legal residents of Sri Lanka to enjoy for a period of ten years the fundamental rights contained in the constitution. The Public Health Department has launched an intensive health care programme for pre-school children in eight slums—CDN. The committees which probed instances of victimisation of public servants from May 1970 to July 1977 have recommended redress for nearly 3500 public servants—CDM. The Minister of Education has agreed to the setting up of separate schools for Tamil children where they are in majority in hill country areas said a CWC statement—SU. The government will soon be giving concessions to department and corporation employees who don't take much leave—DP. Sri Lanka has appointed Mr. Mohameducassin Seyedu Abdul Rahim as High Commissioner for Sri Lanka to Kenya—IDPR No. 144/78. Sri Lanka has appointed Dr. R. C. A. Johnpulle as Ambassador to USSR—IDPR No. 145/78. Sri Lanka has decided to appoint Mr. A. T. Moorthy as Ambassador to Pakistan—IDPR No. 147/78. Sri Lanka has appointed Mr. Ernest Corea as High Commissioner to Canada—IDPR No. 146/78. The CWE has decided to import dry fish and maldive fish once more from the Maldives as the Island has been cleared of Cholera—DV. Sri Lanka's debt to foreign countries has increased by Rs. 8080 million because of the devaluation of the rupee by 117%—ATH. The TULF has appointed a 20 mem-

ber Executive Council to take steps to form the separate state of Tamil Eelam—DK. Rhodesia's transitional government yesterday unveiled plans to end racial discrimination against blacks in public places including hotels, buses and cinemas. President Idi Amin of Uganda is organising a combined non aligned force to free the Comoros islands from white mercenaries who overthrew the government over 2 months ago—CDN. China and the Libyan Jamihiryra signed a joint communique establishing diplomatic relations between the two countries—CDM. Pakistan military ruler Zia Ul-Haq will remain chief executive in a new cabinet to be announced by August 20 said the Secretary of the Pakistan National Alliance—SU.

FRIDAY, AUGUST 11: Serious allegations against Mr. Justice Pathirana were made at the Special Presidential Commission by the Counsel for State; he said that Justice Pathirana had done 'something illegal and described him as a 'political stooge in the Supreme Court introduced by Felix Dias.' The President has set up a National Development Service under the Voluntary Youth Service Act. A salt crushing plant worth half a million rupees has been lying idle for over fifteen years at the Elephant Pass site of the Salt Corporation. Ayurvedic doctors will be given the same privileges and rights as the western doctors and treated on an equal footing soon—CDN. The Tamil Self-Rule Party, which claims to have pioneered the 'Tamil Eelam movement is planning to hold propaganda meetings in every electorate in the north and east—SU. The government has decided to appoint women as AGA's and surveyors; this is taken under the policy of appointing an equal number of men and women for top jobs in corporations and departments. The

government has earned over Rs. 3 million between January and July this year from radio licenses—DV. The late Pope Paul's gold ring and official lead seal have been ceremoniously smashed to pieces with a hammer and chisel signifying the end of his reign. At least 200 members of former PM Indira Gandhi's Congress Party were injured yesterday in clashes with police during country wide protests against the government's policies. The ZAPU headed by Joshua Nkomo has charged that there are more than 13,000 foreign mercenaries fighting along side Rhodesian troops—CDM. Portuguese President Antonio Eanes wrestling with a government crisis

SONG**On Eternity**

The evening breeze whispers
in soft hushed tones rustling
the tall coconut palms.
The sun, a golden orb on
the horizon lights up
the emerald green paddy
fields. The crows, black
specks in the orange sky
are homeward bound. The
tranquility of the scene
seeps into my soul and
creates perfect calm. A
calm which cannot be shaken
by the trivialities of
life. I feel one with
the scene and melt into
nothingness in that perfect
moment of bliss. Oh! to
remain forever on that plane
and never to come back to the
harsh realities of an imperfect life
and feel the steel hard thrusts
of pain which the actions of
men inflict! Yet, it
takes but an instant to
plunge from the heights
of ecstasy to the depths
of despair.

Casava

yesterday asked an independent politician to tray and form a cabinet replacing the outgoing socialist administration—CDN.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 12:

The government is ready to face any consequences that may follow the implementation of the Civics Disabilities Bill; any person who disagrees with the legislation is free to canvass public opinion at the forthcoming local government elections and ascertain from the people whether they are in agreement with the action taken by the government. The radical Samasamajists in the GCSU ousted the old LSSP Leadership at yesterday's GCSU annual elections. Aid from Britain to Sri Lanka will in future be on the basis of grants rather than on a loan basis said the British Parliamentary Under-Secretary—CDN. Mr. T. B. Subasinghe speaking at a ULF rally at Hyde Park said that when the ULF was formed in 1969 the biggest political mistake made by the Left was to join Mrs. Bandaranaike's SLFP—CDM. A 'President's Fund' will be established shortly—to collect money for the relief of poverty, advancement to education, making of awards of those who have served the nation and for any other purposes beneficial or of interest to the public. The new constitution of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka is expected to come into operation on September 7 by proclamation by the President—SU. The President has given two week's time to junior ministers to decide whether they will accept the posts of district ministers—DM. The House of representatives handed President Carter a major defeat by rejecting his latest proposals to end income taxes by 18.1 billion dollars—CDN. India's Upper House yesterday passed a motion to set up a 15 member committee to probe allegations into of corruption against PM

Morarji Desai's son Kanti—CDM. The Indian government has declared a state of emergency in the town of Isafahan the scene of anti-Shah rioting in the past two days—SU.

SUNDAY, AUGUST 13:

An overall improvement of public sector economic performance in the second quarter of this year is revealed in the second Performance Report of the public sector economic activity published by the Ministry of Plan Implementation. Eleven students including six girls of the Jaffna Campus of the University of Sri Lanka were suspended indefinitely from yesterday for ragging first year medical students—SO. A National Housing Authority will be established for the purpose of constructing flats and houses. The country would be self sufficient in paper within the next two years said the Chairman of the Paper Corporation—ST. The government has finalised all subjects, functions

and organisations that come under the purview of future District Ministers—WK. The leader of the Opposition said at a meeting explaining their present stand that the ardent youth who are pressing them should first learn that the first requisite was to make an effort to protect our soil—CM. Two night buses for two consecutive nights have been robbed at gun point—EN. Nurses working in government hospitals will not be allowed to leave the country for employment abroad until the present shortage eases—RR. India's Opposition Congress Party dramatically withdrew a motion in Parliament demanding an inquiry into allegations of corruption against PM Morarji Desai's son—SO. The government declared martial law on Saturday night in Isfahan, Iran's second biggest city and put it under dusk to dawn curfew after riots in which four people were killed. —WK.

LETTER

Sir

Re: Quidnuncs letter page 2 of Vol. 23 No. 28—19.8.78

1. The letter has the apologetic flavour one associated with Foreign Office hand-outs
2. If PD/FO via HC/GB per Control Tower BIA had only bothered to check IF the Bonnie Prince were getting off at Katunayake while his plane was 3 or 4 hours away or not, then except for (a) the British HC and his staff and (b) ONE officer from our local PD/FO who could have stayed behind, the other Sri Lanka could have gone home to sleep and self-respect.
3. Of course there was a thousand to one chance that Charles would have come to earth. A risk worth taking. What lovely photographs to show Colombo Seven? "Maui, he is so intelligent and handsome. We were chatting together for about half an hour"!!
4. A Desai, Zia, Ne Win, Suharto, Kenyatta, Nyerre or Kaunda come and go. But a WHITE prince—ah that makes the difference.
5. The arrangements were excellent re VIP lounges etc. Need the Sri Lankans be shown as grovelling with joy (as our ancient Maha Mudaliyars and Adigars did) at the prospect of touching Charles' finger tips. Of course it would never have done to "Namaste". When Europeans come—a handshake; for the Asians palms together. If the Eskimos sent their Prime Minister PD/FO will leap forward to rub noses.

21.8.78

Saradiel.

ACID BOMB EXPLOSION—12

Chapter Twelve

The Parcel

By James Goonewardene

The wave receded and the angular object, a fruit, was stranded on the shore. Deva, striding along, stopped to look at it. He had been to the river's mouth and was getting back to the resthouse before it got dark; but dusk had already begun to fall and he had been running; his contentment showed itself in the swing of his body and the ease of his stride. He picked up the fruit from the still-wet sand, the fibrous-husked, coconut-like fruit, tossing and rolling it in his hand, feeling its shape as he resumed his walk. Then suddenly he swung his body and flung the fruit out into the sea. It fell with a splash; caught up in a gathering wave it was swept a brief way towards the shore. It then rose and was just a dark object flopping about in the gloom. He watched it for a moment; then losing interest in it he started to run again, limping and testing the strength of his weakened leg, but running light-heartedly, but running steadily and getting winded.

The breeze had been dropping in the last few weeks. The sky had been changing too in that time, becoming bluer in the day and more vivid and colourful at sunset. It would soon be end of November. From now till about the end of February the skies would put on these displays at sunset. These were the cool months when there was barely any humidity in the atmosphere and the mornings had that bracing nip in the air. These were the good months of the year, if the north-easterly winds did not bring rain with it.

He was not running anymore suddenly. He was winded and wanted to get his breath back. He watched the waves, watched them sweep up the shore and then recede, leaving a smooth surface in which the brilliant blues and reds of the sky were reflected, making the shore, in that fading light, a thing as beautiful as the sky. Light was disappearing rapidly and this was the last fantastic scene before the final curtain fall.

He had slowed down to a walk and had been recovering his breath and looking around. Then, once again, he ran, the breeze in his face, cooling and moistening it. He had been thinking how much better it would have been if his wife had been running beside him, but she being dead he had to run alone. How much she loved running barefooted on the beach. It was a gift a child has for doing the simple things and enjoying them; she could see a stallion in a cloud and butterflies in bits of tinsel—she could run light-footedly on a beach with as much pleasure as a night at a concert. A wave round her feet would set her laughing deliriously. This lonely stretch of beach would have combined for her the wonders of a mass parade. The wind in her face, the wet sand clinging to her feet would have excited her no end. He had never stopped wondering at her capacity to absorb herself in the things she did. When he was at work she would engage herself in her own private activity, with the same concentration that children devote to their actions. She had found their secret—the child's secret. She could bring to everything the freshness that children brought to things. Others had not yet learned how to do this, but all that was in the past and she was gone; here he was now, running alone, not knowing what it was going to be like in a week, in a

month, in a year's time and not caring how it would be, not caring anymore.

Before he crossed over to the resthouse he stopped to rest a moment. It was not yet night, but the gloom gathered rapidly; there was still a haze over the horizon where he knew the fishing boats were invisibly bobbing, but he stood there till the haze too had disappeared and darkness had really come. Alone on all that silent and sea-pulsating beach he stood and waited. At last, he turned and made his way to the resthouse, slowly through the tufts of marram grass, the spongy, sap-filled bintambaru, the leaves cracking under his feet, and he feeling and hearing them. The fireflies had taken to wing. They flitted around like sparks and bits of silver. Now he would sit with Ariya, if he was free, and talk with him. They had talked of many things since he had come to work and live here. They had talked of books they had read and of things they had done and about people they had met—Ariya sometimes asking Deva how it was in London, never having travelled, and how he wanted to study marine engineering and become a ship's engineer, and how it had failed. Ariya sometimes talked of women he had known, and how he had come to distrust them, and of the suffering they had inflicted on him. They talked also of the present problems in the country. This was how they sat and talked, and Ariya dreaming of how he would learn to write someday. That was just a dream which he knew would never come to become a reality. He had much intelligence; because of it he saw things clearly and he wanted to write about what he saw so that people would know how he felt and thought about them; but in fact Ariya had never had any patience to sit and write—it

was too difficult and too full of labour, but he did not scorn those who could write well because it was too difficult. Only he hadn't the patience to do it himself, but he had great regard for those who could do the difficult things well. It was why he had talked of art the first day he met him. Deva understood it all, saw it all fall into place. It was so easy not to understand a man the first time you met him.

He turned up the slope, feeling hot from having run, and moist, and also full of this feeling of well-being and knowing that if he could make this peace within him last he could, perhaps, go onto a new way of living. But what he wanted now was to sit in the dark on the lawn and sip an iced beer, but as he started his trudge up the uneven ground he heard the drift of voices. He groaned "visitors", he thought—loud-mouthed visitors, but let them talk, if they wanted. Tonight nothing was going to worry him. He'll put his legs up on a stool and drink his beer. But there were no visitors, not the ordinary visitors—just Piyaratne and Ariya, talking with their chairs drawn close together. That was different. Piyaratne was not a visitor, not the ordinary visitor; he went cautiously towards them.

"Hello," said Ariya. It was just a voice, a disembodied voice in the dark. "A chair—bring another chair," said the voice to an invisible waiter. The chair was brought and Deva sat with them. He ordered a glass of beer. There was suddenly an ominous silence now—what had they been talking about, he wondered, with their chairs drawn so close together like conspirators. The silence continued: it was as if his two friends had ceased to notice him, and there they sat drawn into this silence, it was broken suddenly by the old man's slurred speech.

"If they think theesh..if they think theesh is going to frighten me.. if they think this is going to make me put my tail between my legs.. if they think...I'll give up..I'll give up only when they get me on my back. Threats. Ariya, do you hear, threats..they don't frighten me".....

For a man whose speech was normally so clear and deliberate, the dropping of consonants and the struggle for words seemed like a horrible travesty. He has already taken too many drinks, thought Deva feeling a wave of pity for the old man, and already he felt drained of his earlier cheerfulness "I want a drink," said the old man picking up his empty glass and rolling it in his hand, "I want drink, Ariya, Don't you want to give an old friend a drink.....?"

Ariya left to fetch him his drink. Piyaratne turned to Deva. "I suppose..I suppose I can tell you what thish is all about.." he said. "They sent me a parcel.. they sent me a parcel, all nicely wrapped up. It was put on my desk las' morning; brought by post. My peon, the half-wit had placed it where I'd see it..thing, that's funny..where I'd see it the first thing, thinking it contained the crown jewels. The stupid fools.. the stupid fools to send me such a thing..They believed I would get the jitters..they thought I would get the jitters when I opened it."

"Parcel?"

"Yes, a parcel, a box, wrapped up ..you know what wash in it..all nicely wrapped up..you must be out of touch with this sort of thing. They still practice this sort o' thing here; black magic—you know.. hooniyan, kodivina. They preach high falutin economic theories, but when it comes to hard facts they go back to their primitive black magic like any with doctor in

Africa. This is the refuse, the garbage I have on my staff. The little card board box contained the customary clay image with a pin stuck through it. It was intended as the forerunner of some catastrophe that they intended should befall me. They come as erudite men to whom is entrusted the task of instructing the young in modern learning, but in the darkness they are two thousand years back in the dim, far-off age."

"But you are not frightened of this?" said Deva, "you don't believe in blk magic."

"Of course, its nonsense, its blasted nonsense. Its not that that has go'mi'down. Itssh what they did last night..zhey plastered.. zhey plastered..one of the walls of my house with dung—human dung. Its all done in the dark. They come in the night like thieves, carrying human shit to stick on my wall." Deva couldn't help shuddering with disgust.

"But what makes you think its someone from the staff?" he asked. "You ask how do I know its someone from the staff..its what everybody knows. Itsh that fellow Hemapala..everybody knows how he has been trying to get me out of the school..you know the fellow..you know him, don't you, the fellow who wears those loose, slovenly c.otes..the fellow with feet like boats, suffering from an inferiority complex. Sent me anonymous postcards at first. Zat wash at the beginning..before he formed thish teacher's union. The Police traced the postcard back to him. The police were going to file action against him..but he ..as some high-up friends, politicians. We couldn't do a thing. They are trying to get one of their own bunch here. If that happens there would be no limit to the corruption. All this area will sink into darkness. My boy, you've come to join us at a time when

the island's sinking into corruption of a kind that we've never seen before..but I have no fear of you. You don't look the type who runs away when things go wrong. You don't back out of trouble—do you? No, no, don't get frightened..I am not going to drag you into all this.."

"I am not frightened of getting dragged into anything," protested Deva.

"Yes, of course, of course, but this is my problem and I'll meet it but I don't want you to abandon the school because of this."

Ariya had rejoined them now. A moment later the waiter came with the drink.

"Ah here's my drink. You know, my boy, my friend here—Ariya is a good man...a good friend.. no running, not he. He has the sort of loyalty you don't see around anymore. He stands and fights.. well, I don't know whether he fights, but he doesn't run, but I am going to fight. That's what I am going to do—fight I am going to fight, going to stand and fight. Ariya, here, is a great friend. He advises me not to..let things be, he says.. because he is a religious man..so am I, but sometimes you've got to fight..Yes, sometimes you have to fight—what say you—Ariya—Yes?" Piyaratne grabbed his drink with an unsteady hand and drained off half of the glass.

"My boy, you are just sipping a glass of beer. Ariya, my boy here needs another drink. Its on me. Get more beer."

"No, Mr. Piyaratne, this is all I need now."

"All right, I'll not force it on you. You Ariya, you don't have a drink either. You see, the plastering of the walls with human dung.. it was not a decent thing to do. My wife, it has affected my wife more than it has done me. It was not decent getting her into this. I am glad my children are not here

with me. They are safe where they are, but my wife, she takes all these things very hard. She gets very upset and flies off the handle. Not a decent thing to get my wife into this..Ariya, where's your drink?" "I don't drink, you know, while on duty."

"That's right, come hell or high water a man must stick to his principles. I think that is good enough of a hint. No one's drinking but me. This is the last and I must go. My wife, she gets all upset. She too blames me for all this. That's a bit hard, but.."

The old man tossed off the rest of his drink and rose.

"Well my friends, I must go now, go into the night alone. This..is the only wisdom one's left with..one battles alone..that's the only wisdom one's left with, and one's last battle is with fear and death, and one fights it alone."

Deva and Ariya had risen too. The three of them stood there a long moment saying nothing. They all felt threatened in some deep and fundamental sense. What was threatened was not just Piyaratne, Deva felt, but something more important than a lone individual fighting to preserve some bit of sanity. He saw this very clearly suddenly. For a long time he had known this.

Across the river, in a clump of bushes a pair of water fowls started fighting in the dark. Piyaratne turned his head in the direction of the noise and seemed to be listening for a moment. He seemed reluctant to go. He liked being here. He felt safe in the company of his friends, but he knew he had to go.

"Well, I must go", he said finally as he turned.

"I am coming with you Sir," said Deva, "you can't go alone." The old man was in no fit condi-

tion, he realised, to set out alone over the bridge and back home.

"I will not hear of it," cried Piyaratne, suddenly pushing his shoulders back in a gesture of defiance.

"It must never be said of me that I was frightened of the dark, or that I was frightened to go alone."

Deva looked to Ariya for help, but Ariya shook his head to say no. He knew the old man well enough to realise that, however high he was, when his mind was made nothing could budge him. The old man started to walk out slowly towards the road, lurching a bit now and then. He had not been gone long when they heard him sing, the staid, elegant old man who was the Principal of the only school in the town staggering along drunk as a torpor, singing to drown his fears, a frightened man trying to sing louder than his fears.

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LESSON FROM INDIA

Price Of Aid

The bulk of the pledged assistance from the Aid India Consortium will be 'project aid.' This is because India with its massive foreign exchange reserves does not qualify for non-project aid which is given to help overcome balance of payment difficulties. This, is pointed out, need not defer India getting non-project aid once its reserves are depleted and payment gap develops, as the aid vortaries hopefully project.

But, then, the type of rural development envisaged by the Government and the Planners—whether it is the concentrated support to agriculture for rapid growth of employment potential or small scale industry—does not require any

projects to be financed by foreign aid. Here comes in the specious argument of development of infra-structure to support the new strategy of low technology growth of agriculture and industry.

Project aid is given, after bargaining, by the donor countries, on a project to project basis on stipulated terms and conditions. One of them is the choice of the project itself. Then, they insist on overwhelming say in the setting up and running of the project, as well as on the margin of profits etc. Predictably, the erection of the projects will be on a turn-key basis. Covering these individual contracts will be further liberalisation and extension of concessions. The ground has already been prepared for this type of penetration of private foreign capital into crucial sectors of the Indian economy, by the Orville Freeman entourage of multinational executives to India in February and the Prime Minister's disturbing assurances to the multinationals, during the recent American visit.

Project aid, on the terms insisted upon usually by the donor countries, will pre-empt growth and expansion of Indian enterprise in the crucial areas which would presumably include basic industries as part of the infra structure. The initiative of the Government will be eroded and nullified to the extent that the economy becomes captive to the dictates of the entrenched foreign projects.

Significantly, the demand of Indian Big Business also includes opportunities for exploitation of the consumer goods market through the foreign collaboration. What, therefore, would the aid in effect mean is the capturing of the vast Indian market by foreign capital for exploitation. Heavy industry and basic industries under Indian control, especially under the control of the Government in the

public sector, become irrelevant if not an obstacle to such exploitation. That is the vision which the Government offers under the new Plan and its industrial policy to the Aid India donors. Self reliance has no place in this vision.

If the developing countries cannot export to the developed countries they can still provide facilities to the latter to launch joint ventures for exploitation of third countries, play a junior role and get a small share in the exports which will, on balance, be to the advantage of the dominant western capitalist countries. That is a bait offered to Indian Big Business by the multinationals

—Secular Democracy

THE NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT

Letter From Belgrade—2

by A. W. Singham

*This is the second of a two-part series by Professor A. W. Singham on the Non-Aligned Movement written exclusively for the Tribune. The first part LETTER FROM HAVANA AND WASHINGTON appeared in the Tribune of July 15, (Vol 23 No 3). A. W. Singham is currently Professor, Political Science at Howard University in Washington DC. He is the editor of a book which has just appeared entitled **The Non-Aligned Movement in World Politics**, published by Lawrence Hill & Co. A review of this book will appear in Tribune shortly. Prof. Singham is presently a visiting fellow at the UN undertaking a study on the Non-Aligned Movement. From September this year he is joining the Department of Political Science, Brooklyn College, City University of New York.*

One of the most interesting aspects of the Belgrade Conference

was the presence in Yugoslavia of the Vice President of Cuba, Dr. Carlos Rafael Rodriguez. He held a press conference in Belgrade away from the Conference site at the International Press Center. At the press conference, he answered the critics of Cuba quite directly. In a section entitled "Those Who Can Be Non-Aligned" he said:

We conceive the Non-Aligned Movement as an association of countries with different social and political concepts, belonging to several social-economic systems, confessional as well as laic, but with bonds that characterize the participation of all members in the Movement: not being committed to any of the global military pacts and to accept the program of the Movement which was clearly defined at Belgrade and Cairo.

To such program Cuba does feel committed. If some member country wants to change the orientation of the program of the Non-Aligned Movement, it is not Cuba. Cuba will be opposed to it. When any country that proclaims itself as non-aligned tries to attack Cuba's policy of solidarity with the people of Africa, it forgets, first of all, that one of the principles which the Movement has reaffirmed in its different conferences has been the recommendations of the member countries to request help from other non-aligned member countries whose territorial sovereignty and integrity are threatened. The best answer to those who, serving imperialist policy, try to impeach Cuba's non-alignment, based on its support to African people, is the agreement subscribed at Colombo Conference of Heads of State or Government which, after congratulating the peoples of Angola for its heroic and successful struggle against South

African racist invaders and their allies, "greeted the Republic of Cuba and other States which helped the people of Angola to frustrate the expansionist and colonialist strategy of the South African racist regime and its allies. (Statement by Dr. Carlos Rafael Rodriguez, Member of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party and Vice-President of the Council of State and the Council of Ministers of Cuba to the Press Conference held in Belgrade during the Ministerial Conference of the Non-Aligned Countries, July 29, 1978, p. 6).

A little later on in the press conference he proceeded to define more precisely what a socialist country like Cuba was doing in a non-aligned movement.

No one could demand from a Non-Aligned Country, on behalf of being a member of the Movement, that he attaches himself to socialist theories or that he supports them, or even, that he shows a preference towards the foreign policy of the socialist countries. But it is a fact that while the Non-Aligned Countries may, at the same time, be socialists and non-aligned such as Yugoslavia and Cuba, at the beginning of the Movement and afterwards other members, such as Vietnam and Korea and many others recently incorporated—no imperialist country, neither any country that supports or approves the imperialist policy, successively and repeatedly condemned by all our Conferences, could be a member of this Movement. (Ibid., p. 8).

And finally, answering those who charged that Cuba would misrepresent its role as the Chairman of the Non-Aligned Conference after Havana, he said:

At the same time, Cuba recognizes the heterogeneous charac-

ter of the Movement, the fact that it is integrated by States with different social systems, guided by different political and religious concepts, that sometimes consider in different ways, not only the essential factors of the world situation, but also the way in which the very same program of the Non-Aligned Countries must be applied.

Such facts were the reasons for the sentence that President Tito expressed at the very beginning of the Movement: that our unity "does not enforce unanimity". Last of all, it is our opinion that the directing bodies of the Movement, its Presidency, its Coordinating Bureau, its Ministerial Conferences, when acting on behalf of the Non-Aligned Countries, cannot express the opinion of any country or groups of countries, but are compelled to do so with full respect of the Program of the Movement and of the agreements of the following Conferences. (Ibid., p. 11).

There was another theoretical shift in emphasis that one began to discern at Belgrade. In the past, the non-aligned movement had been very concerned with the issue of colonialism and imperialism in its broadest sense. It has recognized that with the glaring exception of Southern Africa, the issue of political colonization would be settled in the coming decade. They are thus much more concerned now with the growing new phenomenon within the non-aligned world, namely the issue of neocolonialism.

Simply put, this phenomenon, which was recognized at an early date by one of the Founding Fathers of non-alignment, Nkrumah, is a situation where a nation is able to enjoy political sovereignty but is subject to economic dependence.

Most of the non-aligned countries were becoming aware that while they were able to be politically sovereign, their economic sovereignty was seriously impaired by the world monetary and market system.

Most of the non-aligned countries are finding themselves increasingly dependent on the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. Many of the delegates at the Belgrade meeting pointed out that instead of going, as they had done for the past three hundred years, to London, Paris, and Lisbon, they now found themselves increasingly dependent on Washington for their development funds.

Many of the leaders attending the Belgrade Conference were painfully aware of what had happened to one of its militant members, namely Jamaica, in its experience with the IMF. They recognized that in order to follow a policy of self reliance and economic independence, they were constantly being curtailed by the new institutions of world imperialism that were emerging, namely those of the multi-national corporations, the IMF, and the World Bank. (It is somewhat ironic that next month the World Bank and the IMF will be meeting at the same conference site, the Sava Center in Yugoslavia, to determine the fate of most of the nonaligned nations!)

The members of the non-aligned movement were thus realizing that the fundamental contradiction in the world economy, namely of a world recession coupled by a world inflation, would have disastrous consequences for their own economy. Thus, the non-aligned movement was slowly but painfully beginning to develop a strategy to deal with this impending crisis over which they have no control.

In addition to these major theoretical issues, the Foreign Ministers also addressed themselves to some very practical problems that con-

Belgrade Meeting

fronted the non-aligned movement. The meeting of the Foreign Ministers, for example, enabled the Arab Foreign Ministers to meet and discuss certain matters of common interest. This was the first time that Egypt was to save its face and participate with some of the other Arab Foreign Ministers in an effort to develop a collective strategy for peace in the Middle East. Many of the Arab Foreign Ministers saw this as a monumental step in that it allowed the Arab nations to have a joint strategy instead of bilateral negotiations which were destroying Arab unity.

Secondly, the conference also agreed to develop an informal machinery by which to resolve conflicts between member nations. The creation of ad hoc committees to deal with specific problems between member nations was indeed an extremely important practical step. The non-aligned movement thus offers for the world system a new method by which international disputes can be resolved. Because the non-aligned movement has within it members from every given continent it may be that countries that are not directly involved in a particular conflict can provide their good offices for the resolution of such a conflict. It was originally hoped that the United Nations could perform such a task. Unfortunately, in recent years the United Nations has become bogged down in such a morass of international legalism that it has not been able to perform a useful political role. **The non-aligned movement can play an exceptionally important role by providing political leadership of this kind for the international system.**

The Belgrade meeting produced in addition an extremely important political manoeuvre to bring down the racist regime of Southern Africa. The Conference

called upon the Security Council to take specific actions in this regard by calling for an oil embargo.

84. The Conference draws the attention of the international community to the need to undertake effective measures to put an end to the permanent aggression and the system of brutal oppression and genocide against the indigenous peoples of Zimbabwe, Namibia, and South Africa. The Ministers urge those States that maintain economic, military and nuclear relations with the racist regimes to terminate them and to co-operate with the United Nations in the effort to eliminate such relations and in particular to work towards the early convening of the Security Council to consider the oil embargo against the South African racist regime. The Ministers urged all Third World states who are not in the Non-Aligned Movement and in particular, Iran, to join in making the embargo effective. The Conference pays tribute to the heroic struggle waged by the peoples of Namibia, Zimbabwe and South Africa for the liquidation of colonialism, racism, and apartheid, which constitutes a major contribution to the struggle for the general emancipation of nations and countries. The Ministers call for the complete and consistent implementation of the United Nations decisions on the decolonization of Southern Africa and on all required support to the liberation movements at this critical stage of the struggle for liberation and independence. They underline in particular the significance of the role of the United Nations, and of the Organization of African Unity in particular, in this regard. (Draft Declaration For The Conference of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Non-Aligned Countries

in Belgrade, 25-29 July, 1978, BEG-78-0339).

If the non-aligned movement is able to convince the international community to impose an oil embargo on the Southern African regime there is no doubt that such a strategy is likely to bring an end to the deadly poison of apartheid within this era.

It was clear that by the end of the meeting there was considerable optimism amongst those who participated at the meeting about the future of non-alignment. The most pessimistic conclusions about the movement obviously came from the Western press. The New York Times concluded that:

The forum was the Foreign Ministers meeting of the Non-Aligned Movement, 113 nations professing a 24 year tradition of neutrality between East and West. But the reality was something else, bitter and divisive debates over parochial issues from the Horn of Africa to Indochina and to the charges of proxy wars to Great Power patrons.

The Times, in the same article of July 30th goes on to point out that indeed the United States, especially the National Security Council, had hoped that the new "influentials" in Belgrade would have produced a sobering influence on the movement:

Most of the countries that Zbigniew Brzezinski, President Carter's national security adviser, has called the "new influentials" were in Belgrade last week—Saudi Arabia, Indonesia, Nigeria and Brazil (an observer). Mr. Brzezinski and the Carter Administration have targeted these countries for special attention in the developing world, by virtue of their wealth, control of commodities, population or geographic position.

The New York Times continues to question:

But is the nonaligned movement the format to reach them, an arena where the most important issues are diluted with rhetoric, where last week the most crucial debates, even behind closed doors, reportedly dissolved into shouting matches bordering on pandemonium?

But those who had observed the final session of the plenary in Belgrade on the last day of the Conference were not convinced that pandemonium and chaos had prevailed. Indeed, most of the leaders of the delegations including the apparent belligerent influentials came away quite happy that the non-aligned movement had indeed achieved a new stage in its historical development.

However, just as the Conference was ending the new campaign was beginning to disrupt the Summit meeting in Havana. Most commentators began to predict that there would be a very small turnout in Havana by the Heads of State and indeed they predicted that many of the nations would boycott the Summit. It was interesting to note that the wire services reported at the end of the Conference that nearly 30 nations would boycott the Havana Summit. It was obvious that the wire services had not conducted a survey, but they insisted that they were quoting "diplomatic sources". It was finally revealed that the number of 30 was suggested by Morocco in a radio interview with a German station!

It should be remembered, nevertheless, that Summit meetings normally do not bring out the majority of the Heads of State. The only two Summits that attracted a vast majority of the Heads of State were those in Yugoslavia and Algeria. Secondly, it appears clear that the West was determined to continue its cam-

paign to create an ideological schism within the movement, especially by focusing their attention on such concepts as hegemony (and natural ally).

Socialist countries within the non-aligned movement had insisted that the socialist camp which had no record of colonialism or imperialism should be treated as a natural ally. However, the massive split in the socialist movement, especially the division within the socialist camp has resulted in further divisions within the movement itself. Vietnam and Cuba made it abundantly clear that socialist countries like China were no longer following the path of anti-imperialism but were indeed collaborators with imperialism against the interests of the non-aligned. On the other hand, countries like Yugoslavia and India appeared to be totally opposed to the bloc theory in world politics and suggested the phrase "hegemony" to describe the activities of other dominant forces.

It is our view that the debate over the question of natural ally versus the concept of hegemony can only strengthen the movement rather than weaken it. By attempting to define the behaviour of states within these specific conceptual frameworks nations will then be able to judge whether a particular nation's activity, or rather, bloc's activity, fits into its theoretical characterization.

For example, the term hegemony requires considerable further theoretical exploration, especially since it is a phrase that is quickly bandied about in world politics without specific empirical meaning. Furthermore, as events develop in Southern Africa and in Southeast Asia, many of the non-aligned nations will have to come to a political conclusion as to which side they support. Non-alignment does not mean, as most others have ten-

ded to conclude, an amoral position on world issues.

Bandaranaike was quite correct when he said: "We are nonaligned, but committed to the hilt." In other words, there can be no non-aligned block within the non-aligned movement. The commitment to peace, national liberation, and the fight against racism does not allow us the moral luxury to be neutral on these issues.

The debate in Belgrade should have provided considerable clarity to most of the non-aligned nations attending as to what their individual nation's policy should be on such questions as the conflict between Vietnam and Cambodia, the conflict between Zaire and Angola, and most importantly, the conflict between Southern Africa and the front-line states. The Bureau meetings of the non-aligned, the Foreign Minister's meetings, as well as the Heads of State meetings have provided an excellent forum whereby the non-aligned nations can obtain specific information which will inform their policy on broad international questions. For a country like Sri Lanka, the opportunity to be the Chairman of this last movement has proved to be an enormous responsibility. It was clear that Sri Lanka had insisted throughout the proceedings in Belgrade that she was not merely a co-ordinator of the Bureau of the non-aligned meeting, but indeed the Chairman of the conference and proceeded to act as one. When the Heads of State selected Sri Lanka to be the host for the meeting and proceeded to elect her as the Chairman of that meeting, they had confidence that Sri Lanka would act as an impartial Chairman.

It is also clear that when a country assumes the Chairmanship it will not abandon its own foreign

policy objectives and become "neutral." It should be made clear that there is a tradition in the non-aligned movement that when a nation assumes the Chairmanship of such a gathering it distinguishes between its role as Chairman and its role as a member nation. During the 19 year history of the movement, each Chairman has brought to the movement its own leadership skill to try and keep the movement unified and moving forward. Yugoslavia at the first Summit, Egypt at the second Summit, Zambia at the third Summit, Algeria at the fourth Summit, and Sri Lanka at the fifth Summit have all brought the movement their own particular style of leadership to improve the quality of the movement.

It is for this reason that the Heads of State, when they met in Sri Lanka, remained confident that the next Chairman, Cuba, would also continue in that tradition, namely of providing its own style of leadership but at the same time making sure that the integrity and the meaning of the movement as a broad united front of poor nations in their struggle for economic, social, and political justice will continue. Most of the nations attending the Belgrade Conference had enough confidence both in themselves and in their fellow members not to be stampeded into adventurist activities such as the postponement of the Havana Summit.

As one Asian leader put it, "A Chairman will have to be judged whether it is a good Chairman or not when it assumes that office and proceeds to exercise the powers that have been granted by that office. It is irresponsible to judge a country before it has had a chance to exercise this right."

The meeting of the Foreign Ministers in Belgrade, by confirming the date for the next Summit meeting in Havana for September 3-6, 1979, expressed their confidence not only in the government of Cuba but more importantly in the capacity of the movement to govern its own affairs. It made it abundantly clear that it did not require constitutional advice from the foreign offices of the Western nations on how the movement is to conduct its internal business.

concluded

BOOK REVIEW

The Tamil Problem

THE WAY OUT FOR THE TAMIL SPEAKING PEOPLE INCLUDING POST-SCRIPT: 1977 BY V. KARALASINGHAM (INTERNATIONAL PUBLISHERS, COLOMBO, 1978. PRICE RS. 15/- LOCAL).

The author who is a friend of mine has, nevertheless, to be complimented for bringing out a reprint of his *The Way Out For The Tamil Speaking People* at a time when a correct approach to the Tamil minority problem facing the country needs to be made both by the Sinhala people and the Tamils themselves. The first edition of this book made it appearance in the year 1963. In the second edition which has just come out of print, the author has updated his work by including a new chapter *Post-Script: 1977* together with appendices which contain some brief but interesting articles of his on the subject of Tamil minority problem and race relations in Sri Lanka.

The main chapters which formed his earlier work give a concise and

lucid Marxist exposition of the minority problem: the barrenness of the solutions offered by Tamil political parties especially the Federal Party and the real path that lie ahead for them along the road of struggle for socialism. Going through the pages once again after 15 years one notes the stark relevancy of the ideas expressed therein to the predicament in which the Tamil speaking people find themselves in even today.

This review is primarily concerned with and confined to chapters added newly. *Post-Script: 1977* traces the advent of the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) in Tamil politics and its impact on the political life of the country. Tamil politics which was principally governed by the politics of the FP, the hall-mark of whose policy the author characteristically describes as the policy of "looking out for potential patrons after every Parliamentary elections", came to a dead-end in the wake of the sweeping victory of the United Front of the SLFP-LSSP-CP at the elections of 1970. But 1970 also provided a new extension in in-

BOOK REVIEW

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Owing to an oversight, we had failed to mention that the review of the book **FACETS OF MODERN CEYLON HISTORY THROUGH THE LETTERS OF JERONIS PIERIS** by Michael Roberts written by H. A. I. Goonetilleke, which appeared in the *Tribune* of August 19, 1978, (Vol. 23. No. 9) had originally appeared in *The Sri Lanka Journal of Humanities*, Vol. 2. No. 2, December 1960. We regret the omission.

fluence of Tamil communalism. The post-1970 blunders of Mrs. Bandaranaike which were blunders committed as a result of caving in to Sinhala chauvinism contributed in no small measure in continuing to keep the Tamil speaking people in captivity.

The author describes as follows the conditions which brought about this situation: "...in the situation created by the lack of Tamil representation in the United Front Sinhala chauvinism rapidly moved in and soon established a powerful lobby—the Sinhala Taruna Sangavidanaya with Mr. Sivali Ratwatte as president, the same gentleman whom the UNP has retained as chairman of the Export Processing Bureau and is the principal contact man of multinational companies to press for its consistent anti-Tamil policy. By November of that year it, succeeded in pressurizing the Government to review the results of media-wise standardisation imposing the hated *numerous clausus* in the matter of University admission."

Of course, for the lack of Tamil representation in the UF, it is none other than the Tamil speaking people themselves who have to be blamed. For, had they objectively assessed the situation they would have realised at least the tactical advantage of linking their struggle for the realisation of their genuine grievances, with the forces led by the United Front at the elections of 1970. This was not to be. The Tamil people instead of throwing their weight behind the Front and using it as their instrument engaged themselves in to use the term of Karalasingham, "a labour of sisyphus" under the Tamil communal parties. They preferred to wallow in the mire of Tamil communal politics. Further, in a situation where the balance of class forces within the United Front Government itself began to switch in

favour of the Right, Sinhala chauvinism found its way easy into the highest echelons of power. The device of standardisation pushed a considerable section of Tamil youth to a position of hostility towards the Government. To add insult to injury the SLFP's activities in the Tamil speaking areas through its hand-picked 'agents' worsen the situation and Mrs. Bandaranaike's "wisdom" that a police-cum-military operation in the northern peninsula would settle matters further widened the credibility gap. By this negative approach she not only alienated the Tamil speaking people but above all provided the reactionary Tamil political parties a fresh lease of life. Thus Tamil political reaction became alive and kicking on the plank of the demand for a separate state. The TULF provided the rallying point.

Of this organisation author Karalasingham says: "it sought to unite the Tamil speaking people of 3 areas, viz. North, East and hill country with separate and distinct problems under the common demand of Eelam." He lists the following as the reasons which make the objective of a separate state hard to realise—"...not only are the class interested of the plantation Tamils, clearly different from those of the North and East, their own pressing demands of a "national" character are of an entirely different order, involving the ending of the apartheid regime imposed on them and their integration into the political life of the country"... "Even as between the Tamil speaking people of the North and East, the much vaunted unity was largely fictitious, not only on account of the refusal of the Muslim community of the Eastern Province to fall in line, but even as between the Tamils in the Eastern Province."

Why then is this vain attempt to inter-lock or reconcile the con-

tradictory interests of disparate people undertaken? the reader may ask. Karalasingham answers quite pointedly—"While their separate grievances brought them together they were held together in a vice in obedience to a higher interest and superior directive, viz, the need to confront a government which was left of centre." Karalasingham goes on to state that in a situation as that of the present where we find the Government anything but of a Centre Left type, the separatist demand will be kept alive but not activated. "The time for such activation is when a Left or Left of Centre government is in power!"

If one is to judge the course of Tamil politics from its past one cannot fight say of agreeing with this assertion of the author. The line of policy pursued by the TULF and its precursor the FP during the period of the United Front Government and even earlier adds strength to this statement. The role these parties of Tamil reaction played in the general struggle against imperialism is too fresh in the minds of the progressive people that it needs no elaborate mention. Suffice it to say that at every turn they acted as the hand maidens of imperialism and local reaction. Viewed in this context one cannot help but agree with the author when he characterises the idea of a separate state as the creature of imperialism—a sort of a foothold not only in Ceylon but also in South Asia.

Though the TULF demand is of such portent, the danger involved could be and must be warded off at all costs. The anti-imperialist movement should consider this as part of their own struggle and most awaken to realising, the importance, the urgency and the need for a proper policy which will meet the legitimate aspirations of the Tamil speaking people. The

thick veil of insecurity that blur the political vision of the Tamil people needs to be removed. This could only be done to the extent the socialist movement come forward again to fearlessly espouse the cause of the Tamil speaking people. Admittedly, this is not an easy task. Both Sinhala and Tamil nationalism which is nothing but the manifestation of petit-bourgeois chauvinism has permeated so deep in to the body politic of the country that it is an arduous task to make them overcome this overnight. In a country like ours where petit-bourgeois aspirations are not confined to the middle classes alone but pervade even among the working masses, the task is doubly difficult. Age-old prejudices, inhibitions, snobbery die hard and more so, in a capitalist society where scarce resources and scarce opportunities breed cut-throat competition. As Karalasingham says: "only the growth of socialist class consciousness with its secularism and internationalism will eliminate these poisons." We are far, far away from a secular state. But the fight for secularism cannot be postponed and must not be postponed.

Such is the message penetratingly put across in *The Way Out For The Tamil Speaking People*.

T. M. R. Rasseedin

LETTER

Politicians And The People

Sir,

According to a Sri Lanka Radio report, quite 70% of the Japanese do not take their Politicians too seriously. This is a sign of excel-

lent Social health. In this country, on the contrary—Politics and Politicians—have high ranking and dominate much of our life and conversation. The Radio and Press constantly report on what our Politicians did, said, or plan to do. Little is heard of Tikiri Banda's plan at Katidiyawa or Sude Hamine campaign at Unawatuna—whatever the plan or campaign might be!

Democracy—to grow to maturity must reflect ordinary peoples pirations, causes, resolutions and actions.

Of all this, for the most part, there is silence in this country. The Planning is being done for us by the Politicians—so the media report. Lets try to grow up Politically and put or keep the Politicians in their proper and necessary place—it is not necessary to have the solemnly declare open every Butcher's Stall. There are plenty of more exciting, interesting folks all around to do these jobs—even former MPs—so many of them under-employed!!

Dr. Bryan de Kretser

Hendala.
2.8.78

A Promise

Democracy true would prevail
Basic human rights ensured
Freedom we would possess—
Our rulers to choose.
Be expressive and critical,
Creative and productive.

Has this promise
been fulfilled?
You are the judge.....
What is your verdict?

— Betrayed

Peoples Credo

Past

We believed,
Policies of a party
Professing socialism
Would benefit
the people.

Present

We believe
words cannot
move mountains
divert rivers
build houses
create jobs
reduce prices

Future

We hope
We wont stagger
like an old elephant
made pregnant
by a
International
Mating
Fund.

— people



SNIPPETS

We have all enough strength to
bear the misfortunes of others.

—Duc de la Rochefoucauld.

Remember that the most beautiful
things in the world are the most
useless; peacocks and lilies for
instance—John Ruskin.

It takes two to make a marriage
a success and only one a failure.

—Viscount H. L. Samuel.

Poetry is the record of the best
and happiest moments of the happi-
est and best minds.—P. B. Shelley.

Reading is to the mind what
exercise is to the body.

—Sir Richard Steele.

Confidentially

The Mysterious "Mr. Aloysius"

IS IT NOT A FACT that the name "Mr. Aloysius" comes up very frequently whenever trade, commerce, imports and exports are mentioned? That he is said to be, at present one of the biggest, if not the biggest, force in the Government's Establishment in the private commercial sector but he is also one who sells in millions to the public sector? That in addition he is said to be a political force with a considerable punch? That for a long time, ever since this government came to power last year, this name (Mr. Aloysius) was mentioned in hushed whispers not only in the cocktail circuit but also in the dark corridors of the different political lobbies? That in the diplomatic circles it was believed that if one wanted to sell anything to or buy from this government "Mr. Aloysius" was the man? That if one wanted to "get at" particular Ministers, MPs or bureaucrats "Mr. Aloysius" was the man? That what was even more interesting was that this "Mr. Aloysius" was a big name in the bad old days of the SLFP, LSSP and CP rule from 1970-77 and that in the current UNP regime he is an even more powerful factor than before? That he appears to be an ubiquitous character who is the clever contact man, the import-export commission agent, the slick lobbyist, the un-failing compradore, and the man-of-the-hour for trading houses not only from countries in the so-called free world but also in the countries behind the iron and bamboo curtains? That his name was coupled with everything from safety pins and betel leaves to rail-

way carriages and locomotives? That he was in everything from coriander to canned fish?

IS IT ALSO NOT A FACT that in recent weeks this name, "Mr. Aloysius", has emerged from whispered talk onto cold print? That understandably the name has been first mentioned by Opposition and Left papers? That incidentally the SLFP seems reluctant or hesitant to mention his name in their paper though carefully worded and circumlocutory references to various operations of the present government refer to him and him alone? That it is a staggering fact that a darling of the SLFP mudalalidom has become an even greater darling of the UNP—overnight so to say? That this is said to be a phenomenon worth investigating? That the *Forward* in its latest issue, August 15, 1978 in the *So They Say* column by Gadfly has a reference to "Mr. Aloysius"? That this is what the *Forward* said: "*Markfed—the government controlled trading complex was the sole exporter of betel leaves abroad. It was one of its most lucrative lines of export. This was recently changed. For a couple of months the exporting of betel leaves was done by an entrepreneur by the name of Aloysius—who among other things runs the 'Sun and Sand' restaurant next to the Saturday Pola at Galle Face, and a gambling club appropriately called 'Las Vegas'. However, the status quo has been restored. Mr. Aloysius has lost the lucrative business which would have brought him an annual profit of over 20 million rupees. Markfed is back in this business again. Why the change, and who made these orders?*" That the *Forward* columnist writes on the assumption that everybody knows everything there is to be known about "Mr. Aloysius"? That CP bigwigs may know all about "Mr. Aloysius" from the days the CP was in the SLFP-led government? That the name "Mr. Aloysius"

has also begun to appear in the language papers of the LSSP and CP? That the SLFP press will find it hard to keep this name out of its columns for much longer?

IS IT NOT LIKELY that from all that is being talked about in political circles it is clear that "Mr. Aloysius" will figure very largely in any investigation before the Presidential Commission that Mr. J. R. Jayewardene says he will appoint towards the end of the rule of this government and well before the next elections? That even if the next Presidential Commission is a white-wash Commission to salvage UNP charisma for the next elections, truth like murder will out? That if the UNP resorts to a white-wash Presidential Commission to project its name for the next election, it will lose the next general election without any doubt? That thereafter the new Government will be compelled by the pressure of public opinion to appoint a Presidential Commission to investigate the misdeeds of the UNP during its rule from 1977 to 1983? That there are already some doomsday forecasts who say that the current activities of this legendary "Mr. Aloysius" would require a special Presidential Commission to investigate the operations of this "Mr. Aloysius"? That if the *Forward* report is correct—indications are that it is—it means that "Mr. Aloysius" has met with a setback in the betel business and that a bigger force than that he has been able to manipulate so far has decided to check-mate the operations of "Mr. Aloysius"? That this is a good thing for the UNP and more power to the elbow of the force that has decided to cry halt to profit-making activities of the fabulous "Mr. Aloysius"? That in the meantime there is widespread demand for information about this "Mr. Aloysius" and his activities?

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Prime Minister Premadasa

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