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TRIBUNE



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Letter From The Editor

ON OCTOBER 6, at the Sugathadasa Stadium, President J. R. Jayawardene, repeated what he has said on many occasions: that he would appoint a new Presidential Commission to investigate allegations of corruption and the misuse of power by the members of this Government, and that this would be done long before the term of this government was over. He wanted a clean government and invited people to write to him of any wrong-doings of any Minister or MP. He said that he would take the necessary corrective action immediately. Such assurances from the President have helped to create a new atmosphere of confidence in the Government. But, there are many matters which have been brought up in the press (and also on public platforms) that can easily snowball into scandals of a magnitude which only a Presidential Commission can probe. Rackets grow and proliferate on an infrastructure that stems from nepotism, favouritism and corruption. The nepotism of the family tree has, unfortunately, already begun to entwine certain key sectors of the present UNP administration. Favouritism in the award of tenders, contracts and orders, and the corruption that flows therefrom, have already begun to darken our political horizon. Under the last government it was under the umbrella of a series of family trees that corruption flourished and the misuse of power had become the order of the day. Competence was discarded in favour of sycophancy, stoogery and blood relationship. The octopian tentacles of the family tree and chit system had led to a ruling hierarchy isolated from the people. Sirimavo Bandaranaike was, from an early stage of her last tenure of office, cut off from everybody except a small coterie of family members and selected sycophants who crowded in on her morning, noon and night and succeeded in building a fool-proof bamboo curtain (gang-of-four style) around her to prevent honest-to-goodness persons (including old party loyalists) meeting her to tell her the truth about happenings in the country and the administration. With the Prime Minister thus shut up in Temple Trees—the bamboo curtain had an additional iron curtain after the insurgency—the misuse of power and corruption grew apace like a hydra-headed monster at all levels of the Government and the Administration. Sirimavo Bandaranaike in an ivory tower behind the iron as well the bamboo curtain, lost touch with reality, and was privy to many acts of commission and omission she would never have been guilty of if her logic and thinking had not been inhibited by an army of sycophants who encircled her in an ocean of flattery. The Presidential Commission is today bringing to light the anatomy and methodology of corruption and the misuse of power in her regime. This is not something on which members of the UNP and the present Government can gloat about because warning signals are not wanting that similar trends portending the misuse of power and corruption have already begun to grip certain important sectors of this Administration. Powerful groups of brokers, contractors, flatterers, sycophants and entrepreneurs have begun to crowd out the frank and realistic grassroots political activists who had brought the Party to power from the presence of Ministers and MPs. Dollar, yen, franc, mark, sterling and rupee curtains have been woven around certain key ministries, departments and bureaucrats. With the floodtide of aid from many sources, Sri Lanka is on the threshold of a new Contractors' Dream Raj and unless the President and his Cabinet exercise the greatest vigilance the Dharmista way of life they are striving to establish will soon be swept away in the tidal wave of corruption that is swelling up everywhere. Many like to think that the allegations of corruption and the misuse of power are mere straws in the wind (molehills and not mountains) but they are wrong. Dragons and Devils have come out of their lairs ready to gobble up the Dharmista in Sri Lanka.

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EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

The Press In Sri Lanka—2

IN THE LAST ISSUE we dealt with a few necessary matters of importance for the growth of a truly democratic and free press in Sri Lanka, especially the proper allocation of government advertising to all newspapers and periodicals on a fair and just basis. We also referred to certain unwholesome trends where certain big shots and their hangers-on have cast a baneful influence on the press by intimidating or attempting to intimidate journalists by threats of dire consequences if they did not "toe the line."

Before we go on to examine the way the different newspapers and periodicals have conducted themselves or have been conducted, there are a few preliminary matters to be disposed of. (There are, however, some pillars of the Fourth Estate in Sri Lanka who feel that no newspaper has the right to "sit in judgement" over other newspapers on the axiom that dog does not eat dog. "Sitting in judgement" is a moralistic exercise which is very different from an interpretative analysis to throw revealing light on trends in the newspaper world. *Tribune* has over the years provided such analysis of the newspapers in this island, and will continue to do so, without malice and without desire to denigrate any paper or person.

The first point to be made is that this government has repeatedly stressed that it welcomes criticism—nay more it actually invites criticism. The *Sunday Observer* of July 9 1978 had a front-page news item: "The Government has decided that all news media published in the country be

monitored daily and all criticism of any area of Governmental activity brought to the notice of the relevant Ministers. Shortcomings and errors of omission and commission spotlighted must be immediately investigated and corrective action taken, the Government has directed. The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting has been told to prepare these daily dossiers which turn out to be bulky documents on account of the multiplicity of media, including the Opposition press, that is monitored. A senior official of the Ministry said yesterday that no editing is done and everything that is published, however unpalatable it may be for the authorities concerned, is sent on. A high ranking Government spokesman said that the decision to look into press criticism had been taken at Cabinet level."

The President, Prime Minister and a few other Ministers have repeatedly stated that they welcome criticism. For example, according to the *Sun* of August 25, 1978, "The Minister of Information and Broadcasting, Mr. D. B. Wijetunge, yesterday called on the people to be vigilant as to the work implemented and also the rules and regulations instituted from time to time by the government. 'The people should criticise the policies and the work of the Government and, in this case, constructive criticism is always admired and welcome by us. Criticism is the privilege enjoyed by the people in a democratic country. By listening to criticism and the views of the public we are able to go along the correct path while directing the country to achieve its goal, he concluded.' Also the *Sun* of 16/9/78 had reported: "In the course of his speech, the President called on all the people of the country to express their views freely without any fear. He

said the people of this country as free human beings should not be afraid to express their feelings."

On September 14, 1978, the *Sun* had published an exclusive interview with Mr. Anandatissa de Alwis, MP for Kotte and who had a few days earlier resigned as Speaker to be sworn in on that day as Minister of State in charge of Information, Broadcasting and Tourism. Some extracts from this interview will indicate the new Minister's thinking on the question of freedom of the press and allied matters: "Mr. de Alwis first spoke of the role of the press in this country. He said he would ensure that the freedom the Sri Lanka press enjoyed was not eroded and that he would endeavour to grant more freedom to the journalists than they ever enjoyed. Mr. de Alwis, a former journalist himself, said he did not think that there had been any conscious effort by this Government at any time to restrain the press. Questioned whether the Government would be compelled to bring in laws to control the misuse of the freedom of the press—like the publication of untruths and even scurrilous stories which have no basis and are not objective—Mr. de Alwis gave an emphatic reply stating 'Well, that too is a part of the freedom'. He recalled that 'I once remarked from the chair (as Speaker) when a certain member was speaking and somebody cut in saying that he was speaking nonsense. I remarked that there had to be freedom of speech in the House where one could display knowledge as well as ignorance. I think the final judge of a newspaper, particularly regarding its credibility, is the public at large—its readers' he said. Asked whether he envisaged any changes in the Press Council on the lines of the British counter-part where the representative members are chosen from the

Publishers and editors, Mr. de Alwis said he would like to change it. 'In this sense I would like a total involvement of newspapers in the Council plus increased protection to those who feel aggrieved. There must also prevail an appreciation of genuine error—error which is not deliberate or mala fide on the part of newspaper editors in the rush of publication. In the speed of publication a story might go wrong. Therefore because someone comes and complains that a story is wrong I do not think that it warrants a publication of a correction on page 1 and that it should be put in twenty-four point etc.' Mr. de Alwis said, and added that once a mistake was made and the story became ancient it was unfair to demand a correction on the front page." The rest of the interview dealt with questions of broadcasting and tourism with which we are not presently concerned.

It is also necessary to mention that in the present Minister of State who handles Information, this country has for the first time since Independence a professional journalist cum Ad man who has been steeled in the school of politics in a way that makes him, in more senses than one, a unique personality. The Anandatissa of today is afar cry from the Anandatissa of the forties (or even the late thirties). He is not the Anandatissa of the Kotelawela era especially in the way he deals with people. He has gone through the full gamut of victory, defeat, stalemate, success and failure in politics. He knows the tribulations of journalists and has been a successful advertising man and is last a master of the finer points in technique of public relations. Those who have known Anandatissa in the old days and have not been in touch with him, in recent years, to watch his transformation into maturity, will find him a new man. As the Speaker of

COVER

CLEAN GOVERNMENT

PRESIDENT JAYEWARDENE has repeated times without number that wants a clean government free of corruption where ordinary citizens will not be harassed. On *Our Cover* this week we have a *Lotus* the symbol of purity, to remind our readers that the President's desire to have a clean government should become the universal desire of all people in Sri Lanka. Everybody wants a clean and a good government. We have a Constitution that provides a framework for it. We know what it was in the seven dark years with a Constitution that engendered misuse of power and corruption of every kind. Nobody wants a repetition of those seven years even in a small way. That is why *Tribune* in every issue now spotlights matters that can bring a repeat of the seven bad years. In the 1970-77 era, within the limits of press freedom permitted by the powers that be, *Tribune* had focussed attention on a large number of matters which are now before the Presidential Commission, but we were then only a voice in the wilderness, constantly harassed and under a permanent threat of extinction. On the question of press freedom there has been a change for the better since July/August 1977. The present Government further invites criticism of shortcomings and exposure of corruption. And, what is more, there is a ready response to such exposure and criticism from an increasing number of Ministers and Parliamentarians, and this certainly much more than at any time in the past. The President has also announced that he will appoint a Presidential Commission to investigate allegations of misuse of power and corruption against ministers, parliamentarians and officials even before the term of this government is over. *Tribune* is sure that the President means what he says and that such a Commission will be set up in good time. But this in itself does not seem to be enough to check the growth of corruption and the embryonic misuse of power. The Presidential pledge about a new Commission does not seem to deter some people. There are some who want to make hay while they can and fly away to safe heavens which they have already built up elsewhere no sooner the next Presidential Commission is around the corner; there are others who think they can make a few big killings and disappear from the scene to draw a curtain over their activities and be forgotten. For this reason the President and the Cabinet must launch a campaign immediately to check the misuse of power in every insidious form it manifests itself and also keep corruption down to controllable limits. As long as human nature is what it is, corruption and the misuse of power cannot be totally and fully eliminated or eradicated. But what can be done is to see that corruption does not grow to proportions that impinge on the Government in a way that it adversely affects policy decisions to the detriment of the nation or inhibits political action beneficial to the people. Already a fairly large number of matters that must come before a new Presidential Commission have been referred to not only in the Opposition Party newspapers but also in the dailies like the *Sun* and the *Daily Mirror*. They range from the calculated over-hasty purchase of wheat flour at higher-than-world-prices to the scandals in the import of fertilisers and milk powder. The list is already large enough to fill many pages of *Tribune*. Investigations by departmental or ministerial committees will never be able unravel the political ramifications behind the corruption that runs into billions. A little over-price in milk powder or imported chillies (apart from bad quality) may seem a small matter, but so did the chickens and

rabbits of Gamini Wickremanayake and Felix Bandaranaike when they were first talked about. They were only the tip of a mighty iceberg. A similar situation is building up in respect of the activities of certain individuals who appear (and claim) to be pillars of the Dharmista Establishment. The build-up of multi-million dollar, yen, sterling, mark and franc rackets must be nipped in the bud. If this is not done, we can forget all hopes for a clean and good government, and reconcile ourselves to another stretch of seven bad years—until a new and bloody Revolution sweeps everything before it with all the vicissitudes and tribulations that a Revolution of that kind brings.

the NSA for a little over a year he showed that he was a new and remarkable personality in our political firmament. Obviously he did not want to be institutionalised in the blind alley of a Speaker's high post. Anandatissa is too much of a political animal to let himself be shut up for too long in the ivory-tower of a Speaker's eminence.

And the country needs persons of his experience, maturity and mellowness in the front rank of Government and in Parliament. As the Minister of State and as one in charge of Information, Broadcasting and Tourism he has a challenging task which he is likely to cope with more competently than anyone else so far. And, Anandatissa, the politician is, in our view, destined to go far, to go places. This cannot be said of many front rank politicians today. Anandatissa's performance as Speaker and the way he has set about infusing new life into Information and Tourism (he seems to approach Broadcasting more cautiously) shows that his style of exercising ministerial power will produce results.

In so far as Information is concerned the new Minister he has a Herculean task to regenerate and rejuvenate the press into becoming a virile and active force in this country. There are many things he has to do—especially to create the proper climate and atmosphere for a free press to exist and flourish. The legal

restraints and constraints curbing freedom of expression have all gone and the new Constitution makes it legally possible for a free press to function in this country. But the removal of legal constraints alone is not enough especially after the brain drain has depleted the ranks of talented journalists. Furthermore the recruitment of political hangers-on as journalists has brought into the field a large number of persons who have had no training at all in journalism—reporting, sub-editing, leader-writing etc. etc. In this situation, Minister Anandatissa has to take the initiative to secure for journalists opportunities for training, security of tenure, adequate scales of remuneration, and all welfare measures that will enable journalists to go about their work with a feeling of assured self-respect. In India, Press Commissions have gone into all these matters and legislation has been enacted on the basis of their recommendations in regard to the Tenure and Conditions of Employment of Working Journalists to govern and regulate the rights, privileges and obligations of all persons connected with the press. Wages Boards for journalists at the Centre and in the States have regulated wages for different kinds and grades of newspapers and periodicals.

In Sri Lanka, the Fourth Estate is still a jungle where the whims and fancies of private newspaper

owners have reigned supreme. Today, the State is the owner of two of the three biggest newspaper groups, e.g., the *Lake House* and the *Times*, and conditions are no better (in fact, they are worse) than during the days of the private owners. A number of newspaper owners are political parties, some of which claim to be progressive and radical, and yet the status, pay and condition of journalists in these party-owned papers are worse than in the private or state-owned papers.

A free press can exist, grow and flourish only if the journalists are independent and are trained to report truthfully and comment boldly but honestly and fairly. Minister Ananda Tissa de Alwis is conscious of all that has to be done (including a total restructuring of the Press Council by a new Act), and it will be interesting to see how he sets about this task. He should, in any case, endeavour to secure the co-operation and participation of all newspapers and periodicals in this country, of all owners, editors and journalists (in the unions and outside because the Unions are not what they should be and most journalists do not belong to the existing unions).

It is in this context and frame-of-reference that the Press in Sri Lanka today must be examined. In the first place, the so-called national dailies must come under scrutiny. This is best done in three parts: (a) the dailies now owned and/or controlled by the government; i.e., the *Lake House* Group and the *Times* Group; (b) the privately owned dailies, i.e., Gunaseena's *Sun/Dawasa* papers, the *Virakesari* and the *Eelanadu*; and (c) the political party-owned dailies, i.e., the *Aththa* (CP), the *Jaradina* (LSSP) and the *Dinakara* (SLFP)—the UNP's daily of Opposition days *Dinapatha* seems to have ceased publication.

To take the first group, Lake House has the biggest circulation of all newspaper groups in the island. It also has the biggest advertisement revenues. And every paper it publishes, except the *Observer*, carries advertisements in 70-75 percent of the space. Naturally, there is very little of interest to read. Of the English papers, with which we are solely concerned, the *Sunday Observer* has the largest circulation and has the biggest "pull" for its classified advertisements (a sure-fire test of any paper's advertisement draw). The quality and content of its first page news has been maintained although the few critical or exposure stories that appear occasionally are obviously inspired by dominant circles in the government. The centre page features now are uneven in quality and it is clear that there are various pulls and pressures in the fight for space. Politically, the *Sunday Observer* is of little consequence. The plentitude of sunshine stories on the first and other pages seeking to maintain the post-July 1977 UNP victory euphoria has corroded its credibility.

But the political credibility of the *Daily News* and the *Observer* are even less than that of the *Sunday Observer*. In many circles in Colombo one bears the quip that people buy the *Daily News* for its obituaries and the *Observer* for its strip cartoons—and the *Sunday Observer* for its advertisements. One must not go by such simplistic over-generalisations, but in this instance they are not too far off the mark.

The *Daily News* has occasionally ventured to have "exposure" stories, but on practically every occasion the paper was made to swallow its own stories (although they were true). This shows the extent of the "pull" certain vested interests have on Lake House. Recently,

there was an amazing instance of an unnecessary "apology". The *Daily News* published a Soviet APN piece on Camp David. Everybody took it as the Soviet viewpoint, but two days later the *Daily News* published a box virtually apologising for publishing the article and stressing that it was not the paper's point of view but that of the Russian commentator Simonov. Why must the *Daily News* do this? No self-respecting paper will do it. It is not necessary. The *Daily News'* attitude to Camp David had been set out in an editorial a few days before and the APN article stood on its own. Even if a pro-Camp David and anti-Soviet cum Rejectionist Front fanatic had protested, should the *Daily News* beg for mercy in the way it did?

This is only one instance of the many that can be cited to show how the credibility of the *Daily News* has withered away. One has only to recall the excellent job the *Daily News* did in exposing the higher-than-world prices paid for wheat flour by our Food Department in an artificially-induced scare that prices would climb higher. But overnight, the sellers and brokers of this dubious deal were able to get at the powers-that-be in Lake House to publish a bogus cover-up to justify this deal which consisted of two or three contracts. (*Tribune* exposed the shady goings-on at that time, and there is no doubt that this wheat flour transaction is one of the many that must come up before the next Presidential Commission). The *Observer* occasionally publishes good "evening paper" stories, but they are not sustained.

The Lake House is not what it was: certainly not what it was in the days of Wijewardene. In spite of the better business management now to tot up advertising revenue, the publications have begun to limp qualitatively even

more than in the days of the SLFP. Recruitment of ill-qualified hangers-on was a scandal then. Now it is worse. Lake House is chock-a-block with UNP drop-outs with no aptitude for journalism. Furthermore, journalists at all levels appear to work under strain and a deep sense of fear. Most of them have had the experience of having come-backs on the most truthfully reported stories.

The *Lanka Guardian*, (Vol. 1, No. 11 of October 1978), in one of the first meaty articles that brings it into the circle of serious periodical journalism had a revealing account about current developments in Lake House and the *Times*: "What ails the Lake House and the *Times*? The inevitable problem of polity strait-jackets and hyper-activity to official reactions has been aggravated by day-to-day organisational shortcomings and low professional morale. At the weekly briefing session held by Mr. Esmond Wicakremasinghe, the government's top media expert, editors and editorial executives were enjoined to resist all 'divisive tendencies'. Evidently journalists now feel themselves 'grouped' according to creed, race and even caste. There are subterranean power-struggles and conflicts even between pure-bred Lake House staffers and ex-*Times* 'gangs'. Patronage is no longer determined by the Old School Tie, university fraternities and Old Boy Networks but by religious and tribal loyalties.

"The contest for power over the media between top insiders and influential outsiders assume such quaint forms that a former Sinhala editor observed that not only the ghosts of the past hang over Lake House but even the spirits of the YMBA, the Vatican and the High Church. All this accounts for the demoralisation of the journalists and the malaise which grips the media.

Already more than a dozen trained journalists have applied for sub-editors posts in Malaysia. There are reports also of a return to the field by the Wijewardenas—although it is not known whether it is the ancient regime or the new Wijewardena 'stable'. Sunday papers in Sinhala and English, with brand new rotary presses to print them, are in the planning stage. Already however many old loyalists, especially in the Sinhala medium, are preparing their farewell speeches in verse as they say goodbye to the increasingly muddied waters of the Beira. Wijesoma, the *Lake House's* best sharp-shooter today, surprised everybody by taking a pot-shot at the Finance Minister's 'schizophrenia'. It is significant that this cartoon which obviously got a greenlight (a very green light) was a reply to Mr. de Mel's blast on 'newspaper lias'. (Trends 15/9). But for Wijesoma it was just a flash in the pan. More to the point were the frank comments of Dr. Wickrema Weerasooriya who addressed the *Lake House* editors recently—a briefing which caused a flutter in certain circles, and an angry snarl from top insiders. 'Superficial' and 'scanty' were two of the comments made on editorial writing. As for reporting standards, Dr. Weerasooriya related how a *Lake House* staffer asked him 'What's the latest?', without any idea of what story he was after. Dr. Weerasooriya had replied: 'The latest is that I am getting into the lift to get to my car to go home for lunch!' The story did not make the stop press. Not even the *Lankapuwath*. As for the mass circulating Sinhala press, the editors of the *Atitina* and the *Janadina* and the journalists who are making such a good show of the young *Dinakara* are no doubt delighted that the state controlled Sinhala papers furnish the most telling daily evidence to substantiate Mr. de Mel's recent asser-

tion that nobody believes them anymore.....".

How *Lake House* publications can once again be made newspapers people read with respect is a difficult question. The situation in the *Times* is not any better, although its papers are often more readable and carry more newsworthy features

(To be Continued)



MARGINAL COMMENT

Why Police Lock-up?

A news item in some of the national dailies stated that three Tamil government servants who came out of a cinema theatre in Bambalapitiya on a Saturday night (7/10/78) were arrested and taken to the Bambalapitiya police station and kept in remand. They were arrested on a charge that they had not "respected" the national anthem (and/or flag). They had evidently not stood up when the anthem was played. They were kept in remand the whole of Saturday night and the next morning they were taken to their house which was searched. Nothing incriminating was obviously found—otherwise there would have been a song and dance about it. They were again taken to the police station and kept in remand. One of them was a high up in the Paddy Marketing Board, the second a teacher and the third was also employed. By noon their friends managed to have them released on bail. The newspaper reports had stated a police officer in civvies, who had also been watching the film in the theatre, had seen their behaviour and initiated action to have the local police to apprehend them.

All this may appear to be a far fetched dream like a tale in Alice in Wonderland. But some of our cops now seem to be lost in a wonderland entranced in a dubious state of permanent bafflement. But, this is indeed the first time that we have heard of anyone being arrested and remanded for not "respecting" the National Anthem. Not even in the heyday of the British Raj did the police pounce on those who did not stand up for *God Save The King* in a theatre, arrest them, remand them and search their houses. It is a serious matter to arrest and remand a person and thereafter search his house—without good and proper reasons. It violates every freedom in the Charter of Fundamental Rights. Why was the house searched if the three were only guilty of the "offence" of not standing up when the anthem was played? And, is it an "offence" in law not to stand up when the anthem is played especially at the most inappropriate times as in a cinema theatre?

There may be more to this than hits the eye. If so, the reasons for the arrest must be made known—otherwise we will begin a new slow ride into a new Felixian Nightmare. If the Police had wanted the three persons for something else why did they not take them into custody under those charges? Should the Police not set out the real reasons for arresting people and remanding them? Can the Police take cover behind the non-existent charge of not "respecting" the Flag?

On Tuesday, October 10, the Ministry of Justice, for no apparent reason issued a communique which stated that "the Government had appointed a Committee under the chairmanship of Montague Jayawickreme, the Minister of Public Administration, to gather information and prepare a Code of

"Disrespect And The Anthem"

Conduct to be followed by Government Departments, Corporations and Members of the Public regarding the use of the National Flag. This is consequent to a decision by the Cabinet that respect for the National Flag should be cultivated among all sections of the population and guidelines for the proper use of the Flag should be drawn up and published".

All this is highly commendable, but can "respect" be instilled by *dikats* from top? But, getting back to the playing of the National Anthem in cinemas, any survey will show that less than 40% or so in a theatre stand up when the Anthem is played. Can we consider this "disrespect" for the National Anthem? To answer this question we must ask another. Why do people generally go to a cinema? For relaxation, and they do not usually feel like standing up when they have comfortably settled down in their seats. And, in our opinion the National Anthem should not be played at all in cinemas. It is foolish to attempt to compel "resPect" from people by *fiats* and laws when even the most patriotic among us feel disinclined to rise when the anthem is played in a cinema theatre? There is a time and place for everything, and a cinema theatre is certainly not the place for the National Anthem. It is a hangover from colonial rule that imposed itself is so many ways upon a subject people, and must a free and sovereign nation slavishly follow this practice?

By all means, let the National Anthem be played at public functions, ceremonial occasions, national events and the like, and we have no doubt that 90% of those present will "respect" it by standing up. But dissidents, even if they are as much as 10%, should have the freedom to do what they like as long as they do not become a

nuisance or cause a civil commotion or disturbance. In the bad old colonial days, the Anthem was originally played at the end of the show. But when it was found that very few people stayed behind, the practice was started of playing it before. This improved the situation slightly, but not much.

And, if now, we have come to a stage when policemen with guns are going to be at our backs to make us stand up and "respect" the national anthem and flag, it is a sorry state of affairs indeed. Patriotism cannot be pushed down people's throats. It must be something that must come naturally. Can we talk of democracy and freedom whilst we try to force down patriotism? If we feel patriotic it is because the State has something to make us feel patriotic about.

It will be a far more profitable exercise to try and find out why this sense of patriotism is lacking in our people, if it is indeed lacking, than try and enforce it under the jack boots of blundering policemen.

It is to be hoped that the Committee which has been appointed will view the situation realistically and find the proper solutions. To expect a hundred percent in a cinema theatre to stand up for the National Anthem is asking too much of any people. To insist on people doing it by enacting laws is to invite trouble and also disrespect for the law. Such a law will become a joke as some of the laws now on the Statute Book are (it is time they are removed and it will be stupid to add to the number).

If the Government does not act sensibly and is carried away by cheap emotionalism a day may dawn soon when we will have to walk around with a booklet on Do's and Dont's regarding the National Anthem (and/or Flag) as well

as other similar matters with fear in our hearts that the "guardian of the law" may be behind us with bayonets.

I hope we do not live see that day.

V.A.



LETTER

Sir,

Bookmaker's Daughter & The University

The tale of the *Bookmaker's Daughter & the University* as related by your Quidnunc from Kandy reveals only the tip of the iceberg. To bring to light papa bookmaker's doings during the seven year plague and the last eighteen months, a Special Presidential Commission is needed. Your Quidnunc says, 'He (the bookmaker extraordinary) was a great favourite of the SLFP hierarchy in the days gone by and now top UNPers are eating out of his hand.' This in effect means that this bookmaker is going his own nefarious way operating outside the law regardless of whatever Government comes to power. This is not possible unless the Police is bracketed with the SLFP hierarchy and the top UNPers as eating from his hand. This is a challenge to the new IGP as well as the President.

Kandy is thankful to the *Tribune* for spotlighting a living menace and will be eternally grateful to it if as a result of this exposure, Kandy, the Peradeniya Campus and the area from Trincomalee to Badulla which is in the grip of his evil tentacles is rid of this ADHAR-MISTA way of life.

CITIZEN

Peradeniya,
11.10.78.

TRIBUNE, October 21, 1978



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SRI LANKA CHRONICLE

Oct. 4—Oct. 11

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; SU—Sun; DV—Davasa, DP—Dinapathi; CM—Chintamani; WK—Weekend; RR—Riviresa; EN—Eelanadu; IDPR—Information Dept. Press Release; DK—Dinakara.

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 4: Non-summary inquiry which was done away with, with the administration of Justice Law of 1973 will be re-introduced; the post of Director of Public Prosecutions introduced by the same law will be done away with; these are two of the changes that are to be introduced by the Code of Criminal Procedure to be presented soon in parliament. The government has decided that while Sinhala will continue to be the medium of instruction in schools Sinhala students should be made to learn Tamil as a national language and Tamil students Sinhala as a national language and that all students should learn English as a foreign language the President said yesterday—CDN. The Ceylon Tourist Board has drawn up a code of conduct for tourists and visitors to Sri Lanka: this is a sequel to a series of complaints that the behavioural pattern of certain types of tourists were in bad taste and were a bad example to the youth of the country. Inordinate delays in the payment of pensions head the list of complaints received by the Committee on Bureaucratic Bungling appointed by the UNP. The results of the GCE 'A' level examination may be delayed by

yet another month; the results were to be released by September 1—CDM. The President's office yesterday formally informed MP's who will assume the office of District Ministers; they have been told to present themselves at the Janadipathi Mandiraya at 10 a.m. on Thursday to be sworn in. The press is to be briefed daily on important policy matters by high officials of ministries. A second arms manufacturing factory has been discovered by the police within the space of a week. The performance of most public enterprises had been much below expectations during the year 1977. The President has announced that government's new policy on education is that English must be studied by all school children from the age of six years—SU. Sri Balayogi Maharaj who landed at Katunayake Airport yesterday evening was welcomed by his feet being washed; the Minister of Rural Industrial Development and the Deputy Minister of the Plan Implementation Ministry met him at the Airport—VK. Private traders were allowed to import dry fish under the government trade policy; but investigations have revealed that private traders have imported only 10% of the quantity allowed by the permits; this is the cause of the present shortage of this commodity, —IDPR No. 09. The sale of flour has gone down by 6000 tons for the month of September—DV. The Education Ministry has decided to give power to Directors of Education to transfer teachers anywhere within their districts—LD. A group of government parliamentarians have decided to ask at the next government parliamentary group meeting why only a selected group of ministers are allowed to go abroad—DK. Black nationalist guerillas have blown up a bridge on the main road from Salisbury to S. Africa cutting one of the land locked Rhodesia's lifelines. Fore-

ign Minister Moshe Dayan will lead the Israeli delegation at peace talks with Egypt scheduled to begin in Washington on October 12. Syrian President Hafeez Al-Hassad after describing the Camp David Summit agreement between Egypt and Israel as a move towards war rather than peace yesterday discussed closer Arab ties with the Soviet bloc on the second day of his visit to East Germany—CDN. Syrian troops and Christian militia forces pounded each other in Beirut with heavy artillery in fierce fighting during the night and hostilities spread yesterday to outlying villages.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 5: A number of plush residences in Colombo and the suburbs were searched by Customs Preventive Branch men yesterday as a sequel to the crew of the 'Lanka Sagarika' being interrogated; in the statements made by the crew of the vessel they are alleged to have mentioned the names of certain 'big people' in Sri Lanka's business world. Mr. J. A. E. Amaraturunge has been picked for nomination to the Wattala seat by the special working committee the UNP appointed last week. Sri Lanka's Cultural Affairs Minister addressing the 12th General Conference of the World Fellowship of Buddhists called upon all heads of Buddhist states to convene a conference to establish a Confederation of Buddhist states in Asia. Government has authorised eight lakhs of rupees to implement the 'Education through Radio' programme of the Ministry of Education. A strict time schedule of two months for the quick disposal of land cases has been drawn up by the Ministry of Justice and incorporated in the Code of Criminal Procedure which will be presented soon in parliament—CDN. There are political scoundrels who pose off as trade unionists in the trade union

movement of any country but Sri Lanka has got more than her fair share of them and they should be wiped out said the President of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions. A revision of all university admissions will be made this month so that as far as possible, where courses are available students will be transferred to the campus closest to their home said the Secretary to the Ministry of Higher Education. Over 700 employees of the CTB and Railway Department who failed to report for work on September 28 have been treated as having vacated post. 455 motor vehicles, an all time record, were brought in a single ship into the port of Colombo yesterday—CDM. The government is expected to defer the appointment of a District Minister for Jaffna. The Secretary to the Ministry of Plan Implementation said the unemployment figure in this country was certainly less than 1.2 million. Two cranes were utilised to save an elephant which was sinking into the mud in the Kandy lake—SU. Japan, USA, West Germany and Canada have agreed to supply 160,000 tons of fertilizer to Sri Lanka free of charge—DV. The government has decided to allow farmers to repay their loans by giving paddy to the government—DM. At least 25 people have died in a severe cholera outbreak in India's West Bengal state where devastating floods have claimed 800 lives—CDN. Jordan, Saudi Arabia and five other Arab states have supported a call by Iraq for an urgent Arab Summit to discuss the Camp David framework for Middle East Peace. President Anwar Sadat replaced two top military men, War Minister and Commander in Chief Somma and the Chief of State Ali Fahmi just nine days before peace treaty talks with Israel—CDM. The South African Cabinet meeting yesterday for the first time under

PM Botha declared its readiness to continue talks over Namibian independence with the five Western UN Security Council member nations. The State Department has decided to allow Rhodesian PM Smith to visit US—SU.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 6: Three significant results have emerged from the Finance Minister's visit to the US; the IMF has decided to grant and extend fund facility mainly for balance of payment support; Saudi Arabia will grant a soft loan amounting to fifty million dollars for a yet unnamed development project in Sri Lanka and the City Bank of New York has decided to open a branch in Colombo. Twenty two district Ministers took their oaths before the President yesterday. The TULF will meet the President to discuss wide issues after the return of the front's General Secretary and leader of the Opposition to the island. The Police Service will train 2000 new recruits annually from next year; this is more than double the number undergoing training at present. A team of Canadian experts will arrive shortly to prepare a Master Plan for the modernisation of the Katunayake Airport—CDN. The President has directed that the National Milk Board be stripped of the functions of importing and packing powdered milk and instead be confined to production of milk locally—CDM. The post of district minister for Jaffna may go to the TULF if it decides to accept it. The Ministry of Cultural Affairs has decided to record in the Mahavamsa the period from 1935 to Sept 7, 1978 and not upto February 4, as earlier decided. The government is to impose a ban on the slaughter of breedable cattle throughout the country—SU. A team of banking officials led by Mr. A. M. Al Ghurair, General Manager, Bank of Oman, Dubai called on the Acting Minister of Finance and Planning and

explained the main object of their visit was to get first hand knowledge of the economy and the policies of the present government—IDPR No. 19. A group of former MP's have asked the government to increase their pensions as the cost of living has gone up—DM. Pope John Paul was buried in St Peter's Basilica after a rain-drenched funeral in the square outside. The thunder of big guns racked Beirut yesterday as Syrian troops and defiant Christian militias waged the most devastating battle in the city's turbulent history. The 1978 Nobel Prize for literature was awarded to the Polish-Jewish writer Isaac Bashevis Singer of the US—CDN. Former PM Indira Gandhi announced that she will contest a parliamentary bye-election for the South Indian state of Karnataka. The Syrian artillery bombardment of Christian areas of Beirut killed 600 people over the past 24 hours—SU.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 7: Mr. M. Sivasithamparam, MP and President of the TULF and Mr. X. M. Sellathambu, MP and two other members of the TULF met the President on Thursday and discussed participation in government activities; they are awaiting the return of the leader of the opposition from abroad for further discussion. The aim of this government is to have a clean administration; politics in Sri Lanka has to be kept clean; there should be no room for political revenge or corruption under our regime as has been witnessed during the seven year period of the Sirima Bandaranaike government said the President yesterday addressing over 10,000 teachers. The Secretary, Ministry of Trade and Shipping states that a news item appearing in the CDN of Oct 4 saying the government is considering the ban of all imports of gift cars from January next year is incorrect. 17,000 applications were received

by the navy to fill 200 vacancies for sailors—CDN. Very soon steps would be taken to provide training facilities that were available in England and India for Sri Lanka's Army personnel. The GMOA has appealed to the President for a guarantee that doctors who have completed their compulsory service would be permitted to leave the country if they wish to do so without let or hindrance. The Medical Faculty of the Jaffna Campus of the University of Sri Lanka will be opened by the Minister of Higher Education tomorrow. A fresh Presidential Commission would be appointed to inquire into any allegations of corruption and wrongdoing by members of this government said the President yesterday—CDM. Tight security measures were brought into force at the UN HQ's following an attempt by a Sri Lankan to interrupt Foreign Minister A. C. S. Hameed when he rose to address the General Assembly; the man identified as K. K. Vaikunthavasam walked up to the podium and began reading a statement denouncing the government when the Sri Lanka Foreign Minister was called upon to speak. The CWE which is going to import chicken from China for Christmas says that the price will be much lower than the current prices prevailing here—SU. Steps are to be taken to distribute goods imported by the CWE among private traders to create more competition between them. The CWE is to import top grade biscuits from England—LD. Three Indian doctors announced in Calcutta that the world's second test tube baby was born there on Tuesday. Egypt's delegation to peace talks with Israel will be led by new Defence Minister Lieutenant General Kamal Hassan Ali. Soviet President Brezhnev backed hard line Arab efforts to oppose the Israeli Egyptian Peace accords and hinted the Kremlin would step up military aid to Syria—CDN.

Former Pakistan PM Ali Bhutto says his country was on the verge of full nuclear capacity before his overthrow last year—CDM. A group of prominent black Americans protested against the Carter Administration's decision to grant Rhodesian PM Ian Smith a visa for a visit to the US next week—SU.

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 8: The Food Department has threatened the State Trading Corporation of India with the cancellation of a sugar supply contract if an overdue consignment does not arrive here by the middle of this month. The Justice Minister said yesterday that if the TULF wished to take part in government activities they

would first have to conform to government policy. Mr. Robert Macnamara, President of the World Bank is due in the island on Thursday. The government has appointed a high-powered committee of cabinet ministers to review monthly the new guaranteed price scheme for tea small holders. The 3.5 million dollar hashish haul at Rome's Fumicino airport last June never originated from Sri Lanka said a senior police officer—SO. A massive fraud involving Rs. 25 million in the granting of loans to farmers in the Amparai district has been detected by the government. More unions have expressed support for the government's proposals to make

A Feast Of Music For Colombo's Elite

One of the most trivial and pointless western productions of the Century, the "Sound of Music", was faithfully copied by one of the silliest, most frivolous and aimless elites of the Third World. It was presented at the BMICH for a week in early August and was extended further by popular request. The *Sunday Times* pronounced it "Valiant and Praiseworthy"—"A Resounding Success."

The Peiris Foundation, Manik Sandrasagara, Gamini Fonseka, Winston Serasingha, Kirithi Sri Karunaratne, etc, have combined to provide, at fantastic expense, an extravaganza truly fit for Colombo's elite. Tickets soared from Rs. 10/- to an unprecedented Rs. 100/- per person. It was on so vast a scale that only the BMICH stage was large enough to present it. It is rumoured that it is to be taken to Europe—in the wake of the all-conquering Trinity College Dance and Drum Troupe.

Among the cast was an Abbess, an ex-nun, and a chorus of 40 nuns, but not the slightest hint of any Christian meaning in the whole performance. But this did not deter scores of nuns from all the Convents in Colombo and beyond from flocking to the Show. Evidently, they were compensated for the lack of Christianity or any artistic value either by an avalanche of sentimentality that continually moved them to tears. No doubt it was a convenient and comfortable way of forgetting or avoiding facing up to the realities and challenges of the world around them.

The rest of Colombo's elite were of course, also there in full force. Fittingly, the Guest of Honour at the Opening Gala Performance was the President's wife, Mrs. J. R. Jayewardene.

Yohan Devananda

Devasaranaramaya,
Ibbagamuwa.
14.9.78

legal provisions for a strike decision to be taken only by secret ballot. By December film goers will be able to see some popular Hollywood films said film Corporation sources—ST. President has ordered immediate action to stem what appears to be an organised campaign to smear Sri Lanka's image abroad. From November 1, the Night Bazaar now held every Saturday at Galle face will be held daily—WK. The Minister of Trade and Shipping stated that whatever steps were taken to improve the ports of Colombo and Galle the same would be taken to improve the ports of Trincomalee and KKS—VK. Admissions to the University on the basis of the GCE A level results of candidates who sat last April will be finalised by the end of December—CM. Leaders of Rhodesia's transitional government welcomed Zambia's decision to partly re-open the Southern border with Rhodesia—SO. The army was alerted last night to stand by following religious rioting in the North Indian town of Aligarh in which 10 people were killed. A new Strategic Arms Limitation (SALT) agreement is likely to be signed by US President Jimmy Carter and Soviet Head of State Brezhnev in the US in December. Zambia is to sue British oil companies for billions of dollars in compensation for damage caused by the company's failure to honour UN sanctions against Rhodesia. Daniel Arap Moi was assured of assuming Jomo Kenyatta's mantle as President of Kenya and immediately launched his country on its first election campaign for national army posts in twelve years—WK.

MONDAY, OCTOBER 9: The government has decided to increase the subsistence allowance payable to public officers; in some cases the increase will be almost 50%, this decision projects the government's thinking to bring

wage and allowance payments to much more realistic levels in keeping with current living costs. Work will commence soon on a 20 million Rupees Tourist Hotel School complex at Asgiriya Kandy. The Norwegian Fisheries Research vessel 'Dr. Fridtjof Nansen' which conducted surveys in the waters around Sri Lanka has found good resources of valuable food fish on the belt from Negombo southward and eastward from Hambantota. The CID yesterday began investigating an alleged threat to destroy Air Ceylons' remaining Avro 748 and the airlines' buildings—CDN. A Presidential Committee is to be appointed shortly to examine the present tariff structure on imports and to assess the level of protection it offers to local industry taking into account the impact of any other fiscal measures which influence the level of protection. Extensions of visas to the hippie class tourists are at present being restricted according to the department of Immigration and Emigration—CDM. The government's development strategy for the coming years is to be embodied in a new National Development Plan; this six year plan will be introduced in parliament by the Minister of Finance when he presents the second budget of the government. Sri Lanka last month recorded its lowest homicide figures in three years; the marked drop has been attributed to the amending of the Criminal Procedure Code which is a severe deterrent to those resorting to criminal activities. An insidious campaign to discredit the government is reported to be underway in many world capitals; the campaign built entirely on factual inaccuracies, gross exaggerations and distorted accounts of history has taken the form of a series of pamphlets, magazines and other publications; this material is being mailed from western cities like New York

and London and even West Asian Capitals—SU. A complete search of houses and other places frequented by members of the TULF in the Batticaloa electorate was carried out on Friday and Saturday; in addition private vehicles were also searched. Three Tamil government servants who came out of a cinema in Bambalapitiya last night were arrested and kept in remand because they were accused of not standing up when the national anthem was played—VK. It is suspected that gold was smuggled six times by the Shipping Corporation's vessel 'Lanka Sagarika' from Singapore. Sri Lankans working in the Middle East have sent Rs. 30 million to the country this year—DP. The Education Ministry has decided to bring 300 rural schools up to the standard of Maha Vidyalayas in stages during the next four years. 20,000 bags of rice which were stacked in the Port warehouses for more than three years have been condemned as unsuitable for human consumption—LD. The government has decided to give permanent employment to casual workers in government departments and corporations who have served more than 5 years; about 30,000 will benefit under this scheme—DM. The Executive Committee of the SLFP has accepted the recommendation of the Disciplinary Committee of the party to sack the second MP for Beruwala from the Party—DK. The government is to increase the salaries in the next budget by cutting all subsidies and devaluing the rupee by a further 20%—ATH. Rhodesian PM Ian Smith arrived yesterday at the start of a controversial visit to the US and declared 'I have come to put our case to the American people'—CDN. South Africa's new PM Pieter Botha vowed last night that he would not take the road to black majority rule for the country. Zambia is to re-open its border with Rhodesia for key

imports and exports President Kenneth Kaunda announced. Former Indian PM Indira Gandhi filed her nomination papers yesterday in Chiamangalur in the Southern Karnataka state—CDN. India and Pakistan resumed trade negotiations today after a lapse of four months. The Indian government has given permission for Concorde to use Indian airspace at supersonic speed—SU.

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 10:

The Japanese government will shortly announce increased aid commitment to Sri Lanka's development programme; in addition to normal commodity and technical assistance the Japanese government will increase its aid for the Moragahakande project in the accelerated Mahaweli scheme, Sri Lanka's Port Development Programme and the installation of colour TV in the country. The Soviet Union has agreed to send a team of top experts to assist Sri Lanka in the implementation of the Uma Oya project under the accelerated Mahaweli program; it involves both a hydro-electric and irrigation scheme. Family disputes will soon be very private matters; newspapers will not be permitted to report proceedings in Family Courts which will be established in every judicial area where there were magistrate's courts functioning; these courts will hear all divorce actions and applications for maintenance. Among the departments hit by the brain drain is the Telecommunications department; in the cables section, an entire unit had gone to the Middle East. The government is considering doing away with the GCE 'O' level examination which is now the qualifying examination for a student to proceed to the GCE 'A' level to pursue higher studies. Before the end of the term of the government every principal town in Sri Lanka will come under the direct dialling sys-

tem—CDN. Economic co-operation between the two countries will be the highlight of talks during President Jayewardene's visit to India at the end of this month. TULF MP's followed a policy of standardisation in issuing application forms for Job Banks; they were issued to MP's supporters, their kith and kin and to their friends irrespective of their capabilities, qualifications and their condition in life said Mr. G. G. Ponnambalam (Jnr) at a meeting in Chavakachcheri—CDM. An 18 hour lightening strike which paralysed activity at the Colombo general hospital was called off last night after the President personally intervened and assured a full inquiry; the strike at midnight by about 3000 non-medical employees left more than 6000 patients helpless; the cause of the strike was an alleged police assault on four hospital workers. The Minister of Transport has agreed to transport fertilizer direct by railway waggons from the Trincomalee port and paddy from the culti-

vation areas to the PMB's store at Meetotamulla—SU. The government is to increase the inland postal rates by ten cents and a post card by 5 cents by a special gazette notification before the budget—DK. Vice President Walter Mondale said the Soviet Union was helping the US in efforts to end fighting in Lebanon. Egypt responded to an Iraqi call for an Arab Summit conference by saying it would welcome the meeting as long as it was held in Cairo. The US Senate voted on Saturday to spend more than 116 billion dollars on defence during the next 12 months—CDN. Israeli foreign minister Dayan said that under certain circumstances his country would not hesitate to use its armed forces to strike at Beirut or other parts of Lebanon—CDM. More than 3 million people viewed the holy shroud of Turin in a linen cloth believed to be the burial sheet of Christ during its first public display for 45 years which ended yesterday—SU.

TAMILS AND THEIR FUTURE

Sir,

The members of Parliament of the T.U.L.F., contrary to the mandate they received from their electorates, have affirmed/ sworn to be faithful to the Republic of Sri Lanka, and to the best of their ability uphold and defend the Constitution of Sri Lanka.

This is a sensible step and in the right direction.

My earnest appeal to each of them is that as a Party they should co-operate with the Government in all measures beneficial to the nation, and to the Tamil-speaking peoples in particular: and more each of them should devote more time and their keen involvement towards the economic development of their respective areas, instead of playing politics of an unrealistic nature: such action will bring its rewards and good to the people, and help to defuse the climate of the ill-will that appears to be growing amongst the communities.

V. Manicavasagar.

Ward Place,
Colombo.
September 29, 1978

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 11:

Lack of machinery and equipment at the dam site at the Maduru Oya could very well give a bad start to this top priority scheme of the accelerated Mahaweli Project. The President of the World Bank Mr. Robert Macnamara will use a major portion of his 30 hour visit to Sri Lanka to visit the work sites of the Mahaweli Scheme. The government will undertake a 21 million dollar development project covering 50,000 acres of tea land in the Maskeliya-Dickoya area with World Bank aid next January—CDN. The superintendents of estates controlled by the Janawasa will be permitted freedom of action to implement the President's programme of estate-village integration. The presentation of colours was of historic importance to the army and to the nation because that was the first time after 400 years of slavery that a national as head of state presented his and the regimental colours to the army; so said the President at the presentation of Presidential and Regimental colours to sections of the Sri Lanka light Infantry at the army cantonment at Panagoda yesterday. The Minister of Finance by special gazette notification increased the turnover tax on books and the business of accepting, entering or negotiating wages from 5 to 10%—CDM. Farmers will soon be called upon to pay only 30% of the cost of fertilizers; this is to be effected by a further increase in the fertilizer subsidy according to a government decision. President is expected to make a personal appeal to Indian PM, Morarji Desai to obtain for Sri Lanka some of the sacred buddha relics from Kapilavastu when he visits India later this month. A Parliamentary delegation from West Germany is expected to arrive in Sri Lanka on October 22 for a five day visit. The TULF yesterday categorically denied reports

that there were discussions with President Jayewardene regarding the front joining the government—SU. The Secretary to the Ministry of Plantation Industries said that a scheme was being worked out to give equal pay to men and women working in plantations. Many Tamil students from the Polgolla Campus have returned to Jaffna because they say that they cannot follow lectures as adequate attention was not being given to Tamil; they are going to talk to the MP's in Jaffna and ask to be transferred to the Jaffna Campus—VK. Rubber production has increased by 14% in the first six months of this year compared to the corresponding period last year—DM. The British government has informed the Sri Lanka government that they had decided to write off loans amounting to Rs. 780 million and the interest as well; Canada and West Germany are expected to follow suit—DV. The Minister of Youth Affairs and Unemployment said that the 125,000 youths who will be recruited for the National Development Army will be given land in the Maduru Oya Project, Polonnaruwa and Mahiyangana areas and settled there—LD.

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ACID BOMB EXPLOSION — 19

Chapter Nineteen**The Beginning Of The End****By James Goonewardene**

Three weeks later, one Monday night, the first of the incidents took place—the first of the incidents that is, that was going to rock the district the next couple of weeks. It heralded what was to come afterwards. A car drove up

that night, after most people had gone to bed, and stopped outside Piyaratne's house. He was asleep when this happened. He had not sat up to read that night as he had recently been in the habit of doing. He went to bed early and had been asleep for nearly two hours when there was this sudden, loud banging on the front door. The knocking grew louder and more urgent. To stop the noise rather than to see who his ill-mannered visitors were he opened the door. A gun was pressed to his chest.

"If you make the slightest noise I'll pull the trigger," said the man. "We want you to come with us."

It took Piyaratne a moment to realize he was awake and that this was real. He was an old man and wasn't used to sudden excitement. He lifted his pyjama jacket and started to tie his sarong more tightly. His eyes had started to take in the scene now. They were all young men—two of them dressed in some sort of uniform. They surrounded him now and started to jostle him.

"Wait a minute, wait a minute," he cried.

"We have no time, come along."

They were not students from his school—just hooligans from somewhere. They were behind him now and pushing him towards the gate. He kept himself from stumbling, but they continued to push, but he resisted it. Then, suddenly, he decided to call to his wife, but that moment she had appeared and started to call out. "What are you doing—where are you taking him?"

"Sirina," Piyaratne called to his wife, "call for some help." He spoke English and suddenly someone jabbed him in the back with the butt of a gun. His wife was shouting now.

"Shut that woman up. Get her into the house and lock her up in a room," said the leader.

"Don't touch her," shouted Piyaratne hoarsely. He stiffened suddenly and, swinging round violently, he struggled to free himself. He got a sharper jab in his back and someone thrust a gun barrel into his chest.

"Come quietly, if you don't want to spill your blood on the road."

A feeling of powerlessness suddenly came over Piyaratne. He continued to hear the muffled shouts of his wife. They had thrust something over her mouth and they were dragging her away. He felt energy suddenly drained from him. He let himself be dragged along. The young men who had gone with her returned, and the same moment he heard the banging on the door from within the house. It was his wife. They had locked her up in a room and she was safe. They had not harmed her. He felt relieved. He turned his head, as he was pushed into the car, to take a last look at the house, his home. He stumbled into the car in a daze and they started the car, but he could still hear the banging. He felt better to know she was safe, and this was the thing that was all right in this crazy night—they had not harmed his wife.

They had been driving for about ten minutes when he began to revive from the effects of the shock he had felt, and he began to take stock of the situation. He knew he had to be calm. He had to keep his head. He had to think clearly and keep calm. He looked at his kidnapers—two on either side of him and two in front. They were packed tight in the car, and he felt their weight on him—all young men, two of them dressed in some kind of uniform, and they seemed to have this deadly grim earnestness of adult killers. This was no play acting. An occasional monosyllable or a grunt was all

they uttered as the car rattled along. Their leader, seated in front, would snap instructions to the driver. That was all the talk. From the brief glimpses he had of them from the light of a passing motor car or a street lamp he tried to guess their age. The oldest could not have been more than twenty five. Their silence began to frighten him after a time. If they had been indulging in the usual wisecracks and tough talk, as one would have had if they were only playing a prank, it wouldn't have been so frightening. It was their silence that unnerved him. They had started this thing and it had to have an end, and he tried not to think about it. It was best to shut his mind to it, but it was this he couldn't do. Why were they taking him? Would they tell him if asked? All this began to churn in his head and slowly brought back the terror he had felt at the beginning of the adventure. He began to feel the sensations that accompanied such a state, the increase of body heat, the sweat, the drying up of the throat, but it passed. His stronger mind overcame his fear. It was a sudden loss of control over his thoughts that brought the terror and then it passed. He felt better, and then suddenly very tired. He, suddenly, wished he could go to sleep. If he could only shut his eyes and go to sleep it would be all right. It would not matter then what happened. It was how all things came. It came suddenly and one panicked for a moment and then it was all right—the body and mind learned to take it. It didn't resist anymore. Very clearly now he remembered what he had said to Deva and Ariya—that was so long ago—so long ago that he couldn't remember when; that was before they had begun to ration time. Time was being rationed now. It was not then. Now one had to count the seconds and minutes, and they dragged into

infinity—he had told Deva and Ariya about the need to survive this time of fear; so important to keep one's vision clear. It was this he had to do now, keep a clear vision and survive the nightmare; but what was there he could do to survive? Who would know where he was being taken to or how to find him? That was the hitch. They wouldn't know where to look for him. It was better, therefore, not to think of all this now. It was better not to think. It was better . . .; he began to doze off and a great feeling of tiredness came over him.

He did not know how long they had been driving. He was seeing everything in a haze. He remembered reading somewhere that when animals were exposed for any length of time to a very terrifying experience they would pass into a state of stimulated death. Was this happening to him now—this passing into sleep and awakening, fitfully.

The car was then suddenly brought to a halt and the young men all stumbled out of it. It was done quickly. They ordered him to get out and start to walk and the car drove off. It was an isolated spot they had stopped at and it was dark, too dark to make out where. The four men kept him in the middle as they went. The fifth was gone with the car. They walked a short distance and abruptly turned into a footpath that ran through a scrub jungle. Apart from themselves there didn't seem to be another human being within shouting distance. He had got a glimpse of an oil lamp flickering inside a hut some distance away, a chena watch hut. Besides which there was nothing else in sight. The further in they went the dimmer the chances of his being rescued. They were approaching a dense jungle; once inside it they wouldn't even hear his shouts. It was his last

chance. He suddenly dug his foot into the ground and turned on his captors.

"Where are you taking me?" he cried with sudden vehemence. "What are you trying to do to me? What have I done to you that you should treat me like this?"

He found himself shouting the last. He was suddenly crying in frenzy, in fear. It was fear that had turned into frenzy, and frenzy was the last stage before a man lost his power to think rationally. When the butt of the gun struck him in the back it was as if he had been shot. He was hurled forward and his face hit the sand. Hot tears welled in his eyes as he tried to spit out the sand from his mouth. He did this several times until the sand was out of his mouth, and suddenly feeling very tired he lay there and wanted to go to sleep; he never wanted to get up again, but they yanked him up. He was an old man and now the sobs began to come to his throat; he bit his lips to suppress them, but he couldn't control them. He couldn't control the sobs that came to his throat, and they made him go on, when all he wanted to do was to lie down and go to sleep. He wanted so badly to go to sleep, but they made him go, all the time they made him go, pushing him forward with the gun barrel.

The crunch of shodden feet through the undergrowth was the only sound one heard—the crunch of boots and the cracking of twigs and the sound of the insects, and there was the starlight; one could see the starlight through the trees, so beautiful and so illusory. It was dense, dark jungle, but the sky was open and starlit and beautiful, and one caught glimpses of it through the thick, dark, roof of branches.

The man in the lead seemed to know his way through this jungle. He went on. He didn't seem to

hesitate once; the others just followed. They had been doing this for ten minutes, twenty minutes, half a hour; Piyaratne didn't know how long. He continued to stumble forward and the weariness grew on him, his legs beginning to feel as if they had been filled with lead. He wanted so desperately to stop to rest. It was difficult to be doing this at his age, to be tramping through a jungle without a moment of rest, not seeing anything, not hearing a friendly human voice, not knowing what this was all about, every step forward seeming more difficult than the previous.

"I want to stop; I am tired," he said. "I cannot walk so fast; only a moment, just to get my breath."

"Stop! no, you cannot stop," said the young man jabbling him in the back with the gun. "You'll soon have a rest, a very long rest." His companion chuckled. This was the only human reaction he got from them. Otherwise they might just as well have been automated rubber dolls. They were moving again, picking their way through the undergrowth. They had not been walking for more than a few minutes before there was a flash of light—it was a signal. The man in the lead signalled with his torch. He repeated the signal after a moment, and a signal was flashed back. Piyaratne was relieved. Here, at last, was the end of the journey. They were going to stop at last. He could sit down, rest his legs and recover his breath. Just the thought that he could soon rest made him feel better, and soon, maybe, he would know the meaning of all this, the reason for his abduction. All one had to do was to be patient and everything would be all right. He was certain of this.

They soon came to a sort of clearing in which there was a cadjan hut, and a short distance away from it, a tent; in front of the tent

was seated a group of men. They were like hunters camping out in the jungle. The only light they had came from two lanterns—one hanging from the tent pole and the other from a pair of cross poles half way between the tent and the hut. It was a small group who, together with his four captors, would have numbered about a dozen. There was nothing menacing about them—just a crowd of young men having a good time. He didn't however, have to wait long before he discovered who was responsible for his abduction. For the first time he felt a thin, sharp arrow of fear sink into the pit of his stomach; his breathing, at the same time, began to come faster. As his eyes became accustomed to the gloom he saw, with a sudden, involuntary gasp, the gangling, bony figure of the man who had been his tormentor in the recent past. It was Hemapala, the man they called Gurunanse. He was the leader of the group and these were his men. He was the leader—you saw it in the way the men grouped round him.

Suddenly everything fell into place—the meaning of this nightmare, the reason for his abduction. His tormentor had him dragged through the jungle to humiliate him. He looked at the rest of the group—they were all strangers to him. None was a student from his school. The only other man he recognised in the group was another member of his staff, Hemapala's lieutenant, Sarath, the scrawny individual with the large, flapping ears. Hemapala had divested himself of his cloth and Khamisey. He wore a pair of blue trousers, but had thrown off his shirt. He was naked above his waist. His thin, bony torso was bare.

Neither Hemapala nor Sarath showed the least sign of recognition. They were reclining on the grass, and slowly they sat up, crossed their legs in front of them

and stared at him. Hemapala sat perfectly still for a moment and then barked a command to one of the young men. "Get me a torch," he said. A torch was brought. Hemapala lit it and turned it on Piyaratne's face and held it there for a moment. "He's frightened," he said and switched off the torch.

The roles had been reversed. It was Hemapala and his friends who had the power now, the power to administer a swift, tribal justice. The consciousness of this power had transformed them into beings grown big with arrogance. The meanness and cruelty had been there, no doubt—dormant, but, suddenly, these things had surfaced. A mean, cruel and frustrated man, sometimes, added to his cruelty and meanness the capacity he had for gloating over the thing he did, but these two men appeared not to feel any emotion at all as they stared at the man who had been their boss not two weeks earlier. There was something impersonal in their behaviour. They had invested their cruelty with the sanctity of the crusade they felt they were waging. This was the curious transformation that had come over these two men. Hemapala rose and walked up to Piyaratne. He dug his bony finger into his chest and said, "So you are the man who talked to the police about me. You gave me a character certificate. You talked to them about my great virtues. You didn't think I would hear about it, did you? We are smarter than you people think. People will see that very soon." Piyaratne felt a moment's surprise and the surprise changed into amusement at the way the facts had been distorted, but he realised the futility of trying to deny this. Hemapala turned to his companions. "Take a good look at him," he said. "He looks a queer sort of fish, but he has a sting, but the sting is in his tail."

He patted Piyaratne's bottom and said, "Its here. You must make a thorough study of these types. You must be able to recognise them, at once. You get deceived by them; they even talk; they deceive you with nice words. They are clever at talking. When we come into power we must give everyone a thorough course in identifying this type of fish. These fish have been riding on poor people's backs, and have had a monopoly of the good things. Only they have had a proper education and good homes and nice clothes. All this has to be changed."

He dug his finger several times into Piyaratne's chest. "You now know what we have been preparing for. We are going to get rid of all you people and put in their place true people's representatives. Before we finish with you we want you to know that we are serious about what we are going to do. No fooling. We are going to finish, once and for all, with the bogus, middle class education you have been pumping into students. All that's finished. When we come to power there won't be room for sentiment and emotion, no room for that, no privileged people. In your system of education you encouraged these things. Our people's courts will judge such people like you and, of course, you know what would happen to those who are guilty. When we have established our power we shall remove inefficiency created by sentimental old fools like you. We shall have a scientific and efficient education system and a true people's art, not the rubbish you tried to introduce into the school."

Hemapala's voice had been growing in intensity as he went on. It was as if he were addressing a public meeting. When he talked it was always as if he were addressing a public meeting. He had to strike a pose, create a role. It was being denied an audience that had frus-

trated him all these years. It seemed now as if he had one, at last. It didn't matter if it was a one man audience. It was better an intelligent one man than a pack of fools. The intelligent man could appreciate the part he was playing. It was being denied an intelligent audience that had frustrated him most of all, and as a result, it had all become sour inside him.

Piyaratne had listened to this speech in dazed silence. Strangely, he felt removed from all this. It was as if he were looking at a play from a great distance in which a man was doing something and speaking. It was spectacular and nothing more. He did not feel sorrow or fear or hate. He had passed beyond all that.

Hemapala turned to one of the young men and gave him some whispered instructions. The young man went to a small hut lying under a tree some distance away, and returned some moments later accompanied by another young man. Piyaratne suddenly came out of his daze with a start. He recognised the new arrival. He had a marked limp and had to be helped along by the other. It was when he came nearer Piyaratne noticed the bruises on his face. "Have a look at him," said Hemapala, turning to Piyaratne. "He is one of those you tried to corrupt. Unfortunately we got him too late or we may have reformed him. He was all right until you got him. He has absorbed some of your ideas. He wants to go back to be an artist. He told us he made a mistake and wanted to return to his painting and his parents. He wants to be nursed by his mother again. He might have been useful to the movement but not anymore. You have turned his head."

He turned to one of the men.

"Give him the knife", he ordered.

A knife—a dagger was fetched and placed in the hands of the

young man. "You have a chance to reform yourself. It was decided we'll give you another chance, but you'll have to prove you can work with us. The people's court decided that the execution of the men who corrupted you shall be yours. If you do it without fuss we shall let you go. The alternative to a refusal is....."

Gunapala, the young man, suddenly went limp, put his face in his hands while his body was convulsed with sobbing. It was as if his entire body was involved in this rejection of this terrible demand, but, strangely it was a reaction that no one in that group seemed to have anticipated. Hemapala alone seemed unmoved by it. For several moments he watched Gunapala. "No, I will not. I cannot", screamed Gunapala. "I did not join the movement to commit murder." He lifted his tear stained face and stared with horror at his tormentor and then at the others. There was a look of desperate appeal when he looked at the others. "You can do what you want with me, but you cannot make me commit murder. This is not what we were told we were going to do. We were to free the poor people from their suffering and bring about a better society."

Several of the young men standing round seemed moved by Gunapala's appeal. Hemapala's distorted but acute brain thought rapidly. He had to bring the situation under control or he would have trouble on his hands. It had begun to affect others.

"We didn't know we had brought breast-feeding infants into our midst, did we?" he cried rising and striding towards Gunapala. "Is this the sort of man who is going to fight the police and army? We thought we were recruiting men into the movement, but what have we got but worms dressed-up for men who would start bringing

up their entrails with the first sight of blood. I swear to you that these will be the traitors later. There can be nothing worse than a traitor in a people's movement. We got to rid the movement of them."

The knife fell from Gunapala's hands. Hemapala picked it up. It had been the decision made by the leaders of the movement that the slightest sign of weakness had to be dealt with. They had to deal with traitors ruthlessly. There was to be shown no mercy, and the leaders of each sectional group had to show an example. He suddenly whipped round to Piyaratne, who still thought that all this was a bit like play acting. He was being accused of many things that had no truth. Surely they wouldn't harm him for things he had not done, but nothing here seemed to make sense. Yet suddenly a numbed feeling came over him, coming up from his legs. His legs went limp first. He was losing control of himself, of his lower limbs and then his reflexes. He felt as if his bowels were about to open, but he tried to get a hold of himself. He dare not weaken now. He had to check this feeling of paralysis. He must be strong. He must not let them have the victory. To fail now was to destroy everything he had stood for all these years, but quickly, through his mind now passed the wonderful moments of his life. It was like a rapid show of slides, the important moments of his life. He was thinking of the meeting with Deva and Ariya and the things he had said. It was good he had done so. They will remember this meeting. If they remembered nothing else they will remember that last meeting. It was the last thought in his mind when he felt the knife go into him with biting, agonising swiftness. It went into him like a doctor's needle but amplified a thousand times, hot

like heated iron, scorching and burning. For a moment there was a look of unbelief on his face, and then one of surprise as he dropped on his knees, balanced for several moments there, swaying like some heavy object about to tip over, and then he rolled over, jerked a few times and lay still. It was as if to the last moment he had believed that this could not happen to him. He had believed in human order and natural justice, and had faith in human kindness. He had believed that man could not kill another man without having some deep provocation. A man had to be brutalised beyond hope to be able to take the life of a man who had done you no harm, take it in this manner, for things he was innocent of. It was once more the chubby potato face that first struck the earth, and he lay there bent as if he had gone to sleep.

The corpse had not yet grown cold before they dragged it down to the river which flowed barely a hundred yards away from the camp, and there it was to begin its course down towards the sea, rolling and wheeling round and round, sometimes getting caught in a heap of boulders or a clump of rushes, but continuing to go.

They began the trial almost immediately afterwards. They had to deal with cowards at once. They formed a people's court and called witnesses to testify of what they had seen. It was about three thirty, in the morning when Hemapala summed up the verdict of the court.

They then led Gunapala to a tree and tied him to it. He was in no condition to stand. He had gone into a faint and had soiled his trousers, but they tied him, nevertheless. Three men formed the firing squad. They shot him then. His body leapt up when the bullets went into him. It appeared to shudder before it went limp.

THE WORLD TODAY

West Asia, India

WEST ASIA: 16 ARAB NATIONS TO ATTEND IRAQ SPONSORED SUMMIT

SIXTEEN ARAB countries, including Algeria, the Libyan Jamahiriya and South Yemen, the three hard-liners opposed to Egyptian President Anwar Sadat, have agreed to attend a summit called by Iraq to counter the Camp David West Asia peace accords, the official Iraq news agency INA reported on Sunday. Egypt responded to the Iraqi call by saying it would welcome the meeting as long as it was held in Cairo. Cairo radio also quoted an official spokesman as saying any summit should be prepared to discuss the entire Arab situation, particularly the recent fighting in Lebanon. On Lebanon, the spokesman said, "To stop the bloodshed, Israel must first stop giving assistance to some right-wing outlawed militias."

The Arab summit must also take measures to end the mission of the Arab deterrent force, which is predominantly Syrian, to allow the Lebanese army to regain control over all of Lebanon, including the south, he said. Egypt's new Defence Minister, Kamal Hassan Ali, has expressed the hope that implementation of the Egyptian-Israeli peace accords would encourage other Arab States to join in negotiations for a comprehensive West Asia settlements. Gen. Ali, who is to lead the Egyptian delegation to the Washington peace negotiations, told the Cairo press that he would present a draft peace treaty taking into account "Arab interest and all the principles agreed upon at Camp David" to Israeli negotiations. He said the major points of the Egyptian draft were "Egypt's sovereignty and terri-

torial integrity" and said the United States' participation as a full partner was a positive factor for the success of the negotiators.

ISRAELI FOREIGN MINISTER, Moshe Dayan has said that Israel would continue to provide arms and "indirect help" to Christian forces in Lebanon, but ruled out direct Israeli involvement in the fighting. "What we see now is the Syrian regular army shooting at civilians and just killing them. And I think that should be stopped," he said. He was appearing on the CBS-TV programme "Face the Nation". US Vice-President Walter F. Mondale said President Carter had been working with various Governments including Israel, Syria the Soviet Union and France in an attempt "to bring about stability.. and a reassertion of the authority of the Lebanese Government" in Lebanon. Mr. Mondale appeared on the ABC-TV programmes on "Issues and Answers".

MR. DAYAN said the fighting between the right-wing Christian forces and the Syrian army is "an attempt to crush the Christians", and he said Israel is "obliged to extend to them (the Christians) as much help that we can..". He said the shelling by Israeli gunboats of a Muslim section of Beirut last week was aimed at a Palestine Liberation Organisation naval base and not directed at the Syrians "May be..indirectly it was a signal that we won't hesitate (to)..send some of our forces to strike.. against the PLO", he said.

Baghdad, Reuter, AFP & AP
October 9, 1978



WEST ASIA: MR. BEGIN'S ABOUT-FACE

WHEN ELECTED in May last year Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin stated unequivocally, "Israel will create more Jewish settle-

ments in the heart of the occupied territories". On January 16 this year, just prior to the withdrawal of the Egyptian delegation from talks in Jerusalem due to blatant Israeli intransigence, Mr. Begin told a group of visiting US Congressmen, "I would rather resign than give up the 19 Jewish settlements in Sinai as demanded by President Sadat". Such comments were certainly in keeping with the former terrorist leader's 30-year history of Zionist extremism interspersed with biblical fantasies of Eretz Israel. However, in what can only be described as a complete about turn, Mr. Begin stated this week, "I will resign if the Knesset does not endorse the frameworks for peace reached at Camp David," which include the crucial question of the dismantling of Israeli settlements in Sinai. He further added in an address to the Knesset that there were only two options open to Israel, "to accept the Sinai withdrawal or lose all hope of peace." With the Knesset almost certain to heed Mr. Begin's advice what has caused this remarkable transformation and the dawning realization by Mr. Begin and his compatriots that peace can only be equated with withdrawal? Last November President Sadat stunned Israel and indeed the world with his courageous and determined peace initiative. The Israelis, unable to digest the full import of Sadat's visit, fumbled amidst rising party factionalism and growing internal desire for a lasting peace. Mr. Begin, rooted in the arrogance which has dominated Israel since its existence, failed to reciprocate with even the faintest suggestion of flexibility.

UNDAUNTED PRESIDENT SADAT continued in his search for peace, exploring all possible avenues, unperturbed by Mr. Begin's inability to conceive his vision of peace, and unshaken by the short-sighted,

ness of the Arab rejection front whose virulent vocal opposition was matched only by their inability to produce any viable alternative strategy. Mr. Begin's radical reversal of thinking demonstrates the strength of Mr. Sadat's relentless drive for peace. Amidst strong Arab pressure to declare his initiative a failure Mr. Sadat stuck to his guns and his faith in the United States as the nation which held 99 per cent of the cards. Unmistakably the United States has played a vital role in this process, initially as a mediator and effectively as a full partner at the Camp David Summit, but the real force behind the present progress towards peace has obviously been President Sadat himself. The complete reversal in Mr. Begin's views, from refusal in January to the acceptance of withdrawal now can only be attributed to the President's determination to achieve a lasting solution and his skill in accommodating both the established Arab view and a realistic Israeli stance. Given Knesset approval, the agreement marks the first significant negotiated territorial withdrawal since Israeli's formation. With Mr. Begin having reexamined his intransigent stand and a Sinai withdrawal imminent, the prospects for fulfilling the Camp David accords are indeed promising. Hopefully, the Israelis will not waver and the Sinai withdrawal will signify their new realisation that peace cannot be achieved while maintaining possession of Arab territories. Also it is hoped that the other Arab states will eventually understand what a great opportunity President Sadat's courageous initiative has given them. His efforts have made withdrawal a reality and laid the framework for peace in the Middle East, something no other leader has been able to achieve in the history of the conflict.

—Cairo, *The Egyptian Gazette*,
September 28, 1978

WEST ASIA: HUREWITZ'S COMPLAINT

MR. YIGAEEL HUREWITZ, who recently resigned from the post of Minister of Commerce in the Begin government, complained that more US aid would lead to what he called "unacceptable concessions" on the Jordan and Syrian fronts. "We'll end up doing exactly what the Americans tell us" he declared. But isn't it just about time that Israel gave some return for America's munificent generosity towards it? Where would Israel be were it not for the US tax payer? And what exactly does Mr. Hurewitz mean by "unacceptable concessions" on the Syrian and Jordan fronts? In the last thirty years the American tax payer has poured billions of dollars into Israel. How has this investment served him? Israel has used the money to build up an immense war machine for the purpose of constructing a Zionist empire at the expense of its Arab neighbours. This policy has been carried on regardless of the fact that all US economic and strategic interests in the region are bound up with the Arab world. The American attachment to Israel, basically, is connected with the persecutions Jews suffered in Europe under the Nazis—persecutions for which the Arabs were in no way responsible. The Zionists, however, have ruthlessly capitalised, on this, using it to blackmail the West into aiding Israeli expansionist designs in the area: schemes that have led to 30 years of turmoil that have also served to place US national policies towards the Middle East in a quandary. America's Western European allies are almost totally dependent on Middle East oil most of which comes from the Arab world—none from Israel. The United States itself, with the depletion of its domestic supplies, has, in recent years, also been be-

coming more and more dependent on foreign oil supplies, a large proportion of which derives from the Arab World. As the national incomes of the Arab oil-producing states have risen through revenues accruing from oil, moreover, the Arab world has become an expanding market for Western industrial goods. And the Arab world's immense petro-dollar reserves have become an increasingly important factor in the world economy. Without a recycling of Arab petro-dollars through investment in Western economies, the entire monetary system of the West would be endangered. The United States has a vested interest, therefore, in maintaining ties of friendship with the Arab world. It is an interest that has been constantly threatened by Israel's use of American aid for aggression on the Arabs.

IT IS, FURTHERMORE, only US and Western economic interests in general that have suffered. The Arab world is of immense strategic importance in international affairs, as the most cursory glance at an atlas would show. And the Arab states have, for the most part, sought to maintain a posture of neutrality between the two world power blocs. Western, particularly US, supplies of aid to Israel that have been used for massive attacks on the Arabs, have served to threaten the maintenance of this neutral posture. This became obvious when the Arabs struck back against Israeli occupation of their territories in October 1973. The accompanying Arab oil-producers' embargo against Israel's friends and supporters underlined Western dependence on Arab oil supplies, and signalled to the US and others that an unbridled policy of arming Israel was self-defeating as far as Western interests in the area were concerned. The effects of yet another war in the

Middle East, moreover, would, without the least doubt be even more devastating for the West whatever its effects on the parties directly involved in the conflict. It thus became obvious that it was vital to Western interests in the area for the US and its allies to pay somewhat more than lip service to UN resolutions which set out a formula for ending the conflict; resolutions which the Arabs had long accepted, but which Israel, for all its talk of wanting peace, had continued to oppose. The Camp David accords represent an attempt to get the ball rolling towards a peaceful settlement of the conflict. Mr. Hurewitz's criticisms of them represent headline Zionist opposition to the UN principle of non-acquisition of territory by force of arms, a principle against which Israel expansionist policies clearly run counter. What Mr. Hurewitz calls "unacceptable concession" on the Jordan and Syrian fronts are nothing more nor less than the requirements for peace that the UN has set out in its resolutions for peace: requirements which Israel, as a UN member, is under an obligation to carry out. It is high time that Israel, which owes its very existence to the US tax payer, took US interests into account and did something for the US in return for the generous US support it has received. And the best thing it could do is to carry out UN demands for withdrawal from Arab territory and recognition of the Palestinian people's right to self-determination.

—Cairo, *The Egyptian Gazette*,
October 1, 1978

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WEST ASIA: CAMP DAVID CONSPIRACY

THE CAMP DAVID SUMMIT which evolved two main documents—"A Framework for Peace in the Middle

East" and "A Framework for the Conclusion of Peace Treaty between Egypt and Israel"—has sent a wave of indignation among the Arab people. Though the letters exchanged during the Camp David summit on certain crucial issues—such as status of Jerusalem, Jewish settlements in the Sinai and the US help to Israel for construction of two new air bases—have now been released, President Sadat is finding it difficult to carry his people with him on this sell out of the Arab cause. Even the conservative and pro-American regimes like Saudi Arabi and Jordan have not been able to muster courage to give moral support to the so-called summit formula. The Egyptian Unionist Progressive Party which has strongly criticised the Camp David Accord said that it violated the "sovereignty of Egypt" because it provided for demilitarised areas extending deep into the Sinai areas. (The accord lays down that Egypt would be allowed to have a limited strength of its military in east of Suez canal to "ensure" security of Egypt).

What has shocked the Arab people is that in his negotiations with Israel at Camp David, President Sadat insisted on the removal of Jewish settlements in the Sinai but ignored those on the West Bank and Syrian Golan Heights. The Egyptian people are also sore that the agreement ignored the Palestinian right of self-determination. As the Egyptian Unionist Progressive Party put it, the agreement did not clearly accept Arab sovereignty over the West Bank and Gaza strip.

The document providing a framework for Peace in the Middle East does not visualise formation of the Palestinian state on the West Bank and Gaza Strip: it works out the mechanics for giving autonomy to these areas after a period of five years. President Sadat in one of

his letters to Carter speaking on behalf of Jordan and the Palestinian people says: "To ensure the implementation of the provisions related to the West Bank and Gaza Strip and in order to safeguard the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people Egypt will be prepared to assume the Arab role...following consultation with Jordan and the representatives of the Palestinian people". That is to say if Jordan and the Palestinians refuse to negotiate with Israel, first to set up the so-called autonomous Palestinian authority and establish the rules for five year transitional period, Egypt will do it for them.

This means that Egypt has now virtually resiled from the united stand of all the Arab countries that the PLO is the "sole representative" of the Palestinian people—a stand which the General Assembly of the United Nations too has endorsed in a modified form when it declared that the PLO is the "true representative" of the Palestinian people. This apart, the Palestinians would be granted a nominal autonomy for a period of five years and during this period the "seriousness of their intention to live in peace with Israel will be tested". The implication is that if during the transitional period of five years, the Palestinian Liberation Movement is either liquidated or made to surrender the concept of "autonomy" will be implemented. And it is only after this period that it will be decided whether Jordan or Israel should remain in charge of these areas. During this transitional period the Jewish settlements in these areas would remain intact and defended by the Israeli forces. It seems that the Palestinian cause has been completely sacrificed. A bait has no doubt been given to Jordan that after five years, these areas might come under its jurisdiction. King Hussein of Jordan throughout these crucial weeks

has been sitting on the fence watching the Camp David negotiation closely from London. Jordan perhaps would want the "framework" for peace in the Middle East to be set up without involving itself directly. Geo-political position of Jordan is such that it cannot afford to fall in line with Egypt and enter into a separate peace treaty with Israel because this step would create serious problems for it. Jordan cannot afford to ignore the stand of Syria, Iraq and the PLO. The underground network of the PLO organisation in Jordan is intact and in the occupied West Bank areas, the underground liberation movement of the Palestinians is gaining ground day by day.

KING HUSSEIN'S 1972 plan envisaged that a Jordanian-Palestinian Federation under the Hashemite dynasty would be set up. This obviously he cannot achieve unless the decision of the Arab summit at Rabat recognising the PLO as the "sole legitimate" representative of the Palestinians is reversed. He in fact in recent weeks has been talking about the necessity to "untie the knot of Rabat" before he could do anything on behalf of the Palestinians. Thus both Jordan and Israel are interested in cutting to size the Palestinian liberation movement. And if this objective is achieved through the Camp David accord King Hussein will be too happy.

Saudi Arabia has taken an ambivalent stand on the Camp David accord and for two reasons. first, Saudi King Khalid cannot become a party to any agreement with Israel unless the status of Jerusalem is clearly defined. If on any single question President Sadat took a firm stand, it was on the status of Jerusalem. He therefore, in one of his letters has set out that Arab Jerusalem is an integral part of the West Bank, that it should be under the Arab sovereignty and

that its inhabitants should be entitled to exercise their legitimate national rights and that all Israeli measures to alter its status are null and void. Obviously, Israel is not in a position to accept this because it considers Jerusalem as the "capital of the State of Israel", as Begin has put it in one of his letters to Carter. More important, Crown Prince Fahd, who is the real architect of the Saudi policy wants to take over the leadership of the Arab world. The Saudis have a multi-purpose policy, trying to satisfy the US, the Egyptians and Hejectionist Front consisting of Syria, Algeria, Libya, Peoples Democratic Republic of Yemen and the PLO. The dilemma facing Saudi leadership is that it wants to capitalise on the anti-Israeli sentiments of the people while not allowing their radical trend in the Arab politics to grow. The progressive regimes in the area on the other hand, have already taken certain positive steps to counter the conspiracy of the US imperialists, Israel and Egypt as the joint communique of these countries have put it.

AN IMPORTANT ASPECT of the Camp David accord is that the Carter Administration wants to make it clear that the Middle East is its number one trouble spot and will not leave the situation in this region to drift nor allow the anti-imperialist forces there to grow. Economic interests in the area have always acted as a stimulus to a far-reaching American political involvement. The Arabian Gulf alone has 70 per cent of the capitalist world's oil reserves and over 58 per cent of the world oil reserves. Over half of this oil wealth is controlled by the US interests in varying degrees. In the early seventies the influence of the Arab national liberation movements has been highly significant. After the October war of 1973, the main

thrust of the US diplomacy in this region has been to contain the nationalist challenge by political means through support extended to the conservative regimes like Saudi Arabia and Jordan and by strengthening Israel and winning over some of the middle roader countries like Egypt. The Camp David accord is the culmination of this process.

The proposed Egypt-Israel peace treaty, of course, means that the US policy of making each Arab country to come to a settlement with Israel meant good business. The new fissures in the Arab world are created for this purpose. Which means putting on rails the process of integration of economy of some of the Arab countries both with the US multinationals and through them with Israel. Egypt being the biggest and most populated country fits well into this scheme. The open-door policy of President Sadat and the complete reversal of the progressive economic policies of Nasser have already crippled the economy of the country. Egyptian capitalists, therefore, want to enter into regional partnership with the US and finally with Israel too. Israeli leaders have already started advocating that through open border for trade, tourism, capital investment and cultural exchange, as well as conventional forms of diplomatic recognition and mutually recognised borders, a new relationship should be struck between Israel and the Arab countries. As the only developed capitalist country in the Middle East, Israel could tie the Arab countries to it as the supplier of capital and technological skills to them at good profit to itself: while its purchasing power would make it a natural market for Arab raw material. As one of the Israeli leaders has put it recently Israel would provide a market for the "perishable agricultural products of Syria,

Jordan, Lebanon, the meat of Iraq, the cotton of Egypt" while "there is no doubt that our own manufacture could yield a varied range of products to be available to the Arab countries close at hand." This process has already begun on the West Bank and Gaza Strip. And after the peace treaty between Israel and Egypt, this process will begin in Egypt too.

THE USA is vitally interested in forging this new relationship between Israel and leading Arab countries for more than one reason. First, Israel has been receptive to US private and public capital. Some of the largest multinationals are already in Israel such as Lehman Brothers, Kuhn-Leob, the Mellons and the Boston and Cleveland groups. Thus a tie up of Israel with some of the Arab countries will enable American capital to capture these markets. Secondly a stage has come in the US policy in the Middle East that the US cannot rely upon Israel alone. The Arab world where the US interests are far greater than those in Israel has never been able to accept Israel as an ally. The US, therefore, cannot put all its eggs in the Israeli basket, for this would lead to strengthening of liberation movements in this region. So far the USA has been following a dual policy in this region, strengthening economically and militarily Israel and strengthening its ties with the conservative Arab regimes such as Jordan and Saudi Arabia. A balance between these two aspects of US policy in the Middle East was called for. And this was not possible without bringing the conservative regimes closer to Israel. And Egyptian ruling circles for their own reasons are prepared to become a bridge in this process. Nasser's Egypt could not play this role but Sadat's Egypt has become a willing tool.

As a US military expert recently said, "from the overall political and strategic interests in the Mediterranean, in the Persian Gulf and in the sub-continent", if the diplomacy in this area is going to have any "real meaning and real teeth," US national interests demand that Arab States and Israel should "stop shooting and start talking." Thus the Camp David accord has been designed to keep the Arab countries particularly Egypt, and Jordan in the anti-national liberation orbit. Naturally the progressive regimes and liberation movements are seeking to re-group themselves in the area.
—New Delhi, *Link*, October 1, 1978



KARNATAKA BY-ELECTION EXCITEMENT

THE Congress move to get Indira Gandhi to stand as a candidate in the forthcoming byelection from Chikmagalur parliamentary constituency has created considerable stir in Karnataka. The news itself, however, has not come as a surprise. About three months ago, when D. B. Chandre Gowda, the Congress-I who resigned his Chikmagalur seat in Parliament, the speculation was that this was done to provide a safe "seat" for Indira Gandhi.

Though the official notification has not yet been issued, the election is expected to be held on November 6, in which case the last date for nominations will be October 13. Chikmagalur is a sprawling and a predominantly-rural constituency consisting mainly of hilly regions spreading out on both sides of the western ghats. An area dotted by coffee plantations, it has eight Assembly seats. Though it is considered to be one of the traditional strongholds of the Congress-I, the Janata Party and the CP-M also have their pockets of influence. The CP-M's

INDIA: CHIKMAGALUR

Mr. Veerendra Patil, former Karnataka Chief Minister, who has been named the Janata Party's candidate for the Lok Sabha by-election from the Chikmagalur constituency, left here today for Chikmagalur to file his nomination tomorrow. Mr. Patil, who had been initially reluctant to contest, bowed to the wishes of his partymen that he should contest against Mrs. Indira Gandhi, the Congress (I) candidate.

—PTI, Bangalore, October 10

Mr. M. G. Ramachandran, General Secretary of the AIADMK and Tamil Nadu Chief Minister, confirmed in Madras on Wednesday that his party would support the candidature of Mrs. Indira Gandhi contesting the by-election to the Lok Sabha from the Chikmagalur constituency. It said the AIADMK would be the ally of the Congress (I) in all the coming elections.

—PTI, Madras, October 11

The CPM General Secretary, Mr. E. M. S. Nambudripad, wondered here to-day why the Janata Party had dithered so long in selecting its candidate when it had a very good choice in Mr. Veerendra Patil to oppose Mrs. Indira Gandhi in the by-election to the Lok Sabha from the Chikmagalur constituency. Asked about co-operation between the CPM and the CPI, Mr. Nambudripad said the attitude towards the Congress (I) was the difference between them and the Chikmagalur election was the test. The CPI was so prejudiced against Mr. Veerendra Patil that it did not mind Mrs. Gandhi winning the election.
PTI, Bangalore, October 11.

influence, is however on the wane with a rift among their ranks on account of the expulsion of M. H. Krishnappa, former State secretary of the party, who had worked in this region. The Janata Party won one out of the eight Assembly seats in the last Assembly election from Kadur. The Janata Party depends mainly upon the support of plantation owners, landlords and RSS and other communal elements. The Congress-I on the other hand has great influence among the plantation workers and farmers and agricultural workers. The majority of them belong to the Scheduled Caste and Tribes or from other backward classes, for whom the Urs Government has done many things. They have been given house, sites and pattas for land. Today, the Congress-I is in a position to exploit these things for its political advantage. This is sure to help Indira Gandhi if she finally decides to contest the byelection. Anyway, the Cong-I has already launched preparations for its campaign.....It is too early to say what will be the final strategy of the parties opposed to the Congress-I. Whether they will be able to put up a joint candidate to oppose Indira Gandhi or fight separately under different party labels will depend very much on the national leadership of the parties who will ultimately decide the questions. However, present thinking in the Congress and the Janata camps in Karnataka seems to coincide surprisingly. Both are of the view that only if a joint and a commonly agreed candidate, with an unsullied reputation, is put up as an independent will it be possible to fight Indira Gandhi effectively. The very fact that both the parties today are not talking of setting up their own candidates shows lack of confidence in their separate strength.....

—New Delhi, Link, October 8, 1978.

IN THE TUB

by Diogenes

● The Teacher

DIOGENES SAT IN HIS TUB, days, nights and weeks, in a blissful state, oblivious of the world and saw the great panorama of his life unfold before him as a teacher of men who cared to seek his counsel.

"Master, the powerful ones in the City have no use for you. Why do you lie in this Tub as though you find no use in yourself?" asked his Friend. "Why don't you go to the market place and expose the evils in the City?"

"The evils in the City are eternal, dear friend, and so is the evil in men. Diogenes will be wasting his time to go to the market place and preach to the people who will be entertained by his words of wisdom but will never be instructed. It is difficult to make one man wise and how can he make the many wise. He does not want to waste their time. It is better to pander to the stupidity of the public rather than to their intelligence of which they have none."

"Master, you must give of your wisdom at least to the powerful ones for the greater glory of the City instead of lying here and talking to a handful of men like me who do not matter here."

"The powerful ones are not unwise. But their wisdom is not the wisdom of the philosopher. We do not have any philosopher kings. I cannot say that they are unwise to have not wanted Diogenes in the Council of Elders. The wisdom of Diogenes, they are wise enough to know, is not the type of wisdom which helps them or the people who matter to them. They are not wrong. Diogenes does not want any longer and cannot any longer be of any use to anybody."

"Then, what is the purpose of your existence, Master?"

"To relax in my Tub and to contemplate on the nature of man and on the nature of things. I am enjoying myself seeing the present and the future from the tub."

"What is the future of our City and our People?"

"Our City will continue to be poor and our People will continue to be idle. The national pattern will never change unless they accept the great teachings of Diogenes."

"You will soon be called a megalomaniac, Master."

"They will and I will call myself one too, but, my dear Friend, there is more inside this Tub useful to the City, than outside it."

Thus the Master spoke and fell into deep Silence.

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The All-Knowing

NONE KNEW EXCEPT HIS VERY GOOD FRIENDS that when the Master lay in his Tub, he steps out of Time and Space and his peep into the future of men, matter and cities, resulted in some remarkably accurate predictions. It is not astrology or star gazing. It is not the art practised by ordinary men. The Master made observations of all the events in the Universe and all the happenings to happen unlimited by Time and Space. He sees the whole human drama revealing itself as a panorama before his eyes in all its wonder and beauty.

The life and achievement of one Man is just the same as the life and failure of another. Both fade away in Samsara. "Lowly man is

but a breath. The sons of nobles are only lies; in the scales they go up altogether lighter than emptiness", quoted the Master repeating the words of the psalmist. The Master during his meditations has been talking to himself and laughing at himself and others, caring neither for food nor drink. He can be heard talking to the heroes dead, heroes dying and heroes yet to be born to die.

"Master, can we establish a Righteous Society?" asked his friend from the philosopher.

"Has any man in the history of mankind achieved this, my Friend. Great Teachers have failed. As long as man is born to be born again in Samsara evil will persist in the individual and in human society. Where the great teachings of the Masters have failed, can the laws of men build a Righteous Society? It was a Roman poet who sang: *'Quid sine moribus proficiunt leges vane?'* "Of what avail are empty laws without principle", observed the Master apologising that he may be misquoting Horace from his *Tub* and continued "the laws of men can be broken, they can be circumvented, the guardians of the law can be bribed, expensively powerful lawyers can be retained, judges can be stupid and even if they are not so, they can be timid, criminals can gain the patronage of the powerful ones and the nature of man and the nature of things will go on as before regardless of the reformers."

"Do you say, Great One, that no City can be righteous?" asked his Friend.

"Only when it is ruled by a Philosopher King who is prepared to accept the teachings and warnings of Diogenes," so saying the Master went into a deep Meditation smiling with compassion.



IN OUR SEARCH

For A Righteous Society

by The Rev. Celestine Fernando

SRI LANKA is passing today one of the most challenging periods of its history. A great ideal has been set before us by our President—a man of vision and of considerable experience of the vicissitudes of our nation's history as well as of the vagaries of political involvement. But one man's vision, even if he is supported by a few faithful followers in positions of leadership, cannot secure or ensure a whole nation's regeneration. As he himself has so often implied, a nation's recovery depends on the people themselves.

Now more than a year has gone after the present Government came into power with a grand flourish and unexpected aplomb. Even though there were vast numbers who hoped for its success, few dreamed that it would gain such an overwhelming majority in the country and in Parliament. Accepting the general support it got from the majority of the voters the Government has gone ahead with many significant and far-reaching changes. During this year a new Presidential system has been established, a new Constitution has been presented to the nation, several basic and far reaching schemes of National Development have been initiated, an unprecedented amount of Overseas Grants and loans have been obtained to finance these schemes and through different kinds of structural reorganisation the nation has seen some basic steps taken to help to build what has been often described as "a Righteous Society". These changes are going on affect-

ing all the citizens—whether they are aware of them or not.

What has been achieved have however been some political, economic and financial foundations. The superstructure has yet to be slowly built—and all citizens of our land ought to be concerned with the spirit and basis of the new Constitution now adopted. If it is to be truly righteous, socialist and democratic even after its adoption, all citizens must try to study it and there should be wide and popular discussion of all its provisions. It would have been proper if we had far more time and wider discussion of this Constitution than we had prior to the adoption of the earlier Constitution at the Constituent Assembly under the shadow of and bound by the restrictions of a grave national emergency. In our homes, neighbourhood groups, voluntary organisations and in regional and nationwide seminars and conferences the basic character of our Constitution deserved and still deserves study and discussion if its intention is to ensure national unity, personal freedoms, social and economic justice in the spirit of brotherhood for all the citizens of our land. We must all know how these words and phrases are spelled out in the Constitution if we are to be sensitive to how they will be legislatively and administratively implemented or abused.

If there is no such study and discussion even now it will be a great and permanent loss to the nation. But mere study and discussion even in the highest forum possible, and the adoption even of a perfect Constitution cannot ensure a "Righteous Society" just as an Orthodox Creed does not ensure a moral Church. Ultimately a Righteous Society will come into being only if action is taken to

ensure it by the ordinary citizens of the land as they serve at the grass roots. It is the character and activity of our people in the villages, towns and cities and the quality of the leadership that they produce for the local and national organs of Government and administration that will determine whether, as a nation, we shall build a righteous society of unity, freedom and justice and live in goodwill and peace.

TODAY we have great ideals, set forth in the speeches and pronouncements of our political leaders. In terms of these ideals, there is a need to do everything possible to forge the bonds of national unity. This is needed most of all in the area of unity between Sinhalese and Tamils. What is ensured in the Constitution must be legislatively and administratively honoured at all levels. An occasional appointment and a happy word in the appropriate place—these are not enough. In the day to day conduct of Government the ordinary citizen be he Sinhalese, Tamil, Burgher or other should not be denied his or her rights in the land of his birth. We must remember that while many structural changes are intended to bring in a new order, and vast resources are available, there is not enough evidence of a genuine people's movement for national righteousness and development. Too many people seem to be filled with too many complaints about unrighteousness and about corruption retarding development. But we must pay heed to what is said and done even by our opponents—and, perhaps, most of all by them!

It is a great temptation for a political party to make promises that it would be lowering the cost of living when it comes into power even when the character of our national development in-

evitably makes it impossible of fulfilment. And one of the marks of widespread disappointment today can be traced to such promises. There is a need for a plain and clear admission that in terms of our present policies no general or radical decrease in

the cost of living is possible for a long time—if at all. What is perhaps necessary to state publicly even now is that the Government should seek to improve the quality of life of our people. Whether it is possible in terms of our present materialistic personal

WATER RESOURCES BOARD

IS IT NOT TRUE that not so very long ago a Very Important Person who claims to be all-knowing and who says that he is one of the mightiest in Establishment boasted he would see that the area known as the Coconut Triangle would have the benefit of at least 10,000 tube wells within a short time? That our inquiries reveal that He has not confided even in his admirers how he hopes to accomplish this gigantic task? That 10,000 tube wells looks almost superhuman considering the fact that the Water Resources Board (WRB), which is officially in charge of this work, has only a handful of wells to its credit ever since its inception? That it is difficult to understand how the Mighty One can perform the miracle of 10,000 tube wells within "a short time"? That in this connection our investigations have revealed that there is serious disquiet among people who have been anxiously waiting for tube-wells about the capability and competence so far displayed by the the WRB? That knowledgeable circles fail to understand how the Government had picked the same people who had earlier (even in the days of the last regime) been among those entrusted with the job of bringing groundwater to the surface for irrigation and who had not been able to make any headway? That whilst it not known whether the fault was theirs or someone else's, the Government would have done well to try out a new team?

That even at this stage it is not too late for the Government to set up a new unit—built up from scratch—similar to the Wind Energy Unit that has been established and which has done such excellent work in a short time? That the Wind Energy Unit with fresh blood and new thinking has done remarkably well so far? That it is also time that people in high places realised that groundwater should be one of the top priority jobs for the newly appointed District Ministers? That the search for and exploitation of groundwater is a matter which the World Bank will be happy to finance? That Sri Lanka has plentitude of groundwater with good replenishment owing to the two monsoons? That it has been rightly said that a tube well is only a hole in the ground and that it is one of the easiest ways of obtaining water for irrigation? That if the farms in the areas where tube and deep surface wells can be sunk are electrified, the Green Revolution which the Government is waiting for will come upon the country within a short time? That it is not enough to talk glibly about 10,000 tube wells to gladden the hearts of newspaper readers? That it is essential to have the well-drilling rigs and equipment before making any boastful claims? That projecting one's image to appear bigger than one really is an old pastime that has brought ruin to many hopefuls? That history has a way of repeating itself once too often?

and social values to raise the standard of living while lowering the cost of living is an interesting question.

It is also urgently necessary to make every effort to overcome the terrible corruption in our midst expressed in the uncontrollable profiteering which the middlemen are guilty of and reduce something at least of both bureaucratic bungling and the quite unjustifiable expenses that the ordinary man and woman have to incur today in order to live when administration becomes either too heavy or weak. In this context a massive politically active consumer-resistance movement seems to be needed in every part of the country to help the people. There is a challenge here to the Housewives Association and for the formation of active Neighbourhood Groups in Sri Lanka—difficult as this is in some areas—if democratic processes are to be made use of and preserved and eventually a Righteous Society of the People of the Land is to be established.

There is a wide open door to corruption also through the MPs chit-system which was a great evil under the last Government and which the present Government pledged to remove. Now it seems to have become a hydra-headed monster in many more places and in much worse forms than even before. We clearly need a nation-wide network of scrutiny by the promised Ombudsmen. Through such scrutiny and through other means, quite clearly Government administration must be cleaned of political interference and all other evils including laziness, wastage and favouritism. But before any Ombudsman is to function as he should, there is a clear need for public opinion and public pressure on the side of righteousness at every level and in every area. The norms of righteousness

should be set and taught not only by precept but also by example in our homes and our schools and in University Campuses. Appointments, transfers, promotions, dismissals—all appear to need far fairer treatment in many areas of public life today. We must know what it means to appoint people on "merit" as has so often been promised—lest merit may only mean the merit of belonging to or supporting the Governing Party. Different assumptions in these matters go ill with a righteous society for such a society, in any case, can never be achieved without honesty in these matters in the places of power and decision.

ABOVE ALL there is a great need for those in the corridors of power at every moment of history to have their ears, minds and hearts close to the people who sent them there. It is the constant temptation of all governments to forget this—and by so doing to lay the foundations for their fall. Our President and Prime Minister know this well as they have revealed in their public pronouncements. They must see to it that all those who advise them and indeed all in power also take heed. This is specially essential in terms of what the young people say in their deep disappointments and in their low rumbling even while some happily proceed to and constructively work on the Mahaweli and other Development Projects as more ought to do.

We need to listen to the young people of our land specially if they are the actual or potential "drop outs" from our schools and Universities in town and country. The revelations in the Research Study conducted under the auspices of the National Council of YMCAs of Sri Lanka on Drop Outs and the Seminars conducted on the subject reveal a situation which should disturb every concerned citizen from the President and

Prime Minister downwards. We ought not deliberately to train people for insurgencies and violence by any lack of concern. For the "drop outs", we were told, form the base of those who join the brotherhood of pickpockets and their training schools, become thieves and robbers, perpetrate acts of violence and cause civil commotion, although such acts are not always confined to school and college "drop outs". Far too many among them are young. These young people in village and town will also form a good portion of the voters for the next election and there probably will be far more than now. The young are still in the majority. And it is worth listening to them—specially if they are in genuine need; and not merely exploited by other politicians. Such listening to critics in a free and open society which ours is claimed to be, is a very difficult but an absolutely essential and supremely worthwhile task from whatever sector these young people come—North, South, West or East.

As in the Church, so in the State, words do not suffice, even if the words are in the Creed or the Constitution. We are called to translate them into deeds and each of us according to our resources. And in doing so we must remember that our country does not belong merely to the President, the Prime Minister or the Politicians in Power or the Officials in high position but to *all of us*. All who are citizens have a sacred responsibility for its well-being and development. This is why what Edmund Burke said many years ago is still so true:

"All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men do nothing."



THE CATHOLIC COMMUNITY—3

UNP And Education

by Fr. Tissa Balasuriya O.M.I.

The new government has promised in its manifesto to reform education so that it may bring up in our country new persons and a new type of society that are not acquisitive but selfless and other centered. It has undertaken to create a righteous "Dharmista" society, based on the ethical values of our religions.

It has promised equality of opportunity for all in the country. Education is to foster national harmony and a genuine self reliant economic development. Technical and vocational education are to be widely expanded. National service will be organized to give youth the skills for work as well as a sense of loyalty and service to the country.

These promises include much that is desirable in education. Our proposals are in keeping with such UNP proposals.

All the same there are some basic inner contradictions within the UNP itself. Its option for a free economy is contrary to its pledge of a just society. A free economy means free rein for money, for capital. It means growing inequalities.

THE FREE TRADE ZONE proposal brings out more clearly these inner contradictions. The values of the free economy, and the FTZ are acquisitive, competitive, individualistic and selfish. They foster a servility to foreign capital, a subservience of the mind to the needs and values of foreign companies. They need docile conformist workers; and an uncritical public opinion. Profit maximization is the motive force.

In such an orientation of our society the foreign companies return to dominate our country. IMF and the World Bank tend to call the tune to public policy. The local elite who collaborate with the greedy transitional corporations prospers while increasingly heavy burdens are placed on the masses of the people. The secret number accounts in the Banks will encourage greater corruption even within the country. Tourism will foster dependence. Our cultural values will be adversely affected by the capitalistic ethic of acquisitiveness. All these will have their impact on the education system.

The content of education will tend to be more geared to serving these companies, and their values. The mass media will be dominated by the big advertisers and big capital. The introduction of TV may lead to a good educational use; but the big money involved in it will tend to make the programmes consumeristic. TV is likely to encourage buying imported and luxury goods; spread crime, violence, drugs, gambling and pornography unless the government is very careful about it.

Private TV companies will probably have more impact on the peoples' values than the educational system and its religious orientation. The TV may also be an agent of government propaganda. Hence there may be a link up of government and the big companies to the peoples' disadvantage. The country is thus faced with a basic contradiction between the values of righteousness (Dharmista) and of the evils of capitalism.

We should have no illusions about the issues that are being posed by the FTZ that will be sited in a largely Catholic area. Even though it is only 1% of the land surface it includes about 5% of the population. About a fifth of

the Catholic population will be within the area. But since its impact will extend to the whole Colombo district about a third to half of the Catholic population will be influenced by it.

The then Premier Mr. J. R. Jayewardene explained in Parliament when the FTZ bill was debated that this area would be a "robber barren land" where the foreign companies could come in and combat each other anyway, provided we too got a benefit from it. It would be a sort of "Nudist colony in the convent" that is Sri Lanka within the wider nudist colony of South East Asia.

The President is quite clear that in the FTZ capitalism, will reign supreme. It will not be only unbridled capitalism, but rather capitalism with full powers and wise state favours. Education of Catholics, specially in the Western maritime areas will be seriously affected by the value of the FTZ specially as the years go by.

(To be Continued)

NEXT WEEK

Community School



OFFICIAL EXCHANGE RATES

The official exchange rates yesterday (17.10.1978) were:

Currency per 100 units	Buying	Selling
	Rs.	Rs.
US Dollar	1565.00	1571.00
Pound Sterling	3125.10	3136.10
Deutsch Mark	851.45	854.45
French Franc	370.05	371.55
Japanese Yen	8.5450	8.5750
Indian Rupee	197.35	198.15

WHITHER SRI LANKA ?

The High Cost Of Dying

by R. C. Thavarajah

WHEN OSCAR WILDE (1856-1900), the brilliant Irish playwright and author of several delectably interesting books in the eventide of his life wrote "*It appears that I am dying beyond my means*", I am certain that he would not have had the slightest notion of the grossly excessive cost of funerals, attendant rites and ceremonies especially of certain sections of our people in certain parts of this Island Paradise of ours.

It was only the other day that I attended a funeral somewhere in the North. The shock of the relative's death was not half so unnerving as that which assailed me when I was informed of the cost of the funeral arrangements. The undertakers' bill which included funeral parlour arrangements and transportation was Rs. 4,000/-, the services of the gentry who performed sacerdotal duties, the barber, the dhoby, hire for furniture, obituary notices in the press and radio, ceremonies on the 3rd or 5th day of death and the rites on the 31st day of death amount to over Rs. 1,500/-. To describe this expenditure as colossal would be a trite understatement!

I grant that undertakers and others performing other related services at funerals, like everyone else, have to live. With the cost of living on the up and up, people must die so that they may live. If I may digress—I am reminded of a firm of Dry Cleaners with their own peculiar but somewhat scintillating sense of pun when they

made overtures to their customers with the eye-catching slogan "*We live and dye for you.*"

The affluent idle rich can afford expensive funerals. After all, they are the gourmets who often carve their graves with their teeth wolfing down costly food purchased at certain exclusive and prestigious Establishments dealing in imported frozen food and quaff down foreign liquor in the most select hotels. What about the poor who cannot find the means for even a simple burial or cremation? In this contest, I cannot resist the penetratingly profound dictum of Professor Tawney who said "The Poor, it seems, are *helped* by their Gods if not by their fellow mortals for they are awarded exceptional opportunities of dying young."

Two years ago, after my retirement, my peace of mind was disturbed by a depressingly pathetic sight. A poor father carried the body of his child in a small cheap coffin and had walked all the way to the cemetery as he could not afford even a taxi. He was accompanied by two or three friends who shared his grief. At the cemetery, he appealed to the dignity of a certain religious order who had completed the obsequies of a wealthy deceased. He did not ask for an elaborate service. He only wanted the minimum for his dead child. His request was not granted as the usual fees had not been paid. Yet we preach with oratorical excellence of diction, pronunciation and histrionic flamboyance of *charity!*

I cannot forget the look in his eyes. It spoke not only of grief but also of an excruciating bitterness that can engender the trauma of hatred, denouncement and even revolt.

In contrast is another case of an unfortunate man who too could

not afford payment for religious rites. When his plea for the obsequies gratis was peremptorily refused, he took the remains of the dear one to the place of worship and left it there with the trenchant remark that if God created the being, the servants of God should do the needful after death. The Authorities were in a quandry. In order to avoid the unpleasant consequences, they expeditiously organised everything. How many of the poor will have this ingenuity and the gumption to resort to this "technique"?

I have no intention whatever of being accused of flippant irreverence. I do not wish for a moment to incur the wrath of the unctuous, self-righteous, "religious" pharisees who most punctiliously insist on the minutest detail of ceremony. I certainly and most emphatically assert that certain religious rites and ceremonies must be performed for the Soul of the dear departed to attain Eternal Rest salvation. All this is highly commendable.

What I feel is objectinably 'De Trop' is the unnecessary expense for the observance of some customs which are assiduously adhered to with the obstinacy of the proverbial mule. Why perpetuate some customs in the context of progressive social changes that have taken place and when most of the people cannot afford the expenditure especially the poor whose "real tragedy is that they can afford nothing but *Self-denial!*"

(To be Continued)



A HOLY MAN REACHES HIS GOAL

Yatalawatte Sri Amarawansa Thero

It was in the early forties that a middle-aged Buddhist monk of the Ramanya Nikaya came by the power of his reflection to the Mahaweli riverside in Getambe.

Getambe was then an unpretentious village laying claim to a few thatched homes perilously close to the river. An occasional car and a still rarer bus would toot its way near-by on the Colombo-Kandy Road. Even bird calls could then be heard, but not today because city-life eats into the one time "sleepy", quiet village, changing its face.

Yatalawatte Sri Amarawansa—for that was his carillon name—was surely pleasing to gods and men. He wanted to live poor, detached and with the poor. He dived into the river, collected stones, large pebbles, got a few bricks and built his hut (kutiya) with his own hands; obtained a few zinc and not-so-zinc sheets for a roof over his head. He thus chose for himself what normal people wish to get away from: insecurity, uncertainty, anxiety. But he also gained much independence and freedom of the heart.

Then came December 1947 and its unprecedented rains and flooding of the Gampola - Getambe-Peradeniya plain. In the rains of mid-December, his simple robe made of rags would be lost in the wind, flung off from the clothes' line. Soon his hut was under wind and water and he himself was about to be drowned, when people saw him, went up to him in a boat and rescued him to safety. But, the village of Getambe went off the map.

The waters subsided. His interest in people waxed strong. Phoenix-like his hut came up but the people persuaded him to cross over to the other side of the road, a little safer from the ravaging river silted there by years of erosion from the tea plantations. He worked on for ten years more, and within that short decade, had picked up, literally hand-picked a monk called Labbuduwe Siridhamma for a project dear to him: "to try all the time to get to the core of Buddhism, to capture and re-capture the spirit of detachment, radiation of metta, to carry this core-message to men of other lands, to get always to the root of Buddhist sila, share its message with the world, the whole world". After many labours, writings, and a splendid vision of Getambe's Rajopavanaramaya as a point of radiation of Buddhist virtue, the venerable monk attained Nibbana at 6 p.m. on the 9th September 1957.

The monk he had hand-picked from a crowd of monks was not even his own disciple, but yet, would carry out the wishes of Sri Amarawansa. For twentyone years he kept on plugging the line, following the monk's mind, because anyone who is true to Buddhism feels that he is true to the truth. He kept up the cherished idea of his elder. Throughout the years, in the most difficult moments of his life, "he would feel some guiding hand helping him to make the right judgments with regard to this project." He wanted to make of it a place of training, a place of renewal, of meditation so that it would be a forward-looking place for a Buddhism of today and tomorrow.

The Government of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka approved of his plans and those of his Committee. The Committee then decided upon a date for the

first Meeting of the academic staff, well-wishers and others and the date fixed was the 9th September 1978, for 4.30 pm.

The meeting was under way. The Chairman, Venerable Labuduwe Siridhamma spoke of the origin of the projected Dharmacakka Vidyapita. Suddenly he remembered. He stopped short and told us of the Venerable Sri Amarawansa, told us of the date and time of his death. No one had planned the date nor hour of this meeting, for its auspiciousness. What a coincidence it was: exactly twentyone years earlier, the venerated monk with his wonderful ideas for bringing people together had gone to his reward. And now, his ideas had reached maturity, even majority (21 years) in the life and mind of those he left behind. His idea had come of age. The fifty-strong group of academic men could not but marvel at the coincidence. Sincere, open-hearted, poor and loving those in distress, the Venerable Yatalawatte Sri Amarawansa had shown himself a reformer within a reform-movement of Buddhism. He had not been forgotten. His holy life for people had borne fruit.

At the gateway to Kandy's Temple of the Tooth, nesting at the foothills of the University city (Peradeniya), at the confluence of three trunk roads: Colombo-Kandy-Nuwara-Eliya, the Training and research school augurs well for the future.

Michael P. Rodrigo. O. M. I.

LETTERS

KOVOOR

Sir,

It is considered unpatriotic today to sing Praises of Western Culture. Yet, whichever way you cut it, modernisation in a country such as ours is vitally dependent on

Western Culture. Through it we automatically became heirs to a great intellectual tradition. This heritage of reason enabled us to free men physically from the confines of nature. But more, it enabled us to free men's minds.

Yet we are schizophrenic. Because we are too close to the beliefs of the past—backward beliefs—beliefs made rigid by superstition. These sanctified by tradition and sometimes by religion have trapped even those who are part of the modernising process, in a labyrinth of ignorance, fear and idolatry.

It is only appropriate that at this schizophrenic juncture in our intellectual evolution, a prophet of the stature of Abraham T. Kovoor held the national stage. But his fame spread beyond our shores, particularly to the land of his birth, Mother India, the home of so many charlatans even for this deceitful age.

If Abraham T. Kovoor failed to make a clean sweep of conversions, if he failed to strangle the last superstition with the entrails of its propagator, it was because he lived in a world, too complex in its contradictions to be satisfied with a humanist ethic. It would not be for want of ability, for want of effort, or for want of dedication.

I met Kovoor a week before he died, scarce realising that that was our last goodbye. Weighed down by illhealth though he was, the fight was still in him. His mind was keen as a razor edge, as he met and dealt with the superstitions of the day.

Many people on our subcontinent owe a debt to Kovoor. Because it was he who awakened in them the thirst for the truth, a crusaders' diligence in uncovering the truth and an evangelists's dedication in propagating the truth.

These lines are an attempt to acknowledge my debt.

Jayantha Somasundaram

Guaranteed Price Scheme For Tea

I write to thank you for having published my letter dated 25th August 1978 under the heading "Tea Producers and Workers in Danger" in your issue dated September 16, 1976 which, and an earlier letter on the subject, the State-controlled Press and the liberated Press did not publish.

The letter appears to have had a salutary effect and the powers-that-be have, at long last, decided to bring into operation a Guaranteed Price Scheme for Tea as from 1st October 1978 according to a news item appearing under banner headlines in the *Ceylon Daily News* of September 29, 1978.

I shall await until I receive the Tea Commissioner's new formula on the subject before commenting on the adequacy or otherwise of the offer made by the Government which has set apart rupees sixty million for relief to producers from the sum of well over Rs. 3300 million which the Government will receive from the producers for the year by way of Export Duty alone at Rs. 16/20 per kilo without taking into account the millions of rupees it will receive by way of the Ad-valorem Sales Tax. Incidentally, India has recently reduced the Export Duty on Indian tea to Rs. 2/- per kilo against the Export Duty of Rs. 16/20 per kilo on Ceylon Tea. This may not affect the sales of Sri Lanka teas abroad crop-wise but it is bound to affect the price at which Sri Lanka teas will be saleable and the producers will suffer.

The increase of the manufacturing charges to Rs. 3/05 per kilo or Rs. 1/38 per lb., of made tea will cover the cost of manufacture. I hope that a certain amount or percentage will be allowed as a

profit margin to cover the extremely high present cost of depreciation on machinery, and an incentive payment to produce quality teas.

It must be pointed out that the producers are not asking the Government for any financial assistance. They are only begging for a fraction of the thousands of million rupees of their own money which the Government is taking away from them by way of the Export Duty and the Ad Valorem Sales Tax apart from other taxes.

Producers have had to wait almost one year since the last Budget to obtain some relief. And the cost of production of tea will rise still higher after Mr. Ronnie de Mel's next Budget in a few week's time when he grants an all-round wage increase to all workers which will help to increase inflation which producers can face and cope with if tea prices are not controlled internally by extortionate taxation.

Robert Harley

Monte Cristo Estate,
Nawalapitiya.
30.9.78

SNIPPETS

Its all right to hold a conversation, but you should let go of it now and then.

—Richard Armour

Nothing is at last sacred as the integrity of your own mind.

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

The hardest arithmetic to master is that which enables us to count our blessings.

—Eric Hoffer

Inferiors revolt in order that they may be equal, and equals that they may be superior. Such is the state of mind which creates revolutions.

—Aristotle

Confidentially

Eisenberg, IBRD, IMF & EMF

IS IT NOT A FACT that the Eisenberg & Co. saga we began in this column last week has brought us a flood of information? That it will be sometime before we can process all that has come in for publication? That for the moment what is important is the fact that the efforts of Eisenberg & Co., to saddle this Sri Lanka government with a loan of billion dollar magnitude still continues? That with the McNamara promise that the World Bank would back the Accelerated Mahaweli Plan to the fullest with every cent it may require, operators like Eisenberg & Co., have to look to other fields for such investment? That the interest these private banking syndicates demand is a minimum of 7.5%? That it is one thing to get foreign collaboration for a joint venture but a totally different matter to borrow money at high rates of interest to set up an industry or an undertaking? That the Government must exercise the greatest caution before sanctioning the inflow of such capital from private banking and lending circles? That if this is permitted to go on unchecked, it can create a dangerous situation so far as the country is concerned? That if such private foreign financiers are able to get a grip of important sectors of the Sri Lanka economy, it will mean the insidious return of a new form of colonialism which is popularly known as neocolonialism? That freebooters try to laugh neo-colonialism out as a dirty word but the concept and understanding of neo-colonialism has come to stay in all developing and third world

countries? That whilst loans from private buccaneering bankers will open the floodgates of neo-colonialism, loans from institutions like the IBRD, ADB, IMF, especially the soft loans at rates of interest just over 2%, are now regarded by many on a different footing? That the IBRD and IMF are known devils and their earlier Shylockian tendencies have been largely curbed? That IBRD's hard loans make the going more difficult? That some socialist countries now think it all right to seek IBRD loans? That it is true that the prime objective and purpose of the IBRD is to sustain the capitalist system? That in the earlier days of the cold war, the IBRD was snooty about helping countries that flirted with socialism? That therefore it found that one way of de-stabilising young developing nations reaching out to socialism was to offer aid to public sector undertakings in these countries? That the IBRD has travelled a long way in the last thirty years and today it has flexible and ambivalent policies which are able to do much more for private enterprise and capitalism than the earlier hardline policies? That, in spite of softening by the IBRD to sell capitalism to poor third world countries, it is still a hard sell? That in more recent times, the IBRD has adopted policies which its sister organisation, the IMF, finds hard to swallow? IS IT NOT TRUE that the IMF still displays tough Shylockian tendencies? That IMF methodology has brought disaster to many small countries? That countries like Mexico have often threatened to revolt against the IMF? That the narrow inflexible policies of the IMF has led to the capitalistic more forward-looking countries of Western Europe to set up a new organisation known as the European Monetary Fund (EMF)? That many feel that the EMF, when it is brought into opera-

tional functioning at the end of the year, will be an alternative to the IMF? That it is said that after this the developing nations have a new institutionalised alternative to the IMF, the World Bank (IBRD) and other agencies in the same genre? That the first big step in this financial transformation is the European Monetary System (EMS) proposed by West Germany and France and approved at Bremen by the nine heads of state of the European Community on July 7, over the strenuous opposition of Great Britain? That as the European Monetary System (EMS) takes effect by stages it will, through its European Monetary Fund (EMF), replace the IMF and serve as a headquarters for absorbing presently unwanted and misused American dollars? The EMF will take its dollar holdings and use them to make long-term low-interest loans to industrial-development and energy projects around the world? That the Arab Monetary Fund, with plans to greatly increase its \$700 million reserves, intends to link up with the EMS's Fund early? What the highly development-oriented Bank of Islam, in which 41 Islamic nations participate, is considering parallel measures; and the African Development Bank, having gained Japanese involvement, has requested West German participation to reach a 70 percent increase in capitalisation? That Mideast gold purchases have soared since Bremen? That thus the EMS is, and is designed to be, what one senior West German official just after Bremen called "the seed-crystal of a new monetary system"? That the European press also refers to it as the "Grand Design". After the Grand Design of Sully, the 16th century economic counselor of Henri IV of France, who fought to develop world industry and technology from the top down against his feudal opponents?

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