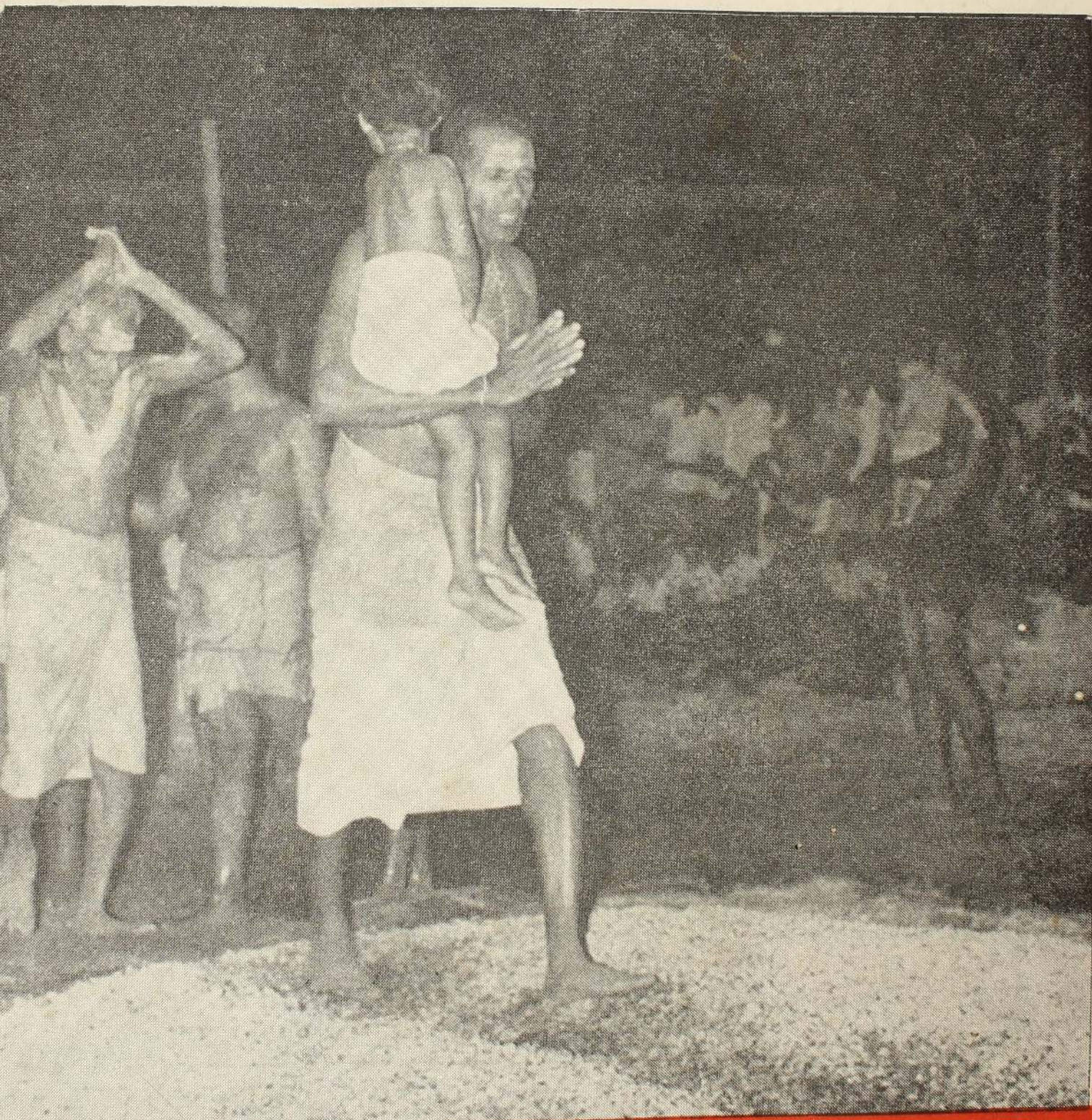


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by

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formerly Principal Hindu College, Chavakachcheri

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Letter From The Editor

ON THE COVER we have a picture from the fire-walking scene in Kataragama. In the foreground is a large pit of hot burning coal embers, and we see a man carrying a child, stepping into it to start his short but hazardous journey. There is a queue of other devotees behind ready to follow him. The walk over the fire takes only a minute or less, but in that time is telescoped a moment of eternity that surpasses Time and Space. Dr. Abraham Kovoor and Dr. Carlo Fonseka, the high priests of the Rationalist Movement in Sri Lanka, decry this fire-walking as an obscurantist phenomenon of religious hypnotic numbo-jumbo in an atmosphere of mass emotional frenzy. They also suggest fraud and humbug and also have a bagful of so-called "scientific" reasons to explain how and why a fairly large number of devotees are able to walk across the fearfully hot embers without the soles of their feet being burnt. Whatever the Rationalist duo have said and written to denounce as fire-walking as religious hocus-pocus, the fact is that millions in the country are aware that some religious-minded people are able to walk this fire every year without their feet getting scorched. It is not our purpose to enter into a polemical discussion with the rationalists on the truth or otherwise of fire-walking. We are not protagonists of fire-walking, but we are interested in all phenomenon that involves man. Fire-walking is a mystery we are yet unable to explain. But, fire-walking is a reality that cannot be dismissed on the strength of the dogmatic pronouncements by the Rationalists. Nevertheless, readers may wonder why *Tribune* has picked on fire-walking this week for its cover—one year after the new UNP government has come to power. The annual Kataragama festival, where fire-walking again took place, was concluded only a few days ago—just before the first anniversary of the Jayawardene Government. The fire-walking on this occasion reminded us that many persons, especially many men and women who are at the helm of affairs, do not seem to be in the least conscious of the fact that Sri Lanka is today on the brink of a burning pit of hot live embers which must be crossed before we can reach economic salvation. Too many of us have begun to gloat over the fact that everything—including hundreds of items one had not seen for over seven years—is today available, at a price, no doubt. Men with money and entrepreneurs who can get credit from banks can order machinery, raw materials and everything else they want to go into business. There is nothing that cannot be imported, but only a few people—very few indeed—can afford to buy even a fraction of what they need from what are available. It is true that the availability of attractive consumerist goods is today an inducement to make young and even older people to work harder, to work longer and to work every day in the year to enable them to buy these goods. For everybody in Sri Lanka the period ahead is testing time more difficult and dangerous than walking on fire. For the country it is in an even greater ordeal. Very soon, the international debt, which we have obtained to push through this present exercise in economic development, will soon be close on US \$1.5 billion. To utilise this money to develop the country and to increase production will, in our view, be more difficult than walking on the fire at Kataragama. Will this government be able to get through this ordeal? Will the country survive the test without being scorched? There is too much complacency in the air. If things do not go well locally, imports are rushed in to meet the needs. Even where local production is adequate importers know how to stampede the authorities to import more and more. How this country will get through these trials and tribulations of the immediate future is anybody's guess.

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EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

One Year After—5

In this final article in this series, it would be useful to examine the political developments and the history of the different political parties since July 1977.

Once again it would be useful to peg our comments on the articles in the Special Sri Lanka supplement of the *Financial Times*. In three of the articles, there were references which are relevant to an understanding of the political developments since July 1977. In the first article by David Housego entitled AIMING FOR STABILITY, after dealing with the economic policies of the UNP and the IMF umbrella which has been unfurled over Sri Lanka (we have referred to it in an earlier article in this series), the writer goes on to examine a few of the more significant developments.

First he deals with the threat to stability from the Left, the Trade Unions and the Students. This is what he said: "The Government has been chipping away at trade union powers through banning political strikes and trying to remove the control of political leaders over the unions. But it had to backtrack on its draft Industrial Relations Bill after strong union pressure against what the unions considered an infringement of their rights. Nonetheless, there has been less labour agitation than might be expected—perhaps because of continuing memories of the failures of Mrs. Bandaranaike's left wing coalition. The Government is also taking on the students. Universities and schools have been closed for a number of weeks this year, after, clashes between Marxists and UNP followers—possibly inspired by UNP attempts to

wrest control of student organisations from the Left. The Government's response has been to send the students home in the belief that angry parents will both force their children back and force them to take their studies more seriously. None the less, student unrest remains a major long term problem while the number of jobless is so large."

This is a fair assessment of the situation, but one of the main reasons for the lack of vigour on the part of the Left, the Trade Unions and the Students was the disunity—splintered, fragmented and hopelessly hostile—among all the so-called progressives on ideological, personal and other grounds. Even the China wing is now in seven or eight groups, and the efforts of the Karawita group, following the Hua-Feng line, to bring as many of the old Peking-wingers under the SLFP umbrella have not met with any success. It has only generated polemical fury against them from the older pure Maoists.

David Housego, however, had more to say about the threat from the Tamil minority; "The most immediate and serious challenge to Mr. Jayewardene's regime has been the least expected. The Tamil minority living in the north and east of the country scored a major success in the election when its political arm—the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF)—won 18 seats in Parliament, making it the largest opposition party in a predominantly Sinhalese state. The TULF had campaigned for a separate Tamil state. Their victory in July was followed in August by the worst communal riots between the Tamils and the dominant Sinhalese population that the country had seen for years. Since then, a terrorist organisation called the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam has emerged and claimed responsibility for 11 murders including five police officers. The President

this month moved police and army reinforcements to the north to hunt down suspected members of the organisation. He also greatly increased the powers of the courts to hold suspects and imprison those convicted on the grounds that the police were demoralised at being unable to pin down the guilty. Behind these moves lies the fear of a fresh outbreak of communal violence far more serious than in August. Communal tensions run high in the north, and among Sinhalese in the south there are ominous signs of a blood lust. The Government feels it has gone far to answer Tamil grievances over discrimination in education and jobs. But the Sinhala population is not going to permit the devolution of power that the Tamils want—and Mr. Jayewardene as a traditionalist Sinhala Buddhist is not likely to offer it. His own proposal, however, to allow the Tamils their own districts meet their political aspirations. The deadlock presages an explosive situation which the President is the first person to admit could sabotage his development plans."

In another article entitled AWKWARD BALANCE IN POLITICS, Housego made a rather interesting analysis of the situation: "In every election in Sri Lanka since 1952, the Government party has been voted out of power. But there has never been a swing of the proportions of last year, which virtually annihilated the former partners in Mrs. Bandaranaike's left-wing coalition and gave the United National Party (UNP) its overwhelming majority. The main opposition party to emerge was the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF), which campaigned on the platform of a separate state for the minority Tamil community. By any yardstick this unrepresentative balance of power in the Assembly is unhealthy.

In terms of seats the July election gave the UNP 140, the TULF 18 and Mrs. Bandaranaike's Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) nine, including her own and that of her son Anura. The UNP thus secured more than the two-thirds majority needed to put through constitutional changes. Mr. Jayewardene has used this strength to introduce the revisions to the parliamentary system, which he has long advocated, to end what has seemed endemic political instability.

"In February he took office as the island's first executive President, resigning his post as Prime Minister and his seat in the Assembly. His new office gives him the power to appoint ministers (including ministers to head reorganised district administrations which he intends to establish), preside over the Cabinet and dissolve the Assembly but not be dismissed by it. He is freed from what he considered as an increasingly time-consuming chore for a Prime Minister of having to appear before Parliament. In this sense the executive is no longer strictly accountable to the Assembly, and the status of Parliament has correspondingly been reduced. His six-year term of office means that he will still be in power at the time of the next general elections raising difficult questions of the possibility of a clash between the President and a Parliament dominated by a majority not of his own party. But to ensure continuity of Government Mr. Jayewardene has brought in proportional representation. This means that any future administration is unlikely to have the two-thirds majority to undo the changes he has made. Further amendments to the constitution are to be brought in to provide for the election of the next President, the holding of referendum (Mr. Jaye-

wardene mentions that one question voters could be asked would be whether they would favour the postponement of elections), the listing of fundamental rights and the detailing of the power of the courts.

"More dubiously Mr. Jayewardene is also using the UNP's two-thirds majority to incorporate in the constitution what would otherwise be regarded as normal legislation. Thus recent bills outlawing the terrorist organisation, the 'Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam', depriving magistrates of the power to grant bail in cases of serious offences and obliging them to impose certain minimum sentences for those convicted, have been presented as constitutional measures. Mr. Jayewardene also talks—possibly loosely—of including commercial agreements made with the Free Trade Zone Commission as part of the constitution."

Housego then examines the Social Composition of the Jayewardene UNP: "The UNP has its origins in the Senanayake family—which with the Bandaranaike family has almost ruled Sri Lanka alternately since independence. Mr. Jayewardene took over the leadership in 1973 after a split with Mr. Dudley Senanayake and proceeded to widen the party's appeal beyond the influential squirearchy and commercial interests with which it has been traditionally associated. He also brought more young leaders into the party—two of the key ministers in the present government, Mr. Gamini Dissanayake and Mr. Lalith Athulathmudali, in charge of irrigation and trade respectively, are under 40. With some justification the UNP projects its parliamentary party as including more men with professional qualifications than have been seen in past assemblies. It has followed the practice of its predecessors in clearing out its

opponents from the bureaucracy, though not with the same ruthlessness as was pursued by Mrs. Bandaranaike in 1970 as a prelude to her nationalisation measures. Potentially more alarming is that it has let loose its youth movement to beat up Marxist opponents in the universities and to disrupt trade union agitation. But though the UNP's popularity has obviously been dented since the election, it has won the only two by-elections held so far—one admittedly in the strongly middle-class area of Colombo West, which was also Mr. Jayewardene's seat."

Then he deals with the SLFP: "The constitutional changes are by no means totally unwelcome to the SLFP—the stronghold of the Bandaranaikes and the other main anchor is Sri Lanka's political system. If proportional representation had been in force during the last election, the party would have picked up 45-50 seats instead of nine. It has denounced the new powers of the President as potentially dictatorial, but as yet is not committed to removing them. It blames the party's massive defeat on a combination of high prices, unemployment and the unpopularity of its MPs, who after seven years in power had become remote from the electorate. To that should be added the nepotism with which Mrs. Bandaranaike's regime was charged. A more rural based party than the UNP, it is currently going through a process of "democratisation" to remove its image of being dominated by a family hierarchy. Until there is a by election in a rural area, however, there is no real way of testing whether there has been any revival in its electoral fortunes. But it is likely to be some time before its reputation of having let the economy run down and black marketeering flourish begins to rub off. Although Mrs.

Bandaranaike's regime has been showered with accusations from the present Government for abuse of power, the charges have not been pursued with the same personal bitterness that surfaced in India against Mrs. Gandhi, Mr. Ronnie de Mel, the Finance Minister, resurrected an old charge in Parliament of improper land dealings, and Mrs. Bandaranaike has responded by issuing a writ against him. A presidential commission is currently taking over her record in administration. But as old personal friend, Mrs. Bandaranaike and Mr. Jayewardene remain on good terms."

Then, turning to the Left, he went to say: "For the traditional Left the constitutional changes are far more serious. The Communist (Moscow) and Trotskyist Lanka Sama Samaja Party (LSSP) have long been major features of the political landscape—and are far less radical than their names imply. The communist leader Mr. Pieter Keuneman, remained in Mrs. Bandaranaike's administration as Housing Minister, almost until the end. Mr. Colvin R. de Silva, the LSSP spokesman has a love of parliamentary rhetoric reminiscent of Burke and was the author of the last constitution. The strength of both parties lies in the trade union movement. They have been hit by the ban on political strikes and the Government attempts to remove union leadership from politicians. They could be perpetually excluded from parliament by a system of proportional representation as proposed, under which parties gaining less than 8.5 per cent of the vote in an electoral district lose their deposit. The danger in this, as Mr. Keuneman is quick to point out, is of driving the Left underground towards 'civil war'."

"Such a remark is intended to raise echoes of the 1971 insur-

rection by Marxist youth. The Government has now let out of prison the leader of that movement, Mr. Rohana Wijeweera, and his followers. His Jathika Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) party remains in numbers the strongest of the young Marxist groups, appealing mainly to high school students in the 17-21 age band. But he seems more preoccupied with discrediting the established Left-wing parties than attacking the Government. His members say that their aim is not to overthrow the Government but 'the system—a tactical timing that suits Mr. Jayewardene. Other Left-wing youth movements, of which there are about 25, are less patient and talk violence more readily. At the back of any Government's mind is the knowledge that the 1971 insurrection was skilfully organised and that the leaders were given the advantage of drawing the lessons from their failure by being confined together in prison. As yet, however, the Left has not really recovered from the mauling it received in the election. It has concentrated its activities on the universities and on opposing the proposed curbs on the trade union power, making surprisingly little mileage out of the economic situation. Its May Day rallies were well attended but were certainly not a demonstration of strength. In the meantime it is undergoing some soul searching to eliminate what Mr. Keuneman refers to as the Communists "Right wing, opportunistic" tactics of the past. As the main opposition party, the TULF claims to speak for both Tamil and Sinhalese. In practice it is committed to achieving an autonomy for the northern region quite unacceptable to almost every Sinhalese. It is rejecting the political solution as a way of appeasing local sentiments throughout the country. It knows that the Government will not grant

the measure of devolution that it wants. It is thus caught on an anvil between its commitment to non-violence and the pressures from an increasingly militant Tamil youth movement to take a tougher stand.

It is a rather kindly evaluation of the Left Parties considering the divided and shattered condition in which the Left is at the moment.

Housego concludes his article with the position of the TULF as the main Opposition Party from which has been chosen the official leader of the Opposition.

The third article in the Special Supplement by Simon Henderson is entitled THE TAMIL POWDER KEG. It is a rather frightening title which is, to those who know the situation, a total over-reaction to Tamil politics in the country.

His analysis is sober enough: "Since last year's general election the position of the minority Tamil community in Sri Lanka has become the major political problem of the Government of president Junius Jayewardene. The size of the community, who are darker-skinned than Sinhales, is about 1 1/2m out of a population of over 13m, but is boosted by another 500,000 when the Indian Tamil community working as indentured labour on the tea estates is taken into account. This community is now represented by the Tamil United Liberation Front, which won 18 seats in the election, a small number compared with the total of 168 seats, but a figure which in fact makes it the main opposition party, for the former Prime Minister Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike, and her Sri Lanka Freedom Party only won eight seats. Under the leadership of Mr. Appapillai Amirthalingham, now the official leader of the opposition the TULF is performing three functions, leading debates against new policies of Mr. Jayewardene's Government'

looking after the interests of the Tamils during a period of heightened communal tension and striving for the implementation of the front's election platform that there should be independence for the Tamils, in a country called Tamil Eelam. The desire for independence has been enhanced by the increase in communal tensions, tensions which have been built up from the majority Sinhala side partly through longstanding prejudice and discrimination, and partly through anger at the audacity felt to be shown by the Tamils in demanding a separate state. On both sides there is fear of an outbreak of racial rioting even worse than that which occurred last August when over 140 deaths were recorded. That started as a continuation of the political rivalry of the elections but quickly extended into plain communal strife. It was the Tamils living in the southern Sinhala parts of Sri Lanka who fared worst. Businesses and homes were attacked and burnt. Only a fortnight's dusk to dawn curfew and several thousand arrests restored the peace. In the meantime several thousand Tamils were evacuated to northern parts of the island by ship and air to face several months in refugee camps before they could be persuaded to return. According to Tamil sources, many families have remained and only the male members have returned south to act as bread-winners. A unique part of the racial violence—the Sinhala are Buddhists, while Tamils are predominantly Hindu—was that Indian Tamil indentured labour on the tea estates was also attacked for the first time. These labourers and their families are usually a third community, not having citizenship as a rule and not accepted as full Tamils by the Tamil speakers in the north and east

Then he goes on to discuss the Eelam demand and the Tiger Move-

ment: "The degree to which a real independent Tamil Eelam is desired and thought possible depends on to whom one speaks. Even within the parliamentary party there is great range of opinion, with the leadership making a formal acknowledgement of the election platform before lapsing into political realities and declaring that there are several levels of autonomy and self-determination, of which complete independence is only the highest. Politically active workers, both among the Tamil community in Colombo and the main town of the Northern Province, Jaffna, are more forthright in their demands, and it is possibly because of this difference that a terrorist movement called the Tigers has grown up in the past year, dedicated to winning independence by violence. Despite this organisation hitting only at what it considers to be Tamil traitors and collaborators, it has widespread passive support among the Tamils, a support not apparently based on fear.

"President Jayewardene's Government has recently started a campaign to round up the Tigers, variously estimated in strength from between 20 and 30 to more than 200. Combined operations of police and army units are beginning to make sweeps of the areas in the Tamil-speaking provinces where the Tigers are believed to be living among the local population. Investigations of the Tigers, the name of which is short for an organisation called the Tamil New Tigers Movement, indicate that it is at present a rather amateurish group without an ideology beyond independence and the use of violence. It was not hard to see why one Government official in Colombo described it apparently confusingly, as 'microscopic but serious'. The projected Tamil Eelam state would encompass those areas where Tamil

speakers are at present in the majority. Roughly speaking these are the entire Northern Province and the substantial part of the adjacent Eastern Province, where the main town is the old Royal Navy anchorage of Trincomalee.

"In terms of economic viability it is a dubious proposition, lacking all the export crops of Sri Lanka; tea, rubber, gems and coconuts. Members of Parliament of the Tamil United Liberation Front, however, say that it will be self-sufficient in food and will be able to export rice, chillies, onions and fish. Trincomalee, would be developed into a commercial and intellectual centre. Whether Trincomalee or Jaffna would be the capital depends on the person to whom one is speaking. It is said that such a state would be non-aligned, being socialist and democratic. To the outsider it remains purely a nationalist movement with an ideology which may swing according to which foreign power may offer assistance. Despite reports in the Press of possible Libyan and Algerian interest there is no proof of such assistance arriving yet. Support from abroad, particularly for the Tigers, seems to be based on foreign Tamil communities which provide funds and a propaganda outlet. Weapons appear to come from the black market or be taken off victims; there have been 11 murders so far, including seven policemen. There is no indication yet of a foreign involvement as in the case of the North Korean assistance during the 1971 student insurrection. Nor is there proof of any international terrorist link, although the Tigers are said to admire the Palestine Liberation Organisation and see a parallel in their struggle with the IRA. So far neither they nor the TULF, which preaches non violence, have won any support from left-wing Sri Lankan orga-

nisations. Mr. Rohana Wijeweera, former student leader detained for six years from 1971 and now a left-wing politician, condemns both the aims and the means of the Tiger terrorists."

Finally, he speculates on possible solutions: "In trying to meet Tamil demands the Government has already removed standardisation in public examinations, a procedure by which candidates were passed in accordance with their racial proportion of the population and which the Tamils believed worked against them. A third constitutional amendment, the report of which will be presented to Parliament in June, is expected to propose other measures to meet Tamil demands. These include equality in the use of language and educational and employment opportunities and the appointment of district ministers. The Government is obviously not happy, however, that the MPs of the Tamil United Liberation Front have refused to sit on the constitutional amendment committee, and despite their own principles of Gandhian non-violence, have avoided condemning the violence of the Tigers. But the Government can get some satisfaction from the degree of co-operation being shown by India in helping it isolate extremism. The Indian coast lies just 15 miles from the northern part of Sri Lanka and is believed to be refuge for the Tigers after their actions. The Indian authorities have already been collaborating on anti-smuggling patrols. Perhaps mindful of their own 40m Tamils living in the province of Tamil Nadu, Sri Lankan officials say they are getting some assistance in denying India as a base and source of weapons and funds to the Tigers. Another possible solution being hinted at is some sort of devolution similar to that proposed between England and

Scotland. These discussions are believed to be in a preliminary stage and on an informal basis between Government ministers and the TULF leadership. In fact it is not clear whether the rest of the parliamentary body is being allowed to involve itself. The acknowledged danger of this solution is again that it might prove inflammatory to popular Sinhala opinion. Another danger is that it might be too late, for aside from the Tigers there are other groups also prepared to consider violence. The youth wing of the TULF itself says it is waiting for the constitutional amendments before it decides on its further action. And another small grouping, The Tamil Eelam Liberation Organisation says it has only forsaken violence, in particular bank robberies, in the past year to give the new Government a chance. The slow moving bicycles and tractors among the agricultural plots of the jungles of northern Sri Lanka provide an unlikely hotbed of nationalist feeling. And even the Tamil youth, who share the unemployment common among young Sri Lankan people, yet fully support the Tigers, admit that police brutality has declined as those guilty of it have been transferred. However, for the time being the Sansoni Commission into the riots of last August is serving to remind and inflame feelings, while police morale remains low at their lack of progress against the terrorists. President Jayewardene has described the situation as a "powder keg", and it looks like remaining so for several months at least."

It must be said that of everything written about Sri Lanka in recent times in foreign newspapers and journals, the most incisive have been the articles in the Special number of the Financial Times. They are informative and nobody can quarrel with

most of their conclusions although there can be difference of opinion on emphasises or slant.

* * *

BETWEEN THE LINES

BY SERENDIB

How The IMF Puts The Squeeze

It is not clear whether the soft line and all-smiles image that the World Bank and IMF had recently shown to Sri Lanka and more especially the Dale-Carnegie ("How To Win Friends and Influence People") cum YMCA David Hopper *modus operandi* to woo and win recently de-stabilised (from Indira Gandhi and Sirimavo Bandaranaike) countries like India and Ceylon is going to be a permanent IBRD-IMF feature for the present and future or is only merely a temporary tactic to hide the real face of IMF. But a money-lender is a money-lender, and even if a few the smaller of the rich countries are willing to forego some of their debts out of the goodness of their hearts or from long-term self-interest, the bigger and really rich countries are Shylocks who ultimately give nothing away. Even if the bigger countries ooze goodwill and cordiality, the dirty baillif's work is done for them by the IMF.

Let us take a few cases of IMF action in 1978 to see how it acts once the debtor countries are not able to live up to the expectations of the IMF. The fact that we cite Left and anti-Establishments newspapers from different countries does not mean that their comments are not worthy of serious consideration. The big internation-

ally known newspapers reflect the views of the capitalist vested interests which own and run them. In the small newspapers, often fanatic in outlook with views that have a slant and a bias and written in idiom that offends the susceptibilities of the elite, truth like murder is out.

In the bi-weekly *New Solidarity* A. Vergara and A. Oliviera in a despatch from Washington dated May 5, 1978 stated: "Using the cold-blooded 'logic' of a 19th century British imperialist, *Washington Post* op-ed writer Stephen J. Rosenfeld today put forward what he called 'The Case for Using Force Against the Third World.' Forecasting 'sharpening confrontation over division of the world product between North and South', Rosenfeld called on the 'industrial democracies to 'look reality in the eye' and prepare to deal with 'riots, mass migration... deep-sea grabs... (and) various local slides into chaos'—or lose all. Rosenfeld's column is a statement of monetarist intent—the looting dry of the Third World—toward such nations as Mexico, India, Venezuela and Jamaica. In past weeks, Jamaica has been singled out as the latest 'example' for the rest of the underdeveloped sector by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. One US think-tanker linked to British circles recently summed up the "future" planned for Her Majesty's former colony: "Jamaica? There is no solution to its problem. It will be another Bangladesh."

"For those who do not like to be reminded, Bangladesh is the living testament to the IMF's commitment to human sacrifice in its most brutal form. Forced submission to the IMF's sanitizing debt collecting 'measures' has led to a total cutoff credit and imported commodities to that god-forsaken country. As a result, the Bangla-

desh population has been reduced to subhuman conditions of mass starvation, epidemic disease, concentration camps, and a total breakdown in organised political-social activity.

"The preconditions for extending the Bangladesh model to Jamaica are already well in place. Earlier IMF-imposed import curbs on raw materials have shut down 50 percent of the island's industrial capacity and have led to shortages of everything from toilet paper to cooking oil and soap. The black market has consequently become a lifeline for many to essential consumer goods—and jobs. Vast sections of the population now live in jerry-rigged hovels, and under the stringent new conditions attached to the IMF's \$250 million loan offer, these conditions will be made even more austere. Resistance to the IMF's austerity demands by the government of Jamaican Prime Minister Michael Manley has been steadily eroded in recent months by means of a strict credit embargo and economic sabotage. Last week, the IMF succeeded in forcing the Manley government to the verge of accepting economic demands that, if implemented, will guarantee the government's downfall.

"The IMF demands were outlined on nationwide television April 24 by Finance Minister Eric Bell. Bell informed the already lumpenized population that what remains of their levels of consumption will be still further reduced. 'In other words,' the Jamaican nation was told, "our standard of living will fall.' Under the terms of the IMF's proposed \$250 million loan offer, Jamaica must impose a strict limit on wage hikes, a cutback in capital goods investment and imports, a tax increase, and the channeling of all production into a major export drive. Jamaica is also expected to achieve

agricultural 'self-sufficiency through labor-intensive methods—a program which IMF defender Bell euphemistically labelled "creating more employment opportunities". In a second televised speech last week, Bell announced that the IMF is also demanding that Jamaica balance its operating budget immediately by eliminating a \$150 million deficit, a move that can only be accomplished with still further drastic cuts in government spending.

"Despite bitter opposition from both labor and business, the Jamaican government announced it was imposing a 15 percent limit on all wage increases effective May 1—inflation is more than twice this—even though the arrangement with the IMF has yet to be signed. Jamaican newspapers suggest that a further devaluation of the Jamaican dollar is in the works, as demanded by the IMF. The British, notorious for their 'social control' expertise, are using their psychological profile of the beaten-down Jamaican population to foster the cultivation of marijuana ('ganja') both for widespread local use and as an export crop to pay back their debts. That option is now regularly promoted in the pages of the brazenly monarchist newspaper, the *Daily Gleaner*. On April 27, columnist Dawn Ritch stated it simply: 'The Jamaican government should use ganja as a foreign exchange earner.' The population, centred heavily in Jamaica's urban ghettos, is also being primed for riot and chaos scenarios—in reaction to IMF austerity. The intention is to overthrow the still resistant Manley government. One Brzezinski-linked officer in the US State Department confirmed these coup plans: "It is a myth to believe that Manley is irreplaceable. Manley is more popular outside Jamaica than in. Other people can rule

too." In the past, the same source has repeatedly argued—correctly—that Manley is the only leader with a genuine popular following in Jamaica.

"Steps in the direction of Rosenfeld's 'slide into chaos' scenario began as early as April 17, when a demonstration against austerity in the capital city of Kingston was turned into a bloody riot by British agent provocateurs in the Jamaican Labor Party. The World Bank and the IMF have postponed any final moves for top down control of the surrounding Caribbean economies until Manley has been definitely broken, which is proving more difficult than originally planned. Manley is holding out on concluding the IMF deal, hoping that either the socialist economic bloc with which Jamaica has special associate status or a consortium of industrialized and developing countries, led by Mexico, West Germany and the US will come forward with a development package that can get Jamaica out from under the IMF's heel, and that would provide the back-up for a much needed debt moratorium."

On May 14, Christopher Allen in an article entitled AFTER JAMAICA BLACKMAIL, IMF PUTS PERU ON THE RACK, stated: "With its appetite whetted after forcing Jamaica to its knees last week, the International Monetary Fund has descended on Peru to exact debt repayment at all costs. As the ferocious austerity package announced four days ago in Lima testifies, these 'costs' will be the lives of Peruvian citizens and the nation's sovereignty. While a high-level Peruvian delegate was 'negotiating' with IMF officials and representatives of the Carter Administration in Washington, the Lima military cabinet was coerced into enacting the following measures: the Peruvian sol was devalued 7.7

percent, in what is supposed to be the first of a series of 'mini' devaluation; the price of gasoline was increased by 40 percent, diesel oil by 70 percent, and industrial fuel oil by a shopping 80 percent; import taxes were increased by 10 percent, excluding only basic foodstuffs and key petroleum products.

These draconian steps are geared to win the IMF's approval of a \$ 240 million loan to refinance Peru's severe balance of payments problems, with a major payment deadline approaching at the end of June. Yet even this amount of extortion has reportedly not yet satisfied the Fund, as it is still withholding approval and is reportedly pressing hard for further concessions before it will come across with any money. There are strong indications that the full terms demanded may well be the replacement of the Morales Bermudez government itself with an outright fascist junta modeled on the Friend-manite Chilean regime of Augusto Pinochet.

"The Peruvian economy is already scraping the bottom, and this week's measures are likely to provoke serious popular unrest. According to sources in Lima, the hundreds of firms that are already on the verge of bankruptcy due to drastic credit restrictions and the collapse of the internal market, will be pushed over the brink as a result of the fuel price and import tax hikes, leading to extensive layoffs. For months, Peruvian private and state-sector firms have been starved of crucial capital goods and industrial raw materials imports as a result of the drying up of foreign reserves. Peru's creditors will only ship merchandise if they are paid cash in advance. Consequently, total imports for the first quarter of this year are a full 30 percent below normal levels. Industrial ac-

tivity is declining so rapidly that industrial consumption of electricity collapsed by 14 percent during April alone. Further turning of the austerity screws, a State Department source smirked yesterday, will require "severe repression." Rumours of a right-wing coup, with assistance from civilian IMF sympathizers, abounded in Washington and Lima this past week.

"However, President Morales apparently moved to preempt this option last night by dumping fascist Interior Minister Gen. Luis Cisneros, a ringleader in this conspiracy, along with Gen. Gaston Ibanez O'Brien, Minister of Industry and Commerce. Although indications are that Ibanez's replacement, plus a new Finance Minister, are civilian World-Bank schooled technocrats, the immediate coup option seems to have been thwarted. Morales held meetings late yesterday with armoured units of the army as well as with the police forces to win support for his move, and received their endorsements—the customary procedures in ensuring against palace revolts. Peru nonetheless is living on borrowed time. The IMF will not stop until Peru is put through the even harsher extortion levied last week on Jamaica. As one banker gloated, the standards of living in these countries will be reduced to the starvation levels of Bangladesh—a parallel made even clearer by the fact that the Carter Administration is preparing to extend credits to Peru via PL 480, the food control export law originally drawn up for manipulating starvation situations in India and Bangladesh.

"To completely break Peru, the IMF must destroy the military as an institution capable of politically managing the state sector of the economy. Since the armed forces took power in 1968, the

military has been the institutional base of viable nation-building forces, and has used the state sector of the economy to those ends. For this reason, the top IMF demand has always been the slashing of the government budget, and in this way depriving the armed forces of any state sector over which to preside—a demand Morales Bermudez has so far managed to avoid meeting. But the IMF observed privately this week that Morales, like Jamaica Prime Minister Michael Manley, 'has no choice' but to give in eventually. 'Everybody in Jamaica' said one IMF officer, 'realized that whether Jamaica negotiated or not with the IMF, the outcome would be the same. They would still have to make immense sacrifices.'

The British-run IMF is riding on the expectation that their deadly game won't be called. The alternative is represented by last week's Bonn-Moscow groundbreaking accords and the related expanded trade credits extended to countries like Egypt, Turkey, and Sudan which were formerly subject to the same kind of IMF Blackmail."

And, finally, on June 7, Leela Narayan in a piece entitled BANGLADESH VOTE: WORLD BANK GENOCIDE MANDATE, stated: "The martial law administrator of Bangladesh, Major General Ziaur Rahman, was elected President June 3 after campaigning to institute the World Bank policy of self-sufficiency, food-for-work and cutbacks in the current starvation rations. General Zia's campaign slogans in this devastated country were: "Bangladesh must feed itself and stop depending on the world for help" and "Population control must be our nation's number one priority."

The rigged election of the Chinese-supported general and his intention to implement the World

Bank starvation plan culminates six years of enforced destruction for the nation. After the bloody 1971 Bangladesh war, manipulated by the Kissinger forces to destabilize the subcontinent, Henry Kissinger dubbed the new nation of Bangladesh 'the international basket case'. Massive floods in 1972 and 1974 and a lack of capital to build the infrastructure necessary to manage the monsoon rains, plus widespread disease, then led Robert McNamara to put the country into the category of the fourth world—those countries denied the technology of the 20th century and destined to starve to death.

Zia, who has ruled since his coup in 1976, is progressively becoming a Chinese puppet. General Ziaur's 4 to 1 victory, with less than half of the 38 million eligible voters participating, was an outrageous sham. Political observers had predicted a 60-40 victory for Ziaur, with General Osmany, the candidate of the Awami League, as a strong second, Osmany had campaigned on a platform of building Bangladesh as a secular nation, playing down the Hindu-Muslim religious tensions created and maintained by the British.

"In this campaign, Osmany had reminded voters of the program of the country's first president, Mujibur Rahman, who was brutally assassinated in 1976 by the Maoist and Islamic networks as the first phase of a destabilisation that later removed India's Indira Gandhi and Pakistan's A. Z. Bhutto from power. Mujibur had stood for healing the wounds of the Bangladesh war and collaborating with India for the development of Bangladesh. For the World Bank, the election stakes were high. As one bank official put it, "All that we have accomplished over the past few years would be unravelled if (Ziaur lost)." To

help his chances, Ziaur had threatened his Awami League opponents with going the way Mujibur went in 1976.

"The World Bank campaign for self-sufficiency and no foreign aid is genocide by starvation for a country like Bangladesh whose flat geography and unpredictable monsoon rains make it impossible for small-scale or any other agriculture to succeed without a centralized dike and irrigation plan. Yet, the World Bank program for Bangladesh is supported wholeheartedly by Britain, the United States, and China. Britain has supplied what the US Agency for International Development has termed 'its handy colonial links' in advising for the appropriate rural work schemes; the US has put up the bulk of the "tied aid" (aid dependent on the nation's adopting the prescribed food-for-work austerity program); and China, through its operatives within the Bangladesh government has provided the Maoist labor-intensive work projects and the cuts in rations.

The plan to cut Bangladesh off from outside aid and make it self-sufficient was spelled out in the *Far Eastern Economic Review* May 19: 'After several years of dumping, the World Bank has now made an about turn reflecting fashionable trends, it is pressing for a reduction of Dacca's (Dacca is the Bangladesh capital—ed.) chronic dependence on foreign food handouts' The World Bank about-face required some retooling for Ziaur as a 'democrat'. The general was ordered hold elections, campaign for self-sufficiency and cutbacks, and win elections in order to demonstrate what the World Bank called Bangladesh's 'stability and maturity.' Britain sent a high level aid team to Dacca to help Ziaur make decisions, and Ziaur appointed an avowed Maoist, Enay

ulullah Khan, as agrarian reform minister, to develop the Chinese-style work programs. That genocide is the aim of the World Bank program and the Ziaur victory was made clear by the fact that the World Bank's Food Policy Review for Bangladesh was approved by the donor nations in February 1978, before any prediction could be made on the severity of the monsoons and the actual need. The World Bank policy review minces no words in describing what is intended for the population of this devastated country.

"The World Bank review states: '1. Present trends continue...food imports might reach 4 to 5 million tons within a decade, accounting for perhaps 25 percent of the total consumption or more...Such large imports are beyond the capacity of the country to finance or handle physically.'" The World Bank solution in a country where 78.5 percent of the population is already at starvation levels; cut off food imports and the aid to self-help schemes. The World Bank review cites a Bengali economist to demonstrate that the current ration system feeds the city people too much and provides too few incentives for the rural population. The World Bank solution: cut off the cities from food subsidies and make Bangladesh an 'open market' to strengthen rural grain speculators. 'Remove from ration rolls families of higher income' and 'expand and strengthen food-for-work programs,' the review states. The food-for-work manual labor programs being instituted in Bangladesh were reported by the United Nations to be so meager that one out of four workers in the program has had to have a second full-time job during the project."

These three articles have a left-wing radicalist slant of a special flavour, but what they

comment on are facts that cannot be disputed.

What has taken place in Jamaica, Peru and Bangladesh are indisputable facts of contemporary history. Different people may see the events from different angles, and comment on them differently or different inferences and conclusions. *Tribune* would not have presented the facts in the same way, but our final inferences and conclusions may be no different.

* * *

AGRIBUSINESS

Food From The Poor And Hungry For the Rich

by Frances Moore Lappe and Joseph Collins

It takes a lot of vegetables to fill a DC-10 cargo jet. Yet three times a week, from early December until May, a chartered DC-10 takes off from Senegal's dusty Dakar airport loaded with eggplants, green beans, tomatoes, melons and paprika. Its destination? Amsterdam, Paris or Stockholm. These airlifts of food from the African Sahel began in 1972, the fourth year of the region's publicised drought. They increased dramatically as famine spread.

In 1971 Fritz Marschall, an executive of the Brussels affiliate of the world-ranging, California-based Bud Antel, Inc., visited Senegal. Marschall, formerly a sales manager for Mercedes trucks, was struck by the similarity between Senegal's sun-rich climate and that of southern California. Only two generations ago federally-founded irrigation projects and ill-paid Mexican labour had helped make California an agribusiness

wonderland. But as farm-workers in California began organising, Bud Antel, like other companies, began looking for cheaper labour elsewhere. Maybe Senegal could replace California as the company's source of vegetables for the high-priced European winter market.

By 1972, the German-born Marschall—known in European vegetable circles as "the pusher"—had set up Bud Senegal as an affiliate of Bud Antel's Brussels affiliate, the House of Bud. Promoting the entire venture as 'development' Marschall got the Senegalese government, the German foreign aid agency and McNamara's World Bank to put up most of the capital. The Senegalese government helpfully supplied police to clear away villagers who had always presumed the land was theirs for growing millet for themselves and the local market. The Peace Corps contributed four volunteers. Today, over 60 armed security officers not only guard the fields but each day search the poorly paid field-hands, mostly women, to be sure they won't sneak vegetables home to their families.

Under the banner of "food interdependence", multinational agribusiness companies like Bud Senegal are now busily creating a global farm to supply a global super market. Big food wholesalers, processors and retail chains have been quick and delighted to find out that land and labour costs in the Third World are often as little as ten per cent of those in the US. Countries most people think of as agricultural basket-cases, multinational agribusiness sees as future bread-baskets, future Californias.

With the emergence of one global supermarket, the world's hungry are being thrown into ever more direct competition with the

well-fed and the over-fed. Like the women field hands on Bud Senegal's vegetable plantations, they may never eat one bit of it. Rather, the food will be destined for some branch of the global supermarket where everyone in the world, poor or rich, must reach for it on the same shelf. The sad reality is that even the poor in a country like the United States can outbid the world's hungry.

Del Monte is another example of agribusiness creating a global farm to service a global supermarket. Though originally based entirely in the US Del Monte is bullying self-provisioning Filipino farmers off their land to set up plantations to grow bananas for Japan; Del Monte is contracting rich, fertile land in Mexico that previously had grown a dozen local food crops in order to feed asparagus-cravers in France, Germany, Denmark and Switzerland (whom the company had once supplied from California); and Del Monte has opened a new plantation in Kenya so that no Britisher need go without his or her jet-fresh pineapple, Del Monte finds that a pineapple that would bring only 8 cents in the Philippines can bring \$1.50 in the Tokyo division of the global supermarket.

Seeing all the world as a global farm, agribusiness today is building on solid colonial tradition. Since the earlier outside interventions, agriculture in the colonised world has been seen as a mine from which to extract wealth rather than the basis of livelihood and nutrition for the local people. But today to the traditional "export crops", like coffee, sugar and cocoa, multi-national agribusiness is adding items previously grown at home in the US or Europe: vegetables, strawberries, mushrooms, meat and even flowers.

One fast-expanding crop on the global farm is what the US

Department of Agriculture calls ornamental crops—cut flowers and foliage. Certain world-ranging firms such as Sears, Green Giant, Ralston Purina ("Green Thumb Division"), Phillsbury and United Brands are getting into this business, along with the big grocery chains. All of them have their eyes on the profits to be made by mass-producing flowers in under-developed countries at low costs, then airfreighting them to the global supermarkets' division in the North America and in Europe (where some customers on average spend 3 per cent of their food budget on fresh flowers).

The global farm is spreading fast. Today in Central America and the Caribbean, for example, more than half the agricultural land—and it's the best half—has been put into production for export. This export push is despite the fact that up to 70 percent of the children under five in many of the countries are undernourished. Costa Rica's beef exports to the United States have risen to over 60 million pounds while Costa Ricans themselves eat much less beef than before and many eat none at all. There are always, however, a few shelves of the Global Supermarket for the elites of the poor countries; a few well-off Costa Ricans can afford to eat some Costa Rican beef just like Americans—at one of the three McDonald's in San Jose, Costa Rica's capital.

Who helps pay for the transformation of countries like Costa Rica into farms and feedlots for the likes of Del Monte? The American people do—in the name of "foreign aid". The Latin American Agribusiness Development Corporation, owned by some of the largest agribusiness corporations in America, has in the past four years helped start up over 60 projects in Central America geared to the US division of the global

supermarket. LAAD has obtained two-thirds of its capital from American taxpayers via the Agency for International Development.

During the winter and early spring, well over one half of many vegetables in the American supermarket now come from Mexico. They are grown on land that could, and in many areas did, produce beans. With beans being displaced and their price rising in Mexico, many rural people find it hard to secure this basic nutritional staple. Similarly the Brazilian military government has brought in Cargill and other giant US grain marketing firm in an all-out drive to boost soyabean exports to the Japanese cattlefeed market. This soyabean export drive has been at the expense of ordinary Brazilians, some of whom last year rioted, because exported soyabeans had crowded out their basic food—black beans. And in Chile, the junta vigorously pushes food exports while it has been estimated by an economist at the University of Ottawa that by mid-1974, 85 percent of the Chilean people were malnourished.

The global farm does more than divert land away from growing the varied, nutritious crops that were once grown and eaten in the poorer countries. Crops for the global supermarket monopolise the funds and services of government agriculture programmes to the neglect of local food crops. Finally, the global supermarket is the best incentive yet for local elites to fight redistribution of agricultural resources. Unwittingly, global supermarket consumers in countries like the United States are being made into a suction force, absorbing land and labour that otherwise could be producing food for those who need it most.

Ironically, many see agribusiness as the solution to hunger. Having been told that scarcity is the cause

of hunger, they inevitably believe that increased production must be the answer. Only agribusiness, they reason, has the technical and managerial knowhow to produce more.

On the surface this sounds logical enough. In fact, it's non-sense. Simply increasing production will never solve the problem of hunger. The real questions are what is grown and who eats it—and the answers to these questions are determined by who controls the food producing resources. The problem is not technical. It is political.

But the diagnosis of scarcity with its prescription of more production has been the central thrust of the "War on Hunger" for at least 30 years. More than enough evidence is now in to know where such an approach has taken us. Presented as an all-out effort to boost food production, governments, international agencies like the US AID and the World Bank and multinational corporations have promoted agricultural "modernisation" of all sorts. This means large-scale irrigation, chemical fertilizers, pesticides, tractors and combines, and now high-response seeds. The result has been that Third World agriculture, once the basis of livelihood for millions of self-provisioning farmers, has become the latest way for a small elite to get rich. As sheer control over the "right" piece of land begins to virtually ensure financial success, a catastrophic chain of events has been set into motion.

Competition for land by a new class of "farmers"—money-lenders; military officers, bureaucrats, city-based speculators and foreign corporations—has sent land values soaring. Land values have jumped three to five times in the "Green Revolution" areas of India. For people who owned the land they worked, that's fine—but most

do not. Higher rents force tenants and sharecroppers into the ranks of the landless, who now make up the majority of the rural population in many countries. With their increased profits, the powerful new class buys out the small land-holders gone bankrupt.

Thus, fewer people are gaining control over more land. In Sonora, Mexico, before the "Green Revolution", the average farm size was 400 acres. After 20 years of publicly-funded modernisation, the average around the "Green Revolution" hub city of Hermosillo has now climbed to 2,000 acres. Some holdings run as large as 25,000. By contrast, over three quarters of Sonora's rural labour force have no land at all. A similar process moves ahead right in the United States. Where government funds have subsidised irrigation schemes, the legal holding for one person is 160 acres. Yet today, the average irrigated farm operation in California is 2,407 acres. Moreover, with vast acreages planted in the most profitable crop, commercial operators from Brazil to Indonesia, mechanise to avoid "labour-management problems." By conservative estimate, two and a half million labourers have already been displaced by tractors and harvesters in Latin America alone. Less than a third of these will find other rural jobs. They have no choice but to join the ranks of the urban unemployed. Thus come about the rapidly swelling slums of cities like Calcutta and Mexico City.

We have found this process happening in every country where farm-land is allowed to be the source of individual wealth. And, to be cut out of production is to be cut out of consumption. No one expressed it better than an agricultural labourer in Bihar, India, who earns 36 cents a day: "If you don't own any land, you may

never get enough to eat, even if the land is producing well."

Once green revolutionist landholders are established, they start growing crops not in the local diet. We found landholders in Mexico's Sonora province switching to grapes for brandy; we found entrepreneurs in Colombia switching land from growing wheat to carnations. Thus, for labourers forced off the land, the price of what food crops remain is still higher.

The end result is tragic, ironic, and predictable; more food is being produced, yet more people are hungry. This point is hardly speculative. Studies done for the National Labour Organisation document that in the very Asian countries—Pakistan, India, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, the Philippines and Indonesia—where the Green Revolution has been pushed and where, indeed, production per person has risen, the rural poor are worse off than before. The studies conclude that "the increase in poverty has been associated not with a fall but with a rise in cereal production per head, the main component of the diet of the poor."

These seven countries account for well over half of the rural population of the non-socialist Third World. Other studies by United Nations Research Institutes for Social Development (UNRISD) confirm the pattern; in the Third World, on the whole, there is more food, yet more people are more hungry.

In its lust to harvest new riches agribusiness is treating the soil carelessly all over the world. It can afford to, because profits are high and there is always new land to move on to when the old develops problems. In Mexico's Zamora Valley, the strawberry export industry treats cheaply the land that

it has acquired cheaply. Too much irrigation and pesticide results in the soil being infested and exhausted. But the few strawberry millionaires merely count on taking over new sites where the process can be started all over again.

In Brazil one of the last remaining great natural reserves, the Amazon river basin is being rapidly stripped of its forests. But the environmental consequences of clearing land of cattle are likely to be disastrous. Tampering with a tropical forest, it turns out, is not the same as cutting down trees in the temperate zone. Once the multicanopied vegetation of the forest is stripped away, the torrential tropical rains which sometimes dump six to eight inches in a single day, wash away unshielded, top soil, and the equatorial sun bakes what remains into bricklike wasteland. Ecologists warn that by altering drainage and water evaporation rates might well set off chain reactions that would significantly alter climate throughout the world.

Most people learned about single-crop agriculture in high school geography classes; everyone can remember the brightly-coloured maps of the world with a banana superimposed on Ecuador, a coffee tree on Brazil, and so on. Indeed, there seems something so logical about all this, the "natural advantage" idea. Why shouldn't every country grow what it can grow best and then trade for what it can't?

But our learning now must begin with unlearning: there is nothing "natural" and no "advantage" about just growing luxury agricultural exports. Applied to most underdeveloped countries today, the idea of natural advantage is inherently deceptive. It hides what really happens, namely, that those who benefit from the foreign exchange earned by the agricultural exports are not the people

whose labour produces the exported crops.

Even when a Third World country uses part of its foreign earnings to import food, the imports generally are not staples but western style or semi-luxury food for the better off, urban classes. In Senegal, peasants are forced by taxation to dedicate their bitter land to grow peanuts for export to Europe. The Government uses a good portion of the foreign exchange this earns to import wheat for foreign-owned mills that turn out flour for French-style white bread for city dwellers. On a recent trip to Niger, we discovered that foreign exchange even goes to import ice cream straight from a shop on the Champs Elysees!

The whole process debunks a myth much in the news these days; that higher prices for the Third World's agricultural exports will help the hungry. The very success of export agriculture often pushes the rural population further into poverty. This happens because of the land speculation we talked about earlier; when commodity prices go up, land farmed by tenants and self-provisioning farmers gets taken over by big landholders who can now make a large profit. In addition, plantation workers' wages actually decline. For instance, when the world price of sugar more than doubled in 1974, the real wage of a cane cutter in the Dominican Republic actually fell to less than it was 10 years earlier. A nominal increase in cane cutters' wages did not compensate for inflation set by the sugar book.

Moreover, governments pushing agricultural exports are governments that relentlessly suppress land reform. Minimum wages laws for farm workers are killed because they might make the country's exports "incompetitive." Land growing food for exports gets exempted from land reform; and

growers shift taster from local foods to exports crops to avoid having to sell their land. Thus, in one Philippines in 1974-75, 232,000 more acres were planted in sugar (and therefore exempted from land reform) than just three years earlier.

Finally, large-scale global farming demands chemical fertilisers and pesticides to get maximum yields as well as to meet the foreign markets processing specifications. Basing an agricultural system on imported technologies helps ensure that whatever is produced will be exported to pay the import bill—a vicious circle of dependency.

It's temptingly easy to believe American food problems are different from those of poor countries; their problem is scarcity and America's is oversupply in reality however, the Americans and the world's hungry face a common threat; the tightening of control over the most basic human need—food—both within their country and on a global scale. The same increasing concentration of control over land and marketing that directly causes hunger in underdeveloped countries is going on in America.

Only 5.5 per cent of all in farms the United States now operate over one half of all land in farms. The result is landlessness, joblessness and sometimes even hunger in rural America.

Almost 90 per cent of vegetable production in the United States is controlled, through contracts or directly, by major processing corporations. Many farmers already have no choice but to sign with Del Monte or whoever or go out of business.

Less than 0.2 per cent of all US food manufacturers control about 50 per cent of all the industry's assets. The top four firms in any given line control, on the average,

over half of the market. In 1972, the Federal Trade Commission staff calculated that such oligopolies in 13 food lines were responsible for \$2.1 billion in overcharges. For the one out of 10 Americans who must spend an average of 69 per cent of all income on food, such inflated prices cause malnutrition.

It is many of these same oligopolistic corporations, helped by governments and international agencies, that are penetrating the Third World. Farmers, farm workers, meat packers and cannery workers lose their jobs as agribusiness roams abroad. The United States already is importing roughly \$14 billion worth of food annually—more than half of which competes directly with what US farms grow.

Glorifying it is "food interdependence", multinational agribusiness corporations right now are creating a single world agriculture system in which they will control all stages of food production from the soil in Afghanistan to the grocery shelf in Des Moines. Eventually they will be able to effectively manipulate supply and prices for the first time on a worldwide basis. The process is well under way and the effects can already be seen in the form of raising good prices.

The opposite of such fake interdependence is not isolationism, just as the opposite of the narrow production focus is not stagnation. We have to redefine the world hunger problem as a social one, not a technical one. People freed from exploitation by landlords elitist governments and corporate power—people who know that together they are working for themselves—have shown that they will not only make the land produce but they can make it even more productive. After decades of heavy dependence on food imports Cuba is now producing rice, beef, dairy products and an in-

creasingly wide variety of fruits and vegetables. The Chinese people, through equalising and localising control over food producing resources, have freed themselves from hunger. And in countries like Jamaica, where half the production intake has been coming from foreign sources, even minor moves towards land reform can lead to some diversification and less hunger.

Once people use their own land to feed themselves first, trade can become an organic outgrowth of development—no longer the fragile hing on which basic survival hangs. No country can hope to "win" an international trade as long as its very survival depends on selling only one or two products every year. A country simply cannot hold out for just prices for its exports if it is desparate for foreign exchange with which to import food. Once the basic needs are met, however, trade can become a healthy extension of domestic need rather than being determined strictly by foreign demand. Cuba and China have shown that food trade does not have to be at the cost of a decently-fed population.

In contrast, the global farm and the global supermarket are the type of interdependence no one needs. They are a smoke-screen for the usurpation of land and labour by a few for a few.

Courtesy: *Viewpoint, Lahore*

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FOLK TALES OF THE PUBLIC SERVICE—3

George Marzipan by Glucorasa

I normally get to the bus stand around 7 in the mornings to reach my office at 8—a distance of 1½ miles. On this particular day I noticed an empty bus, at cruising

speed, stop by to pick up passengers. I therefore got to my work place early, but the gates were locked. I had to wait out—I even considered the idea of jumping over the wall—but I feared that I may be jumping into the arms of the law. So I waited outside.

By 8 the KKS came along, nonchalantly. "Poor bus service" he remarked. We both went and he signed first—7 a.m. time of arrival. I followed suit. The KKS started opening the doors and windows while I went up to my own room. The KKS would take time to think of my table, so dusted it myself and settled down with my Briar and Gold Block. The KKS never came up—he had gone for tea I thought. I had implicit faith in what Calvin Coolidge had once said "Never go out to meet trouble. If you will just sit still, nine cases out of ten, some will intercept it before it reaches you."

It was nearing 9 when my Assistant walked in with a smile. "Sit down chum" I said. He closed up like an oyster. "Why what's the matter" I asked.

"You called me chum—I thought I had annoyed you Sir".

"My dear fellow, chum merely means a friend. You are my friend and associate. So cheer up good chap" He brightened up at once. "Who is that fellow hiding behind the door."

"He comes from Jaffna. He wishes to meet you."

"What on earth for? He should meet E. C. B. Wijesinghe. I am from Matara. Is that fellow by any chance one of the Tigers—can you assure me on that?"

My Assistant laughed so loud that the man behind the door walked in before he was even called. Well built and badly groomed, he had the look of one who may have just got back from Beirut.

I motioned him to a chair close by—one heavily infested with bugs. This chair was kept there specially for people whom I wish to get rid of soon. This poor fellow was clearly uncomfortable. He really was not sitting—actually, as a matter of fact, he was balancing on his two feet. I ignored all this.

"Well, we have not been introduced. I am Glucorasa. What's yours?"

"Vaihunthavahanoff".

"Will you repeat that please? It's a mouthful, like the masala vadai of Jaffna".

"Or like Jinadasa's thalaguli" quipped my Assistant. He was in good form today.

"Vaihunthavahanoff"

"That's a lovely name your parents have given you. May I, however suggest that you be called VHF? With television coming in soon, everybody is talking of VHF, VOA, FEBA and so on. So we will make it VHF for you, my friend." The visitor seemed impressed, but the bugs would not let him even smile.

"By the way, when you are in Colombo, do you stay with your friend?"

"No I stay in a boarding in Divorce Lane" he said.

"What—divorce lane. Where the devil is this place."

My Assistant intervened before any further misunderstandings occurred. He said that the correct name of the road was De Vos Lane, somewhere in Bamalapitiya.

"We do not wish to waste your time anymore. VHF has brought me some brinjals and murungas from Jaffna. Can I please have short leave to go along with him and collect the pa—cel?" My Assistant asked me.

"Certainly—but make it long leave. There is no hurry. We will try and manage, however,

hard it may be". I said this in order to impress VHF about his friend.

VHF was happy to take leave of the bugs. He shook me warmly by the hands, fortunately not by my throat although I deserved it for setting the bugs on him. You see these bugs were my first line of defence against intruders and interlopers who come into my room to spend their time, when they had nothing else to do. My Assistant and VHF left.

It was now time for my tea, and lo and behold Walrus walks in with his cuppa for me. I can generally set my watch by his entry. I thought to myself, it is now very nearly 11 and soon I will have to sit down to my plate of rice. I had done no work at all for the morning. This is a government office.

George Marzipan had not been to see me for some time. I thought I would call him. I dialled 12345. No reply, but I knew that the 'phone had been taken off its cradle. I dialled again. Engaged I was getting a bit annoyed, with myself. Five minutes later I was more fortunate. The man at the other end barked "What do you want."

"Please, may I speak to Marzipan".

"Who is Marzipan. There is no one by that name. This is the Corporation for the Unemployed."

"You mean to say that this Corporation has 1.4 million people doing no work" I asked.

"No you fool. I am sorry I called you fool. Please excuse."

"Not to worry. You were right. If I was not a fool, I will not be in government service. Any other employer would have fired me by now. Now, tell me, who are these chaps in your Corporation?"

"All those people in the public service who do not do any work, like me for example, are sent to this Corporation. All they have

to do is to come in the morning, sign the attendance register and leave in the afternoon, signing off. On the 25th of each month they get paid."

"Thank you—then I am on the correct line. Marzipan should also be there. He is a Union man. Are you not a member of his Union?" I asked him.

"I tell you, there is no Marzipan here. If you do not understand English, I will tell in Sinhala."

"I beg of you, please don't. It will sound like Tamil to me. Then someone will ask the Government to pass a bill for the Reasonable use of Sinhala. So please speak in English."

"You sound very interesting. Why don't you also come to this Corporation?"

"For the present—no. Are you not going to let me speak to Marzipan?" I asked. He exploded using chosen Sinhala, which I understood very well. I said "Wait till Marzipan gets hold of you. He will teach a damn good lesson for your insolence".

"What do you think he can do to me?"

"He will make you a member of his Union."

"What's wrong about that. You must join a Union if you do not want to do any work"

"That's not the point. His Union is open to males and females" I said.

"That's just it! Could anything be better?"

"Man—you speak English so well, somewhat like the SLBC announcers."

"If you are a friend of Marzipan, you should encourage him to promote his Union-of both sexes."

"Look, my dear fellow. You do not seem to realise the gravity of your statement"

"Why"

"I simply will not allow Mrazipan to create a national problem." I replied. That man seemed too dense to understand what I meant. I left it at that. I suddenly realised that Mrazipan was really George Leopold Robialac. I explained this to the telephone operator and he was very understanding. "Robialac was here in the morning to sign the register and left followed by some of the other unemployed in this Corporation. He will be back at 4.00 p.m. to sign off for the day. I shall give him your message."

"Many thanks my dear fellow. My number is 54321. Call me whenever you feel bored doing no work. You are the telephone operator, are you?"

"No—I am designated Operator of the Switchboard." That definitely sounded more intimidating. It reminded me of the local lad who went to England and was given employment as a grave digger. A fool in Jaffna wanted to get his daughter married to an Engineer—he had a good bank balance having robbed the PWD as an overseer, constructing and maintaining roads. The grave digger offered his hand in marriage, calling himself an Underground Engineer. Unfortunately this was discovered only after the girl went to England with this underground Engineer. This is life—with all sorts of permutations and combinations, cheating all the people thus, and destroying their lives.

It was around 4 p.m. and I was getting ready to leave. My Assistant walked in with a delightful smile, a smile that could only have been brought about by a visit to a pub. "I brought these for you my good and understanding Sir" showing me a parcel of murungas. "Thank you very much. These will not be of much use to me. Give them to our cook. He goes

home tomorrow and sure he would like to take some murungas from Jaffna and establish communal harmony. How was the day with VHF?" "Wonderful Sir. I insisted on paying for the lunch and we also had a little beer too to whet our appetite. VHF was keen to go to

the Jaffna Hotel because in that place all men and women are equal all eating off plantain leaves. And, Sir VHF intends to make an announcement in the papers that henceforth he will be referred to as VHF" That was the end of an interesting day.

ACID BOMB EXPLOSION—9

Chapter Nine

Robbery And The Underground

by James Goonewardene

STORY SO FAR

Deva, a well-known sculptor, returning home after a sojourn abroad and failing to get a response to his work in his homeland finds a job as an art master in a school in a town down the coast. The Principal, Piya-ratne is a type of serious educationist that had been disappearing from Sri Lanka, and Ariya, the manager of the local resthouse with whom Deva strikes up a friendship, is sensitive to the disturbing realities and the underground trends swelling up in the country. Ariya, in a talk later with Deva, reveals that he is perturbed about the strange things that have happened in the neighbourhood recently. Deva giving up his rooms in Colombo asks his brother, a successful, money-spinning architect to look after his collection of unsold sculptures. The brother, aghast at the thought that Deva should waste his talents in a rural school, offers him money to enable him to go back to London to resume his career as a sculptor and regain his former popularity, wealth and success. Deva refuses because he has no desire to escape to London and what the world regards as fame. Before leaving Colombo finally, for the village. Deva tries to contact an old friend, who though an important bureaucrat, was a sensitive, just man. In the government office where he had worked he finds a strange new atmosphere where an aggressive, unionist, peon and ultra nationalist clerk tells him that his friend had been thrown out as a reactionary. With his ties with the old world he had known snapping, Deva returns to the village. Back in the village, Deva looks for a lodging as he does not want to stay in the school hostel. He cannot afford the resthouse. His friend Ariya, the resthouse manager finds him a room in the house of the village sub-postmaster whose wife was a school mistress. In the first day at school, he learns a little more about Piya-ratne, the Principal. He also meets a teacher in the school who spouts fire and thunder against imperialists colonialists and talks glibly of socialism. Deva then encounters, while fishing one afternoon, an out of work bum who has still to reveal another identity.

Saturday was a day Deva now began to look forward to. It was his day of release from the chores and the oppressive atmosphere of the school. He had begun to feel the need for release from all this.

He needed somewhere he could feel safe from the tensions. Aramanis, the out-of-work drifter he had accidentally run into and made a friend of, had shown him how to find a real place of escape—

the river. All he had to do was to go to the river and fish. It was this he was going to do this Saturday morning. He was up early, therefore, and off to the resthouse dressed in a pair of shorts and an all-weather sweat-rag and a pair of rubber sandals.

The morning was cloudy and, strangely, quite cool, without the customary humidity. He could look forward to a little peace by the river, and perhaps, a chat, later in the day with Ariya. He reached the resthouse, and the first thing he noticed about it was its air of emptiness and disarray. The doors had not all been opened yet, and the chairs had not been put out. He looked at his watch. It was well past eight. It was usually opened and cleaned and ready for visitors by seven. Now it was well past that time. There was something wrong, he thought. He entered rather cautiously and went looking for his friend, and found him in his office, but he wasn't alone. There was all his staff round him—the safe open, and whatever money there was all piled up on the table, and lying open; beside the money, was the accounts ledger.

"Deva, my god, I am glad you are here," cried Ariya with a sound of relief in his voice. The sound of relief was genuine. It was as if he had been held a captive by his staff and was relieved to have a friend come, at last, to his rescue. He leaned back, and wiped his forehead with his hand. He didn't speak for a moment. For some moments nothing was said. Deva squinted his eyes and turned his gaze from the waiters and cook who stood bunched round Ariya, to Ariya who was seated at his desk and looking quite bewildered and confused.

"What's happened?" asked Deva; his own voice had altered. He felt, overcome, as he was, by this curious scene. He tried to

keep calm against Ariya's agitation and the visibly felt tension around.

"You wouldn't believe it if I tell you," replied Ariya. It surprised Deva to see Ariya rattled. He didn't think anything would upset him.

Deva got himself a chair and Ariya went on to explain.

"One of the waiter's gone", he said, "A fellow I trusted has bolted. He was the last person I thought would do it—a quiet chap—you didn't get a squeak out of him—minded his business and went about his work without a fuss. He's gone. A waiter running off is no great wonder—it happens all the time, but this one's taken all the money there was in the drawer—nearly three hundred rupees. The stuff in the safe is untouched—only the money that I had, by accident, left in the drawer. I left the money there last night—pure accident."

"And then?"

"That's it—the man's gone with the money."

"You don't generally leave the money in the drawers?"

"No. I don't. I transfer the stuff into the safe before I go to bed, at least the bulk of it I put in the safe, with a bit of money left over in the drawer for sudden expenses in the morning—not much—just a little to get by if there was the need and there was no time to get the money in a hurry from the safe—which has to be made a note of and accounted for in the ledger. Well, last night I left the money—two days' collection which I was going to have recorded in the ledger—written down—but I forget all about it".

"When did you discover the loss?"

"This morning. The waiters here now tell me a curious story".

Ariya looked at Deva to see the effect the statement had on him.

"What's that?"

"He's in some sort of organisation. According to them he's been in this for sometime. In the nights he was in the habit of going to some secret meeting place. No one seemed to know this—at least, I didn't know it. He would tell me he was going to night school to get a brush-up on his English which he said he was learning." Deva glanced in the direction of the waiters to see if anyone was following all this being said in English. They seemed to be following it all right. He saw it in their eyes. He saw it in the way they stared at him and nodded their heads when something became clear to them. They seemed to be as surprised by the incident as the manager. It was also now they were, perhaps, acting for the moment to dissociate themselves from what had happened. However, it was no indication that they were totally unaware of what had happened. Even if they themselves were in this thing it was how they would behave to indicate their own innocence. They knew he was the boss's friend and that he would take his side, not theirs. They were suddenly in two camps. They knew that. When one waiter was guilty of a crime, naturally the others immediately became suspect also.

"There's more to this story" continued Ariya. "It seems he had always been contributing to this movement—giving part of his salary to it, and he's taken this money now for the same purpose. I gave him the job out of pity. He said he was starving in his village, and he needed a job to help his mother. Told me how grateful he was. He worked very hard at the beginning—didn't pull him

up once—not a fault to be found.
.....”

“It's how a fellow in an underground movement would act—keep a low profile—don't draw attention to oneself.....”

Ariya glanced up at Deva sharply. “Exactly...that's what it was. A fellow who had nothing to hide would act in a more straight forward manner.”

“Is it the money that you are worrying about now?”

“Certainly the three hundred rupees concerns me, but more than that is the shock of being betrayed. Its all these things put together. For years one walks up a staircase and nothing's wrong. One day one's enemies have removed the landing, and in the dark one drops into empty space. This has produced the same effect on me. Perhaps, more than the betrayal it is the shock one feels, the surprise.”

Ariya turned to his staff and began to question them afresh. “Who else is there in this movement? I don't care what you do outside your working hours. What you do then is your business. You want to blow up the town go ahead and do it but leave me out of it, for god's sake don't rob me to do it. I need the money to run the place and pay your salaries. If the resthouse closes down you lose your jobs”.

The men were silent. He looked at them, shifting his eyes from one to the other, studying their faces. There were four of them, the two waiters, the cook and the gardener—the cook was the oldest of them, a deeply bronzed, dark skinned man with Malaysian-Sinhala racial mixture evident in his high cheek bones and the slant of his eyes. He had been the longest with Ariya, a slightly built man who smoked the pungent Jafna cigar and whip-lashed the rest of the staff for laziness. The

gardener, a Tamil of Indian origin worked part-time, only in the mornings and for the rest of the day lived and worked on a coconut estate some distance out of town. The loyalty of these two Ariya had no doubt. It was the two waiters he wasn't sure of; They were in their twenties, more educated than the other two—fair skinned and more politically conscious, with a fairer knowledge of their rights. They had no loyalty to anybody, just out to make a living and move to another and better job if the opportunity arose. Ariya looked from one to the other. It was a futile task. How could he know who else was in this? The two waiters might be innocent or guilty—who would know?

“All right, you can go,” he said finally.

“You reported the matter to the police?”

“Yes, they have been and gone. The thief doesn't hang around after a robbery. He could be miles away. The Police are certain of that.”

Deva called again at the resthouse the following evening, but Ariya was out. He had been summoned once more to the police station. He had been summoned in the morning too. Deva met one of the waiters on his way to the resthouse that Sunday morning and was told that Ariya was at the Police Station. So they've got Ariya in there, he thought as he went down to the beach. He couldn't just sit around waiting so he thought he'll take a stroll along the beach. He wondered what it was they had discovered to get Ariya out there twice in one day. Perhaps there was nothing to it; it was just their police methods. They tried to make it seem they were doing something when they dealt with some people—with

others they didn't go to that much trouble. In any case he felt he shouldn't pre-judge anything. He'll put the matter out of his mind until he met Ariya. He'll just concentrate on the stroll for the moment.

The air was full this evening not only of the smells of brine but also of fish and sea weed. The boats had landed their catch and gone. There was a strong smell of fish. Where they had unloaded the fish they had also tossed out a lot of sea-weed. It was the smell of all these that he caught at the beginning but as he went on the air cleared. The breeze was strong and the waves rolled further up the beach and were pushing the sea-wrack up on the dunes. The crabs foraging undisturbed scuttled away on Deva's approach. He stopped a moment to light a cigar; having lit it he started again, his sandalled feet sinking into the soft sand. Some of it clung to his sandals in a kind of sea-mud, unusual for this stretch of beach. On he went, his shirt unbuttoned and billowing out with the breeze, his shirt sleeves and trousers rolled up, crunching into the sand with his feet and brooding and feeling the wind and hearing the sound of his feet and nothing else, only the sound of the waves breaking gently on the shore.

On he went, his shoulders slouched and his mind brooding, trying to understand all these things that had started to happen. He didn't go as far as the water's meeting. He stopped short of it, and going over the sandbar he got down to the bank of the river on the other side of the sandbar. A tern took off suddenly and settled further up. Here he lay down, flat on his back, knowing he wouldn't be disturbed here, cushioning his head in his cupped hands. The sun was low on the horizon. Only a ray of light, breaking through a

bank of clouds, filtered through the screwpine that grew on the crest of the sandbar.

He lay here and passed into a strange stillness. Then he listened to the tiny river waves roll over the smoothly washed sand—the steady, softly muted roll and its trickle up the bank like the hiss of small leaves over splintering glass and then back into the deep, dark river, the roll and the hiss, up and down the narrow bank, down beyond his feet in their slow wash of the sand into this window-pane smoothness. He turned his head and watched a bank of clouds move slowly eastwards turning a reddish grey as it moved. It all had a dreamlike quality that he feared would be gone the moment he shook himself awake. So he did not dare move or make a single quick shift of arm or leg for fear the spell would be broken. He rolled over slowly to turn his head. That was all he did.

Far away, on his right, was a fishing village; the fishermen's huts were partially visible beyond the coconut trees. In the grey light a solitary child played with a dog. She did something to it—pulled its ear may be, and then she held up something that the dog leaped up at and she ran with the dog chasing her, barking and leaping up at what the child held over its head. How clear everything seemed to sound here.

Unknown to him and despite the peace he felt around and inside him his mind began slowly to reactivate itself; it began to think and brood on things that he had no wish to think and brood about now. He wanted to lie here untroubled and in peace. If he had learned how to insulate himself against what took place outside of him then he would take the shock of the various incidents that appeared to be taking place with increasing frequency everywhere, not

in just one or two places—it was everywhere, it seemed. He had to learn how to do this—insulate himself—empty his mind of thought, bring stillness into his mind—the ancient, eastern way of acquiring peace.

Before all that, maybe, he had to understand what was causing all this restlessness and violence and hate among his people—one man against another, employee against employer, community against community, uneducated against educated, doctor against patient the young against the old—what was causing these terrible—divisive tendencies.

It was once a peaceful land, settled, ordered—it was no place for the sort of sudden eruptions that had started to take place like the communal slaughter of the recent times. Certainly there were criminal acts earlier; there had been men capable of great brutality, also men of great cunning. His people had always been shrewd. They had always had the ability to strike a shrewd bargain. They litigated furiously, cut up a neighbour over a land dispute, but there had never been organised violence before. One could, in earlier times, move through the land without fear of being waylaid and robbed. One could go from one end of the island to the other and meet with consideration from the utmost stranger.

It was the ancient way of doing things in the land—the wayfarer and traveller could always find hospitality. It was a land in which everywhere one came across an ambalama, the free resting places, and along with it the large clay water vessel for the traveller to quench his thirst from that lay scattered around the island like symbols of the words karuna and maithri which pilgrims were so fond of uttering as they wandered from one holy place to another.

If one did not find an ambalama one could seek out the local Buddhist temple and obtain a mat to sleep on for the night and even a meal—and here one would be addressed with politeness and respectfulness by the incumbent priest. All that had gone. He had been looking for signs of these ancient practices and found only hate and violence instead.

It was the cause for the loss of all these that he wished he could understand. What was it that had brought about the change? Had men in this country suddenly gone mad? Or did it all spring from truly necessary causes. Had a society to go through these periodic mass scale violence for it to move to a higher stage of complexity and development, or was the country doomed now because of a population that was bursting at its seams to pass through recurring unrest and sorrow and misery? He needed an answer to all this.

Suddenly now he heard the crunch of feet. His ears picked up the sound while it was still some distance away. He felt a quick flash of fear coil in his stomach and pass. It was somewhere here that Ariya had been confronted by a strange youth once. But there was nothing sinister in the way the feet crunched in the sand now. There was no cunning in the way it advanced. But he listened and waited. After a time the crunching feet were nearer. Finally the owner of the feet himself stood before him. It was Ariya and Deva was pleased to see him.

"I was told you had asked for me", said Ariya, flopping down beside Deva.

"Well, how did it go now? Asked Deva.

"Same questions. They go over the same ground, over and over again. Its their police methods, I think, or just a lack of intelli-

gence—a trial and error method by which they hope to get a glimpse of light. It seems they have got at the man from the bazaar who had told the waiter about my man and what he had been doing with his money. They have now begun their inquisition of him."

"Are they still harping on this ordinary robbery idea?"

"I am not sure now that they believe this theory themselves, but they kept saying it though while secretly believing something else. It was one of the cops who met me outside who told me about it. Apparently there is something fishy going on in the temple which is two doors next to the police station that they think is connected with all this, but the higher ups have been told no meddling with the affairs of a temple. This is the cop's story".

Deva saw the tired lines on Ariya's face. There was no other symptom visible of this grilling. Deva followed Ariya's example and sat up and crossed his legs.

"So they see a connection between what's happening in the temple with what's happening elsewhere".

"One gets bits and pieces here and there. One sometimes gets the impression that red herrings are drawn across the path to confuse issues. Whether this is done deliberately or not it is difficult to know".

"What do you think yourself?"

"About what?"

"About whether you think this is all very serious or not?" Ariya didn't answer at once. He lit a cigarette and smoked it for a couple of moments before replying.

"I really don't know", he said, "There's not enough evidence to go on. Everyone seems too sacred to talk. No one's free to do so anymore".

"That's part of the trouble, sores fester underneath. No one can bring it into the open."

"This is what makes me think that someone wants it all shut and silent so that their share in

it wouldn't become known. From what's known around the country it would seem that all this underground subversion was nothing more than just a boy scout act of boys playing at being professional revolutionaries."

"Is this the last time you go to the police station?" Deva asked.

"I think it is. I believe they went over the ground with me to see if I would slip up. I have a shrewd feeling that they were checking my story with that of the waiter, and the man from the bazaar. They'll keep at him now until they get a lead onto someone else. It's a slow method but successful in the long run if they are honest and seeing a truthful answer, not playing some official game."

"What I have sometimes wondered is whether all these things, like in a game of chess have to be worked out to their final conclusions, or whether all this can be check-mated before the thing deteriorates into a stalemate.

"What is one to do?"

"Nothing I am afraid".

"An organised attempt to mislead people into believing the half truths can only lead to greater dead-ends and blind alleys. No one can lead a people into the light along a path of half truths. That politicians believes you can do this is the terrible modern sickness."

"That is not so modern. It is as old as history, Every ruler attempts it as a method."

"And man after twenty centuries returns to base."

"Everyone tries a bit of dictatorship."

A sure sign that intelligence has begun to fail. Some spark somewhere, perhaps, will help to revive it. Until then they are all like rats trapped in a cage getting frenzied when its intelligence does not show it a way out of the trap."

Unknown to them the sun had set and the pink glow over the sea began to be reflected high up, in

the sky. The silence deepened. They watched the river turn grey and pink. Night came quickly. The river sounds were suddenly different in the dark.

To Deva with his experience, not so long ago, of the steel and concrete buildings and the broad highways of London it sounded unreal. It is why he, sometimes, found these threats from supposed underground movements too much like stories men had concocted. This peace here was something that could never be disturbed. No, gun fire and death could disturb the silence here.

They sat here awhile and rose at last, and started to walk back, the crunch of their feet like cows eating a hedge, phosphorescence tripping along the waves, the breakers crashing down and rustling through the sand.

NEXT WEEK

GUNAPALA—"THERE'LL BE TROUBLE SOON....."

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George L. de Silva

I regret to inform your readers of the death of Mr. George Leonard de Silva of Kurunegala. A retired Government servant he was a regular contributor to the local newspapers. His letter dated 16.5.1978, perhaps his last, captioned 'Foreign Travel' appeared in the *Tribune* of 1st July 1978. Although he had lived beyond man's allotted span of three score years and ten, Mr. de Silva was a picture of health upto the time of his death. He was fearless and upright. His funeral at the General Cemetery, Kurunegala, on 29.6.1978, was attended by a large and representative gathering.

S Sivagurunathan

Kurunegala.
5.7.78



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SRI LANKA CHRONICLE

July 7 – July 12

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

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

FRIDAY, JULY 7: The government has decided to revise the retirement pattern in the State sector to allow the employees to retire on completion of 15 years service; employees who make use of this option will gain an additional five years to their service for the payment of pensions, gratuities and provident fund benefits. The President will inaugurate the tree planting campaign on July 22 by planting a Sal tree brought from Nepal at the auspicious time of 9.17 am at the mahamaluwa of the Dalada Maligawa. The Archbishop of Colombo Dr. Nicholas Marcus Fernando speaking in Jaffna said that every citizen should pray for peace and harmony and reconciliation of various communities. Fifty two successful raids were conducted by the Price Control department last week. Occupation charges for all rest houses have been revised. The price of a National Lotteries Board sweep ticket will be one rupee from August 6. The police fear that counterfeit fifty rupee currency notes printed an year ago by a ring operating in the city may now be in circulation—CDN. The government will liqui-

date the State Tea Corporation set up by the former regime; this corporation was set up in 1972 with the objective of securing better prices for tea by bidding at the tea auctions. The Secretary to the Ministry of Plantation Industries has told staff officers of the Ministry that none of the reports furnished in respect of progress and targets on works for the first four months of this year contained explanations for the shortfall in targeted achievements; he stressed that this information was vital and should be provided. A National Cotton Development Authority is to be set up shortly; discussions are under way among the ministries, departments, corporations and Banks regarding the cultivation and marketing of cotton—CDM. After nine years, elections to local government bodies will be held during the last quarter of this year. The Minister of Higher Education yesterday appealed to the intelligent and critical press in this country to help insulate Sri Lanka's students from the turbulence and violence that prevail in our higher educational institutions. Musical horns, hooters and sirens on motor vehicles will be strictly prohibited, the police yesterday started warning motorists not to toot those horns on public highways. Serious allegations of maladministration and lapses in the National Milk Board are made by the Auditor General in his report of the board's accounts for 1974 which was tabled in the NSA on July 4 this year—SU. The Minister of Justice has emphasised to the government that the new campus of the university that is to be established in Batticaloa should have a faculty for Muslim studies—DP. The TULF has decided that they would not participate in the debate on the amendments to the constitution that will be debated in the NSA shortly—VK. The Sri Lanka Bankers Union has decided to hold

a token strike on the 20th to force the authorities to re-employ the 971 persons who have been sacked—ATH. About 200 drivers are resigning every month from the CTB to take up posts as heavy truck drivers in Middle Eastern countries. The cost of living index has risen by 1.8 in June—DM. The Deputy leader of the Janata Party in India quit his post yesterday in protest over the dismissal last weekend of Home Minister Charan Singh. Israel was hostile to Egypt's new peace proposals yesterday but official sources said it looked as though the government would agree to attend Foreign Minister's talks in London. China blamed the delay in repatriating Ethnic Chinese from Vietnam on the 'many obstacles created by the Vietnamese side'. Fifty people were reported killed or wounded in Beirut during the night in an intensive artillery bombardment of the city's christian area. Lebanese President Elias Sarkis indicated today that he intended to resign. Pakistan's military leader Gen Zia introduced politicians into his government for the first time since he seized power; the new cabinet consisting of 17 ministers includes seven politicians drawn mostly from the Muslim league headed by the Pir of Pagaro—CDN. Israel sent planes zooming low over embattled Beirut today and a top government official said 'we will not stand by while christians are annihilated.' The British government yesterday faced the growing threat of a wages battle with trade unions after granting big salary increases to top civil servants—CDM. The Solomon islands, a British protectorate in the South Pacific will gain their independence on July 7—SU.

SATURDAY, JULY 8: Legislation has been gazetted by the Government to impose civic disabilities on 32 persons against whom findings have been made by the G. P. A. Silva Commission

on the malpractices in Municipalities and the S. W. Goonewardene Commission on the malpractices in Urban and Town Councils; Mr. Felix Dias Bandaranaike former Minister of Public Administration, his deputy minister Mr. Neal de Alwis, Mr. A. H. M. Fowzie former Mayor of Colombo are among those against whom findings have been made. For the first time in Sri Lanka manual workers will be sitting the first examination of a degree course on July 19 at the Peradeniya Campus of the University of Sri Lanka and on August 19 at the Colombo Campus. Our sea shells will soon be a money spinner, especially the small butter yellow 'money cowries' which are much in demand for processing as artificial jewellery and buttons in fashion houses in Europe; a representative of the private industrial sector of West Germany arrives in Sri Lanka to establish an Institute for the Transfer of Technology to the industrial sector of Sri Lanka. The Social Services Ministry will spend Rs. 2.8 million this year on beggar rehabilitation. The Sri Lanka Association for the Teaching of English has organised a campaign to raise the standard of English in the country—CDN. Campuses of the University of Sri Lanka will admit 4915 students this year against 3995 last year, an increase of 920 or 23%. Mr. Azizul Haq, Minister of Agriculture and Forests, Bangladesh is due to arrive by plane today—CDM. The Finance Minister said yesterday that the government could not give free rice every day, import wheat flour at Rs. 2 a pound and provide it to consumers at 80 cents or continue to provide fuel at half the import cost. The Secretary to the Ministry of Higher Education said yesterday that the 36 students of the Vidyalaankara Campus who were suspended recently had been taken back after

each of them agreed to comply with conditions set out by the Ministry—SU. The names of Mr. Sivasithamparam and Mr. A. Amirthalingam as President and Secretary respectively of the TULF have been nominated and handed over to the party high command—VK. Many feel that only two new districts will be created at present thus bringing the total to 24—DP. The government has decided to increase the prices of kerosene and diesel oil—JD. The prices of synthetic and cotton textiles are to be increased by 25%—DK. The President of the Ruling Janata Party, Mr. Chandra Shekar said that he expected an overall settlement of the current crisis within the party. Israel declared it could not allow the Syrian army to wipe out Lebanon's Christians. The deteriorating situation in Lebanon led the US yesterday to consider seeking action by the UN Security Council. A new military ruler took power in Ghana yesterday and set free opposition political figures detained after a closely contested referendum on the country's political future last March. Over five million voters of Malaysia will go to the polls today to elect the fifth parliament and ten of the thirteen state assemblies—CDN. PM Morarji Desai was due to meet with his former Home Minister Charan Singh the next two days in new moves to heal the breach in India's ruling Janata Party. Foreign Minister Moshe Dayan feels Egypt's Middle East peace plan made public represents a hardening of the Egyptian line; Israel is as certain to reject Egypt's demand that it withdraws inside five years from all occupied Arab territory. Cuba has cut its troop force in Ethiopia by about 25% to between 12,000 and 13,000 men—CDM. The President of the ruling Janata Party said last night that he expected an overall settlement of the current crisis within

the party. Frenzied discussion on cutting coloured immigration to Britain had overshadowed the real race relations issues. David Lane, Chairman of the Commission for Racial Equality warned—SU.

SUNDAY, JULY 9: A Post-liberalisation analysis of the economy undertaken by the Central Bank indicates a rapid increase in the import of investment goods, machinery and transportation equipment into the country since last November. Sri Lanka's first solar still to produce pure drinking water from brackish water will be installed today in the parched island of Pungudutivu in the Kayts electorate; this attempt by CISIR scientists is believed to be the first practical application of solar technology in Sri Lanka. The government was now considering combining all systems of medicine for the benefit of the people; a committee appointed by the Minister of Health had prepared a report on the subject and the Cabinet would approve it early said the President speaking after he unveiled the statue of the late Ayurvedic Chakravarti Pandit G. P. Wickremaratchi yesterday. The government has decided that all new 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—SO. The Cabinet reshuffle inclusive of certain changes among deputy ministers, the appointment of deputy ministers and project Ministers is expected to take place on July 20. A Committee including the Mahanayake of Malwatte and Asgiriya has been summoned by the Minister of Agriculture and Lands to meet at Dalada Maligawa to hand back the viharagam lands;

the former minister of Agriculture had obtained parliamentary approval for taking over these lands which were given to temples in times past to perpetuate buddhism—after paying compensation. A fully state owned company is to be set up to market textiles produced by local weavers. The Minister of Agriculture and Lands will introduce regulations empowering officials of the State Timber Corporation to detect illicit transportation of timber and for the payment of rewards to those who make such detections. Sri Lankans have gone in for 'show off' fancy cars in a big way over the years; this is borne out by more than 70% of the cars being non utility cars with a cylinder capacity of over 1500 c.c.—ST. Mr. Rohana Wijeweera, leader of the JVP addressed students and members of the German Press at a conference at Dauerwaldawage students hostel, in Berlin. A team of 150 doctors from the UN Volunteer Organisation are due in Sri Lanka shortly to augment the country's medical manpower—WK. The Ministry of Plan Implementation is drawing up a scheme to train unemployed youths to fill vacancies in the government sector which needs a large number of trained workers—SM. The opening session of an OAU ministerial meeting was hastily adjourned in Khartoum yesterday after the Libyan Jamahiriyah clashed with Zaire and Mauritania over France's military role in Africa. Lebanese president Sarkis yesterday maintained his threat to resign, raising fears of renewed fighting in his crisis-ridden country and the possibility of Israeli military intervention. A Judge's order holding US Attorney General Griffin Bell in contempt of Court was set aside at the request of the government yesterday—ST. Socialist Sando Pertinin, 81, a veteran anti-fascist and resistance hero was

yesterday elected as President of Italy ending a ten day political deadlock. The summit conference of the nine nation EEC has agreed to establish a new European monetary system based on the European monetary unit it was announced in Bremen yesterday. The crisis-ridden OAU plans to set up a Security Council along United Nations lines and make its decisions binding on all its 49 members. The non-communist world's economic negotiators, under pressure to reach political agreement by the end of next week will meet in Geneva on Monday, UN officials said—WK. The fate of effort to prevent a split in India's Janata Party hung in the balance when ousted Home Minister Charan Singh against criticised PM Desai and other party leaders—SO.

SUNDAY, JULY 10: The government has decided to replace the present Agricultural Productivity Law and the Agricultural Lands Law with an Agrarian Services Law; the Parliamentary Advisory Committee on Agriculture which met last Thursday approved the proposed legislation. A dharmista society cannot be ushered in by legislation but by leaders of the country setting an example to the rest of the people the President said on Saturday evening after he unveiled the statue of the late Pandit G. P. Wickreemaratchi. Work under the Mahaweli Project is speeding up rapidly to match the drastically advanced scheduled of the Accelerated program decided on by the government. A strong case for the early setting up of the office of Ombudsman has been made by the Public Interest Committee in a memorandum submitted last week to the President and the government. The President said on Saturday that a concerted effort by the people to increase local production was the only solution to the rising cost of

living. A recent study has revealed three reasons—the wanton destruction of fruit trees such as jak for timber, the lack of interest in growing yams and lack of knowledge of the varieties of nutritious food found in the forests—as to why rice has become the staple diet requiring three million measures to feed a population of fourteen million at the rate of a quarter measure per person per day—CDN. The Minister of Labour will shortly introduce legislation to set up employees' councils in public corporations: according to the proposed legislation the councils will consist of workers representatives

A POEM FROM NIGERIA

The Afro Girl

Her skin was ebony,
smooth and bright,
Her dark eyes smiled
her face to light,
Gold ear rings on her ear
lobes gleamed,
A final lustre to give it seemed.

Her hips swayed from side to side,
As if to music she did glide,
With her basket of wares
she made her way,
To the Market Square
at the break of day.

The cloth and blouses
that she had clad
Were of the brightest
colours to be had
That you could not but help admire,
This quaint maid and her gay attire.

She had plastic slippers on her feet,
Her hair was twisted into
a style most neat,
Her white teeth sparkled
like many a pearl,
She was a simple Afro girl.

Sita Selvadurai

elected through secret ballot. The International Finance Corporation an affiliate of the World Bank has provided 2 million US dollars to the Bank of Ceylon on long-term credit to help finance small and medium-scale private industrial enterprises in Sri Lanka. Representatives of departments, corporations and voluntary organisations concerned with the protection and management of the environment will meet for four days from July 20 to review the existing legislation, institutionalised framework and administrative machinery in this connection with a view to introducing appropriate legislation. Semi-automatic handlooms will be imported in a bid to improve the output of the 100,000 odd handlooms in the island—CDM. The administration of all estates under 250 acres—earlier handled by the now defunct Janawasama Commission—is likely to come under a new institution to be set up shortly by the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands. The President has ordered an overhaul of the entire structure of the police service—with the emphasis on specialisation and the streamlining of the various branches. The TULF has selected five Tamil youths to represent them at the International Youth Festival scheduled to be held in Havana on July 27—SU. Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike, leader of the SLFP speaking at Kalutara asked why the President should only follow King Ellara to establish a dharmista society; why could he not follow Sinhala Kings like Dutugemunu or Parakramabahu; she was referring to a statement made by the President recently—VK. The Minister of Irrigation speaking at a meeting at Hatton said that the government will change the entire holiday structure in the country and they plan to have 280 working days in the year—DP. An Advisory Board

with 144 members will be appointed to advise the Central Transport Board. The Ministry of Agriculture and Lands is taking steps to form a new authority to administer estates which are less than 250 acres in extent—DW. 100,000 tons of rice have been handed over to the Trade Ministry and another 100,000 tons will be handed over shortly—DM. The Petroleum Corporation is to increase the price of a gallon of petrol to Rs. 20.00, diesel to Rs. 8 while a gallon kerosene oil will cost Rs. 4.20—ATH. President Anwar Sadat of Egypt, starting a busy weekend of talks on the Middle East discussed peace prospects with Austrian Chancellor Bruno Kreisky yesterday. Malaysian PM Datuk Hussein Onn was declared elected to parliament by a huge majority in the general election in Malaysia. Abdul Fattah Ismail, South Yemen's new strong man leader has reaffirmed his country's readiness to meet North Yemen in order to resolve problems arising from the assassination of Northern President Ahmed Hussein Al-Gashmi—CDN. Agreement by EEC leaders to work out the world's largest monetary system won cautious praise in West Germany yesterday. Chinese PM Hua Kua Feng has said that the country's economy has been restored from the brink of collapse but he warned 'there is not the least reason for complacency'—CDM. The Carter Administration may advise the Soviet Union officially this week that it is planning to equip the US armed forces of 200 nuclear mobile guided missiles. Egyptian President currently in Vienna for West Asia talks re-emphasised that there were no plans for him to meet the US President on European soil—SU.

TUESDAY, JULY 11: One year of office of this government has shown noteworthy progress said the President yesterday; he was

addressing a public meeting after declaring open the new buildings of the Kelani Maha Vidyalaya in the Kelaniya sacred city; he said this progress was the result of the government's policies, never thought of by any previous government and being carried out with development of the country as their main goal. The government has made a number of essential consumer items, including infant food powder, condensed milk and imported tinned fish duty free while the duty on some other commodities has been reduced. A Memorandum of Understanding was entered into yesterday between Sri Lanka and Australia providing for Australian assistance in an amount not exceeding 3.5 million Australian dollars for the Muthukandiya Reservoir Project. The President referring to changes in the education policy said that universities would be free from state control 'they would have greater academic freedom to manage their own affairs he said. The number of schools opened by this government in its one year of office far exceeds that of the last government in its seven year term said the Minister of Education. All those who receive cars as gifts from abroad will be permitted to sell them on paying a tax according to the weight of the car—CDN. Subsidised food as well as goods for the consumer or development in the larger interests of the country; that was the choice before the government; the government had taken a considered decision to give priority to the long term interests of the people against the short term cheap popularity said the President at Kelaniya yesterday. The tax structure in Sri Lanka will be altered drastically in order to meet the demands of a developing economy and generating revenue for industrial and agricultural expansion according to the Minister

of Finance. There were severe allegations against the SLFP's seven year rule and much of that criticism appeared to be true; if the party is to succeed in the future we would have to beg pardon from the people rectifying our errors and reorganise ourselves in a bid to serve the people well; this was stated by Mr. Ratnasiri Wickrematunge former Minister of Plantation Industries and an ex-SLFP MP for Horana at a meeting in Kalutara. The government will change the present system of holidays; an employee in future will be entitled to a holiday only on festive days important to the religion he belonged, instead of all employees being granted a holiday significant only to a particular religion as at present said the Minister of Irrigation etc. The government is studying a proposal for the introduction into the country's system of education a method for learning which was practised in Japan during World War II; accordingly, school text books if not published in time for the new year (1979) will be made available to the general student population through the medium of newspapers. The Cabinet has approved Rs. 19 million for Sri Lanka's participation in the Commonwealth Indian Ocean Undersea Telecommunication Cable Project. 'Only seven million people in the world speak Sinhala; the last government progressively dried up the English stream; English completely went out of the curriculum; it was a foolish thing for them to have done; a whole generation of Sinhala educated students are loafing the world in search of employment said the President. The government does not intend to bring down fish prices in the corporation stalls; this is a measure intended to bring about a realistic relationship between the 'producer' and the rates the consumer has to pay; it will also be an incen-

tive to catch more fish said the Fisheries Minister yesterday. The Minister of Industries and Scientific Affairs disclosed yesterday that in the next week or two the government would conclude an agreement with a firm of foreign tyre makers to produce and export tyres; he made the announcement in his speech at a ceremony to mark the laying of the foundation stone for a nylon 6 plant at Sapugaskande. The Leader of the SLFP Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike said that there is no government in the world which has become so unpopular as this one in so short a time; it is trying to escape the wrath of the people for failing to solve the pressing problems in the country by shifting the blame on them—SU. A law abolishing the sacrifice of animals in temples is soon to be passed—VK. Speaking at Kelaniya the President said the price of flour

could go up in the future—DP. Surveys reveal that 20% of children of the school going age do not attend school at all and 45% leave school at the primary stage—DW. The Minister of Trade has said that the main reason for the shortage of vegetables was inadequate transport facilities and he also said that Rs. 930 million has been allocated for the import of motor spare parts—LD. Former Iraqi PM Abdel Razak Naif was in a London hospital's intensive care unit early yesterday after being shot in the head at close range when he left a London hotel on Saturday. Several countries have asked to be included in the nonaligned movement; final decisions have been adopted at the forthcoming ministerial conference at Belgrade—CDN. The Thai government has rejected the Soviet proposal to sign an agreement on cultural co-opera-

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tion between the two countries—
CDM. President Anwar Sadat expressed 'keen disappointment today over Israel's rejection of the latest Egyptian peace proposals for West Asia. The former Director of Pakistan's Federal Security Service Mian Mohammed Abbas admitted in a supreme court hearing today his role in a murder conspiracy—SU.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 12:

Private sector firms have responded to the government's appeal to increase employment and offer better terms to trainees recruited under the scheme for the expansion of employment in the private sector; following discussions the President had with representatives of the Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry of Sri Lanka and the Employer's Federation, it was agreed to give more benefits to new recruits including an increase in the remuneration paid to trainees; guarantees of employment at the end of the training period is also likely. A centre for Integrated Rural Development to serve developing countries of the Asian region is to be established under the auspices of the FAO in Bangladesh soon. A group of eye surgeons, medical staff from the eye hospital Colombo and other prominent citizens met on Monday evening to form an association known as 'Eye Care' to combat the high incidence of eye diseases specially in the rural areas and to conduct eye campaigns in remote villages. The government has decided to appoint a Parliamentary Committee of Inquiry to probe the Food Department; this is a sequel to certain allegations that there have been deliberate acts of sabotage regarding the utilisation of the department's vehicles. Sri Lanka has agreed to host one of the most important anti-narcotics conferences to be held in the Asian

continent in recent history tentatively scheduled to be held in November—CDN. Bus services in the city and suburbs were severely disrupted yesterday as a result of large-scale absenteeism among employees after the CTB's pay day on Monday; the Chairman of the Sri Lanka Central Transport Board said yesterday that bus depots in and around Colombo could not operate 204 buses yesterday as drivers had not reported to work. A total of 228 motor vehicles arrived aboard a special roll-on roll-off cargo ship in the Port of Colombo on Monday. The Minister of Education has decided to formulate a Code of Conduct for teachers in government schools—CDM. The President has pointed out to his ministers that the development of the country cannot be hastened if half the year is spent as holidays by the workers. The construction of two housing complexes in Seeduwa and Kottawa is to begin shortly. The Minister of Education has decided to vest all estate schools in the government and bring them up to the level of Mahavidyalayas. The first Asian Islamic Conference in Pakistan has expressed deep appreciation of the manner in which the Muslims are treated in Sri Lanka—SU. Six thousand persons will be employed from next August; this will be done through the new State Development Division. The Minister of Industries said yesterday that industrial good must be upto international standards otherwise they would not be aided by the state for production—DP. The Cement Corporation is taking steps to export 25000 tons of cement for the first time in its history. The Labour Department has recruited 600 persons for employment in the Middle East. The decision to increase the working days a year from 187 to 250 will be confirmed in a few day's time—DW. The government has decided to

amend the bill proscribing the Liberation Tigers; under the new amendment only the Tiger movement will be proscribed and not any other group—JD. The Burmese government said it had reached agreement with Bangladesh on the repatriation of lawful residents of Burma who have crossed into Bangladesh and who were now in refugee camps. President Tito of Yugoslavia stressed the need for non aligned nations solving problems among themselves in a peaceful way—CDN. The Islamic Republic of Mauritania whose President is Moktar Ould Daddah has been toppled by a military coup. Right wing Lebanese militia and besieged group of Syrian troops fought a brief but furious battle in a battered city square on Monday night. The main UN disarmament forum today begins what could be its last new session before changes designed to make it more effective. The Netherlands announced in Geneva that it had decided to write off 130 million dollars of debts by four developing countries—Bangladesh, Sudan, Tanzania and Upper Volta—CDM. The Indian government today took the first step in the prosecution of the former Indian PM for alleged breaches of the law during her 21 months of internal emergency rule. The Egyptian President told the UN Secretary General that Egypt was ready to reopen the Geneva Conference on West Asia if peace negotiations with Israel failed. Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat is reported as saying his guerillas have a squadron of Libyan fighter planes at their disposal and Palestinian pilots have been trained to fly French Mirage and Soviet Mig 23 aircraft—SU.

CARAVAN FAMILY—17

Last Day In Delft —And Allaipiddy

by Inna Trimmer

"Daddy, this is our last day in Delft, isn't it?"

"Yes Ranjit. Are you sorry to leave?"

"M m m. I am, and I am not. I like Delft a lot but now I want to see Jason again and go to a new place. Mummie are you sorry to go away?"

"Very!" Mummie was reclining on her mat under the margosa tree and sipping her morning cup of coffee. "I've never felt so peaceful before. No trains, no buses, no trams, no cars, no telegrams no social obligations".

"What's that?"

"Don't you believe her patha. Mummie will soon tire of Delft when she has nowhere to go except to visit wild horses; nowhere to show off sarees and make other women jealous."

"Is that social obligations?"

"More or less! Functions to which Mummie goes and outshines all the rest with the lovely clothes I've brought her from abroad. But what shall we do today? Tomorrow afternoon we leave in the Sea Spray on her return journey to Kayts."

"Let's go and see our darling ponies again." This from Nila.

"Yes daddy, please, please cried Varuni and Ranjit.

"I am not going anywhere till 4 o'clock". Mummie's tone was very determined. So at 4 o'clock in the afternoon they set off for the last time in the chariot, as Mummie called the cart.

"Where are we going today?"

"To the south coast, to see the Quinda."

"What's that" asked the children.

"Wait and see" was the reply.

The same flat landscape they had passed through the day before was again with them; the same type of vegetation and the rocky shores on the left with the angry sea beyond.

"Are there no hills in Delft?"

"No Villia! I've told you that it's nothing but a coral mountain top, an elevation if you like, that many centuries ago rose from beneath the sea. The whole surface is a flat plain. Here we are, and there's the Quinda!"

They jumped off the cart and ran to the sea shore. Standing high above the surrounding plain was a tall white pillar facing the sea.

"Who built this?" asked Mummie. "it looks as if a giant has played with his children's giant blocks and placed those huge stone squares one on top of each other, like our children do with their toy blocks. How high is it?"

"To answer all your questions at once. No one knows who built it, probably the Portuguese as a type of beacon to guide the sailor home from the sea. I'd say it's about 40 feet high."

"Who gave it that strange name?"

"I really don't know. It may be a Portuguese name or Tamil, but I don't think there's another Quinda in all Ceylon. Because there are on the coast in many places and the Quinda is nothing but that though the name is unique. Who's willing to talk a short distance?" "I-I-we-we" it was an unanimous decision.

They retraced their way and branched off to the Horse plains, but the horses would not oblige. They preferred to be invisible in the lonely fastness of their plain.

Not far away they came on a group of huts, all of palmyrah leaves.

"This is what is known in Tamil as a fishing Wadi. In Sinhalese they call it Wadiya."

"It sounds like the word for 'sit down' in Sinhalese Wadi-wenna said Mummie.

"I suppose it does mean a sitting down, a settlement, because they are temporary dwellings. The fishermen come all the way from Point Pedro and other coastal towns and villages in the north and north east during the fishing season and like migrant birds when the time is ripe are seen no more."

Driven deep into the lagoon bed are stakes to mark the navigable channel from the shallows. Meticulously the dhoney followed the path indicated with expert navigation by the steersman.

Mummie spoke at last "Why these sakes?"

"To show us the way so that we don't flounder in the shallows. The lagoon from Kayts to Jaffna is very shallow except for this channel which is kept deep enough for large craft like dhoneys which are mainly responsible for trade between Jaffna and the east coast as well as from India. A dhoney takes quite a draught of water."

"What are we carrying except ourselves?"

"Look under your sack."

Mummie lifted a corner of the old gunny, "Suriya (tree tulip) leaves!" she said in astonishment. "What ever for!"

"Manure! Green manure, for Jaffna vegetable plots, tobacco plantations, fields etc. These leaves have come all the way from Point Pedro. The whole cargo is nothing but Suriya leaves and this is not an isolated case, but regular consignments are sent when needed".

"What does India send?"

"Bricks, tiles, earthenware cooking utensils, and straw for burning in the fields of the northern province, for the same purpose as the Suriya leaves—manure. India also sends Betel leave. They are packed in flat round baskets, layer upon layer, hundreds, thousands of leaves."

"But surely they'll be withered by the time they reach the Ceylon markets, coming all that way in a dhoney!"

"By no means! With a good wind a dhoney can come from South India in a day. See how fast we are travelling."

"Is that Velanai still on our right?"

"Yes! Its a large island the largest of them all, and a lone one. The lagoon widens out here and on our left, in the far distance is the Jaffna peninsula."

The clumsy old dhoney moved ever so lightly with effortless power driven along by the wind.

"We are now almost at the end of Velanai and where it peters out almost to nothing is a place called Allaipiddy. It's only a name now but long years ago an Indian Queen named Alli came to Ceylon in search of pearls.

She landed at a little place close by, to the west of this site where the open sea leads into a tiny lagoon. Here her schooners anchored and to this day its known as Kappaladdi. (The place of ships). These place names alone remain when all else have succumbed to the mighty, destroying hand of time. How many there are of such instances."

"What happened to Queen Alli?"

"She found life so pleasant in this little northern island that she never went back. There's not a vestige left of her palace but from time to time various finds show that there's truth in the legendary splendour of the Indian Queen.

"Once a bronze bowl with a lid was dug up when deepening a well, a bowl of immense age, and on another occasion a chain of gold coins and yet again a pot of unusual design, containing 179 golden Gujrati coins was discovered fairly close to the surface. I wonder why she stayed on, instead of returning to her home and the splendours of her Indian Court."

"I'm not surprised."

"Really? There couldn't have been much here to offer a Queen as a fair exchange for all she renounced."

"There are other things more precious than palaces and courts and she must have found them in this little island."

"What?" asked Daddy.

"Trifles make up the sum of human things, and life's best joys consist in peace and ease."

* * *

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

Limestone For Puttalam Cement Works

by R. Kahawita

According to the CDN of 20.6.78 and earlier, there seems to be a serious problem facing the cement workers at Puttalam. Shortage of limestone, to maintain production—without limestone, there cannot be cement. Supply of limestone and clay should have been secured before the factory was located at Puttalam. This kind of planning has been our force over the years, and we are still learning and will never learn either by our own mistakes or mistakes of our experts, consultants and advisers—local or imported.

To find a solution to this problem, the Cement Corporation, as

the press reports go, seemed to have invited Mr. L. J. D. Fernando to advise as to where lime stone formations are available. If there is anybody in Sri Lanka who knows the geology of our country, he is Mr. Fernando. I have not read the article of Mr. Fernando published in the CDN of 4.5.78. Nevertheless his knowledge of our geology cannot be questioned.

His recommendations to the Cement Corporation or may be his views on Lime stone resources of Sri Lanka have been questioned by Mr. A. N. S. Kulasinghe—Consultant, Ceylon Cement Corporation and he trots out the theory that all the limestone could be mined from the bed of the Puttalam lagoon. His article is before me. I am aghast at his suggestion. Blast the bed of the Puttalam lagoon, at a depth of 12 ft. for the lime stone. I am not interested in the technical difference between the geologist and the consultant, I am interested in the fate of marine life in the lagoon bed if blasting is carried out as recommended by Mr. Kulasinghe. In his desire to, shall I say out-wit the geologist, he is thinking only of the lime stone, like the concentration of a mongoose to get his prey. What Mr. Kulasinghe says is that the lagoon bed can be blasted. He says he has done it and also knows how to do it. I do not think any one will question the technique of under-water blasting. But one has to consider the effect of blasting on the ecology of lagoon bed. Puttalam lagoon is a land-locked sheet of shallow water with one outlet to the sea, and that outlet leads the lagoon overflow to one of our most important fishing grounds Portugal Bay Lagoon is also the breeding ground for myriads of fish food. With every flood season the Bay is as replenished with fish food. So it has become the foraging ground for a variety of

fish—and fishing is available all the year round. Lagoon itself yields the best prawns and crabs, beside other varieties of brackish water fish. Fishing in the lagoon provides lucrative employment to hundreds of families in Puttalam, Kalpitiya etc. Once blasting operations are started, the ecological balance in the lagoon and its bed will be upset permanently. Blasting cannot be done by the "cheena patas" type of blast. It must be of a blast strength that can dislodge a couple of hundred tons of lime stone. If not mechanical equipment to claim the lime stone debris after the blast cannot be used. Simple dynamiting in our lakes, lagoons etc., is prohibited by law. I have seen such dynamiting in Arugam Bay some years back and the damage done to marine life. So one could imagine what is going to be done to one of our most important sources of food—a food much more essential than anything else for the health of our people.

This is what is wrong with us. We do not analyse the consequences. We get fixed ideas and work in it irrespective of the consequences. In all our activities, we have been that; so in this case too it is the same. Lime stone to manufacture cement at any cost. That is the goal. In that search we may lay waste a whole economy. That does not matter. I hope the recommendation to blast the lagoon bed will be abandoned. The recommendation may have been made to prove individual technical resourcesfulness—but not at the expense of the people and their food—my friends.

New York.
8.7.78

+ + +

LETTERS

Indiscipline In Uniform

Sir,

On 8.7.78, I was at the Colombo International Airport, Katunayake to receive a passenger by the UTA flight which arrived at about 10.15 A.M.

I was issued with a ticket to enter the Terminal to receive my friend; but my entry was restricted to the lobby only as no one was permitted inside beyond that point. There were about 25 to 30 persons along with me waiting in the lobby to receive the visitors. A stern young Police Constable at the door would not allow the people even to get near the door.

We all appreciated the stern discipline enforced, which in our opinion was a welcome change.

But to our utter dismay and frustration, we observe that the Supdt. of Police CID in uniform had very free movement in the Customs Examination area, at the Immigration Counter etc. and finally whisked away in no time two ladies out, who had arrived by this UTA flight.

We also observed another person in civil with an entry badge tagged on to his shirt taking away a couple in the similar manner.

Was this SP on duty there on this day?

Even if he had been on duty, could he have broken down discipline as he did on that day?

Who was the other person in allow those gentlemen to be in civil?

Why did the Customs Officers allow those gentlemen to be in their premises?

Mr. Law Officer. Please discipline yourself before everything.

I wish the President holds an inquiry into this matter.

"Disciplined Citizen"

Colombo 10.
10.7.78

The Lure Of Uva

Sir,

Your issue of 20th May 78 carried a letter to "Gamiya" from Nimal Perera of Mayfield Lane, Colombo 13, and it sounded interesting to me who is in Uva—(lower Uva). I came across this issue only on the 10th of July but still it may not be too late for a small comment on Nimal Perera's letter to "Gamiya".

Seeing Uva "through only from the seat of a CTB bus," and falling in love with Ella is a good start to fall in love with Uva—I am not inviting Nimal Perera to settle down in Uva but it must be said that if one really wants to see the inside of Uva, the life in Uva, at least a few weeks' stay is necessary. Uva has a lot to be studied and Uva needs a lot of people to work for her and Uva needs a lot of help!

I have met many people from different walks of life come Uva's way to see Uva—"mey pattha balanda ava" they say. Uva being an underdeveloped and unattended province in Lanka it needs people to come and see its villages and towns but after seeing these underdeveloped areas one should get interested and involved to do something constructive and offer something practical to the villagers of Uva. Almost all the towns of Uva have many problems to those living in them and it is the villages that need much looking into. There are some who by-pass Uva, stop over for a few minutes in a village and write a fairy tale of village life in Uva. And some rush into a village like a group of terrorists make surveys of some surface social conditions and make a big noise about it. Most of these people being urban intellectuals they only make proposals for uplifting the socio-economic conditions of the rural areas but none would dare to

live in a rural area and try to put into practice what they have proposed. I am sure with much aid given for the development of lower Uva by the Australian Govt. there would be many more urban intellectuals coming Uva's way, those of Uva could have a close watch on the activities of these visitors who come to help Uva—Anyway, I would like to help Nimal Perera in his search for the "Lure of Uva" if only he could spare a week at least, for a start to live in a village home not a rest-house or an Army camp.

Loghead

Lower Uva.
12.7.78

* * *

Food Production

Sir,

Colonists and middle class farmers who are making a genuine efforts to increase food production must be given every protection by the government from harassment by unscrupulous Public servants, thugs and thieves. Mr. T. Arulanathan of the middle class Allotment 21, Bakiella, writes all the way from there informing me of the hardships he is undergoing at the hands of these category of people, and states that as a result of this he is driven to desperation.

According to him, he has made several complaints to the Grama Sevaka, the Police and to high officers in the Government service, but up to now he has not received any relief.

When I was in charge of the Police in NP and EP I saw to it that every protection was given by the Police to Colonists and middle class farmers as they were doing a service to the country,

I hope that this letter will catch the eye of the Minister of Agriculture and Lands, for whom I have the highest regard and that he will take appropriate action to give these colonists and the middle class farmers, what-ever protection necessary.

Jack Van Sanden
Retired DIG Police

4, Westdale Court,
Watsonia,
Victoria 3087,
Australia.
24.6.78

* * *

Education Reforms

Sir,

A committee on Education Reforms under the Chairmanship of Mr. Bogoda Premaratne was set up—or rather the announcement was made in Parliament on 17 December 1977. What progress has it made? Was there a timelimit set by the Minister for the submission of its proposals to be presented to Parliament in the form of a White Paper. The Ministry of Education should move a bit faster.

The hardest thing to get out of Malay Street mandarins is a decision. One would have thought that the Minister of Education with his wealth of administrative experience and doctorate in laws could provide instant answers rightly or wrongly, sanely or madly to all manner of questions. Such is not the case. Old habits die hard.

Lord Curzon's celebrated 'round and round' minute still provokes a smile. "Round and round" the Viceroy noted the diurnal revolution of the earth went the file; stately, solemn, sure and slow and now in due season it has completed its orbit and I am invited to register the conclud-

ing stage. Like Fabius, Malay Street tries to conquer by delay. And Parkinsons abound to aid and abet them. The Minister should alert the Committee to hasten its pace and prepare the report as quickly as possible.

M. Perera

Greenlands Road,
Havelock Town.
3.7.78

* * *

"Little Or Nothing To Show"

Sir,

All our Ministers and our President are very confused in their thinking everytime, on any subject, they end up criticising the previous government the Bandaranaike family's past regime, what right has any government to criticise, when they have nothing better to show in comparison with what the previous government has done? It is easier to criticise than fulfil the needs of the nearly 14 million mostly hungry people, nobody has exploited our country the way these politicians both SLFP and the UNP have done. The real test the government of a poor country however is not whether it can hold the price line while the economy is more or less stagnant but whether it can do so while industry and agriculture are surging ahead. In the balance sheet of the UNP Government first ten months in office there are few entries on the credit side of the ledger so far as economic decisions are concerned.

In future the party will be judged more and more by its socio-economic record.

Raja Somasundaram
(Olian)

79, Modera St.,
Colombo 15.
4.7.78

* * *

Confidentially

Rumanian Coaches ?

IS IT NOT TRUE that the question of importing more Rumanian coaches has hit the headlines? That the Sun of July 11 had a striking headline ENGINEER REPORTED 29 DEFECTS BUT... CGR IMPORTS MORE RUMANIAN BOGEYS and carried the following report: "At the Railway Commission hearings yesterday, Mr. J. L. M. Peiris, Engineer, admitted that despite his reporting 29 defects in the Rumanian bogeys, which he considered the least reliable, the CGR had placed a further import order for these bogeys. Mr. Peiris stated that at present there are English, Chinese and Rumanian types of bogeys in use by the Railway. Mr. Peiris, who is Engineer-in-Charge of the Hydraulic Locomotive Shed, Maligawatte, told the Commission that the Rumanian coaches gave the most trouble, with problems arising after they had been in use for only six months. The shock absorbers in these bogeys had become defective in a very short time, he said. The wheels were worn down after only four months of use while in other types of coaches they lasted eight months. Mr. Peiris said that he had reported 29 such defects in Rumanian coaches to the Railway authorities. As a result of this report, a team of Rumanian officials had come down to investigate. However, they had put the blame for most of the defects on the tracks and on overloading. Pointing out that even though these bogeys had a two-year guarantee, Mr. Peiris stated nothing had been done to remedy these defects. He considered the Chinese type of bogey definitely the best. This type was very hardy,

he said. Mr. Corbert Jayewardene: In spite of all these drawbacks and your own report, the CGR is importing more Rumanian bogeys?" Witness: Yes, they were originally of German design and not meant for our gauge. Continuing his evidence, the Engineer stated that as there were different types of locomotives with different specifications the work load in the engine work-shops was multiplied with the additional difficulty of shortages in spares. At present, there were no spares for the M1 class of locomotive he added. Witness agreed that workshop maintenance would be more efficient and streamlined if the Railway was standardised on one type of locomotive such as the M2. He stated that the M2 class could operate both in the low country and up country. Mr. Corbert Jayewardene Chairman of the Commission, observed that according to CGR statistics the M2 locomotives had done over a million miles, were 18 years old but their availability was still around 85 per cent. Mr. Peiris told the Commission that the lighting in trains also suffered due to the variance in locomotive models. Earlier, each coach had its own dynamos and batteries for the supply of electric lighting. In the present system the coaches were supplied with surplus power tapped from the locomotive. The surplus electricity varied according to the locomotive type witness pointed out. The Engineer also admitted that only 50 per cent of the locomotives had functioning speedometers.

IS IT NOT SURPRISING that though 29 defects had been listed and though the Rumanians had not put them right under the two-year guarantee, the CGR had once again chosen to order another 150 carriages without any guarantee that these 29 technical defects would be eliminated in the new carriages? That Tribune had

been only concerned with the terrible seating arrangements in the Rumanian coaches which made long distance travel in them a nightmare? That the re-arrangement of the seats and providing more comfortable seats is a simple matter? That the 29 defects mentioned by Engineer Peiris are technical and engineering defects that affects the life-span and safe utilisation of the coaches? That one of the defects mentioned relates to the wheels? That railway coaches and waggons have what are known as (iron) Tyres? That, on the Sri Lanka tracks, the "tyres" of Chinese and British coaches have been known to last 8 years? That the tyres on Rumanian coaches started giving trouble in a few months after use and it has been found that they need replacement in about two years? That the tracks are still the same and the overloading will continue for a long long time more and in spite of this more coaches have been ordered? That the "bad tracks" and overloading had not adversely affected the Chinese coaches even after ten years of use? That another matter that has intrigued many is that interested parties had led people in high places to believe that this transaction was a government-to-government deal? That the truth is that though the deal was between an "export corporation" in Rumania and the CGR, the deal was negotiated not by Rumanian government officials but by a go-getter agent in Sri Lanka who is now the most successful import contact man this side of Timbuctoo and one who knows the magic of persuading Ministers, Deputy Ministers and Corporation Chairmen and Departmental Heads to buy any and everything from foreign organisations he represents? That unless this government keeps an eye on him and the stuff he peddles, the dharmista will soon turn into adharmista?

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