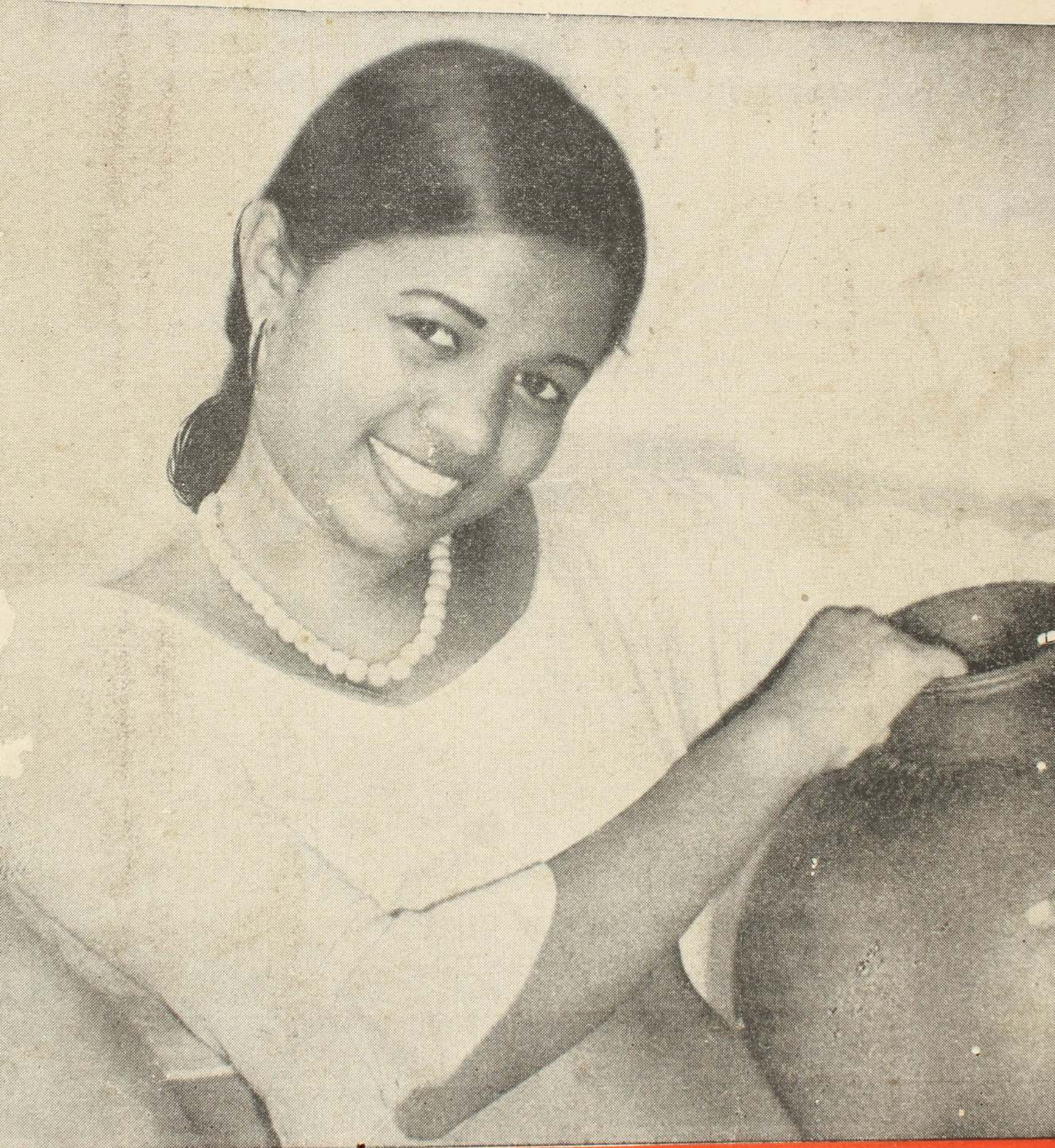


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Letter From The Editor

MANY WILL ASK THE QUESTION why the young lady on our cover this week is smiling. It is an infectious and all-pervasive smile—not often seen these days with the spiralling prices and static incomes (static only for the common multitude whilst a tiny elite daily make more and more). Why is she smiling? The answers may be many. One (that appeals to us) is that a reader of *Tribune* (she really is) she was all smiles when our photographer asked her to pose for the cover to herald our new volume No. 23 and the 24th year of publication. In another year, *Tribune* will enter the 25th year of publication though the volume will be numbered 24. We are not clear whether we should celebrate *Tribune's* twentyfifth anniversary in 1979 or 1980. Some readers have already suggested that we should spread the celebrations over one year from 1979 to 1980 to commemorate the year as well as the volume. The young lady no doubt has a smile for *Tribune* as we edge closer to our twentyfifth year of existence, but that cannot be the one and only reason. She is certainly happy that the Government has been able to obtain all the money, and especially the foreign exchange, to launch a breakthrough out of our chronic economic stagnation—without capital and cash a start could not have been made in economic development. The smiling young lady on our cover is undoubtedly hopeful that the working people of the country will rise to the occasion and utilise to the fullest all the funds the Government has been to secure from big, medium and small countries in the West as well as the East. She is also happy that the UNP has been able to fulfil its election promise to present a new Constitution to the nation which will make democracy purposeful and meaningful. Sri Lanka is today a “free, sovereign, independent and democratic socialist Republic”. The addition of the word *socialist* into the nomenclature, according to many, savours of demagogic gimmickry, but in the world of today “socialism” means different things to different people and the UNP is entitled to use this term with as much validity as much as the equally-procapitalist SLFP. Our young lady is no expert in Constitutions or Constitutional law, but she knows enough to be aware that the 1972 Republican Constitution was neither fish, nor fowl, or flesh. It was an unworkable hotch-potch which rejected the separation of powers which is the bedrock of the parliamentary system and took cover behind the rhetoric “sovereignty of the people” to make the dominant oligarchy in the Legislature a crude dictatorship manipulating the Executive and the Judiciary. There is therefore much to smile for because of the oncoming demise of the 1972 Constitution and all that it had meant. There are also many other matters to induce a smile. The slow and painful disappearance of the hero-worshipping and the deification of the Bandaranaiques is something to be jubilant about—the reversion to the original name “Colombo Airport, Katunayake” is only one more nail into the coffin of the personality cult of the Bandaranaiques. (It is to be hoped that the so-far incipient and embryonic attempts by sychophants to float the Jayawardenas and the Premadasas on the sea of personality cultism will be nipped in the bud). Whatever decision the TULF may arrive at its momentous Working Committee meeting in Batticaloa last weekend, everybody is happy about the TULF's decision to co-operate with the Government to accord a fitting reception to the buddhist Kapilavastu Relics in the hindu Tamil areas in the Eastern and Northern provinces. This was done in the same spirit in which the Buddhist Prime Minister Premadasa had recently participated in the *kumbabishekam* of a hindu temple in Colombo. There is much to be happy about and smile these days, but. there is a but, as in all matters human. Unfortunately, the *buts* have begun to submerge the positive measures of construction, and unless something is done about this soon, UNP's dharmista era will become a home for lost causes and meet the fate of all previous Sri Lankan governments.

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EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK**On The Draft
Constitution**

Colombo, June 26,

The long awaited Third Amendment (and more) has come, but in the form of a Draft Constitution of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka. The report of the Select Committee (together with the proceedings of the Committee and the Minutes of Evidence) and the Draft Constitution were tabled in the NSA on June 22. The two documents are available for scrutiny, study, discussions and debate.

The report of the Select Committee revealed that the Committee had "earlier in its deliberations formed the view that having regard to the fundamental changes necessary in the basic structure of the Constitution, it was more convenient to formulate the principles according to which the Constitution should be revised in the form of a Draft Constitution, rather than to attempt to formulate a multitude of specific amendments to a number of sections of the 1972 Constitution."

The Report explained the reasons for the principal changes proposed under the following main headings:—

(1) *The Sovereignty of the People*—would be exercised through a separation of powers—Legislative, Executive and Judicial—and with adequate safeguards to prevent any erosion of the Sovereignty of the People. In the 1972 Constitution there was a concentration of the Powers of the People in the NSA. "Such concentration of powers tends to erode the Sovereignty of the People. The division of Powers among the different organs

of Government tends to act as a restraint upon the arbitrary exercise, or the abuse of power by the delegates of the People..." The report indicates how the Legislature, the Executive and the Judiciary would function under the new Constitution and the powers they would exercise.

(2) *The President*—the draft Constitution incorporates the Second Amendment which had come into force on February 4, 1978.

(3) *Proportional Representation*—This is one of the major changes introduced in the new Constitution. The Select Committee stated: "The present system of parliamentary elections has been the subject of considerable criticism in that representation in the Legislature is not fairly representative of political opinion in the electorates. Thus in 1970 the Sri Lanka Freedom Party with 36.9 per cent of the total vote was able to secure 60.3 per cent of the total number of seats in the Legislature, while the United National Party with 37.9 per cent of the total vote was only able to secure 11.3 per cent of the total number of seats. The converse occurred in 1977, when the United National Party with 50.9 per cent of the total vote secured 83.3 per cent of the seats, whereas the Sri Lanka Freedom Party with 29.7 per cent of the total secured only 4.8 per cent of the seats. Apart from its unfairness, this situation is not conducive to political stability.

"The deficiencies of this system have been recognised in many countries, particularly in Europe, and varying systems of proportional representation have been adopted in order to achieve more exact representation of the major political parties in the Legislature,

"The Draft Constitution marks a major change in the system of Parliamentary elections in this coun-

try by adopting a system of proportional representation, the details of which are to be found in Articles 97 to 100A. Special mention ought however to be made of the following features:

"(a) A Delimitation Commission will divide the country into several electoral districts (Article 98). These electoral districts will remain unchanged thereafter, avoiding the inconvenience and complexities of periodical changes in electoral boundaries. Further, electoral districts shall be the administrative districts (or combinations of administrative districts), thereby facilitating proper planning, administration and development.

"(b) The present disparity in the value of votes in different electoral districts, resulting from the allocation of additional seats on the basis of area, is considerably reduced by the provision in Article 98 (4) that each Province shall be entitled to four additional Members, independently of population. The allocation of these four seats among the electoral districts of each Province will be another of the tasks of the Delimitation Commission;

"(c) The total number of seats has been frozen at 196, consisting of 36 seats (each of the nine Provinces being entitled to four seats independent of population) and 160 seats, which will be divided among the several electoral districts according to the number of registered electors in each electoral district. As population increase, the qualifying number of electors per seat will automatically increase, for this qualifying number is an arithmetical ratio (namely, the total number of registered electors divided by 160) and is not dependent upon the decision of any Delimitation Commission or other person or body. Further, since the system attempts to obtain fairer representation of the

political opinions of the voters, the entitlement of seats is based on the number of registered electors in each electoral district on the number of inhabitants or even citizens. This system will automatically provide for changes in representation necessitated by increases or shifts of population;

(d) "Voting will be for recognised political parties and groups of independent candidates (who have submitted lists of candidates) and not for individuals. This will have the added advantage of tending to reduce the intensity of the rivalries between candidates of different political parties. In the case of the death or resignation of a Member, the vacancy will be filled, not by means of a by-election, but from among other candidates on the list of the party or group to which such Member belonged; and

(e) "To ensure that the persons elected to Parliament are really representative of significant political opinion in the electoral district, provision has been made that a party or group polling less than one-eighth of the total number of valid votes cast in that electoral district will not be entitled to any representation. This cut-off point of one-eighth has been adopted, inter alia, as under the present system any candidate receiving less than one-eighth of the total number of valid votes cast is not entitled to the return of his deposit."

(4) *The Referendum:* Another important change introduced in the new constitution is the Referendum. The Select Committee report states: "In further recognition of the Sovereignty of the People, the Draft Constitution makes provision for the Wishes of the People to be consulted in a variety of situations of basic importance.

"Certain fundamental provisions of the Constitution are not to be amended even with a two-thirds majority, except with the consent

of the People. Such consent is required in regard to changes in the basic structure of government are required in regard to changes in the basic structure of government (Articles 1-4), the place accorded to Buddhism (Article 5), certain fundamental rights, such as the freedom of thought, conscience and religion and freedom from torture (Articles 6 and 7), the remedies for infringement of fundamental rights by executive action (Article 14) and the extension of the term of office of the President and the duration of Parliament (Article 68).

"There are further situations in which the People may directly participate in the exercise of legislative power. The President may refer to the People:— (a) a Bill for the amendment of the Constitution which has failed to secure a two-thirds majority; and (b) any Bill not passed by Parliament.

"Any such Bill if approved by the People will become law. The participation of the People directly in the process of Government is not always practicable. But the Draft Constitution, by empowering the President to refer to the People for decision any question of a national importance, makes direct participation possible, although to a limited extent, in regard to matters of national importance. The question whether the scope of the Referendum should be further extended may well be considered after these provisions have been in operation for some years."

(5) *The Judiciary:* The Judicial Service Commission as under the Soulbury Constitution is to be restored and the report went on to say: "The 1972 Constitution expressly conferred on the National State Assembly the power to create, by ordinary legislation, Courts in substitution for the existing superior Courts (namely the Court of Appeal and the Supreme Court),

Indeed, the National State Assembly, in the exercise of that power, did abolish the Court of Appeal, and even the Supreme Court sent up by the Charter of Justice of 1833, and created a new Supreme Court by the Administration of Justice Law, No. 44 of 1973. Upon the commencement of the Law, all judges of the Court of Appeal and of the Supreme Court ceased to hold office and did not automatically become Judges of the (new) Supreme Court; membership of the new Supreme Court was by virtue of fresh appointments made by the President. Thus the provision in the 1972 Constitution which *ex facie* purported to safeguard the security of tenure of Judges of the Superior Courts proved completely ineffective.

"Your Committee unanimously agreed that the independence of the Judges of the Superior Courts should be effectively secured by making constitutional provision for the establishment of the Superior Courts, namely Supreme Court and the Court of Appeal, the appointment and security, tenure of the Judges of these two Courts, and the essential jurisdiction of these two Courts, including the writ jurisdiction.

"The Constitutional Court created by the 1972 Constitution has been subjected of some criticism, and as there is no valid reason for the exercise of this jurisdiction by a body other than one of the Superior Courts, the Draft Constitution provides for this jurisdiction to be exercised by the Supreme Court. Other jurisdictions pertaining to the Constitution of in regard to matters of a constitutional nature have also been vested exclusively in the Supreme Court, so that authoritative decisions thereon may be obtained expeditiously; these include the interpretation of the Constitution, the protection of

fundamental rights against infringement by executive action and a consultative jurisdiction."

(6) *The Ombudsman*: (The Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration): "It is generally accepted in parliamentary democracies that the existing judicial remedies for the redress of grievances, in respect of infringement of fundamental rights, of administrative injustices and of maladministration are inadequate, expensive and time-consuming. Some parliamentary democracies such as the Scandinavian countries, the United Kingdom and New Zealand have established the office of the Ombudsman, under various designations, charged with the duty of informally and promptly investigating and reporting upon such grievances.

"The Draft Constitution in Article III enjoins Parliament to Establish such an office, and expressly provides constitutional guarantees of independence and security of tenure, comparable to that granted to Judges of the Supreme Courts, the Secretary-General to Parliament the Auditor-General and the Commissioner of Elections."

(7) *Buddhism*: "The Draft Constitution reserves unchanged the pre-eminent position accorded to Buddhism in the 1972 Constitution (Article 5). However, this position is now made inviolable in that there can be changes in regard to the place accorded to Buddhism except with the express consent of the People (Article 68)."

(8) *Fundamental Rights*: "Three major criticisms of the Chapter on Fundamental Rights contained in 1972 Constitution were that the rights recognised were limited in scope, that they were subject to restrictions which were so wide as almost to nullify the grant of fundamental rights and that their enforcement was not guaranteed in the Constitution.

"Chapter III of the Draft Constitution considerably enlarges the scope of the fundamental rights, particularly by recognising the right to freedom from arbitrary arrest, detention and punishment and the right to freedom from torture, and by prohibiting discrimination and retroactive penal legislation.

"A few of the fundamental rights are recognised as being absolute, in that no restriction is permitted—such as the freedom of thought, conscience and religion, the freedom from torture and the right not to be deprived of life or imprisoned by way of punishment, except by order of a competent court in accordance with procedure established by law. Further, there was much criticism of the provisions of Section 18 (2) of the 1972 Constitution, particularly in that restrictions on the operation of fundamental rights were permitted for the purpose of giving effect to the principles of State Policy. The Draft Constitution does not permit restrictions on fundamental rights by reference to the principles of State Policy, and the restrictions which it does permit are considerably narrower in extent than those permitted by section 18 (2).

"Article 14 of the Draft Constitution confers the right to seek a remedy from the Supreme Court in respect of the infringement or threatened infringement, by executive action, of a fundamental right. In the interests of both the aggrieved party and the State, this remedy is required to be sought and granted (or refused) expeditiously."

(9) *Language*: "The Draft Constitution preserves unimpaired the status of Sinhala as the Official Language of Sri Lanka. Your Committee unanimously agreed that both Sinhala and Tamil should be the National Languages of Sri Lanka, and that the status of Tamil

should receive constitutional recognition, especially by incorporating in the Constitution the relevant provisions of the existing law. Chapter IV provides for the use of Tamil in Parliament and local authorities, as a medium of instruction, as a language of legislation and as a language of administration and of the Courts in the Northern and Eastern Provinces. It is pertinent to mention here that by Article 8 (2) discrimination on the ground of language is expressly prohibited"

(10) *Citizenship*: "Your Committee agreed that a chapter on Citizenship should be embodied in the draft Constitution to avoid any distinction being drawn in regard to the status of citizens as specified in section 2 of the Citizenship Act No. 18 of 1948 (Cap. 349). Accordingly there shall be no status called citizenship of Sri Lanka by descent or by registration and all citizens shall enjoy one status and shall be described for all purposes as "Citizens of Sri Lanka."

(11) *Public Service Commission*: "In the 1946 Constitution, the appointment, dismissal, transfer and disciplinary control of public officers was vested in an independent Public Service Commission. The 1972 Constitution abolished the Public Service Commission, and vested its powers, in the Cabinet of Ministers. It also set up two advisory bodies to advise the Cabinet of Ministers in regard to the exercise of its powers.

"There was general agreement that these powers should not normally be exercised by the Cabinet of Ministers, except in the case of higher-grade public officers involved in the formulation of policy. The Draft Constitution provides for a Public Service Commission, the delegate of the Cabinet of Ministers, to be responsible for the appointment, dismissal, transfer

and disciplinary control of public officers, other than the public officers of the category mentioned earlier. Provision is also made for the Public Service Commission to act through a Committee whenever the size or importance of a category of public officers warrants the appointment of such a Committee. Except in the case of higher-grade public officers of the category mentioned earlier, the Cabinet of Ministers will in general act only as an appellate body from the Public Service Commission."



THE POLITICS OF THE WEEK

BY NARADA

● Keng Piao

● Vajpayee

● TULF

The Chinese Visit

Every time an important Chinese dignitary has come to this island, it has been a major landmark. The first among them was Fa Hsien, the traveller and buddhist researcher, who had come here several centuries ago. His writings constitute one of the earliest and well written chronicles of ancient Ceylon. Then, among others, was Admiral Ho who left his stamp of authority near Galle. Recent discoveries have shown the Chinese connection with Mantota in Mannar and Allaipiddy in Jaffna. More recently the visits of Chou En-lai had left an indelible impression on the minds of Sri Lankan peoples. The twentyfive year old Rice-Rubber Agreement and the BMICH are reminders of the intimate ties between the two countries in the contemporary era.

During the Cultural Revolution, though friendships were maintained,

there was a lacuna which cannot be easily explained. Once again after 1972, after Peking had denounced the JVP insurrection, bilateral ties continued to grow, but thereafter there was a lull whilst China settled a major internal problem after the death of Chou and Mao in which the Gang of Four were routed by the forces of Hua and Teng.

With the new leadership in Peking settling down to a new era of upsurge, China has developed a new extrovertism in foreign policy. It is based on irreconcilable hatred towards the USSR and its allies like Cuba, China had also declared a kind of special war against Vietnam. China is now wooing the USA and the West—with NATO and other Western military bloc paraphernalia—only to denigrate, erode and destroy the "revisionist trends" in the USSR and its allies. But in its excessive zeal to woo the West on a newly furbished "Three Worlds Theory", China had lost one of its staunchest allies, Albania, which now questions the validity of the Peking's current view of the *Theory of Three Worlds*. To Albania and many of the Marxist-Leninist parties which owed allegiance to Peking during the reign of Mao and for sometime after during the rule of the Gang of Four, the present regime of Hua and Teng is "revisionist".

It is in this background that one must view the visit of Vice-Premier Keng Piao.

It would appear that Peking is most concerned about the current visit of its Vice-Premiers (and Vice-Presidents) to a number of countries in different regions of the world. From the welcome and reception accorded to Vice Premier Keng Piao at the airport and elsewhere it is clear that he received

protocol honours far higher than is normally extended to Vice-Premiers. Premier Phan Van Dong of Vietnam did not receive all of the protocol tamasha Keng Piao got. (There is no rule that the protocol gets inflated by the size of the country).

Vice Premier Keng Piao received the same treatment as a "head of government." There was a guard of honour, the national anthems were played, he was met by the Prime Minister and practically the entire Cabinet and the diplomatic Corps.

Naturally, there were flutter in diplomatic dovescotes in Colombo. But those who have been following current Chinese affairs know that the "leadership of the Premier and Vice Premiers" in China is "collective or collegiate" and for this reason, Peking seems anxious to secure a head of government reception for every Vice-Premier who has gone on an official visit to any country.

One does not know the reception that the Chinese Vice-Premiers received in Western Europe, but Pakistan seems to have risen to the occasion and lavishly welcomed Keng Piao on a head of government basis. It must be recalled that, according to the *Newsweek*, when Pakistan's Zia had gone to Peking, he had been given a cold reception, but China which was closely tied to Bhutto seems to have undergone a basic change in attitudes after the Zia visit—so much so that foreign observers were tempted to say that Keng Piao's visit to Pakistan marked the end of the Bhutto era. Can it be said that Keng Piao's visit to Sri Lanka marked the end of the Bandaranaike era?

There was no joint communique after the Keng Piao visit and the reports of the speeches released

to the press consisted nothing more platitudious praise for each other. There was no press conference, no fraternisation with the Press. Whatever Keng Piao said in private conversations and discussions is secret, but there was no open attack on the Soviet Union in any public declaration. The closest to criticism was to lump hegemonism with imperialism and colonialism (hegemonism being given pride of first place). It is significant that though some of the newspapers, had included "hegemonism" the SLBC newscasts studiously avoided the word "hegemonism". Keng Piao was willing to extend all assistance to Sri Lanka—including the Mahaweli Project. But, more importantly, Keng Piao gave the fullest support to the non-aligned movement and Sri Lanka's leadership as Chairma.

As we go to press we have received a copy of a statement issued on 17.6.78 by the Ceylon Communist Party led by the well known Maoist N. Shanmugadasan entitled CEYLON COMMUNIST PARTY REJECTS THE THEORY OF THREE WORLDS AS ANTI-MARXIST-LENINIST.

The premier Maoist and Peking-wing Marxist-Leninist Party in Sri Lanka has adopted the Albanian line of thinking on the current ideological developments in the Maoist world. In a subsequent article we will examine the dynamics of the Albanian position and its impact on former Maoist and Peking-wing parties like the Ceylon Communist Party.

The Indian Visit

The Indian Foreign Minister will visit Sri Lanka from June 29—July 2. Whilst many bilateral matters may be tidied up, there is speculation in political and diplomatic circles

as to whether in the discussions any special light will be thrown on the question of "unity of the non-aligned movement." Marshal Tito has recently issued warnings about the threats to unity in the non-aligned movement.

As everybody knows, the danger arises from the demand from Somalia (presumably backed by Saudi Arabia and certain other Arab countries) that Cuba should be disowned as a non-aligned nation because of its "interventions in politics" in Africa. The USA and China have been plugging this line. There have been hints that India too was disturbed by Cuba's policies but there is no confirmation about this.

Sri Lanka's position is not known, but from all indications it is clear that neither Sri Lanka nor India (nor Yugoslavia) will precipitate matters on account of Cuba in a way that might lead to a split. Cuba might be persuaded to show more restraint and emphasis will be placed on a resolution that African countries should resolve their disputes without inviting foreign intervention.

The Vajpayee visit is bound to be interesting.

TULF And The Constitution

The TULF Action Committee met last week-end in Batticaloa to discuss the Report of the Select Committee and the Draft Constitution. According to the *Virakesari*, the Action Committee has passed the buck to the Parliamentary Party of the TULF to make a decision.

This signifies that the TULF is approaching the question with caution and restraint. The Action Committee has not resorted to

rhetorical resolutions on Eelam as it always did sometime ago.

Those whose memories are not short will recall the minimum Mr. S. J. V. Chelvanayakam had wanted from the Constituent Assembly in 1972 and which was refused (and this led to the Eelam resolution at the Vaddukoddai Congress of the TULF in 1974). The present UNP draft Constitution grants all that Chelvanayakam had wanted and more in 1972, and it is yet to be seen whether the cry for Eelam would be revived as a major political slogan after this (although there will always be a harking to Eelam in an academic sort of way).

The TULF reactions to the draft Constitution will be known after the Party's Parliamentary Group make a statement. The SLFP attitude is known. The CPSL and LSSP views are not yet known.

In the meantime, the Government is busy not only in launching construction works but also extending its social services amenities. Last week, President Jayawardene inaugurated the Lunugawehera Project in the deep South-East whilst Premier Premadasa opened the model village of Udagama in the Wannu in the Yapahuwa Electorate.

NEXT WEEK

- SLFP's DISSENT
—About Draft Constitution
 - CARAVAN FAMILY—13
—To Delit
 - ACID BOMB EXPLOSION—4
—Brother In Colombo
 - CITRUS GROWING
—Past Mistakes
-



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BETWEEN THE LINES

BY SERENDIB

Foreign Trawlers

*FISHERMAN'S TALES. The Director, Development, Ministry of Fisheries, Edgar Fernando, in a lavish splash in the *Sunday Observer* and *Sunday Times* of June 18 sought to answer the question WHY THE PRICE OF FISH IS SO HIGH? The main part of the article trotted out the hackneyed and customary excuses (*vide Confidentially* column at p 32) to explain why the price of fish was high, and in the concluding paragraphs went on to show that the price of fish had not gone up because of the activities of foreign trawlers the Ministry had licensed. This is what he said:

"The suggestion has been made in certain quarters that fish is in short supply with an inevitable rise in prices, due to the activity of foreigners poaching in our waters. In this connection reference is made to the permits issued by the Government to two foreign-based firms to engage in fishing activities in our territorial waters. An examination of the reason for allowing foreigners to fish in our waters and the terms and conditions of the grant of such authority is therefore in place. It must be stated that Deepsea fishing is capital-intensive, technologically advanced, export-oriented, and therefore, requires a high degree of centralised, integrated management. The fishing industry at the present time is not fully equipped to meet all the requirements of deep-sea fishing, and such a high risk and possibly low profit operation, at least in its initial stages, would not justify the use of Sri Lanka's scarce foreign resources. Employment potential is an important aspect that has to be taken into

consideration, in the context of the maximum utilisation of available manpower. In an initial and experimental deep sea fisheries project, the employment potential is relatively small, and there would be operational problems of implementation and crew training.

"The question might well be asked, as to why the Fisheries Corporation could not undertake such a venture. The answer is not far to seek. The CFC is not equipped to carry out such operations due to heavy overheads, managerial and labour problems etc. Besides, there has been, over the years, a lack of preventive maintenance of the fleet of five trawlers and two tuna boats owned by the CFC. Further deep-sea fishing on modern scientific lines has remained virtually untapped owing to the absence of private sector investment due to risks, uncertainty, lack of information and know-how. It is in this context that the Government decided to issue licences to two foreign firms, purely as an experimental measure, for a trial period of one year to engage in deep-sea fishing activities. It was hoped that there would be certain distinct advantages to the country. Our fishermen would receive a training in deep-sea fishing; in terms of the agreement, a regular, and additional supply of fish would be available for local consumption from the catch. Moreover there would be foreign exchange earnings, in terms of royalty and other charges. The hiring out of our harbour and shore facilities would bring an additional source of income to the Fisheries Corporation and the Fisheries Harbours Corporation.

"The issue of the licences to the two firms—one based in Singapore and the other in Hongkong—stipulated, *inter alia*, that the Government had the right of cancel-

lation of the contract at any time, before the expiry of the contracted period of one year, if they, (the firms) violated the terms and conditions of the contract. Such were the circumstances under which the Government, purely on an experimental basis, issued licences to the two firms. *Unfortunately, the contractual conditions were violated by both firms, and the experiment came to grief. The Government took prompt action to cancel the two contracts.*

"In summation it may be said that the government has taken meaningful steps to bring down the price of fish, by adopting both short and long-term policies. Readers may judge for themselves the true reasons for the rise in the price of fish, and the steps that are being taken to counteract it. It is hoped, too that the issue of foreigners being permitted to fish in our territorial waters would be viewed in its correct perspective."

What do his arguments amount to? That deep sea fishing was necessary to augment supplies: that Sri Lanka was not equipped to start deep-sea fishing: that it was thought wise to licence foreign companies to do trawler fishing: that through them Sri Lankans could be trained for this work: that the two companies which had been licensed had violated their contracts and that the licences had to be cancelled; that the activities were not the cause for the high price for fish and that therefore the "issue of foreigners being permitted to fish in our territorial waters would be viewed in its correct perspective."

We will deal with the customary excuses trotted out in the first and longer part of article on another occasion, but the question which we and many others have asked as to why these excuses, especially those about the shortage of spares and equipment are being trotted out

one year after this Government had come to power and nearly nine months after adequate foreign exchange resources had been made available to it. We have also asked the question why the situation was far better in the days when the late Mr. S. de S. Jayasinghe was the Minister and why the situation had deteriorated after Festus Perera had taken over.

These two questions remained unanswered, but in regard to the foreign trawlers' matter *Tribune* had raised questions several times—and none of which have been met or answered so far. Even the Minister, in his talk over the SLBC on 18th June did not refer to this matter, and it was only Edgar Fernando who set down his weak and evasive answers to plead that the matter of the foreign trawlers was really not very relevant or pertinent to the question of the present high price of fish.

In a recent speech, Minister Festus Perera had made the "ice mudalalis" the chief culprits (or scapegoats) for the current shortage of fish and the resulting high prices. *Tribune* has dealt with the question of ice shortage as early as March 1978, but the real shortage, we pointed out, was due to the "slaughter-fishing" indulged in by the foreign trawlers which took all the fish away.

The questions we have raised on this matter and other questions relevant to the current shortage of fish have not been answered by the Department or the Ministry. A functionary of the Ministry, with the grandiose title Director/Development sent *Tribune* a letter some time ago to tell us that we were barking up the wrong tree. We published his letter in full with our comments. This letter also provoked us to ask more questions. The Director/Development

has so far not sent us a reply—although we invited him to do so.

We are aware that VIPs in the Fisheries hierarchy privately tell gullible and not-so-gullible people that fish was not short because of the foreign trawlers and that the "campaign carried on by *Tribune* was mischievous." We wonder why these Fisheries VIPs do not tell this directly to us in a written communication.

Anyway, for the record, here are a few of the questions that remain unanswered and will continue to have topmost priority as a matter of public interest until they are answered: (A) When were foreign trawlers licensed to catch fish on a 60% for royalty and 40% for Sri Lanka basis? How many such licences were issued? How many trawlers operated on these licences? Who fixed the scandalously low royalty rates? Who fixed the meaningless 25-mile limit—all who know anything about seas are aware that outside the 10-12 mile limit there is no edible fish except shark? (B) Who drew up the agreements, if any, with the foreign trawlers companies? What were the actual dates on which the agreements were signed and was this done before or after the trawler companies started operations? Why were these contracts not made public? Why were they kept secret? Why are they still kept secret? Is there any further need to keep them secret? (C) How many officers were appointed to be on these trawlers to have a check on (a) the 25-mile limit; (b) the catch in our seas; and (c) the delivery of the 40% to Sri Lanka? What are the names of these officials and the names of the trawlers on which they were posted? Is there any truth in the current gossip that one such posted officer has gone off for good in the trawler to which he was attached? What has happened to the

others, if any? (D) Who are the local agents of the defaulting trawler companies? Can't they be held responsible and accountable for the royalties the trawlers did not pay and the catches (40%) which they did not deliver to Sri Lanka at the agreed prices? Are there any non-defaulting trawler companies? Are any such still operating?

Is it true that at one stage Government had directed the Fisheries Department to order the foreign trawlers to hand in the entirety of their catches to Sri Lanka? Was this done, if not, why not? Was it after this that the trawlers vanished? Did the Trawlers unilaterally quit when they found that the game was up when they were called upon to produce all the fish? (E) What action has the government taken to pin responsibility on local officials and others for being party to such a scandalous transaction that has brought disaster to this country? What is the action contemplated against the foreign trawler companies which have cheated this country? (F) What are the terms of the contract the trawlers had violated to which Edgar Fernando makes reference? Why have details not been furnished to the public to see if these violations could not have been avoided with ordinary precautions?

These are only a few of the questions that must be answered by the Minister of Fisheries. There are many more questions to be asked, but for a start these would suffice. Students of history who remember the South Sea Bubble which caused a major shock for the Government in England some centuries ago, will soon be confronted with the SRI LANKA FISH SELLOUT.

CLARIFICATION

From Chairman, NLDB,
to Editor, Tribune

Sir,

I write with reference to your Article headed 'NLDB Versus Ceylon Cold Stores', in your issue of Volume 22 No. 51 of 17th June, 1978. I apologise for being 'reticent' and 'publicity shy'. Now that you have put the ball very clearly in my court, I would like to tabulate a few general points as follows:—

1. The proposed Abattoir at Alawwa was abandoned due to many reasons but primarily, due to the paucity of available stock in the country. Alawwa is neither in a producing or consuming part of the country. The need for some form of hygienic slaughter arrangements is vital and is recognised, but we have no commercial beef breeding in this country and we have already eaten into a fair section of our traditional nomadic herds of the NCP and EP. Now the butcher is eating into our dairy herds. This matter is serious and I have submitted papers for certain rulings on this crisis. The Abattoir was expected to cost Rs. 120 million. In fact, it may well have cost more now and in order to select a suitable site, a hill—originally a jak plantation was flattened at a cost of Rs. 700,000/-. The area so levelled was 12 acres. (Previous Board!).

2. The original concept of the NLDB was inter alia to rationalise the meat trade. Since September 1978, the Honourable Minister of Agriculture and Lands has indeed re-defined our functions as stated by you. It does not mean that we concentrate only on Dairy Cattle. The prime objective at the moment is to arrest the downward trend in the national herd but the NLDB

by virtue of its activities can only make a small impact in this connection. Here again, submissions on certain recommendations have already gone through to the Honourable Minister and to His Excellency the President.

3. I have endeavoured to lay out targets in the manner in which we can achieve some progress and any such progress is mainly due to the efforts of the staff on the farms, staff at the Head Office and all concerned at the IDA Division of the World Bank Project who have responded magnificently. There is still an awful lot of work to be done.

4. The IDA Project was officially handed over to the NLDB on the 1st January 1978. After a re-assessment of the position the World Bank approved our proposal for a reformulation and the Mission Team spent most of May 1978, in Sri Lanka. In these proposals were a clear identification of certain solutions to constraints which were impeding the development of the dairy industry. Final ratification is indeed awaited but we are told that certain proposals were favourably received. However, pending ratification, the World Bank has already cabled us requesting a Team be sent to Anand immediately for preparatory work in connection with the setting up of Producer Societies based on the Amul Pattern. Basically, our proposals lay in these fields.

(i) *Cereal Feed Production in the Dry Zone and Moneragalla Areas* which also includes the maximum utilisation of rice bran. The shortage of an adequate quantity of reasonably priced animal feed is one of our biggest constraints. Sri Lanka has produced approximately 75,000 tons of maize, sorghum and gingelly in certain years. The problem continue to be collection, payment and processing. On the question of rice bran,

if we are to expect a bumper harvest and more when the Mahaweli gets underway, the maximum utilisation of rice bran by means of solvent extraction, is an immediate solution to part of our problems. It is likely that this proposal will be subject to an independent study to be financed by the World Bank. The study is to commence in September 1978 and to be completed by December 1978. I regard this as priority number one, as we must surely cease to rely on poonac—that ever diminishing commodity.

(ii) *Rosita Calf Rearing Operation—150 Acres of Former Abandoned Tea.* We lose an estimated 4,000 to 6,000 calves per annum from the mid and up country areas. We are short of stock for development. Why not save heifer calves which after raising and insemination can be distributed to farmers at approximately Rs. 2,000/- to Rs. 3,000/- as opposed to Rs. 12,000/- to Rs. 15,000/- equivalent in foreign exchange for an imported unit. It will be noted that the Friesians from Holland were received on a Gift basis. Subject to ratification this proposal has been, we understand, accepted by the World Bank.

(iii) *Fodder Conservation Program in the Coconut Triangle.*

This is a detailed study and I enclose the proposal from which you may certainly extract any information necessary. I understand this proposal too has been passed subject to ratification.

(iv) *Small Feed Provender Plants.* We hope to establish one in the middle of the Coconut Triangle and one in the mid country. IDA Borrowers reached desperation point and the whole concept of the World Bank Program nearly collapsed in October/November 1977 due to the inordinate rise in price of poonac. We consider that the two small scale operations one at Kuliypitiya and one at Mahabder-

riatenne will afford relief to both IDA Borrowers and if possible, to outside farmers. I am told that this proposal too has been accepted.

(v) *Model Co-operative Societies.* It is proposed that we commence Producer Societies similar to the Movement at Anand. The IDA will receive the fullest support of the National Milk Board to set up five model societies for a start. This is probably the most demanding of our proposals and will necessitate not only a large volume of preparatory work but also constant monitoring of progress. In short, the producers will ultimately own their own collecting centres, which will also accommodate the services of a Veterinary Surgeon, an A.I. Inseminator and mixed feed for sale in small quantities. I have already written to Dr. Kurien soliciting assistance. This too, has been accepted by the World Bank subject to certain modifications.

5. The setting up of 15 sub centres for AI Insemination in the Farms has been directed to other sources for funding. This vital ingredient of dairy development is a must.

6. The co-operation of the Dutch Authorities and this includes the Charge de Affaires in Colombo, Mr. Loudon, to whom the Honourable Minister of Agriculture and Lands, paid a tribute at the handing over of the first consignment of Friesians and MRYS, has resulted in the first of two gift consignments. We did have an unexpected change of plans due to Foot and Mouth at Haragama and due entirely to the unstinted efforts of both the staff at Mahaberiatenne, and those in the IDA, we got through with a loss of only six out of 460 animals. Of these six, three suffered tick fever which they had contacted prior to immunisation. This is said to be the most successful of imported stock from temperate climes but men-

tion must be made of the untiring efforts of the Project Director of the IDA, Mr. Leslie Fonseka. As regards equipment, we negotiated for, secured and brought into this country within seven days, equipment and semen to the value of half a million rupees.

The New Zealand Farm is to be handed over shortly another consignment of 460 Friesians and MRYS, which will arrive in Sri Lanka from the Netherlands in September 1978, as a further gesture of goodwill between the Netherlands and Sri Lanka—this too will be on the basis of a Gift.

It will appear that your sleuths have breached my "impregnable fortress" as you say and your figures are authentic. You have requested a list of all individual farm crop percentages which is enclosed. The best of weather, maximum fertiliser and excellent management, seldom results in increases of over 20%. The increases on the attached list is entirely due to the strict management for which my staff on the Farms must receive full credit.

I must apologise for being 'reticent' (as you put it). To go ahead with development in livestock it is necessary to strengthen the foundations of the NLDB and by this, I mean the Coconut Farms. The problems took longer to overcome than I first envisaged and it was for this reason that I deferred making any statements. The implementation of the World Program will be a heavy and demanding cross to bear.

The NLDB is only an instrument through which development can be geared. We do not intend to be production units for commercial purposes. The other aspects of livestock apart from dairying must surely receive due attention as well.

C. F. H. de Saram
Chairman.

National Livestock
Development Board,
72, Ward Place,
Colombo 7.
19.6.78

	First Pick		% In-crease	Second Pick		% In-crease
	1977	1978		1977	1978	
Andigama	233491	290101	47.0	222 366	449986	102.3
Beligama	62889	181208	118.1	143 371	212456	48.1
Horakelly	370708	574917	55.0	718 484	818721	13.9
Koulwewa	77978	153077	96.3	128 669	150638	17.6
Melsiripura	291057	513401	76.3	289 040	457222	58.1
Polontalawa	54045	101515	87.8	89 135	143545	61.0
Sirinapapatha	393823	514242	30.5	451 220	758773	68.1
Walahapitiya	241740	356948	47.6	410 698	581326	41.5
Marandawila	413813	957344	131.3	392 473	885246	125.6
Gal Pokuna	78483	361349	360.0	139 726	419350	200.0
Rukkatana	248328	532749	114.6	417 328	529337	26.8
Total	2466355	4536851	83.9	3401 910	5406600	58.9

CARAVAN FAMILY—12

• Hammenheil

by Inna Trimmer

Daddy watched Soosaimuthu disappear amongst the palmyrah palms. "Grand old chap! Never thought I'd meet him again," he said sadly, his thoughts evidently in the past. "Come on Villia, call the children and let me tell you about Hammenheil. You must never go places without knowing what you are going to see. Love your Ceylon and learn all you can about it."

"Ra-a-an-jit! Varu-nee! Nila-a-a." Mummie's voice rang out over the lonely shore. A trio of happy youngsters chased up over the sand.

"Come along, dress quickly, Daddy's waiting for us."

Within minutes they clustered round him at a table where he sat with a map before him.

"Now this is where we are, a little bay on the west coast of Kayts. It's considered a sacred spot because a Muslim saint is buried in that little mosque over there." He pointed to a ram-shackle building under the Margosa trees. "They say that miracles have been performed here and people come to be healed of their diseases.

"You'll notice that the north of Ceylon is all broken up into bits and pieces. Islands without number are scattered all over the lagoon which is really the sea flowing in between. Velanai or Kayts is the largest."

"What sort of name is Kayts?" asked Mummie.

"It's a corruption of the Portuguese Caes and the Dutch Cays which means Quay. The place where we landed is a very ancient roadstead, a quay, where ships have called, from time immemorial."

"Where's Hammenheil, Richard?"

Daddy's guiding pencil travelled along the blue part of the map, which meant water. "Here, standing in the fairway,"

"What's fairway, Dad?" asked Ranjit peering intently at the spot where Daddy's pencil had stopped.

"Fairway, putha, is the safe channel at a river's mouth that ships take when entering. The Portuguese, who were here before the Dutch spoke of the lagoon as a river. When they saw the little rocky islet at the entrance to this wide part of the lagoon they realised what an important strategic point it could be to protect the whole of Jaffna-patnam, for the lagoon extends as far as Jaffna. So they built a fort and called it Forteleza do Rio or the Fort of the River.

"Some years later, the Dutch came along, fought the Portuguese and besieged the little fort. The soldiers who were inside, held out as long as they could, but they knew and the Dutch knew too that they would be forced to surrender because there was no water in the fort, no, not a spring, not a drop, only sea water flowing round."

"What happened?" asked Mummie deeply interested.

"The Dutch won, of course. They rebuilt the fort, improved it in many ways and gave it a new name, Hammenheil"

"What does it mean?"

"The heel of the ham, the ham itself being Ceylon. The Dutch thought that Ceylon looked like a huge ham. Now enough of history and geography. I see the children yawning, so let's have early dinner and an early night."

Next morning after a solid "brunch" of pittu, fish curry and a smarter of a sambol, they set out in the ferry taking with them cooked food, sleeping kit, a petrol

lantern or two and, of course, their bathing costumes.

Soosaimuttu was ready for them. In his "Jolly Boat" were four kegs of water. "I'll bring some more later Dorai. Here are two friends who have come to help us."

Everyone was safely aboard. Up went the sail! And Soosaimuttu's *Sun Fish* sprang forwards, dancing over the little waves.

"Who gave your boat that name?" asked Daddy.

"A former master. It was his boat and that was always the name."

Faster flew the *Sun Fish* as the wind filled the sail. Closer came the far away fort which in the heat haze looked like a fairy castle conjured out of the sea. Closer! Yet closer! Ranjit sucked in his cheeks with excitement. Mummie's eyes were shining brighter than the sunlight.

As they approached the fort the waves became bigger, splashing into the boat and almost drenching them. Nila clung to Mummie and hid her face but Ranjit was a true sailor.

Sheer from the water rose the ancient grey walls of Hammenheil. No human hands fashioned the moat round this strange fortress. The sea encircled the citadel; there was no shore at all.

Soosaimuttu manoeuvred his boat as close as he could to the little stone jetty, but cross waves hit it amid-ship. Rocking violently it was thrown back again and again. Mummie held her breath. Daddy lent a hand with the oars. At last expert work by Soosaimuttu brought the *Sun Fish* safely to its moorings on the leeward side where it was comparatively calm.

Nila could scarcely repress a loud whimper when Soosaimuttu lifted her out of the rocking *Sun Fish* and put her down in the safety

of the firm strong stone jetty, but Ranjit leapt with a whoop and a hurrah like a conquering army and shouted "Come on Varuni, I'll give you a hand. Welcome to Hammenheil." With a mighty heave he landed her safely beside him.

Daddy helped Mummie out and they tropped up to the ancient gateway which Soosaimuttu opened with an enormous brass key. Creaking on its rusty old hinges the door was swung back.

Up they climbed; up steps of stone and cement winding round till the upper storey was reached where the Guard Room still stood in perfect preservation; then still higher to the topmost tier. An enormous gun emplacement occupied the centre of this floor. All round were buildings of various sizes.

"We'll sleep up here", said Daddy. "These are rooms I used when I was custodian of Hammenheil."

"How long did you stay? I wish I was married to you then."

"Often spent a weekend. Wonderful!"

"Wouf! Wouf! roared the wind, Mummie clutched at her saree which was flying out like a banner.

Sea and sky all around! They might have been in the middle of the ocean where indeed they were. Only the battlements rose above them but not so high as to hide the view; land far away on two sides but on the north an endless stretch of water, the open sea.

"We'll have our meals in the guard room below. That's what I used to do. The dungeons which are still lower down did duty as kitchen and bathroom."

"Daddy I'm hungry", broke in Ranjit.

"What a boy you are! After that big meal this morning before we left!" Mummie was exasperated.

"Anyhow I am hungry."

"Doraisani, let him eat." Soosaimuttu was sympathetic.

"Let's all eat. I too am hungry" broke in Daddy.

"Dorai, I have a small surprise, I have ordered dinner for us all. Later I'll go and fetch it from Kayts, thosai, and chicken curry and a fine special sambol."

"Soosai, you old rascal. Thank you all the same. Come on then everyone to the Guard room. I'm starting."

"It's this sea breeze", sighed Mummie.

Early in the afternoon they set out again, sailing in and out of the islands, a fresh sea running, the *Sun Fish* often lying on its side as they skimmed over the water while foam-tipped waves splashed merrily in. But no one minded because they were suitably clad in bathing costumes. Even Nila was no longer a afraid though she sat very close to Mummie and held her hand tight.

"A wet sheet and a flowing sea and a wind that follows fast", quoted Mummie, pushing a dripping strand of hair behind her ears.

"That's Velanai on our left, and Karaitivu island on our right which is joined to the mainland by a causeway. You remember we crossed it when we came in". Daddy could barely keep his seat.

On they flew past islands without number, many of them mere sandbanks or clusters of rocks.

"Are they all like this Richard?"

"Oh no! Quite a number are inhabited, though some are the homes of partridges only. I've had some fine sport chasing those birds. Homeward bound now Soosai before it gets too, dark."

"Ah! Ay Dorai! Must go and get your dinner also. Tomorrow I'll take you to a small island where

only a few fishermen live. There's a safe bathing place, the only one in all this side."

Into dry clothes again to sit on the edge of the jetty, like sparrows on a telegraph line, dangling their feet in the water.

Soosai's dinner was pronounced by everyone as something out of their usual world even though the chicken curry was so fiery that Mummie, had to hold her tongue in water. "Scotland's burning! Fire! Fire!" she gasped.

Later they sat under a jewelled sky, on the ancient gun emplacements, a murmuring sea below, grateful for the shelter of the embrasures which still held the warmth of the daylight hours, for the wind had turned cold. Kovalam lighthouse on Karaitivu island winked a message far away.

* * *

LETTERS

Foreign Travel

Sir,

Just exactly 12 months ago members of the present government, then a vociferous and sanctimious Opposition, condemned the Bandaranaike regime for the numerous trips politicians and their cohorts undertook outside the country, for the sake of the starving poor. Today the picture is more impressive because politicians, their bureaucratic favourites and henchmen are flocking or docking out into space without anyone's knowledge. I cannot give concrete figures, but I think it will be very interesting at least statistically if the government takes a census of all government servants and politicians who have gone abroad since July 1977 indicating the place, duration, and number of such trips, and include all Minis-

tries, Departments, Boards, and Authorities etc.

When Pope Pius the 11th. opened the Fatima message he is reported to have fainted. I think many of us who voted for the UNP will collapse when these figures are revealed. Still, I challenge the Dharmista Government to make an honest and accurate disclosure of those trips even at the risk of a calamity of deaths.

G. L. de Silva

Puttalam Road,
Kurunegala.
15.6.78

* * *

Prince Charles

Sir,

You have raised some interesting questions regarding the protocol aspects of the stopover of Prince Charles at Katunayake. We now enjoy Republican status and the Queen is no longer head of state and the formal powers of the Crown had been eroded to almost zero. The question is whether Buckingham Palace informed our man in London that Prince Charles was passing through Colombo and asked for any courtesies to be extended to the Prince. What was the need for a lady protocol officer to be sent to the airport to greet the prince when he is on a legstretch on the eiderdown. Couldn't the Sri Lanka Naval Commander have been a better substitute? In the century of the common man nobody ever puts up anybody in the wee hours of the morning. The slip-up of the "ER" on the headgear of the guards at President's house may be dismissed as a Freudian slip but is the commitment of the Sri Lanka Government so heavy that the chauffers of the VVIP who cruised down to the airport should be on overtime till 3 o'clock

in the morning. Is any thinking done at the Foreign Office? Who is the Minister in charge of ceremonials? Where was he at this point of time? Let us assume that President J. R. Jayawardene is passing through London airport enroute to the United States to address the UN assembly. How will the British Foreign Office react to this stopover? Of course His Excellency Noel Wimalasena will be there in the biting cold in his Aquascutum. Who else?

Ranjit Piyadasa

Gower Street,
Colombo 5.
6.6.78

* * *

Sermon On The Mount

Sir,

If the UNP Govt could be judged only or even mainly by the speeches of its spokesmen in Parliament or perhaps at the BMICH during the last 300 days, there would be no reason for worry. The confidence with which the President and the Ministers speak and the array of facts and figures placed before the people as a kind of all embracing prophylactic to silence critics would have been impressive at any time in any age. This is all very well in the first flush of victory but it is not enough to satisfy public opinion even if coupled with broadly phrased pronouncements about future intentions. It is true it is a reformed UNP that was voted into power but have they let into the fold after the 23 July people who are mildewed and are beyond reformation and redemption?

It is not enough to argue that complicated administrative procedures come in the way of prompt and effective action. This is clear indication that the Govt has misunderstood the revolutionary na-

ture of the vote that swept the UNP to power. It was not merely a vote in favour of toning up the administration or removing some of its most glaring faults. In point of fact it was a rejection of the entire administrative and planning priorities evolved in the 7 years of misrule. In the light of such experience the UNP Ministers cannot be expected to be excused if they continue to blame outmoded administrative procedures and blunt instruments to get things done.

The Govt is expected to master and control the bureaucracy, not allow it to remain a privileged elite. It is obvious when one looks carefully who is doing the governing. It is the senior public servants—some of them reemployed pensioners. They have the day to day contact with the practical realities of governing. It is true they are anonymous—they might even be humble in a histrionic sense—but they are no longer obedient servants. They are the people who take the longterm decision even if the documents carry a Minister's signature. They know the right people and the right dodges. They know what is desirable, what is impossible and what is unthinkable.

It is sad to see the UNP Ministers fumbling with a few outstanding exceptions but so far they have shown no greater ability than the SLFP to administer the country for the benefit of the bulk of the population.

The UNP bears a heavy responsibility to fulfil the mandate to build a just and free society and it will be a safe bet that any efforts in the future to change the system are unlikely to be peaceful. This is the dilemma of our times. Therein lies the tragedy.

Nissanga Jayaratne

Angampitiya Road,
Etul Kotte.
12.6.78

Foreign Service

Sir,

In a lively and lucid style, Mr. Mickey Jayasundera has presented a case for the career diplomats—a serious and well researched account which will be recognised as such by anyone who knows something of the Foreign Service in the last few years. One has to start with the question. What is diplomacy? Do we really need it at all? How green are our diplomats? How clever are they in passing the litmus test? We must first observe the distinction between foreign policy and diplomacy. Foreign policy is what you decide to do or to attempt; diplomacy is how you set about it. The objectives, functions & general work program of the Foreign Office is spelt out in the current years Budget Estimates but the draftsman apparently schooled in the tradition of the Ten Commandments, Sermon on the Mount and Kipling's "IF" has forgotten all about Dharmista Society. The Foreign Office which is furthest removed from the vulgar influence of public opinion is most inexorably bound up with an unquestioned and unquestionable philosophy of life.

Among the functions assigned to the Foreign Ministry are the following:— (a) to formulate and execute the foreign policy of Sri Lanka and direct the conduct of international relations of Sri Lanka; (b) to co-ordinate the economic, commercial and social policies of Sri Lanka in respect of the foreign relations of the country; (c) to disseminate information relating to the policies of the Govt of Sri Lanka in foreign countries.

Well and good but not a word about the functions and work program of our Missions abroad in the Estimates. This is a serious omission and it is hoped a defini-

tion will be attempted next year by the whizkids of the Foreign Office. It is interesting to note that the tax payer is committed to a budgetary allocation to the tune of Rs. 68.8 millions for the upkeep of our missions abroad.

Should we spend a significant portion of our GNP maintaining appearances in world capitals. For example what is the Sri Lanka Ambassador to the United States paid to do? The routine answer is that he represents Sri Lanka to the American people. This is palpable nonsense. No American however retarded would form his view of Sri Lanka from the Ambassador and change it with each new one although we Sri Lankans know the distinction without a difference between Dr. Neville Kanakarathne and Prof. W. S. Karunaratne. The right answer is that, apart from making appointments for visiting VIPs, sometimes going along on the visit and passing on routine messages, the Ambassador does nothing. Of course in saying that the Emperor has no clothes, one can never endear himself to those sections of the Diplomatic Service who are proudest of their Austin Reed suit. The curious thing is that the results cannot be quantified—the cost benefit ratio is not applicable in a Dharmista Society. All that matters is performance to the satisfaction of the taxpayer who shells out Rs. 68.8 millions per annum.

The Ambassador is prone to use the telephone to get things moving faster in the host country—this is a new development but old bureaucratic habits die hard. The Ambassador should curb his passion for putting everything down on paper. But of course the Russians who are good professionals even put what they call oral communication on paper, so that there can be no mistake in interpreting any of their manifold ways of saying No.

Are our Embassies overstaffed? Perhaps in the sense that they are too large for our true needs. A business tycoon who frequently visits our Embassies abroad recently commented that he has rarely found signs of underwork and for ever they are running round in circles. The old world style is still there—Iranganie should remember to tell the butler to tell the housekeeper to tell the cleaner not to polish the floor too zealously to ensure that the visiting Minister does not slip on the parquet and crack his head.

In our Mission in London, the grand total embracing typists, gardeners, telephonists, cypher clerks is reported to be about 40—perhaps the largest DPL establishment. When asked what nearly 40 people can possibly find to do all day long on Sri Lanka's behalf, the High Commission understandably tends to be a bit defensive. Pressed to the last, our diplomats in the finest tradition of lying abroad in the service of one's country mutter with some embarrassment that the embassy's size is commensurate with its importance in representing Sri Lankan interests to the nation of shopkeepers.

An Ambassador's duties have been rightly described as 101% mutual entertainment. No diplomat ever picks up a juicy titbit on the cocktail circuit which doesn't come his way in the normal day to day correspondence unless it be the mating habits of an errant diplomat. It is all the antiquated humbug about your Excellency, the Cadillac with the flag on the bonnet and the CD on the number plate; taxfree take home pay and dutyfree liquor that lend it lustre in the eyes of the deprived.

Who are the people who lunch or dine on frequent occasions with our envoys abroad. The people round the table at lunch or dinner

are mainly and invariably Sri Lankans—visiting Cabinet Ministers and their secretaries; Chairman of Corporations, Queen's Counsel, trade union leaders, expatriates working for UN & its specialised Agencies, M.P.s in transit. The vast majority of them are not friends of His Excellency. They are united in the belief that their opinion of the High Commissioner, the quality of his conversation, Campari on ice and the roast duckling with sour cherries is important for better relations and his continued incumbency in the post with a possible extension beyond the contractual period. In between dessert and coffee the Cabinet Minister could always be on the hotline to Colombo on the direct dialling facility and be uptodate with sizzling hot news.

The High Commissioner need feel no compunction about living as a national host should, for the simple reason that he receives from the Govt an ample entertainment allowance. At least some of them are able to obtain import licences for more than one Mercedes on completion of their tour of duty. The Professor turned Ambassador can always amuse himself by giving radio talks on Buddhism, culture and obtaining vouchered payments as radio artistes. Or better still if the Ambassador's name is listed in the International Who' Who, he can always contribute to the Encyclopaedia Series and collect his honorarium. And that is diplomacy. If not this man, then that one. It is all the same.

Kumar Namastivayam

49, Dewala Road,
Nugegoda.
27.5.78

* * *

TRIBUNE, July 1, 1978

Sack Them

Sir,

In other countries only knotty problems of a very intricate nature are referred to the President for a solution, and that too on rare occasions or due to exceptional circumstances.

It has been reported in the local press that a petty issue viz: bringing down the price of fish has been referred to the President, and that too on flimsy grounds.

The authorities concerned should evolve ways and means of solving such issues, on their own, without recourse to the President. If they are unable or incapable to do so, their services should be dispensed with irrespective of their rank and status.

Haji S. M. A. Raschid, J.P.

76, Manning Place,
Colombo 6.
1st June 1978

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Life In Our Villages

Sir,

We have been reading much about the less opportunities and less facilities the villager has compared with his counterpart in the urban areas. Also we read very often about what should be done and what is not done to uplift the living conditions in our villages. We read of a Caravan Family that goes from village to town and town to village, relating what they see and do on the way and a bit of history to make it interesting. A travelling Gamiya writes about a few villages of Uva—both those give us a few details of village life in a few details of village life as seen or witnessed by an outsider. Most probably they are urban people writing about the village.

At the same time we hear from here and there that there are some people who are doing much work in our villages to uplift the living conditions of the villager. Some organisations are also involved in "rural development work" as they call it. We also hear much talk about village development by the clergy.

We suggest that your newspaper open a column for those many silent workers involved in "village development" or "Community building" or whatever it is called, to give the readers first hand information of facts and experiences of life in our villages.

"A.E.S."

Logcabin,
Wellawaya.
1.5.78

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BOOK REVIEW

Libraries And People

Edited by Ishvari Corea

The Golden Jubilee of the Public Library run by the Colombo Municipal Council provided an appropriate opportunity for the release of the book *Libraries and People*. Sensitively edited by Ishvari Corea, Chief Librarian, Colombo Municipal Council, whose name is very familiar not only in the world of Libraries and librarians, but in the wider educational horizon as well, her selection of the articles shows a remarkable awareness of the readership interests.

Librarianship as a profession appears to have fallen far short of the needs of this country. It is all too apparent that this profession is of indeterminate social status, except of course in the case of librarians with high academic and professional qualifications in charge

of prestigious institutions. Thus, this book has appeared at a time when a determined and conscious effort is needed to enhance the status of this profession and attract talent. This is a task to which the Sri Lanka National Library Services Board should, in our view, direct its urgent attention.

The book is divided into five parts—Public Library Services; National Library Services; University and Research Libraries; Libraries and Librarianship and the last part Publication and Media. I was particularly impressed by Part III which is of contemporary interest at a time when, metaphorically “the old Campuses of the University (conceptually) are dying and the new struggling to be born”. Perhaps if our university students spent more time in the campus libraries, it will be more rewarding than the alleged manufacture of bombs within the campus precincts. It will benefit not only the country but also the students themselves. The parents who deny themselves of much in order that their offspring may have the opportunity to pass through the portals of a University would find the sacrifices worth.

Violet de Souza in her article says “Sri Lanka’s libraries have to equip themselves to cater to the rising expectations of the students” while Ian Goonetilleke considers that “no university can be better than its library and neglect of the library must surely lead to eventual atrophy of the University”. These are ominous words and Government will no doubt take cognisance. The University and the country are fortunate that we have people in this country who do not mince their words.

I had occasion to meet Ken Harrison early in 1974 when he spent some time in Sri Lanka. Hence his article, which Ishvari has selected, was of special interest

to me. The mobile library recommended by him is not much in evidence in this country. However, in the City of Colombo, Book Mobiles have been seen. Judging by the enthusiasm and the ardour of those making use of this extended service of the CMC, it struck me that Ken Harrison could not have written anything more appropriate. According to the Special Commissioner, Colombo, the mobile library service was inaugurated on 10.01.75, and that this project “is the first of its kind in Sri Lanka.” It is, sad to say, unfortunate that it took the Colombo MC 50 years to introduce this service. Ishvari Corea should be congratulated: one hopes too, that other libraries will be able to embark upon a similar programme, even on a modest scale. It is not everybody who lives near a library and it is not everybody either who can afford frequent visits to a library.

I am reminded of what Ken told me about what ordinary people ordinarily expect from a library and from a librarian. He was of course speaking of his experience in Britain. He told me of an instance when a housewife telephoned the librarian of a prestigious library to inquire from where she could purchase a packet of margarine of a particular brand! In this country, in all likelihood, the anxious housewife may have been advised to go to that other place, which some call hell, by an irate librarian. But in that particular instance, the librarian promised to call back. In the meantime he made inquiries and was able to call back the lady and advise her as to the store from where the purchase could be made. Is that not fantastic? This only shows that people expect information of every description from a library—to use jargon, a library should in addition to being a documentation, retrieval and referral centre could

most usefully be also a ‘clearing house’ to meet situations such as the one posed by the housewife in Britain. A library should be developed to be the focal point of communal life in the locality.

Having regard to the present prices of books, the suggestions made by K. V. J. de Silva in his article are certainly worth pursuing. It is almost impossible for the average citizen to purchase a book these days. Prices have sky rocketed to astronomical heights. Thus it was very thoughtful of Ishvari Corea to have included this article. Mr. de Silva’s recommendation that “it is imperative that serious and far-seeing steps are taken immediately to ensure that the youth of the country have made available to them the kind of reading materials they both need and are thirsting for” deserves the serious consideration of government. I must take this opportunity to re-iterate the suggestions made by various organisations and individuals that prices of books must be brought down. Prices, in some instances, have been unconscionably high and quite irrational. A prestigious bookseller in the Fort quoted Rs. 56/50 for a book I needed, which I was later in the day able to pick up for a mere Rs. 30/- in a less fashionable book stall. That was really hard to beat.

I happen to be running into librarians ever so often. Evelyn Evans whose interesting article is included was also in this country about 10 years ago. I believe she was on a UNESCO assignment. While lunching with her in one of our badly neglected resthouses, but often delightfully situated, she reminisced. She almost painted my own dreams about a library and its place in society. It was therefore not surprising for me to read what she says in the article. “It is early in life that a taste for books and the habit of using libraries and their resources are most

likely to be acquired. Separate areas should be provided for them (in the libraries)" Local government authorities pay special attention to this aspect in most of the larger libraries. It is understood that the Department of Local Government spends large sums of money by way of outright cash grants to local authorities to develop an efficient network of libraries throughout the country. This is money well spent. The International Year of the Child in 1979 would be an ideal opportunity to enlarge and enhance the Children's library service.

Writing of Evelyn Evans, I am reminded of an interesting interlude at the Resthouse—it is not totally irrelevant in this context. Evelyn found the windows (glass panes) closed. Since we were very close to the sea, she suggested to the Resthouse Keeper that the windows be opened to let in some fresh air. The man was very reluctant—I thought he was being rude. With a little persuasion by my guest, the man opened the windows—they went crashing down, much to his chagrin but to our amusement. He had an impish twinkle in his otherwise dull eyes and Evelyn Evans swore she would never again set foot inside that Resthouse. Government Agents and local bodies looking after resthouses had better take note.

My good friend W. M. A. Warnasuriya, who presided over the destinies of the Library Board has made a useful contribution. Although he came to the Board from Malay Street Headquarters of the Ministry of Education at that time (early 1971) he was a dedicated 'librarian' fired with a missionary zeal. I am aware that he helped many libraries to enhance their services. He has set out the functions assigned to the Board under the Act setting up the Board and con-

cludes "How far the Board can succeed in this endless but challenging adventure time alone will show." One cannot agree with him more. "Deny me anything but time" wrote Napoleon. The Board has had enough time so far—it will be good to know what it has achieved hitherto since 1971. :

The fact that I have not made particular reference to many other articles should not be taken to mean that they did not interest me—they did considerably. Space does not permit me to comment on all of them, but I would like to refer the librarians to the exhortation of Anthony Vaughan, formerly of the British Council, contained in the last paragraph of his article.

Ishvari Corea must be congratulated for bringing out this publication—and of course the others who helped her to do so. Her own contribution giving the genesis of the Colombo Public Library, of those who worked hard to make it possible and her generous acknowledgment of the work of her predecessor and his staff was interesting reading. How many people know that Public Libraries are a function, not yet mandatory, assigned to local government authorities? Her review of the short-term and long-term plans give us much hope.

It is however, very disappointing to read that the foundation stone was laid in 1965 for the Central Library, estimated to cost 5 million rupees at that time. Nothing was apparently done since then. Passing the World War I memorial column along Green Path, it appears that work on this project has started. The delay of 12 years needs some explanation, for the inactivity of 12 years will in all probability cost the CMC another

couple of millions—at whose expense, the tax-payers of course. Was the delay due to bureaucratic apathy, bungling or plain indifference? We are certain, however that now with the present Minister of Local Government, several heads will roll if public money is allowed to be wasted thus. It is understood that it is now the unalterable rule enforced by the Prime Minister who is also the Minister of Local Government, Housing and Construction that foundation stones shall not be laid, unless work can continue from the word go.

Ishvari Corea should not be discouraged. The Special Commissioner and Mrs. Corea will, it is hoped, see this project through so that the City of Colombo will have a modern public library very soon.

I cannot conclude this review without reference to the article by Raji Ratnam. Her elegant turn of phrase, felicity of diction left me wishing she had written more. War and Peace is without doubt an epic. She quotes Andrei, it's hero. Lying wounded on the battle-field, "What turmoil" thinks Andrei, of life and death while cannon shots boom around him. "What will it all prove"? The answer can be found as Raji writes "in a library more than any place else, do you realise that men are destined for eternity, not for yesterday, today or tomorrow. As you wander around the gathered books, you have lived through the rise and fall of many civilisations. The timelessness, the unbroken continuity of life, overwhelms you". Those who know Ishvari Corea can be certain that she will keep this thought in mind when she develops the new library.

ACID BOMB EXPLOSION—3

Chapter Three

STRANGE
HAPPENINGS

James Goonewardene

The Story So Far

Deva, an England-returned artist, failed to make the grade in Sri Lanka's art world, and sought a job as an art teacher in an outstation Maha Vidyalaya. He travels down by train from the metropolis, is drawn into a friendship with Ariya, the manager of the rest-house in that town. After an interesting interview, Piyaratne, the Principal appoints him as Art teacher. Piyaratne is the dedicated school master-cum principal with old world ideals and objectives that many still hold dear. After his interview and his selection as art teacher, Deva returned to the Rest-house.

Now read on.....

It was past five when Deva emerged from his room at the rest house. He had been asleep. He had needed the rest and the time in which to let the effects of the interview wear off. The breeze coming in steadily through the open window had aided his rest. Each time he came back here he felt it was all right to come here, to this backwash to take a job; it was not the best sort of thing a man could wish for, but if, each day, he could retire to a peaceful place such as this everything would be all right. It was impossible to say what it was going to be like in another six months but, at the moment, there were things here that would compensate him for difficulties he underwent elsewhere. In any case he had taken the first step. A thousand mile journey, the Chinese said, began

with but a single step. That's what he had done—started out on his journey.

He wandered out into the verandah. The sun was low in the western sky. He went in the direction of the dining room and discovered the manager in his little cubicle, bent over a ledger like a money lender counting his assets. The manager always surprised him—that he should be here, doing this job seemed in some curious way unaccountable and decidedly a mystery; yet he seemed in another strange sort of way to fit into the setting like a priest would in a monastery, a dislodged boulder in the centre of a mountain stream. He looked up from his ledger, and smiled.

"I let you sleep on—seemed to need your rest and so I didn't wake you for your afternoon tea."

"It's what I have come for now."

"Yes, oh yes, you can have a cup of tea." The manager went off in the direction of the kitchen.

This was not like a resthouse at all—more like a hermitage, thought Deva—that's what it reminded him of. It had the deep silence and restfulness of one—so different from the air-conditioned hotels they were building in the tourist places with their breathless efficiency and carpeted silence. Both the manager and the way the place was apparently being run seemed to dove-tail like a mountaineer and his cabin. If it was rest and silence people wanted they had it here. Why did anyone want to alter anything that was naturally good, disturb its equilibrium, to bring in the rush and madness of the material world? He had seen enough of the push-pull, maggot-ridden relationships of the cities. This place was good enough for him.

"How did the interview go?" asked the manager.

Deva turned the corners of his mouth down. He had no joy or disappointment in accepting the job—one took it as one took a dose of castor oil for an illness.

"Well," he said, shrugging his shoulders disparagingly. "It could have gone off better."

"You mean you didn't get the job?"

"Oh, yes, I got the job—it was the school—something wrong about it; it was like an old cabinet in which the woodworms had started to attack from inside it—and the Principal—he too seemed an odd sort of a man."

"The Principal!" exclaimed the manager, his eyes widening.

"Is that the impression you got of him?"

"Yes, there was something odd about him—he talked—in the space of a few minutes he lectured to me on culture, art, tradition, nationalism—all the things I have come here to avoid."

The manager had a sudden distressed look on his face. "Did he really lecture to you about all that?"

"Yes, he did and he began to bore me; but I needed the job."

"It's so unlike him."

"You know him."

"Yes, I do."

Deva seemed to fumble about in his mind for something to say.

"You think he was right to do that?"

"No, not that—its the way you put it—the way you have got your claws into him."

"I've got my claws into him? I don't understand. I told you what happened—that was all. You think it's right for a man to lecture to you on nationalism, tradition and all that the first time he gets hold of you?"

The manager was silent a long moment. It was as if he had lost

contact with Deva, lost the fellow feeling he had earlier. He stirred after a moment. The waiter arrived with the tea. Deva moodily poured it, measured two spoonfuls of sugar and began to stir thoughtfully. The manager sat there and watched him in the manner of some one who had trapped a strange animal and did not know how to deal with it.

He had, out of nowhere, arrived in the sleepy little town. It was however, not for him to like or dislike his customers. A man pays for his stay and he must be provided with his needs.

"All right, I'll leave you now. There are things I have to do if there's anything you.....?"

"Yes, that's fine," said Deva. He sat there a long while just staring to the sea. After a time he lit a cigar and smoked it broodingly and gradually he seemed lost in some private world of his own—a lone, solitary figure in an empty craft out on a lonely sea. There was a curious sadness about him.

The evening deepened. The thick grove of coconut palms cast a shadow over the foreground. To the left of him Deva saw through the trees an outrigger boat come ashore. Two fishermen leapt off it and started to haul it up the beach. A crow flew off a coconut tree and swooped down on a crab on the beach, but missing it started to go after it. Nothing, perhaps ever happened around here, he thought, only a crow going after a crab or a boat coming ashore. He felt the silence grow deeper as the twilight slowly passed into night. He had felt it ever since he had been to the school—an unseen hand manipulating a variety of trouble spots from behind the scene here; there were things here that one could not quite account for, things that didn't seem normal—the twitch over the eye of the Principal and his decaying

school, a resthouse to which people had stopped coming, the listless manner in which people sat in the boutiques and dozed at the bus stands, waiting for buses that never seemed to come, drains choked with filth and never cleared, the sullen immobility with which men and women squatted on the side; it disturbed him. He hadn't expected to see this town in this condition.

Somewhere at the back of the building the electric generator had been started. The steady thudding of the motor went on for a while before the lights began to come on. One of the waiters went round switching them on. The dim, yellow lights did not do much to brighten the place—it pushed the shadows back a bit but they lingered outside the circle of light, creating a ghostly fringe where things seemed to move mysteriously. Deva picked up some magazines from the table and began to glance at them. They were copies of the *Time* magazine. The Vietnam war and the Middle Eastern crisis were two years older. There were reviews of films that had become dated. He glanced through the rest of them without interest. They were all dated. New things were happening. New people were taking charge of things. There were new heads of governments. They had replaced others who had governed earlier. The world was on the move, but here and there they made attempts to roll it back or even keep it still. He returned the magazines to the table. There was a tattered copy of a journal of the Automobile Association. Someone had drawn figures on the inside of it, someone who had sat there and drawn these pencilled images while his mind brooded on other matters. What strange people had stopped at this resthouse, bound as they, no doubt, were to some other destination down the coast.

"Would you like a chair out in the lawn?" asked the manager, appearing suddenly. "You'll prefer it to sitting inside and trying to read in the dim light of the verandah—if you want to read you could do it better in your room—there are table lamps there."

"Yes, I'll sit out."

The manager had decided to put himself out to make his visitor's stay pleasant. He had recovered his good humour. Deva agreed that reading on the verandah was out of the question and being told it was better sitting in the lawn, where he could see the river, he decided he'll follow the suggestion.

While he stood outside and waited for his chair he thought about the manager. He was not the sort of person one put into a category—he was deep, but eluded the easy definition. He was the sort of man one liked or disliked, at once, without too much hankering after explanations. Yet he had the capacity to give that touch of companionship a stranger in the place would often need on his first visit here. For that one had to be thankful. Deva, thinking about him, wandered deeper into the darkness. One could like or dislike the resthouse too. One could not be lukewarm about it. It had the austerity of a monastery and the cosiness of a mountain cabin. Yet it was so within reach, with a town, a shabby town, no doubt, but an accessible town nearby. Then, again, according to one's temperament one liked or disliked it. One came to stay here for a long time or went away at the first opportunity. He heard footsteps and he turned. It was the manager with the waiter, bringing him a chair.

"You'll need another chair if you are going to join me," said Deva.

"You want me to...another chair...yes...I'll do that."

"Unless you have something more important to attend to."

"No...no, I am free now. I am quite free."

Ariya, the manager, had tried not to forget he was doing a job here; it had been his rule not to fraternise with his visitors. One had to choose the course of one's life and avoid the pitfalls. The moment he had cast his eyes on Deva, however, he had told himself that here was a man adrift like himself, looking for some place in which to abide for awhile before he made a more lasting decision.

"It's all right," he said. "I can sit with you for a short time."

The breeze had dropped and the night sounds had suddenly got pinpointed. A branch creaked somewhere and a fish flopped in the river. The bridge out on their right was barely visible in the dark.

"Have you any beer?" asked Deva.

"Yes, you want a bottle?"

"Yes, and, of course, you'll take a glass yourself.?"

"I'd better not...generally I don't accept drinks from visitors. It's a principle I stick to—it prevents trouble."

"I don't get you."

"It defies explanation—you don't know why but people do things you can't find an explanation for—all you need to do is to take a glass of beer from a visitor to stir up trouble for oneself."

"A glass of beer...why should there be trouble?"

"An anonymous petition will be written nevertheless—I am doing a job here—someone else has been eyeing it too. He gets into his head to write about the sinister transactions you are supposed to be having with your visitors."

Deva looked at his companion frowningly. "It either starts in some dark region of the man's brain or it is just on the surface—someone doesn't like another fellow having a break and wants to cut in."

Deva shrugged his shoulder. "It doesn't make sense. I've been too long away from home, maybe. I am inclined to forget these things exist. They perhaps surface only in times of stress".

"There's stress always. People scrounge around all the time. Jobs are hard to get—the stress is there and one gets thrown off balance."

"People resort to charms, don't they? It has had a longer history—are they the same sort of people who do that?"

"Resorting to charms...yes, in a way the two things are connected. Those who write petitions are the ones who will also resort to charms. It springs in the same odd place in the brain. Despite two thousand years of Buddhism people will resort to a *hooniyam* or a *kodivina*—all primitive practices—people have dealt in these here for centuries—causing harm to one's enemies from remote control. There has been a professional class of petition writers as there have been professional makers of charms and mantrams—causing death to people from remote control, for money."

"The poison pen and black magic is not confined to this country...you find it in Europe."

"I agree, but the need to do it seems to be more persistent here" Deva sighed and leaning back in his chair he stretched his legs out.

"But still the peace here—its good; one is not threatened—why then trouble oneself about things one doesn't know about."

The manager smiled, but refrained from comment. Deva's eyes were suddenly fixed on the

fireflies flitting around, down near the river. It was so long since he had last seen this, these bits of sequin whirling around in the dark. Who would want to disturb the peace here? Who would be violent? He sat up and told Ariya about his need for a boarding. He told him about the hostel the Principal had suggested.

"The hostel," said Ariya. "That's no good. I know the set up there."

"I was actually thinking of some other place I can get boarded at."

The manager stared back at Deva, saying nothing for a moment

"I need time," he said.

"You'll have time. I am going back in the morning and shall return only a day or two later."

"We'll try to work something out—shouldn't have much difficulty, I think."

"I don't want to tax you over my affairs. I am a stranger after all."

They sat there and let the silence grow around them. Now and then Deva glanced at his companion who looked as if he had gone to sleep, his legs stretched out and his head thrown back on the headrest—a man who had made his peace with life and was not going to let things disturb his mountain-like calm.

"Talking of petitions," said the manager, stirring into life, suddenly, a physically wiry man, with lean, strong arms—no fat of any kind—a man who had had to rough it out and had learned how to stay on top—a wanderer, a mendicant—a priest. "I must tell you of some, thing that happened to me. It got me worried for a while. It seems so peaceful here—one thinks that nothing ever happens—this is really an illusion." He paused here.

"I can believe that," said Deva.

"The chairman of the Urban Council—he is my boss—I am answerable to him in the running of this place. Recently his officers

got into the habit of calling here, suddenly. That was all right. Then they got to checking the books and taking stock. I had no fear of that. They had a right to do that but after a time I got the feeling they were keeping tabs on me. They kept popping up every little while; sometime in the morning, sometime later in the day—they were looking for something; it was difficult to say what; I thought then, someone's been sending petitions—some sneaky, undercover man. I didn't think I had enemies—but someone had, for some unknown reason got his knife into me—this proved it—there was no other reason I could think of, but how and when I had made this enemy I had no idea. This was how it was. I had an enemy without a face. It went on for a while—I didn't let it bother me, however—let the thing just float over me—I behaved like a rubber ball in a mountain stream as the Zen masters advice you to become. The Zen idea bolstered me for a while”.

The manager paused and stared into the dark as if he were trying to get the sequence of events right, and then he continued; “strangely all this began after a curious incident.”

Deva leaned forward, picked up, his glass and took a swig of beer, and the manager waited. “The incident I am talking about happened about a month back, I am not convinced it has any direct connection with the chairman's interest in the running of the rest-house—of course, he is a man of a certain political complexion—but I saw no connection: it didn't seem to have a connection; you see, there's a lot more secret activity everywhere nowadays than in the past—smuggling for instance, hooch distilling—there has even been talk of gun running; you see, life's altered a lot since you and I were boys. One evening I had

gone down the beach for a stroll. It was getting dark at the time. I was coming to a spot, not far from where the river meets the sea—you'll see it eventually—there's a clump of screwpine growing on the top of the sandbar at that point—I was approaching this place when I heard a whistle—a sound you make with your fingers in the mouth; it was sudden and unexpected; it was a signal; the next moment a young man in a pair of close fitting shorts and a bush coat emerged from the clump and stood in my path—a well, set, dark young man with his hair closely-cropped. I had not seen him before. I am not a weakling—still a little strength left in me, and I've got into spots before and I felt I could look after myself. This could be an attempt to waylay me, I thought and rob me. He tried to make it seem as if he wasn't really obstructing me, but actually he was, and the questions he asked were meaningless, but it was his way of holding me up. This went on for sometime. I was on the point of striking him when there was suddenly another signal—this time, from further down the beach. When that happened the young man turned suddenly and ran; he ran in the direction of the signal. I gave chase. It wasn't easy running on the beach. He had got a good start. I just managed to see him scramble into a boat in which there were a couple of others, and they rowed off.”

“Obviously hooch—you came suddenly on some man engaged in the making of hooch.” “They couldn't have been making hooch—you can't do that on the open beach. They could have been hiding bottles of hooch in the sand, if it was hooch they were dealing with. On the other hand it could have been something more sinister. They could have been hiding weapons—they could have been

doing anything—trafficking in drugs. It was something illegal. Of course, the thing didn't end there. I searched the beach. I searched in the morning as well. Then came these post cards asking me to mind my business—asking me not to go probing into things that didn't concern me. Several times, after that I had visits from groups of people who came and prowled around, looked at me truculently and then disappeared. Nothing happened until the chairman seemed to get busy and develop a sudden interest in the rest-house.”

“Certainly it is very odd.”

“It is odd.”

“Has anything else happened since then?”

“No, it has all gone quiet.”

“That's a consolation.”

NEXT:

THE BROTHER IN COLOMBO

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IN COLOMBO

Afro-Asian International Conference

by T. Duraisingam

An international conference of the Afro-Asian Peoples' Solidarity Organisation is to be held in Sri Lanka at the Bandaranaike Memorial International Conference Hall, Colombo, from 27th to 29th June 1978. Among the topics to be discussed would be those on the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace and on the struggles against Apartheid and against Zionism. An Yousef El Sebai memorial meeting will be held during the sessions of this international conference. Over 150 delegates from about

92 Asian, Arab, African and Socialist countries and International organisations are expected to participate at this conference.

The Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Organisation, with its headquarters at Cairo, is a peoples' organisation having official support and recognition in most non-aligned and socialist countries. It originated and developed in the process of the struggle for peace conducted by the Asian and African peoples, within the framework of the world wide peace movement which unites peoples of diverse political opinions and religions who belong to different classes of society, but are at one in their desire to prevent war and assure lasting peace.

The first conference of this Organisation was held in Cairo on 26th December 1957—1st January 1958. Participating at this conference were 500 representatives from 48 countries of Asia and Africa and who represented the aspirations of nearly 1500 million inhabitants of these countries and whose forefathers were the founders of culture and civilization in the world and who had now been reduced in their persons, their lands and waters to mere objects of exploitation by another part of the world.

The participants denounced the scandalous exploitation, tyranny and racial segregation perpetrated by imperialists and racists; they disclosed the numbers of the patriots executed by colonialism, to what extent the treasures of the earth had been looted and the number of resistance fighters killed, humiliated and imprisoned. But at the same time, they affirmed their desire for peace and that they did not wish to fight hatred with hatred, in spite of what they had suffered under colonialism. This is what the Afro-Asian peoples affirmed in their first meeting in Cairo at the beginning of 1958.

For a continued period of twenty years they strove and struggled, had their ordeals and their victories, in order that they may achieve their goal of making the world a better place to live in.

The present International Conference, organised under the auspices of the Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Organisation, is hosted by its affiliate organisation, the Afro-Asian Solidarity Association of Sri Lanka. The conference will debate and come to a decision on the definition and development of the tasks of the Afro-Asian Solidarity Movement in the present political situation, especially in respect of the following issues: The liberation movements in Southern Africa, the struggle against apartheid and racism, the Middle East Question and the Struggle of the Palestinian People for their legitimate rights, the struggle of the national Arab liberation movement and the combat against Zionism, the military bases in the Indian Ocean and struggle for transformation of the Indian Ocean into a zone of Peace, the question of development and establishment of a New International Economic Order and equitable economic relations, the Movement of Non-Alignment, its anti-imperialist content and the strengthening of the co-operation between the solidarity movement and the Non-Alignment movement, the question of disarmament and detente and finally the consolidation of relations between the solidarity movement and the UN system and the Non-governmental organisations.

A meeting in commemoration of the late Youssef El Sebai, the founder Secretary General of the AAPSO will be held. He fell a martyr to the cause of the Solidarity Movement to which he devoted his whole life. He was assassinated while leading the Presidium Session of the AAPSO in

Nicosia, on the 18th February 1978. During the morning of 29th June 1978 a Consultative Regional Meeting of AAPSO on Asian Co-operation will be held.

The Afro-Asian Peoples' Solidarity Organisation stands side by side with all forces struggling for the freedom and dignity of man. It is committed to go forward as a major part of the world anti-imperialist and anti-colonialist front. It gives its absolute support to the militant peoples' struggle for freedom and independence and to achieve their social, economic and cultural development and progress.

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SRI LANKA CHRONICLE

June 13 — 18

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.

TUESDAY, JUNE 13: Sri Lanka is reportedly gaining a positive image in the usually critical eyes of three Washington-based institutions: the World Bank, the IMF and the US State Department; all three have promised increased assistance to Sri Lanka—and a collectively receptive ear to the ongoing problems of economic development. The Rev. S. Yoshida lead-

ing of the Nichirenshu Nikayya—one of the five biggest Nikkayas in Japan presently leading a delegation from Japan to this country, told the President that all the Buddhists of Japan were awaiting his arrival for the 12th General Conference of the World Fellowship of Buddhists scheduled to be held in Tokyo in September this year. Twenty leading international banks wish to establish branch offices in the FTZ. Public corporations must either improve and show profit or close down; the government cannot and will not submit them at the expense of the consumer or the people; this was the firm and unequivocal statement made by the Minister of Finance. The Soviet Union will assist the Mahaweli Development Board in completing the upper and Lower Uma Oya projects under the accelerated programmes; the total cost of the project is expected to be more than Rs. 680 million—CDN. The new draft constitution will firmly establish the position that the source and authority of all power within the state are derived from the people and provide full protection and enforcement of fundamental rights. 'Obviously some parties think that the people have very short memories how else could one understand the cynicism and duplicity which underlies the ULF statement' this is the question posed by the UNP in reply to a statement issued by the ULF in which it 'condemns and denounces' the Criminal Procedure Law and the Proscribing of Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam and other similar organisations law as laws which would disgrace the statute book of any civilised country. The government would import 500 cars for distribution among the taxi owners said the Minister of Transport—CDM. The people of Sri Lanka are to be served by the bureaucracy at their doorstep; problems besetting them

will in future be given a patient hearing in their own electorates and on the spot solutions effected through the concept of community centres which the government has proposed to set up on an electoral basis. The Sri Lanka government has refused to extend the visa of an American professing himself to be a member of the Anand Marg movement. At the invitation of the government of Sri Lanka, Keng Piao, Vice Premier of the State Council of the People's Republic of China will pay an official and friendly visit to Sri Lanka from June 21 to 25. Customs last afternoon raided a house in Gurnagar in the Northern Province and discovered 13,000 detonators stored in it, allegedly smuggled from India—SU. The seven youths who were arrested in Vavuniya and Killinochchi have been released on bail—VK. The salary of government clerks is to be increased by Rs. 105; a special committee has been appointed to prepare the details of this—DP. A large youth settlement scheme on 5000 acres of land in the Vavuniya District; land is to be allocated on a basis of ten acres for each youth; the Minister of Plantation Industries is making arrangements to implement this scheme as soon as possible—EN. President Ferdinand Marcos was sworn in yesterday as the Phillippines first PM at the opening of the country's new legislature after nearly six years of martial law. A group of prominent lawyers, former judges and politicians opposed to President Marcos today called on the government to dismantle US military bases in the Phillippines. South Africa's economy could only last about 2 years if its oil was cut off by an embargo according to a study made for the UN Centre against Apartheid. China cancelled some of its aid to Vietnam as the funds were received to support over 100 thousand overseas Chinese

expelled from Vietnam—CDM. President Anwar Sadat has concluded a 24 million dollars arms deal with France covering the purchase of tanks, helicopters and a radar system covering the whole red sea area the weekly magazine October said yesterday—SU.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 14:

Libya has opened her doors to Sri Lankan workers; it is possible that a special training program for skilled workers anxious to work in Libya will be launched here with Libyan assistance. The standardisation of bus fares will come into effect on July 1; there will be a very small increase in the fares but it will not be a burden on the commuter said the Minister of Transport. The government of Canada will gift 2,517 metric tons of full cream milk powder to Sri Lanka today. The country's 22 Kachcheris will be streamlined and re-organised completely to meet functional needs or the decentralised district administrative system which will come into operation soon. A Code of Conduct for doctors in government service has been drawn up by the GMOA. An international commercial complex and a duty free shopping arcade are to be set up in Colombo; the Minister of Trade is behind this venture—CDN. The total number of seats in the NSA is expected to be 196. The Vasu Group in the GCSU is now assured of capturing power at the 58th annual general meeting to be held on June 30. OIC's of all police stations have been instructed by the IGP to work in close co-operation with the community centres and help improve police-public relations—CDM. Sweden has agreed to buy a large consignment of garments manufactured in Sri Lanka from October 1 this year; this will include 450,000 shirts, 440,000 blouses and 160,000 trousers among other garments. Air fares from Colombo to desti-

nations in South Asia including India, Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh and Afghanistan will go up from June 15th. Sri Lanka was saddled with a demurrage bill amounting to 963,173,44 US dollars in respect of its imports of fertilisers for 1977 alone; this is apparently because of the lack of vehicles in the Fertilizer Corporation for prompt transport—SU. The Palmyrah Products Corporation will begin operations from July 15; its HQ's will be in Jaffna—DP. The Coconut Marketing Board has warned that there will be a severe coconut shortage in the immediate future if steps are not taken immediately to increase production; it has pointed out that production was lowest in recent times and that there was a shortfall of 21%—LD. More than 1000 workers fought to prevent heavy oil from spilling into the Pacific after a major earthquake cracked giant oil storage tanks at Sendai North of Tokyo—CDN. Former Indian PM Indira Gandhi has been summoned to appear before the New Delhi Magistrate's Court on July 20 to answer a civil suit filed by the Delhi Transport Corporation for recovery of Rs. 14,235. Israel withdrew the last of its forces from South Lebanon today and handed over control of the border zone to Lebanese Christian militias. The son of former President Suleiman Frankjut was killed in heavy fighting between rival right wing militias in Northern Lebanon today the death toll has risen to at least 32. 21 people were killed and 350 hurt yesterday when the strongest earthquake to hit Japan for 15 years rocked Japan's densely populated main island of Honshu—CDM. President Carter is expected to make another attempt today to persuade Indian PM Morarji Desai to accept strict safeguards over his country's nuclear installations—SU.

THURSDAY, JUNE 15: The government will soon introduce

legislation in Parliament to amend the Fee Charging Employment Agencies Act passed in 1956 and incorporate far reaching legislative changes to protect labour rights of Sri Lankans employed in foreign countries. The Minister of Trade yesterday liberalised with immediate effect the import of a series of items including newsprint and micro buses and passenger vans to ease the pressure on the CTB. Pirivena education should be reorganised in a manner that will not add to the problems facing the sassana; taking cognizance of this fact, the Ministry of Education has prepared a draft Pirivena Education Bill said the Minister of Education—CDN. The new Constitution of Sri Lanka is expected to provide that certain fundamental provisions of the Constitution may be amended in the future not only by a two thirds majority of the NSA but also by referendum. The Minister of Agriculture and Lands yesterday appointed a high powered committee to ensure timely importation and distribution of fertilizer. The prevention of the use of undue influence to obtain preferential treatment on service matters is one of the highlights of the code of conduct which the GMOA hopes to introduce shortly for government doctors. On the instructions of the Minister of Plantation Industries, a scheme has been formulated by the Coconut Cultivation Board in collaboration with the Bank of Ceylon and the People's Bank to provide loan facilities for the financing of replanting and rehabilitation work on coconut lands. The Sri Lankan Foreign Minister delivered a message from President Jayawardene to the Emir of Qatar on ways of strengthening relations between the two countries—CDM. Major trade chambers, organisations of traders and individual businessmen have been called to the rescue of consumers in the country; with this

in view, the government has proposed a scheme whereby consumers with the assistance of these organisations could effectively resist unjustifiable price hikes by traders. Officers of the Department of Social Services with the assistance of the city police will round up all beggars in the city today; they are to be taken in under the Vagrant's Ordinance which is the law which gives the power to the police at the moment for this purpose. The five rupees tickets of admission to the Katunayake International Airport are now being sold in the blackmarket for Rs. 10. The government has decided to publish the report of the Presidential Commission that inquired into the affairs in Air Ceylon as a Sessional Paper. The Galle Face Green is to get a brand new look with colourful flowering trees to provide shade to premenaders; this will be one of the major changes to be effected when the tree planting campaign in the city of Colombo gets started on July 22—SU. The anti-narcotics bureau of the Police has discovered an agreement that has been made between local drug sellers and world drug traffickers to supply 100 million rupees worth of drugs for sale in this country—LD. The Sugar Corporation has drawn up plans to cultivate sugar cane in 100,000 acres in five districts with assistance from the Asian Development Bank—DW. Whisky to the value of Rs. 8 million has been imported between January and May this year—DK. Benazir Bhutto, daughter of Pakistan's condemned PM, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was freed today after three months house arrest. President Carter welcomed Indian PM Morarji Desai to the White House yesterday and defended his recent proposal to sell enriched uranium to India despite differences over nuclear policy—CDN. A senior White House official brushed aside an offer by Cuban

President Fidel Castro to meet President Carter and discuss a bitter row over Cuba's alleged role in the invasion of Zaire's Shaba Province. President Nicolae Ceausescu yesterday began the first state visit to Britain by a communist leader and rode in an open horse-drawn carriage with Queen Elizabeth amidst spectacular military pomp. Former Premier of Rhodesia Garfield Todd yesterday lashed out at Rhodesian security forces and the country's multi-racial transitional government following the Saturday massacre of 22 black civilians in a village north of Salisbury—CDM. Israeli troops withdrew from Southern Lebanon and handed over control of the border zone to local Christian militias yesterday while bloody fighting raged between other Lebanese right-wing forces in the North. China agreed today to a Japanese proposal to resume long-stalled negotiations for a peace and friendship treaty between the two countries and suggested talks should start early next month—SU.

FRIDAY JUNE 16: The estates managed by the Janawasama Commission have shown a remarkable increase in production and income during the first quarter of this year compared with those of the same period last year under the former government. The Foreign Employment Agencies Association of Sri Lanka yesterday welcomed government moves to eliminate mushroom organisations and streamline the method of recruitment of Lankans for employment abroad. The Sri Lanka government will mediate with the government of UK to secure a change in the UK State Pensions Scheme to rectify anomalies that adversely affect Sri Lanka nationals employed there; the Sri Lanka community numbering 30,000 to 35,000 have been agitating for an earlier pension or a

refund of the contributions to pensions when they leave that country irrespective of retirement age. The Southern Campus of the University of Sri Lanka will be sited at Meddawatte and Wellamadama in Matara; the foundation stone will be laid by the Minister of Education on August 12. The Chairman of the Cement Corporation said that the production capacity of the corporation had shot up from 12 to 64 thousand tons per month and that arrangements have been made to export 25,000 tons of cement shortly. The public of Jaffna predominantly Hindus along with Christians, Muslims and Buddhists will decorate their houses with flags tomorrow and on Sunday in honour of the sacred Kapilavastu relics which are expected to be taken there tomorrow—CDN. The Food Department has incurred a liability of 195,000 US dollars by way of demurrage payments to two ships which have been waiting outside the Port of Colombo for over four weeks to discharge a cargo of rice. Kuwait has shown keen interest in exporting the new investment opportunities in Sri Lanka in several rounds of discussions which the Sri Lanka Foreign Minister had with the Kuwait government and business communities. The Deputy Minister of Public Administration and Home Affairs has agreed to appoint a committee to look into the pay scales of government clerks. The coupon system for the issue of subsidiary food items through co-operative will come into operation in Colombo and the suburbs from June 28; this is the prelude to the introduction of this scheme in other areas. The Tamil Nadu government will reserve 200 posts of drivers and 200 posts of conductors for repatriates from Sri Lanka under the Indo-Ceylon agreement of 1964 in various government-owned transport corporations in Tamil Nadu—CDM. All foreign aid to Sri Lanka

will in future be streamlined through a central co-ordinating authority; the President has allocated this function to the Ministry of Finance and Planning which will co-ordinate the foreign aid through its department of External Resources. One of Sri Lanka's most wanted men have been nabbed at the Zurich airport after airport authorities found 6000 grams of hashish in his possession; the detection was made two days ago while the Sri Lankan Mohan Dharmaraja had disembarked at Zurich airport from a Paris bound flight. A Canadian and a British national who were nabbed with 350,000 rupees worth of hashish in their possession were fined Rs. 50,000 each by the Colombo South Magistrate. Workers in the private sector may enjoy the rights of the directors of the institutions in which they work according to draft legislation now being drawn up; according to Trade Ministry sources, a draft bill—'The Employees Investment Bill' is now receiving the serious attention of the government—SU. The Rs. 50 allowance for jobless youths will be paid from August—DM. 40,000 tons of rice, enough to give a pound a week to the whole population for six weeks—is getting spoilt at government warehouses; this consignment of rice which has been imported is now unfit for human consumption—ATH. The National Milk Board hopes to sell a new kind of powdered milk at less than the price of Lakspray. Rs. 1.3 million worth of passion fruit juice has been exported to West Germany. 160 tons of rice gets wasted daily at government milling complexes—DW. Major industrial nations vowed yesterday to work for expanding world trade and to resist new forms of protectionism. Belgian PM Leo Tindemans yesterday submitted his resignation but King Baudouin asked for time to decide whether to accept it, it was announced in Brussels.

General Eusio Silavou UN Middle East Commander said today the UN forces were still not in complete control of Southern Lebanon following the withdrawal of Israeli troops—CDN. The US warned its treaty partners today it would retaliate swiftly if governments persisted in unfair use of export credits to win markets. The PLO representative in Kuwait was shot dead by unknown assailants according to Palestinian sources. The Eritrean People's Liberation Front said in Brussels today its forces killed over 500 Ethiopian troops and sent the Ethiopian army fleeing after a battle near Enticchio about 150 kms South of Asmara—SU. The SWAPO black nationalist movement yesterday joined the Zambian government in accusing South Africa of preparing for a military incursion into Zambia. The grief stricken people of the North Lebanese town of Zgharta buried 33 relatives and friends yesterday and vowed bloody revenge against right-wing gunmen who killed them in a dawn attack—CDM.

SATURDAY, JUNE 17: President Jayawardene's proposal for a World Disarmament Authority was transmitted to the UN General Assembly at the end of the meeting of Foreign Ministers of the Non-Aligned Group chaired by A. C. S. Hameed of Sri Lanka. The 'Aloka Pooja' offering of lights—at the sacred city of Mihintale will be made tomorrow when the PM will turn on the illuminations. Housing and water problems and town and country planning will receive priority in a massive Rs. 4500 million program conceived by the PM; styled the Medium-Term Investment Program, this ambitious multi-faceted scheme will include several parallel undertakings towards affording the people better living conditions, civic amenities and control of communicable diseases caused by slum

dwelings, unsanitary living and marsh lands. The Qatar government would be sending a delegation from the industrial banking and commercial sectors to examine the possibilities of Qatari participation in short and long term development projects in Sri Lanka. Ministers and state officials proposing to travel abroad on official business will in future be required to inform the President of their proposed trips at least two months before leaving the country. The biggest haul of counterfeit 50 rupees notes was made by the police when they swooped down on a small printing works at Dematagoda on Thursday night. The squad car night operation started in Colombo on Monday has proved to be a tremendous crime buster with 51 seasoned criminals nabbed in three nights police reported—SU. Engineers should accept responsibility and not pass the buck; they should prefer a wrong decision to not making any decision; if any decision was made in the best interests of the country, the government would stand by them; this was said by the Minister of Irrigation, Power and Highways yesterday. The Ministry of Textile Industries is exploring all avenues to solve the problem of millions of yards of handloom textiles piling up unsold all over the island because textiles produced at these centres cost more than imported synthetic material; as a result 100,000 handloom textile centres face imminent bankruptcy and loss of employment threatens nearly 150,000 weavers employed at these centres—CDM. President Ferdinand Marcos today ordered the military to prop all charges against nearly 200 people but this arch political rival Benigno Aquino still remained in jail await in his turn for freedom. South African PM, John Vorster yesterday announced the dis-banding of his government's information depart-

ment after months of attack on its secret diplomacy from opposition press and politicians. PM Begin struggling to ward off a dangerous cabinet split conferred with 2 top ministers today on a compromise formula to express Israel's long-term intentions towards occupied Arab land. Italian President Giovanni Leone resigned six months before his term of office was to have ended; this is the first in Italian constitutional history and came after a series of charges in the press that Leone has been guilty of corruption and tax evasion—SU. Some UN peace keeping units in South Lebanon were cut off from their supplies after christian militia units sealed off parts of the region near the Israeli border. Indian PM Morarji Desai returns from his visit to the US tomorrow to face a growing crisis among the leadership of his ruling Janata Party—CDN. University classes were indefinitely suspended yesterday after bloody student clashes over President Carter's visit to Panama today to ratify the Panama Canal treaties. Soweto was in a state of near sieze yesterday as police stepped up what they called an anti-crime drive on the eve of the second anniversary of the bloody racial protest in the black ghettos outside Johannesburg—CDM.

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POEM

Call To Rechristen Christ

They crucified their Saviour,
Not just another Jew;
Forgive their vile behaviour
"They know not what they do."
He fought their vice, corruption,
Their vanity and pride,
They compassed his destruction
And at their hands he died.

His life, His love, His Passion,
His Sermon on the Mount,
These Pharisees refashion,
Rejecting him, their Fount.

Then with the Cross for cover,
They follow with the sword,
They pillage, rape, devour,
While preaching Holy Word.

Full blinded in their vision
By avarice and greed,
They prostitute their mission,
And desecrate their creed.

This ruthless exploitation
Of coloured by the White,
Each now emerging nation
With force of arms will fight.

The Blacks in sheer derision,
Would Jesus Christ rename,
To save the selfless mission
Of one devoid of blame.

Mervyn Casie Chetty.

30.4.78

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BACCHANALIA

by Fair Dinkum

The New Elite

PROBLEMS OF THE VILLAGE. In keeping with the name of this column the writer proposes to begin with the aftermath of the closure of taverns, foreign liquor bars—the first act of the Dharmista Government. Religion wise the idea is a laudable proposition. However, one must look at it pragmatically. Even America with its high rate of literacy and education failed miserably in its attempt at prohibition.

The production of our 'Moonshine' has increased 3 or 4 fold. It has once again become a lucrative cottage industry engaging both young and old. Even widowed

mothers taking over from their late husbands, employ their sons to act as couriers from taverns that are still functioning to provide drinks for the discerning customer. Both government bottled arrack and illicit brew are available at most of the joints, and prices vary according to the quality and even the place of manufacture. e.g. Dankotuwa stuff rates high in quality as well as consumers' preference. (Like Whisky from the Highlands of Scotland).

SOCIOLOGY: After the closure, of taverns, thefts, abuse and assaults have increased as the regular drinker has to go looking for it in some one's back yard or attic. Here he meets other cronies waiting to be served in a much inebriated state. Tensions rise high in such places where arguments take place over the cost or even breaking queues, and the perennial curse of party politics. On the way home the drunkard becomes the king of the road and starts abusing people along the way. He either assaults someone or gets assaulted himself and may find himself in a trench till a dear one comes along to fetch him.

On the other hand the licensed liquor bars were sited in close proximity to police stations, and normal police patrols were able to maintain law and order to a great extent. Here 4 or 5 people would get together and contribute for a bottle which they would invariably take into the back room of a nearby boutique where a plate of "taste" awaits them. This custom is similar to the war veterans in Russia who stood at the corner of a pub and raise their thumb to indicate that he is first to pool for a bottle of Vodka. This is followed by the next interested person who will raise his first finger and the process is followed till sufficient number have pooled for the bottle, usually 4 or 5.

In certain areas the Excise department has restricted its regular vigilance and operate only from a base station, and that too on a tip off. This puts the onus of detection on the police with its limited supply of men, vehicles and fuel. (Not forgetting the political influence wielded by the illicit dealers, who may have contributed in many ways to the politicos success.

ECONOMICS: The small holders sugar cane industry was once flourishing from a national point of view, because the syrup was utilised for the manufacture of jaggery, treacle and sweetmeats, without drawing on the imported sugar. Now most of it goes into producing 'Moonshine'. The prices have dwindled and enthusiasm for cultivating sugar cane has died. The local traders cannot cope with the demand. A hundred gallons of syrup bought in from more productive areas disappear overnight like hot bread when flour under PL 480 is in short supply.

GROUSE OF THE COMMON MAN: While he is deprived of a reasonably good quality drink reasonably priced the more affluent the 'nouveau riche' and the political power brokers have in no way given up or reduced their consumption of liquor and this is done quite openly in their spacious lawns or verandhas. Quite often it is reported that government and board vehicles are seen parked near licensed taverns situated several miles away from their respective bases. Saturday nights for these new village leaders (come up thorough political stooging) are gala nights when the peoples' representative is invariably present along with AGA's, Medical Officers, Divisional Engineers, Highways supervisors, even a self nominated legal adviser—a mere petti-fogg—and Estate Development Board Project Managers and their assistants

who hardly know the difference between a coconut and arecanut

The venal government servant (expecting a promotion or transfer) and the spineless yes-men all get together. They congregate for the free booze offered by any one of the new rich or aspiring ones to shower encomium on their representatives and their generous host who is eyeing something lucrative (a government contract a directorship in a Corporation or board, or even a JP ship). At such gatherings policy matters, development and even acts of revenge against their political opponents or rivals—business men who don't see eye to eye with this new group of "managerial elite" are discussed.

The members of this group appear to be experts or specialists on different subjects discussed. Though most of them would not even know the difference between 'Das Capitol' and the Capitol theatre. Discussions go on late into the night, and as the blood alcohol rises more and more the problems of the village are solved, (theretically of course). And, also if and when the government decides to reopen the foreign liquor bars, who out of this new elite should be given the license?

Round about midnight the local cabinet members begin to disperse. The bottles are empty. The alcohol content is still higher, sometimes the sound of broken glass and shouts are heard by neighbours who dare not complain. A peace loving resident may even be disturbed by an obnoxious telephone call. Then the 'Sirs' get into the 6 or 7 Sri cars or jeeps. The engines are started, revved and disappear into the darkness—God knows where. A week later the same thing is repeated, but no new project appears to come up—not even a brick.

Are these new 'Electromagnets' any better or worse than the previous lot?

'Why 'Electromagnet'? Their source of power comes from political power. Once the power is switched off they cease to attract anybody and they themselves fall.

THE MEDIA AND SRI LANKA

Developmental Journalism

by Shirley J. Payoe

In the 1960s Tarzie Vitachi, doyen of Sri Lankan journalists, and Ambitabha Chowdhury began a move to lift Asian journalism from its conventional flummeries. They hoped to elevate the profession to a level that would give the print media in the region a relevance to the national developments taking place there. Vitachi saw "a whole era of development in Asia unfolding without the mass media." With fellow scribes Alan Chalkley and Juan L. Mercado they set out with missionary zeal to produce a new crop of journalists to take up the challenge posed by the new areas of reporting and writing.

They hoped to give the new journalists a training in the economics and the sociology of development. Vergal Santas was to charge: "With few exceptions, the profession in the region had attracted to its rank those who had the special sanctity of the unqualified. But the issues of the time, as now, if to be analysed, called for a certain skill, for certain attitudes of the mind, for a unique understanding of the cultural and the historical forces which made up the backdrop against which the socio-economic landscape of the region was being transformed."

One of the aims the innovators set themselves was to devote their skills to examine the fate and the interests of the bottom segments of the populations in Asia for whom, in the final analysis, the decision makers were doing all their plan-

ning. The prime movers also set out to free Asian journalism from its dependence on jargon-filled official press releases. They resorted to a writing style that was lucid and unpretentious and designed to make quick sense to the average reader.

When Alan Chalkley addressed his "Manual of Development Journalism" to the Phillipino pressmen he set down the basic philosophy of the new adventurers. They sought to make the readers aware of the gravity of the development problem, to make them think about the problem and to open their eyes to possible solutions. The adventures in their enthusiasm even hoped to dent the vicious circle of poverty and degradation that year after year engulfed so many lives in Asia.

The group moved into action with a will. In September 1969 from their Manila-based headquarters they launched DEPTH news. Their non-profit news-agency which derived its name from Development Economics and Population Themes (uppermost in the mines of the group) bombarded newspaper offices with development-oriented features.

Meantime in 1975 India began using experimentally a NASA satellite to telecast development information 4 hours a day to 5000 selected villages scattered throughout the country. Half the targetted area received direct reception while the balance depended on indirect reception through boosters and a rediffusion system. Family planning, agriculture, national integration, child and adult education, health and hygiene were subjects dealt with in the TV programmes originated by All India Radio.

Such innovations never touched Sri Lanka. In its insularity the country even failed to be concerned by the

definite down grading of the radio and print media which occurred particularly during the last gasping years of each political regime. The rock bottom was reached during the last seven years. This was when journalism became the paradise of hacks and political slogan-makers, journalists the closetted pets of professional politicians for whom the development and preservation of the fourth estate were of little concern. King-makers roles were assigned to white-washers whose only assets were an ability to overlook the sins of commission and omission that made the nation as a whole slide backwards. What these men did achieve, however, was to bring about the ruin of their masters by shielding them from the true will of the masses. The creation of consent as an art—or is it a science?—was unknown to them.

The slow uneventful additive processes by which any purposeful government must seek solutions for pressing national issues—especially when these undertakings had to occur against the backdrop of ceaseless political ching-footing which characterises our national way of life—was another thing that left our journalists completely at sea.

Language limitations, restricted horizons and ideological blinkers made the inadequacies worse. Clearly, the national crises, of population growth, unemployment, corruption and high-riding by public men and women, were beyond the understanding and scope of most pressmen. It is no wonder that the king-makers soon found themselves doing an undertaker's job for their clay gods.

The exceptional men sought jobs outside while yet others at-

tached themselves to foreign newspapers. Only in this way could they preserve their sanity and their self-respect or derive an element of job-satisfaction.

The Sri Lanka press has been the subject of many estimates. In *Ceylon; Dilemmas Of A New Nation*, Prof. W. Howard Wriggins (now His Excellency the US Ambassador to our country) has said, "Of all the countries in South and South East Asia, Ceylon has the most active press with the largest circulation. . . Few countries can boast of a similar skilful critical press." However His Excellency did not miss the fact that the press could play a more directly constructive role in the future of the country.

A more sharper picture of the press is painted by D. T. S. A. Dissanayake in his book *Dudley Senanayake of Sri Lanka* published in 1975. Here the author after examining the ills of press concentration, suggests that remedial action perhaps lies in a diffusion of ownership and, secondly, in "the creation of a professional body to check on the un-professional activities of journalists, many of whom are worse than hack writers." An even more forthright view has been expressed by Esmond Wickremasinghe, who headed Lake House from 1947 to 1967, in an article published abroad in 1977. He viewed press reforms thus: "This can only be done by the restoration of professional standards in the mass media, and the immediate dismissal of politicians, bureaucrats and party functionaries who have come to clog the media. Short of that, there are no other ways of restoring professional credibility." (*Media*,—June 1977). Hope of a rejuvenated press have now risen. But unless the moves are watched with care (and the first things are placed first in a reasoned order of priority) the reforms would fizzle out in ano-

ther bureaucratic takeover. The de-linking process in thinking, which is essential to any new innovation, runs the risk of being by-passed by over-much concern with trivialities such as press complexes and modern gadgetry. Old thinking and old ways would continue and Sri Lanka would have to be content with the mild stir caused by nothing more serious than 'a revolution of fools'.

Examples of persisting old styles of working are easy enough to find. For instance, one could take the Publicity Division set up by a Ministry to generate enthusiasm for the state's development programmes. It died during childbirth after producing a single monstrous advertisement. Meanwhile, the Information Department reportedly bungled the Press Directory, a task performed single-mindedly by journalist, Gami Nayaratne, in 1971. It would be a pity if the opportunities afforded by Development Journalism, to obtain the goodwill and motivation of "an informed, interested, rational and participatory public", it wasted at a time like this when the nation is at the crossroads of growth and decay.

* * *

Gramma Sastra-10

Scribblings on Uva Villages

An Unlucky Land?

by Gamiya

"There's a happy land somewhere,
And it's best that I should go"—

So must that bride have sung who sneaked out with a few hundred rupees on her wedding day, when she happily stole a march

over her rudely-exploiting employer. For she and her nineteen companions had been worked to the bone.

She left her town-slum (in a hill country town of Sri Lanka, not far away from here) and went everyday into a village area, to a so-called biscuit manufactory run by a foreigner who exploited local labour and did it with great gusto. Twenty girls and 5 boys, for lack of other avenues of employment after tragic schooling, sought to get under this heel, if even "for something."

Let's take Silanee's (a made-up name) case: she starts working at 6 am and finishes her morning work at 12.30. A half-hour for lunch, gobbles it down and gets back to work at 1 pm and she sticks on there till 5 pm. A full ten hours work. She cuts biscuits with a tough mould which she has to press down for making a hundred pounds of biscuits per day. Now and again she gets a severe chest pain, she has told her father, and she is "exhausted at the end of the day and feels like a rag". She gets Rs. 5.00 per day without food, but only tea provided.

A Price Controller once came that way, and saluted all and went off. A Labour inspector was to come and the girls were briefed: "Say you start working at 7.30 am, and you finish at 4.30 pm. We will pay you a little extra if you explain it that way"—said the man with gay abandon and in perfect belief that there is no God who will punish the evil that men do. How many of his ilk are even now getting ready for their own round of meeting out sorrow to the weak, the frail, the fragile, and then go out and cheer a Women's Lib. Gathering!

Imagine that: Rs. 600/- worth of biscuits cut per day by each person, and each person is paid only Rs. 5/- per day. Four bags of flour finish off in one day, and

what an avalanche of biscuits he makes per day. The Owner in person? He looks poor and feels poorly perhaps (no wonder, after this kind of exploitation) and wears a torn banian, worn-out slippers, lives in a tumble-down house (which he wishes to buy up, if they sell..) The Menikes from the area, the Darshanis from long-standing families from the south, the one or two Sellammas from the estates, all suffer the same fate: they are at the grind, for 120/- a month, the flower of our village and estate youth. Bang, smack, bang—a scolding bang—if a biscuit ever breaks while the packing goes on. And the few vans carry them out and away in packed boxes, and five different brands, mind you.

One girl told a friend: "We can hardly say 'biscuit' by evening, let alone saying 'bread'. Every day I go away with a strong headache and a spine ache because I have to bend over and cut, out of the not-too-easy, over a hundred pounds of biscuits".

She feels, she lives in an unlucky dough land that wants to get the best of her teeen-age powers of work, but for a pittance. My father has no work, she said, and if I stop, who will see to us?



ELEPHANT STORY—3

AN IMPORT MADHOUSE?

CEYLON COLD STORES LTD, or Elephant House, continues to repeat its set of irritating advertisements lamenting on the sad state of Sri Lanka to cover up what is evidently a bigger mess in the affairs of the Company. Will these advertisements succeed in pulling the wool over the eyes of the shareholders who, for instance, do not seem to know that prices were increased to the consumer without any increase to producer—although the advertisements seek to give the contrary impression?

The advertisements do not reveal that the Company had succeeded in persuading the Government to permit the import of 150,000 lbs of beef, mutton and chicken to be sold at prices which local producers were denied. This import of frozen meat could have been justified only after a suitable lapse of time allowing the import of cattle feed, poultry mash and breeding stock to encourage local production—and that only if local producers do not respond to these incentives.

It is also necessary to examine the claims of the Company in regard to soft drinks and ice cream. Are these advertisements too intended to lay the foundation for importing ice-cream and soft drinks? These are among questions that will be dealt with in this series which will appear in the *Tribune*. The simple question is whether advertisements of this kind should be utilised to launch an expanded import orgies of frozen meat and other foodstuffs (probably ice cream and soft drinks) which can be produced locally. Sri Lanka is not yet the paradise where everything under sun could be imported without doing damage to its well-being and future. Imports and exports must be doverailed with developmental plans and production programmes. Paid advertisements by big companies should not be allowed to create an import madhouse in this country.

—TRIBUNE INVESTIGATOR

Confidentially

Minister Festus's Big Talk!

IS IT NOT FUNNY that the latest propaganda barrage launched by the Ministry of Fisheries to explain the high price of fish (and also to promise that within year or two people will have all the fish they want at reasonable prices) consist of nothing more than old hackneyed excuses about the primitive run-down state of the industry combined with personal pledges of the Minister that he will personally go down to the beaches, into the lorries, into the ice-plants inside the markets and maybe on fishing vessels to slave-drive his minions to bring salvation to the fish-eating consumer? That all this and more Minister Festus Perera promised in a much-publicised forum-of-the-air in a SLBC-sponsored series on the Cost of Living on the High Price of Fish and which took fortyfive minutes of valuable time (Channel 1 on Sunday, June 18 and Channel 2 on Monday June 19)? That though there were two other panel members and one moderator, the forty five minutes was dominated by the big talk of Minister Festus Perera, who gave his listeners a heavy overdose of egocentric "I" and pledged "...I will get it done..I will get it done"? That the emphasis was so much on the "I" that one is tempted to call him Festus the Giant Killer? That two members of the panel and even the moderator had attempted, very weakly, to raise important queries about the shortage of fish and the high prices thereof which differed from the ministerial theories but they were brushed aside with an

avalanche of ministerial "...do not worry.... this I promise..I will get it done.."? That *Tribune* has a taped verbatim report of the entire forty five minutes blah-blah? That it will be interesting to play this tape on June 18, 1979 and again on June 18, 1980 to see how far the Minister's "tears, sweat and toil" bombast will finally measure up to real achievement? That Minister Festus Perera's big-talk performance over the SLBC was heralded by a lengthy article by the Director of Development, Ministry of Fisheries, Edgar Fernando, entitled WHY THE PRICE OF FISH IS HIGH? which was spread out in the *Sunday Times* and *Sunday Observer* of June 18? That Edgar Fernando's pretentious and circumlocutory argumentation was only a prelude to the Minister's high-jinks on the SLBC that evening? That Edgar Fernando trotted out the presently popular ministerial arguments for the high price of fish—arguments people are tired of hearing day in and day out? That they can be summed up thus: that production does not match demand (soul-searing statistics are pulled out of magician's hat instead of rabbits or fish): that the Corporation only handled 5% of the output (is it only now or was it always so?): that mudalalis exploit fishermen (a great discovery, no doubt, but why were mudalalis—from Wennappuwa and elsewhere—given a free hand after Festus Rex took over?): that fishing equipment cost more (prices had shot up after the oil crisis in 1973/74, but not spectacularly in 1977 until the devaluation): and so on and forth? That all these argumetns cannot stand up to scrutiny? That any Minister should and could have anticipated these difficulties and overcome them without sending up the price of fish to the dizzy heights they have climbed in recent months? That moreover all these reasons cannot account for the present

disarray in the fishing industry and the total collapse of the price factor? That one question that ordinary people ask and which we have raised so often is why during the short time Mr. S. de S. Jayasinghe was the Minister fish supplies were neither so short nor the price so high as after three months of the Festus regime? That even during the worst days of the so-called SLFP maladministration fish was available in plenty at much cheaper prices than now? That today shortage and high prices have become so chronic that the Minister cannot hold out any hope for another year or two? That the population of the country has not increased so much as to warrant the current shortages and high prices? That the argument that there were more fish-eating in the context of the shortage of beef, mutton, chicken and eggs is a puerile one taking all factors into consideration? That the Minister and the panel members on the SLBC castles—in-the-air talking marathon did not touch on the one question that was on everybody's mind, namely the operations of the foreign trawlers which many believe fished to extinction everything that was alive in our fishing banks so that for next two or three years fish catches would be minimal? That one panel member had ventured to suggest that something had to be done about deep sea fishing? That this was dismissed very brusquely and the Minister had continued his soliloquy on his promises to produce more fish within a year or two? That Edgar Fernando in his article had dealt briefly with deep sea fishing and also the question about the foreign trawlers in a way as to gloss over the questions that were rankling in everybody's minds? That, elsewhere in this issue, the problem of the foreign trawlers is discussed?

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