

CEYLON Today

Independence Day
Celebrations

Marshal Tito in Ceylon

P. M. Addresses Press-
men

The Contemporary Sin-
halese Theatre

How Vesak Became a
Holiday



Bovitia
(*Osbeckia aspera*)

FEBRUARY, 1959

CEYLON TODAY

		Local		Foreign
		Rs. c.		
Annual Subscription inclusive of Postage	..	7 50	..	15s.
Price per copy	0 50	..	—
Postage	0 10	..	—

Apply to—

**The Superintendent, Government Publications Bureau,
Galle Face Secretariat, Colombo I**

Independence Day Celebrations

THE Eleventh Year of Independence was celebrated, both in Colombo and in the Provinces, by events spread out over a number of days.

On February 3, the eve of Independence Day, at a ceremony which was attended by Ministers, members of the Diplomatic Corps, other V. I. Ps. and thousands of citizens, the Prime Minister, the Hon. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike declared open the new Kelaniya Bridge.

This new bridge, which is the longest in the Island and one of the finest in South East Asia, cost Rs. 6¼ million. It is 900 feet long and 60 feet wide with 10 feet wide pavements on either side. It has room for six lanes of traffic and is expected to end the traffic congestion which has hitherto been a common feature at this important gateway to the city of Colombo during the rush hours.

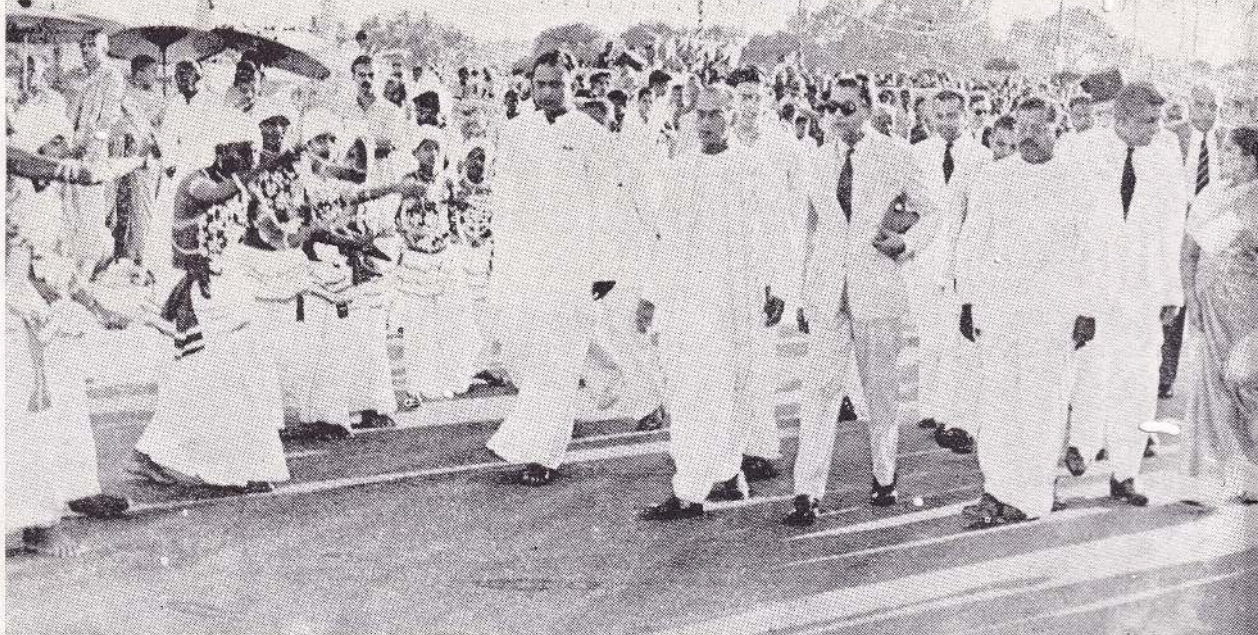
The bridge can be approached at the Colombo end both from Baseline Road and Prince of Wales Avenue. The two new roads meet at a round-about and form into one road going up to the bridge. The road leading from the Prince of Wales Avenue crosses the Kittampahuwa Ela by means of a 50 span bridge. This bridge is one of pre-stressed concrete design. Another small bridge, which is also of pre-stressed concrete, spans the railway line.

The approach roads provide a dual carriageway, each of which is 30 feet wide with two footways each 10 feet wide. They are of a total length of just over a mile. The northern end of the bridge is at present temporarily connected to the existing Colombo-Kandy road till such time as the full scheme as envisaged by the P. W. D. is taken up and implemented.

The work yet to be done consists of the construction of a new approach road from the northern end of Kelani Bridge which will overpass the Colombo-Kandy road at the present temporary junction and proceed straight through the marshes for a distance of about a mile after which it will bifurcate into roads joining up the Colombo-Kandy road at the 6th mile and the Colombo-Negombo road at the 5th mile. The fork leading to the Colombo-Kandy road will overpass the main railway line to Kandy with an overhead bridge. The necessary investigations for this work have been carried out and all the plans prepared.

Pealing of Bells

Independence Day began with the ringing of Temple and Church bells followed by offerings of flowers, services, prayers, poojas and religious observances at places of worship. The Prime Minister attended the



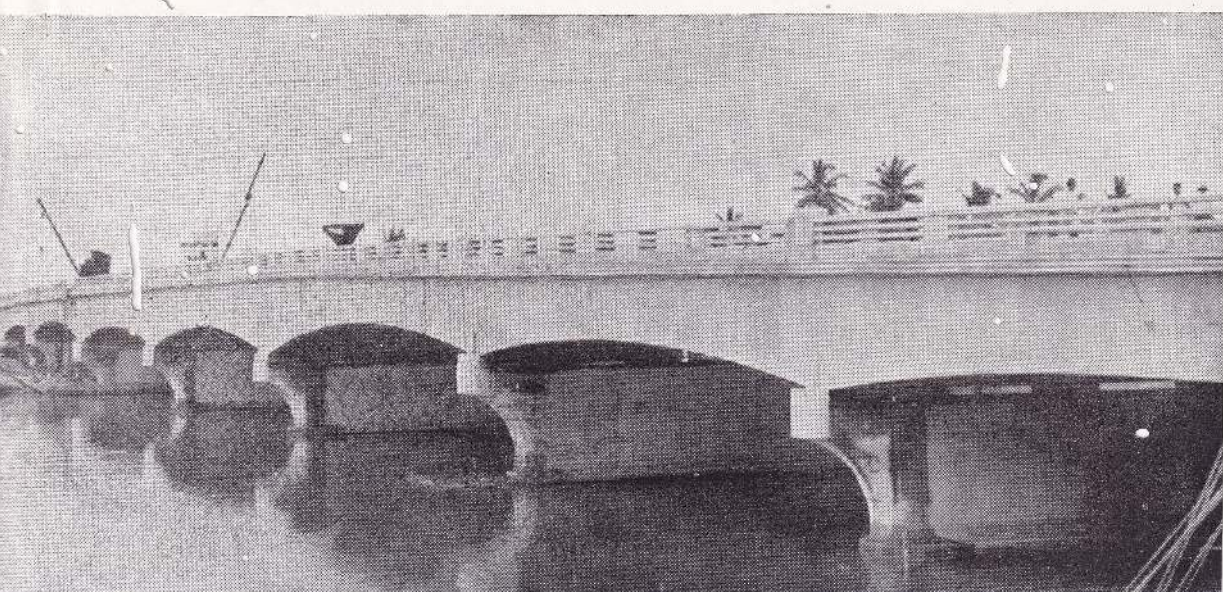
The Prime Minister walking on the New Kelani Bridge which was formally opened to traffic on Independence Day eve

religious ceremony at the Polwatte Temple, Kollupitiya. His Excellency the Governor-General attended the service organised by the National Christian Council at the Wolfendhal Church, Pettah.

In the morning there was a parade of the Armed Services and a Fly Past at the Galle Face Green. Members of the Diplomatic Corps, Ministers and citizens of Colombo as well as visitors from the provinces witnessed the March Past at which the H. E. the Governor-General took the Salute.

In the afternoon there was a pageant, march past and drill display by several thousand school children at Independence Square. At the end of this and after the departure of H. E. the Governor-General the Prime Minister addressed the gathering. He said,

“On 4th February, 1948, this country received some form of political independence and we celebrate today its eleventh anniversary. I would, therefore, wish to speak a few words on this day about independence. What is independence? Some say that we got our independence in the year 1948. Some say that it was completed only in 1956. We need not quarrel about these details. Independence is a thing that can be achieved only gradually. In 1948 we got some form of constitutional independence. It is, therefore, our duty to thank all those who fought for it. But most of you will remember that, in the speech I made in 1948, on the occasion of that independence, I said that “independence on paper” alone was not sufficient. In order to complete it there were other freedoms to be won,



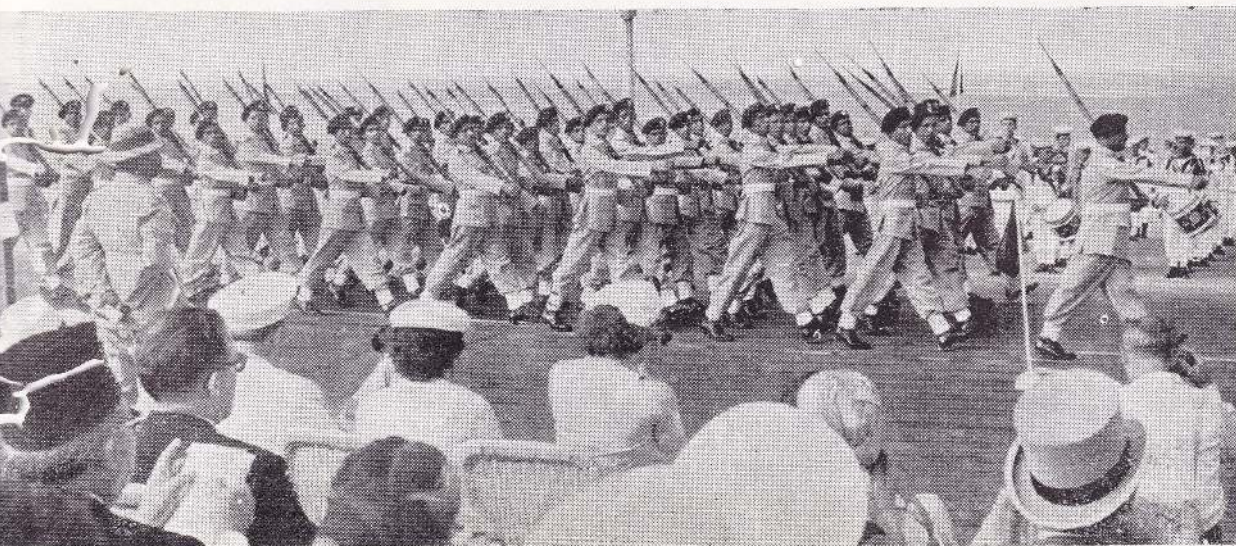
▲ A view of the new bridge during construction

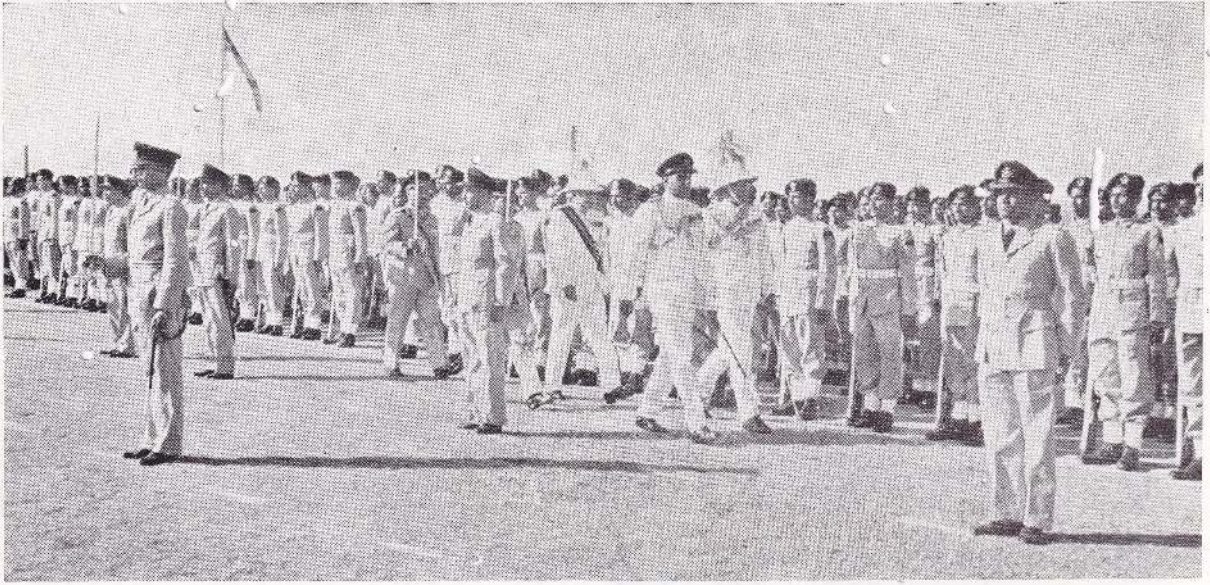


◀ The Prime Minister worshipping at the Polwatte Temple on the morning of Independence Day

“Real independence includes economic, industrial, political, health and educational freedoms too. I said on that occasion that the independence we received was not complete without these. We attained constitutional independence in 1948. Other freedoms were achieved later. It was only two and a half years ago that we were elected by the people’s vote to work for you. Everybody

▼ Troops marching past the diplomats’ enclosure



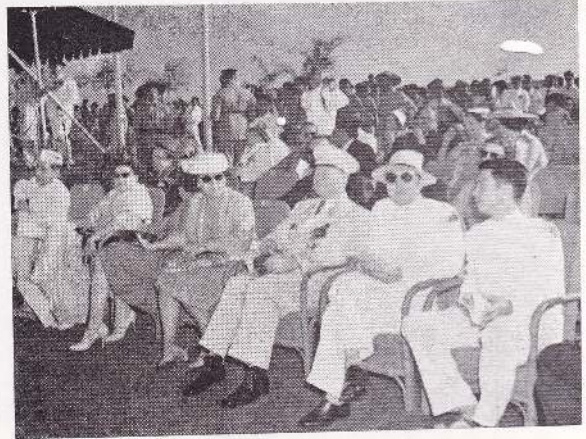


▲ The Governor-General inspecting the Guard-of-Honour at the Parade

The diplomats' enclosure at the morning's parade ▶

knows that during this period we had to face numerous difficulties. At one stage it was floods. At another it was wide-spread communal clashes. Then there were workers' strikes.

▼ Nearly 3,000 schoolchildren from over 30 schools participated in the Mass Drill Display at the Independence Square in Colombo





An item at the Pageant and Drill Display on Independence Day—girls of Visakha Vidyalaya, Colombo, dressed as Sigiriya frescos, standing against an artificial Sigiriya Rock



A folk dance by schoolgirls at the Independence Day Pageant and Drill Display

"We had to face difficulties of that nature and all of you are aware of that. But we should not be discouraged. It is the duty of any Government to face such difficulties and tackle them with patience and in a reasonable manner, so that they may not be repeated again. Everybody will agree that we have taken that necessary step which we will continue to follow to the best of our ability. At

the same time we have taken a few more steps forward during this two and a half years in order that we may complete our independence. But I do not say that we have done everything. I do not say that there are no defects in our Government. For we are but human beings. But we have done our duty to the best of our ability and in a manner acceptable to the majority of the people who are fair-minded. You will appreciate the fact that we have to govern a country in which there are various communities speaking different languages and following various religions with their own respective forms of culture.

"I feel that the policy we should adopt in such a context is this: While safeguarding the rights of the majority we should be fair to the minorities also. That is the correct policy to be followed in a country like ours. I am trying to solve certain problems according to that policy. That was the policy we followed with regard to our language problem. About 70 per cent of the Ceylonese are Sinhalese. Therefore, we considered it our duty to make Sinhalese the official language. At the same time we know that there is a large number of our Tamil brethren whose language is also dear to them, as our language is dear to us. We had to do our duty by them too. We have accordingly made the Tamil language legally second only to the State language. Perhaps it was thought that the language problem would never be solved. But I have solved that problem. I have no doubt that it will be looked upon as a fair and reasonable solution.

"Buddhism is the religion of the majority of people of this country. It has been the religion here for over 2,000 years. Therefore, Christians, Hindus and Muslims should not be offended if we gave the rightful place to Buddhism. We are also continuing our ancient system of Pirivena Education. This system of education was badly neglected in the recent past. We have now given it a place of honour. The Minister of Education has granted University status to Vidyodaya and Vidyalankara Pirivenas by getting a



King Mahasena and his Queens—a scene from the pageant

special Bill through Parliament. The Cabinet has decided to vote more money for such schemes.

Workers Lot Improved

“Whether you are employees of the Government or of private concerns you will appreciate the fact that during this period we have done our best to better the lot of all employees. We have paid to Government employees alone more than eighty million rupees as special living allowances. This was an unforeseen expenditure for which there was no provision in our budget at that time. Employees outside Government service also received many benefits. The Minister of Labour has established a Workers’ Provident Fund for the benefit of those employed outside the Government. It will provide for the future of those workers when they retire. They will, therefore, be able to spend their last days in happiness.

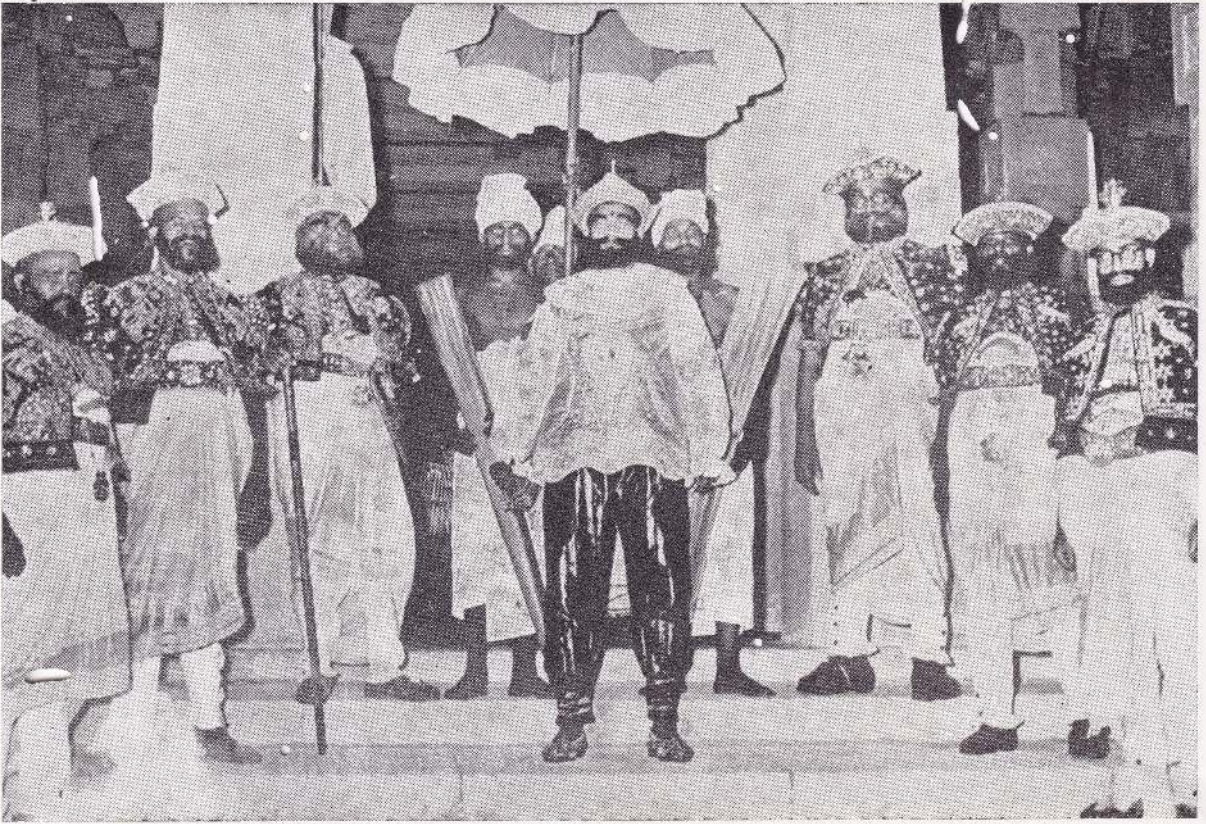
“In order to help our farmers to obtain a better standard of living by increasing the present yield of paddy the Minister of Agriculture and Food has implemented the Paddy Lands Act which is now in operation. There is no doubt that this Act will provide better facilities to our peasants and farmers.

“The Minister of Lands is also carrying out a scheme of land development. On the completion of those schemes there will be no landless people in this country. Large Irrigation Schemes have also been launched and a large sum of money set apart for irrigation works in the current budget.

“The Minister of Industries too has started such schemes as textile, sugar, salt, and cement factories, and fisheries work. Money has been already provided in the current budget and work is going on apace. We are doing a large number of things like these. You will be able to reap their benefits

King Parakrama Bahu—another scene from the pageant





Sri Wickrama Rajasingha and his Court—a scene from the pageant

soon. We do not claim to be magicians. Much preliminary work has to be done before what can be garnered can be enjoyed by all.

“The British bases at Trincomalee and Katunayake were an obstacle to the completion of freedom. I managed to negotiate in a very friendly manner with the British Government to take back those bases from them. Those bases now belong to the people of Sri Lanka. I have completed a fair amount of similar work for you. Many more things, however, have yet to be done. I do not deny that. We have just started doing these things as an independent nation. But if there are people who say that this Government has not done anything, and the country is in a very uncertain position, I would humbly tell you that that criticism is not fair at all. I do not wish to lengthen my speech. I hope that most of our troubles will disappear in the present

year. In that way our Government will be able to carry on our mission more speedily.

“Some people say that it is a great wrong to continue the emergency. I wish to ask whether there is anybody suffering under the present emergency conditions. The emergency only provides a sense of public security and is not harmful to anyone. It has been declared to ensure law and order for that is what most people expect. There are some people who think that their opportunity to create chaos and trouble in the country will be hampered by the existence of an emergency. They are trying their best to intimidate us into lifting the emergency. I would wish to assure them on behalf of the people of this country that every step will be taken to foil every foul intention of theirs.”

(Continued on page 22)



The Prime Minister of Ceylon, Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike, greeting Marshal Tito as he steps out of his yacht, the 'Galeb', on to the Queen Elizabeth Quay. Madame Jovanka is on the left. Mrs. Bandaranaike is also in the picture

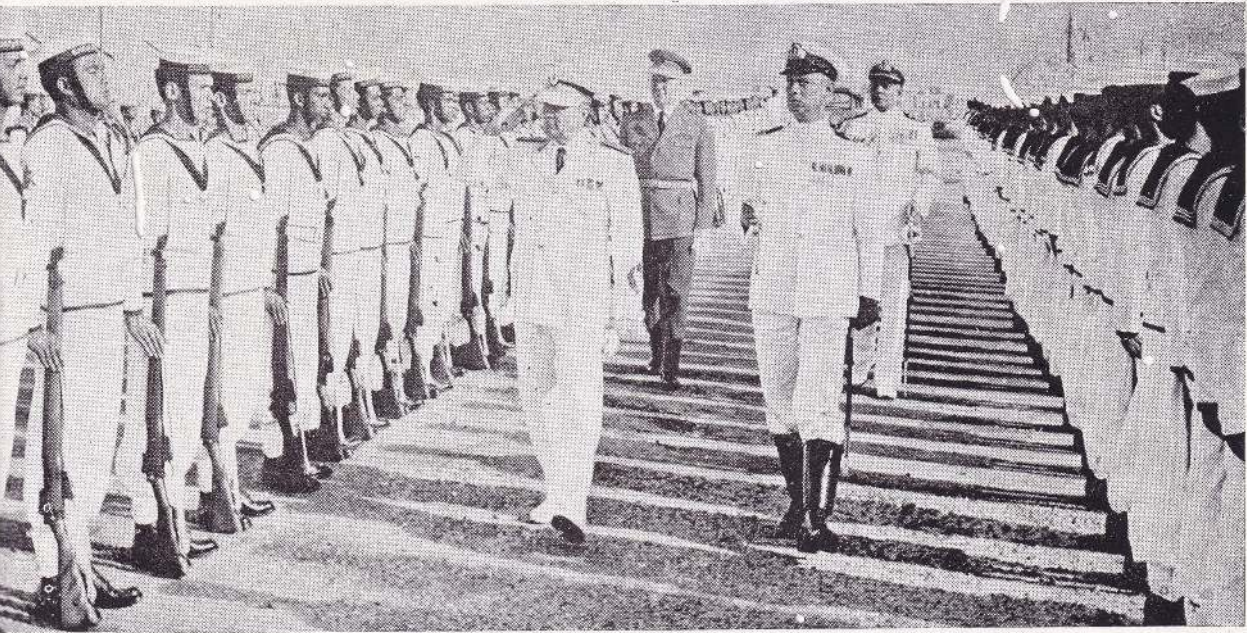
Marshal Tito in Ceylon

HIS EXCELLENCY Marshal Josip Broz Tito, the President of the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia, and Madame Jovanka Broz and party arrived in Ceylon on board the Presidential yacht the "Galeb" on January 21st, and were given a rousing welcome by the people of Ceylon.

Early on the morning of the 21st, the "Galeb" was met ten miles off shore by planes of the Royal Ceylon Air Force. Shortly afterwards H. M. Cy. S. "Vijaya" met the President's vessel. On arrival outside the harbour the "Galeb" fired a 21-gun salute to Ceylon and a 21-gun salute to Yugoslavia was fired from the shore batteries of Ceylon.

After the "Galeb" berthed alongside Queen Elizabeth Quay the Hon. Minister of Home Affairs and the Hon. Minister of Nationalised Services and Road Transport went on board. Shortly after their return His Excellency President Tito appeared on the deck and the Yugoslav Anthem was played by the band of the "Galeb". As the President accompanied by the official party came down the gangway Magul Bera was played.

As His Excellency stepped ashore a Royal Salute of 21 guns was fired. He was then greeted by His Excellency the Governor-General who then presented the Prime Minister and Mrs. Bandaranaike to the



▲
 Marshal Tito, shortly after his arrival, inspecting a guard-of-honour by the Royal Ceylon Navy

◀
 Marshal Tito being conducted on a State Drive shortly after his arrival in Colombo. On his left is Sir Oliver Goonetilleke, Governor-General of Ceylon

President. The President then presented the members of his official party to the Governor-General, the Prime Minister and Mrs. Bandaranaike.

After the Minister of Home Affairs had presented the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Defence and External Affairs and other officials to the President he was

1*—J. N R 161 (1/59).



The Mayor of
Kandy Mr. E. L.
Senanayake
presenting the
address of welcome
to the President

conducted by the Captain of the Navy, to the dais opposite the Naval Guard-of-Honour. After a Royal Salute the President inspected the Guard-of-Honour. He then returned to the dais and was given another Royal Salute.

The Prime Minister then took the President to the enclosure where the monks were present, and the President, after greeting them in oriental fashion, met the other V.I.P.'s and diplomats who were present.

The President then made a short speech in Yugoslav which was translated into English. Here is the text of his speech :—

President's Speech

I feel most happy to have been given this opportunity to visit your beautiful country at the invitation of your Government, and my wife and my associates join me in expressing this feeling. I am no less happy that I can avail myself of this occasion to convey to you warm greetings of the people

of Yugoslavia and the feelings of friendship they cherish towards your country and your people. As this is our first visit to your country we are looking forward eagerly to meet your people and to learn something about their history, cultural heritage and customs.

There are many similarities between the people of Ceylon and Yugoslavia in their struggle for peace and in their endeavour to strengthen the peace and international co-operation in accordance with the principles of the United Nations Charter. It is well-known in Yugoslavia that Ceylon stands for peace and international co-operation. Yugoslavia is also guided by the same basic principles in her foreign policy and our efforts in international relations are directed towards the implementation of the principles of active peaceful co-existence. That is why we have no doubt that the exchange of views with the leaders of your country will prove useful and yield fruitful results with respect to both our mutual relations and international co-operation in general.

The peoples of Yugoslavia are watching with keen interest the efforts the people of Ceylon are making to develop their country and to secure for themselves a better future. These efforts are fully appreciated by our people because our own experience has taught us that the development of economic resources is of primary importance for the strengthening of independence and for the securing of full equality and of a better life. I am very glad that I shall be given an opportunity to see some of the results you have achieved in your country's development.

The contacts between our two countries so far have shown that there are good possibilities for a fruitful co-operation in political, economic, cultural and other fields. I am

confident that our visit will contribute to the development of this co-operation. On the international field our people exert great efforts for the strengthening of peace and it is my firm belief that our visit will serve this end as well.

Deeply moved by the warm reception accorded to us in the capital city of Colombo, I should like now to thank most sincerely the Government of Ceylon for the invitation to visit your country and wish the people of Ceylon comprehensive progress and prosperity.

State Drive

The President then entered the car with the Governor-General and the State Drive



At the Temple of the Tooth, Kandy. To the left of Marshal Tito is the lay custodian of the Temple, C. B. Nugawela Dissawe

began. Workmen had been busy for several days and the harbour premises, as well as the buildings along the State Drive, were gaily decorated with flags and the traditional "gokkola" (coconut palm fronds). Harbour workers, who had gathered in thousands, gave a particularly warm welcome to the President and his party. Meanwhile traffic along the route of the Drive had been stopped and thousands of office workers as well as their wives and children greeted the party as the motorcade, preceded by a guard of the Mounted Police, came along.

On his arrival at Queens House the President inspected another Guard-of-Honour provided by the Army and then returned to the Queens House. In the afternoon of the same day the President had talks with the Prime Minister, Mr. Bandaranaike. In the evening H. E. the Governor-General gave a State Banquet in honour of the President and Madame Broz.

Visit to Kandy

The following day the President and his party left for Kandy. The road to this second city of Ceylon, which is up in the hills, passes through beautiful country side and the visitors from Yugoslavia thoroughly enjoyed this part of their trip. On their arrival at the Peradeniya Bridge at the entrance to the city the President was met by the M.P. for Kandy and then drove in State to Kings Pavilion. In the afternoon Marshal Tito and his entourage visited the Royal Botanical Gardens at Peradeniya where they were received by the Minister of Agriculture and Food, the Hon. D. P. R. Gunawardena. Here His Excellency planted a tree to commemorate his visit and an orchid, which had bloomed for the first time that day, was named after Madame Broz.

The afternoon's programme included a Civic Reception in the Marshal's honour by the Mayor and members of the Municipal Council of Kandy, who also presented him with an address of welcome. After a visit



The President and his wife photographed with the Kandy Lake in the background

to the Dalada Maligawa, the President and his party returned to Kings Pavilion where, after dinner, there was a display of Kandyan dancing which greatly enthralled the visitors.

To Nuwara Eliya

The following day (Friday), the President and party left Kandy for Nuwara Eliya. Here too the party was received by the M.P.

for Nuwara Eliya, the Mayor of Nuwara Eliya and other officials. After the State Drive there was a Civic Reception by the Mayor and Members of this hill town. After lunch at Queens Cottage the President continued the talks he had begun with the Prime Minister earlier in Colombo, the Prime Minister having motored up to Nuwara Eliya for this purpose.

Although a visit to the Hakgala Gardens was in the original programme the President had to call it off to continue his talks with the Premier. However, Madame Broz visited the Gardens accompanied by other members of the party and spent nearly two hours there.

The President and party had dinner at Queens Cottage and spent Friday night there. On Saturday, January 24th the party

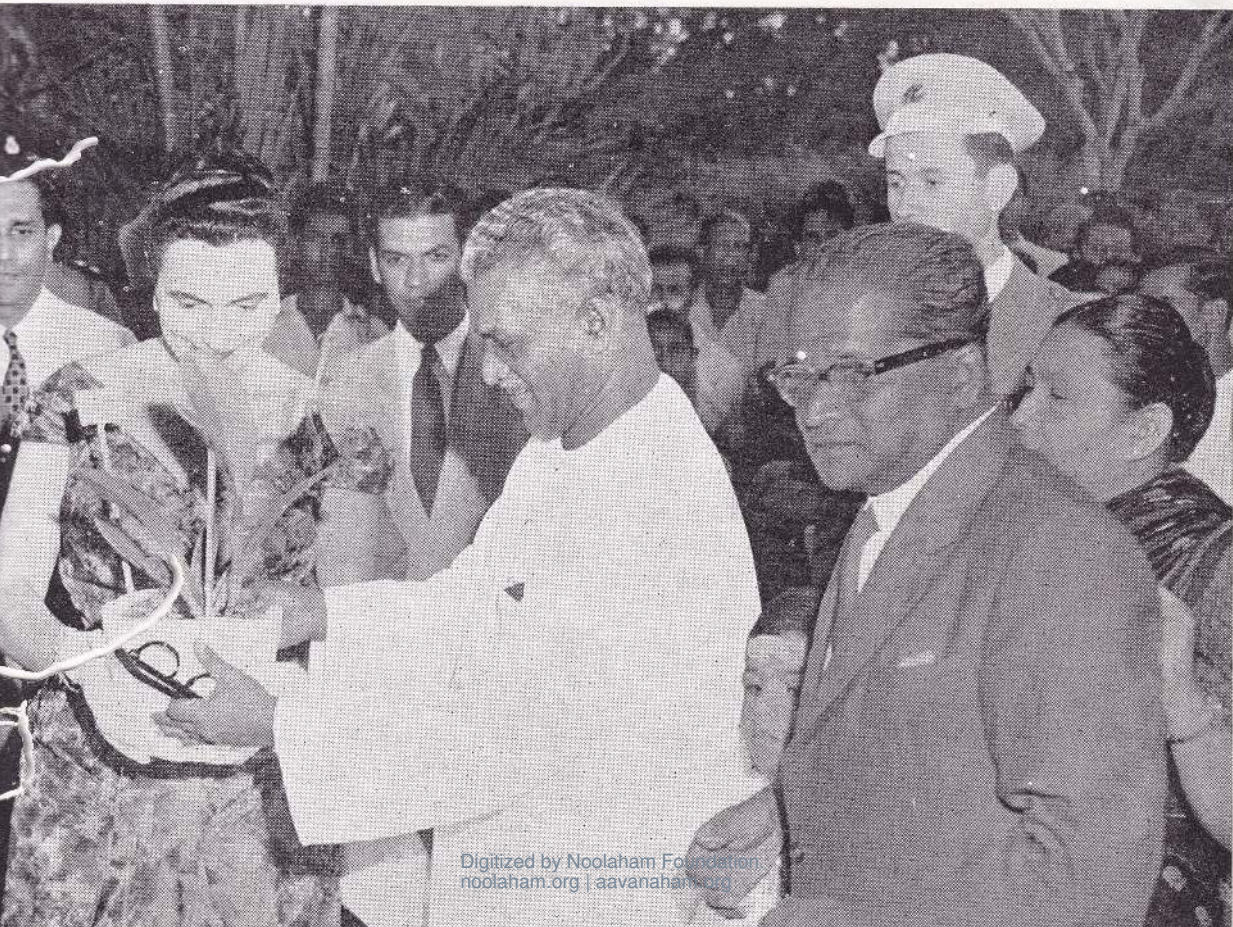
left Queen's Cottage at 10.15 a.m. and arrived at the King's Pavilion, Kandy for lunch. Immediately after lunch they left for Colombo.

At the Temple Trees

That night the Prime Minister and Mrs. Bandaranaike accorded a reception at the "Temple Trees", in honour of the distinguished visitor. Proposing the toast of Yugoslavia and its President the Prime Minister said :—

"We are all extremely pleased to have with us for a few days the President of Yugoslavia and Madame Broz. This is the first time that we have had a chance of seeing them, meeting them and speaking to them, although the name of President Tito and of his country are indeed very well

The Minister of Agriculture and Food, the Hon. D. P. R. Gunawardena, presenting the orchid which had been named after her, to Madame Broz at the Royal Botanical Gardens, Peradeniya



known not only to most people of Ceylon, but throughout the world. What is now Yugoslavia has been struggling for many years amid difficulties, tribulations and sufferings for freedom—a freedom which was gained after the First World War. But the troubles were not at an end and, as you know, in the Second World War Yugoslavia was overrun by enemy troops.

“President Tito, whose life crystallises the struggles of his country, starting amid many difficulties and from small beginnings, working and preparing to serve his country together with his people in the last Great War, fought a heroic struggle for freedom from external enemies to drive out of their land foreign invaders, as well as to convert internally the reactionary regime into the Peoples Democracy which we know of today. In that indeed heroic struggle the President himself, personally, as we all know, played a most heroic part, and success crowned his efforts and the efforts of his people. They obtained their freedom both from external foes and from internal reaction.

“Ever since the end of the last war, President Tito has been playing an important role, he and his country, in the rather troubled arena of world affairs that followed upon them in the last war. And he has accepted the right of his country to follow their own way of life, while preserving friendship with all others and of helping the cause of peace in the world.

“Yugoslavia is one of those countries, like ourselves, which is labelled sometimes as ‘neutralist’; sometimes as ‘uncommitted’. I do not like either of those words though they are used for convenience. We are not neutralist. We do not adopt a negative attitude. Our attitude is a very positive one in following our different ways of life in non-alignment with power blocs, and therefore, as we think, helping the general cause of world peace and friendship not in a ‘negative’ or ‘neutral’ sense but in a positive way. I do not like the word ‘uncommitted’. We know of course the



The Visitors at the University of Ceylon, at Peradeniya

meaning the word conveys. But we are very much ‘committed’—we are committed to the hilt—to peace in a positive form, to friendship amongst all nations and to the peace and prosperity and happiness of all mankind. We are committed quite as much as anyone else, perhaps even more so.

Power Blocs

As I said before, I do not like those two words, though they are of course used popularly. But still our policy is one in which we do not—Yugoslavia and ourselves as well as a number of other countries—believe that the best interests of peace can be served by belonging to one bloc or the other, of the two great power blocs that are in existence today. Nor do we believe—as some people have spread a rumour—in any effort to create a third bloc. For that would indeed be a contradiction in turn. We who are opposed to power blocs



Madame Jovanka inspecting Ceylon handicrafts at the Lanka Mahila Samiti Centre at Kaduwela. Mrs. Bandaranaike, wife of the Geylon Premier, is on the left

have no intention whatsoever of creating a third power bloc or a 'third force', whatever you may like to call it.

However, I am certain that the so-called 'uncommitted' countries, in the policies that they follow, can serve a useful purpose in promoting peace and understanding amongst all, and perhaps of helping on occasion to bridge the gulf between the two Great Power blocs in the world today. We feel that there is a definite role for countries with a general pattern of foreign policy as we possess, to play a useful, perhaps even an important, part in promoting those things in this troubled era, for which we are all, in our different ways, striving to achieve.

"I have had the privilege of a number of conversations with His Excellency the President and I am perfectly sure that his visit to us on this occasion and that of Madame Broz

will serve a most valuable purpose in helping us to understand each other better and also to increase the co-operation and friendship between Yugoslavia and our own country.

"I hope that His Excellency the President, Madame Broz and their entourage have had a pleasant time during the few days they have spent with us, and also a stay which I trust will be both profitable and useful in still further promoting that close understanding and co-operation with Yugoslavia which, indeed, we have been striving to establish with all countries in the world. The President is perhaps the most picturesque personality and a heroic figure in the world today. It is a great pleasure to have had him amongst us even for this short period, and, as I said, I trust that they have enjoyed themselves in Ceylon and will carry away with them pleasant memories of this small country of ours. And also that his visit will help to

strengthen the ties which we have with his small but great country.

Ladies and Gentlemen, may I ask you to stand up and drink to the health of Yugoslavia and its President, Marshal Tito”.

President Replies

The President, replying to the toast proposed by the Premier at the reception, said that although Yugoslavia and Ceylon had no formal diplomatic relations until recently, they had found a way usefully to co-operate in the international field; in the United Nations Organisation. This was only natural, he said, because Ceylon was among the countries which had adopted the principles of the Bandung Conference and which were today persistently working for the safeguarding of peace, for international co-operation and full equality, and for the right of all nations to decide their destiny.

On Sunday the President continued his talks with the Premier at the end of which a Joint Statement was issued. (Full text below). Shortly before the discussions started the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the Leader of the Opposition called on the President at Queens House.

That same afternoon the President and party visited the Dehiwala Zoo and were highly amused watching a performance of the trained elephants. The President also made an unscheduled visit to the Ceylon Industries Shop in the afternoon.

At 6 p.m. a reception was given at the Galle Face Hotel by the Minister of Yugoslavia and Madame Kveder. This was followed by a State Banquet by the President and Madame Broz at “Temple Trees”.

Departure

Next morning (January 26th) the President and party left Ceylon at 8.45 a.m. The State drive from Queen’s House started at 8 a.m. and the party arrived at Queen Elizabeth Quay at 8.15 a.m. The President

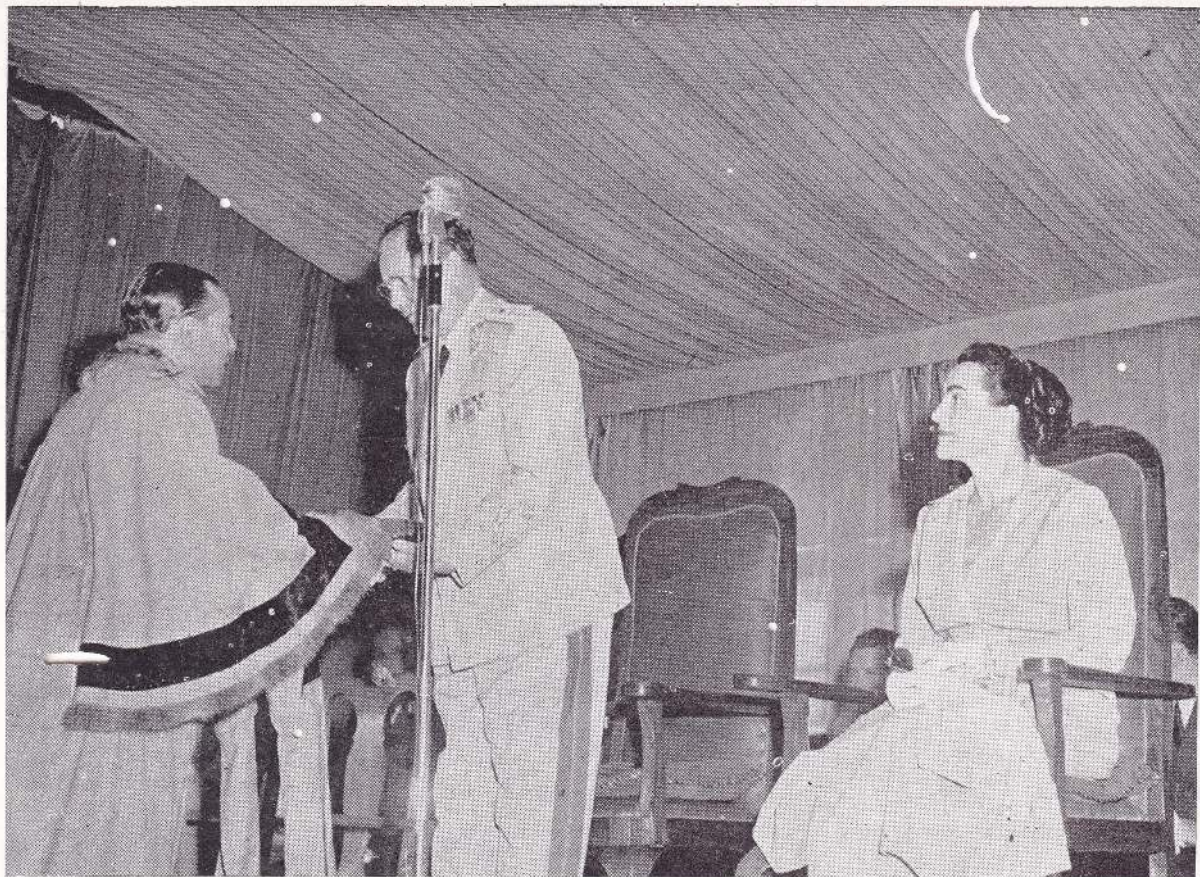
was accompanied to the jetty by the Governor-General, the Prime Minister and Mrs. Bandaranaike. They were met at the Quay by the Minister of Nationalised Services and Road Transport. After inspecting a Guard-of-Honour presented by the Royal Ceylon Air Force the President and Madame bade good-bye to those presented to them and also to Mr. and Mrs. Bandaranaike and the Governor-General. The following farewell speech was then made by the President—

“After having spent a few days in your hospitable country, we are now leaving, deeply impressed and in the firm belief that, together with your leaders, we have contributed considerably to the better mutual acquaintance and approachment between Ceylon and Yugoslavia.

“This visit enabled us to become directly acquainted with your country, with the unique beauty of her scenery, with some of her historic and cultural mountains, with her natural resources and potentialities, and with the life, work and aspirations of her noble people. What we have seen and experienced in your country, our meetings with your people and the warmth of friendly feelings by which we were surrounded during our stay here, will make this visit a dear and unforgettable pleasant experience which we shall always cherish. You may be proud of your beautiful and rich country which, fully free and independent, shall stride steadily towards a better future.

“Looking at your blossoming country and at the whole of this part of the world, its tremendous potentialities and forceful strivings towards further progress and peace, one becomes even more firmly convinced that it is essential to follow the way of peace and co-operation among peoples and states, for the sake of man, for the sake of mankind and its advancement.

“It was in the light of these aspirations that we had a broad exchange of views with your leaders on questions of mutual interest. I am very happy to state that our talks were very cordial and profitable. There were no



The Mayor of Nuwara Eliya, Mr. K. A. R. Pelpola presenting the address of welcome by the Municipal Council of Nuwara Eliya to Marshal Tito. Looking on is Madame Broz

problems dividing us and we found a common language very quickly as if these talks were subsequent to some previous meetings. In our talks we had only to find out the best and quickest way of strengthening our mutual relations and of co-operating in the international fields in the interest of world peace. That was not at all difficult, since our strivings in this respect too are identical.

“Once back in our country we shall, with greatest pleasure and satisfaction, inform

our peoples that the people of Ceylon cherish friendly feelings towards the peoples of Yugoslavia and are attached to the cause of peace and international understanding.

“I should like to take this opportunity too, to thank the Governor-General, the Prime Minister and the people of Ceylon, on behalf of all of us who came to your country, for the hospitality and kind consideration. I wish your people much success in developing their country and in their efforts for the cause of peace in the world.”

Joint Communique

The following is the full text of the joint Communique issued by the Prime Minister of Ceylon and the President of the Federal

People's Republic of Yugoslavia at the end of their talks on January 25 :—

The President of the Federal People's

Republic of Yugoslavia Josip Broz-Tito and Madame Broz paid a State Visit to Ceylon at the invitation of the Government of Ceylon from the 21st to the 26th January, 1959.

President Tito was accompanied by the President of the People's Assembly of Montenegro, Blažo Jovanovic, Member of the Federal People's Assembly, Ivan Macek, Member of the Federal Executive Council, Slobodan Penezic, Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Veljko Micunovic and Secretary-General of the President of the Republic, Leo Mates.

During their stay in Ceylon, President Tito and his associates visited various points of historical and cultural interest and economic projects in Colombo, Kandy and Nuwara Eliya where they met representatives of the administration and of political and public life in Ceylon, and came in contact with many other people as well. President Tito

expressed his gratitude for the cordial hospitality and reception tendered him by His Excellency the Governor-General, the Government and the people of Ceylon.

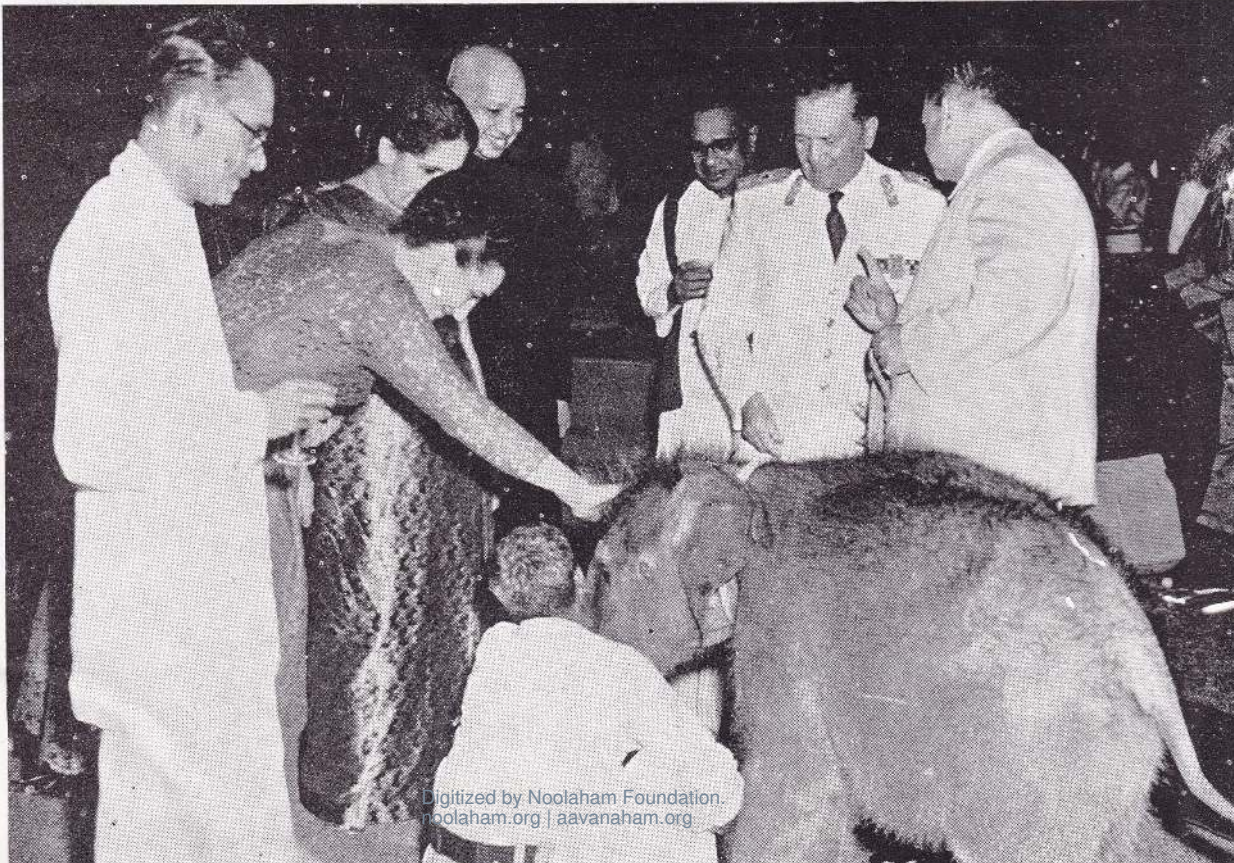
In the course of the visit, talks were held between Prime Minister S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike and President Tito on current international problems of interest to the two countries and on bilateral relations between Ceylon and Yugoslavia.

The talks were held in an atmosphere of cordiality, understanding and mutual respect. The exchange of views on international problems was profitable and helpful and there was agreement in regard to the need for increasing co-operation between the two countries, particularly in the economic and cultural sphere.

I

In the field of international relations, the Prime Minister and the President of the

Madame Jovanka patting the baby Elephant which the Prime Minister presented to the visitors



Republic were in complete agreement on the urgent and vital need to make every possible effort to reduce the prevailing state of tension between nations. They recognize that in the present phase of human civilization there are various differences amongst mankind, political, economic, national, social and otherwise. At the same time they are fully conscious of the fact that the progress, and even the survival, of mankind demands that, transcending these differences, international concord be established on a footing of understanding, co-operation and friendship.

They are strongly of opinion that the policies of overcoming the contradictions between the existing Power Blocs and non-alignment with such Blocs, i.e., the policy of peaceful co-existence, followed by a number of countries including their own, have already made and will make in the future a positive contribution to the attainment of this objective.

While warmly endorsing the efforts that are being made in the political and diplomatic spheres to secure the cessation of nuclear tests and general disarmament, the Prime Minister and the President wish to emphasize the imperative need to remove those barriers which stand in the way of full and unfettered economic co-operation between nations, irrespective of their ideological and other differences.

They accept and re-affirm their faith in the principle of self-determination. They extend their support to all peoples striving for national freedom and independence from colonial rule, as well as for international relations based on equality, in the firm belief that the ending of colonialism will help to ensure international peace and security.

These principles are embodied in the United Nations Charter and the Bandung Resolutions, the validity of which they uphold.

The Prime Minister and the President re-affirm their adherence to the principles and aims of the United Nations, within the framework of which their countries are pro-

moting fruitful co-operation. It is their belief that experience so far has shown that this world organization, despite the many difficulties it meets within its work, is the most suitable forum for the consideration of international problems and achievement of settlements by way of agreement. This role of the United Nations has been further strengthened by the admission of a number of new independent States, especially those in Asia and Africa. They are strongly of the opinion that all nations which are not yet represented should be included in the United Nations if it is to function more successfully and efficiently.

II

During the talks, the Prime Minister and the President paid special attention to Ceylonese-Yugoslav relations and measures that could be taken to advance and develop them further. They have noted with satisfaction, especially now that diplomatic relations have been established, that broad possibilities exist for achieving fruitful co-operation along all lines in bilateral relations, which will be also furthered by the present visit of President Tito to Ceylon. They agreed on the need to strengthen the diplomatic relations between these two countries and to raise the status of the respective diplomatic missions to Embassy level.

They have expressed the readiness of their countries to augment and extend co-operation in various ways in the economic, technical, scientific and cultural fields and to bend their efforts towards increasing the trade between the two countries, for which favourable conditions exist on both sides. For this purpose, a suitable delegation, at governmental level, from Ceylon will visit Yugoslavia early on the invitation of the President.

President Josip Broz-Tito has invited Prime Minister Bandaranaike to visit Yugoslavia. This invitation was accepted.

Done at Colombo on this Twenty-fifth day of January, One Thousand Nine Hundred and Fifty-Nine.

P. M. Addresses Pressmen

ON January 10th the Press Association of Ceylon held its Annual get-together Dinner at the Grand Oriental Hotel, Colombo. The Prime Minister, the Hon. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike, was the chief guest. We print below the text of the Prime Minister's speech not only because of its intrinsic value but also because it gives foreign readers a picture of the position of the Press in this country.

It has given me the greatest pleasure to have accepted the invitation of the Press Association of Ceylon and to be present here at this most enjoyable dinner. The Chairman stated that perhaps this was the first occasion on which I attended a function of a press association. It is not altogether so. I have had the privilege, both in this country and other countries, of attending similar functions of press proprietors, editors, "Press Dukes", "Barons" and so forth. Certainly this is the first occasion on which I have had the pleasure of attending a function of those in the lower rung of the press industry, if I may call it an industry.

This Association is chiefly composed of reporters, correspondents and also, I believe, of the lower rungs of the editorial staff.

The Chairman referred to the responsibilities of the Press—the responsibilities of the Press in guiding public opinion, and in reflecting public opinion. Very true, particularly in a country like this where we have something approaching a press monopoly. One of the most unhealthy features in this democracy of Sri Lanka is the existence of what in fact amounts to a press dictatorship—a press monopoly. I cannot help being amused at times when the Press or certain sections of it accuse me of dictatorial tendency, dictatorial action, shout out and scream out their adherence to the principles of democracy when, as a matter of fact, their

own position provides one of the most pernicious and vicious dictatorships of the world, particularly the democratic world, one can possibly know that is, a dictatorship of the Press. It is one of the worst types of dictatorships.

Press Dictatorship

With a political dictator, well, you know where you are. But with a Press dictatorship you don't know. The ordinary public do not know where they are with the Press dictatorship. A political leader makes his speech. They know well that that is his view. But when something appears in a newspaper people do not attribute it to an individual. It is something impersonal and, therefore, has a greater force. There are various methods by which a newspaper concern can put forward ideas and views in a way that does not become apparent to the reading public. If I say something they know that it is my view. They know what value to attach to it. If my good friend, Dr. N. M. Perera says something, they know that it is Dr. N. M. Perera's view and they know what value to attach to that.

But in a newspaper by various methods of omission, of commission, of slight twist here, a slight distortion there, by letters addressed to the Press usually under the title "Pro Bono Publico" generally manufactured in the Press Office itself, by various articles and by various editorial stratagems a wrong impression can be created in the minds of the public that no single individual can do individually. Therefore, you will realise the great responsibility that lies on the shoulders of the Press, especially in a country where there is something approaching a Press dictatorship and a Press monopoly as we have in this country.

Of course all those newspapers concerned may well turn round and say that it is not their fault. Others are welcome to start newspapers if they wished. Of course that is perfectly true; but in a small country like ours it is not easy to have a large number of daily newspapers as in other big countries like England or America or any other Western country where every shade of opinion is represented in different papers.

My good friend Lord Beaverbrook, for instance, is representing the extreme reactionary, Conservative, imperialist point of view in the "*Daily Express*". Of course another newspaper like that is the "*Daily Telegraph*". Generally the "*News Chronicle*", the "*Manchester Guardian*" and an independent paper like the "*Times*", a Labour paper like the "*Daily Herald*" and even a Communist paper like the "*Daily Worker*" represent their own point of view. So it does not matter. Similarly in various other countries. But here, you know it is not so. And I would like to say this, that those who blame politically the Government of being guilty of undemocratic thinking or acting should be careful of how they throw stones when they reside in fragile glass houses themselves—the glass house of a much worse type of dictatorship than any political dictatorship can be, that is, the dictatorship of the Press.

Influence of the Press

Of course the Press has influence; but I wonder sometimes how far that influence really extends. Judging from my own case the Press, or a certain important and influential section of the Press of this country, has generally been hostile to me during the whole of the 30 years of my public career; but it seems to have done me much more good than otherwise. I know of a number of blue-eyed babies of the Press who have crashed. Well, in my case I seem to be going on and on without being particularly

affected! Those may be exceptional cases. I do know how far the Press does, and is able, to wield influence and, therefore, the responsibility that lies on the Press for honesty and integrity, for honest reporting and honest comment is greater than it is in any other sphere of public activity.

This Association is an Association, as I said, primarily of reporters and correspondents. They have to play a very important part. I know that the task of reporting is a very difficult one. I have been wondering if I had any fellow-feeling towards you, if I had been engaged in similar activities of the sort you engaged in, and it struck me that I have done so. When I was at Oxford we had an undergraduate weekly paper known as the Oxford "*Isis*" and sometimes its Editor used to ask me to report the proceedings of the Oxford Union; and I used to report those proceedings. I found it very interesting. I found that the best method of reporting was this. I never took down anything that the speaker said while he spoke. I listened to him carefully and with a certain measure of intelligence I followed what the speaker was trying to drive at, what he was really trying to say, and to express the spirit of his speech in my report of his speech. Now that kind of reporting is very difficult. That is, you must be sufficiently intelligent to be able to follow the speaker with intelligence. To understand what he really is saying, or making, or trying to make and reproduce that and not merely to write down a few sentences that he may utter in his speech and just put that forward as his report. Of course, that kind of reporting is extremely difficult; but it is important.

Reporter's Task

Reporting is a very difficult task. In the first place the unfortunate reporter has to bear in mind the policy of the editor of the newspaper which he serves. He would, therefore, naturally be expected to pick out things

in the speech that would be welcomed from the point of view of editorial policy rather than make a fair and impartial report of the speech which he is supposed to be taking down. No doubt you suffer from that difficulty. Sometimes the speech is made in Sinhalese. You have to listen to the Sinhalese speech and put in into English for the English newspapers. It is a very difficult task. I think, therefore, there is a very good case for some diploma course in journalism at the University of Ceylon or in other Universities that may exist in Ceylon or may be created in the future. I think it is a very sound idea indeed. I should think that the Press concerns should also welcome such a training-course in picking their reporters who have gone through some reasonable course in journalism.

Well, if your Association wishes to pursue that idea the Government can be of some help in the matter. Of course our Universities as you know are independent institutions that are created by special Statute. The Government cannot dictate to them about any particular Faculty and so on. But if it is felt that the Government can help we shall be very glad to give you every possible assistance for the establishment of either a Degree or a Diploma in journalism. I think it is a very good idea. I shall be very happy to help you.

Another matter that was mentioned (during the Dinner) was that you have not got some place, some office, some home of your own. It is intended to start a Press Club. That, too, is a very good idea and if there is anything that the Government can do to help you in that, certainly we will be glad to help. In the meanwhile I should point out that our Government has already taken certain steps that have greatly ameliorated the conditions of service of those who are engaged in such work as you are engaged in. Provisions of the Shop and Office Employees' Act have now been extended to cover pressmen and they now enjoy an eight-hour day; and certain other measures which have ensured a certain degree of security for you as well as a certain degree of necessary relief in the arduous work you are doing. I do not know how the eight-hour work really works out. Sometimes I see some of the reporters hanging about my gate even at 10, 11, 12 o'clock in the night and even at 1 o'clock in the morning! I really do not know how those pressmen manage to get their eight hours. It's a very strenuous job, you are doing.

Now, both those steps that you suggest are very valuable and in that if we can do anything to help you, we shall gladly do so. I promise that on behalf of the Government.

INDEPENDENCE DAY CELEBRATIONS

(Continued from page 7)

At the Temple Trees

On the night of February 4th the Prime Minister held a reception at the "Temple Trees" at which a cross-section of the entire country was present.

The Independence Day celebrations came to an end when thousands of citizens gathered at Independence Square on the two following nights to watch a Pageant depicting scenes from Ceylon history organized by the Arts Council of Ceylon.



A scene from the play "Sanda Kinduru"

The Contemporary Sinhalese Theatre

R. SIRIWARDENA

THE Sinhalese Drama Festival, held recently under the auspices of the Arts Council, offers an appropriate occasion for a discussion of the new or experimental Sinhalese drama of the last fifteen years. If the Sinhalese playwright during this period has been preoccupied with the search for a dramatic form, it is because he has not had the advantage of writing in a continuous dramatic tradition. The great periods of Sinhalese culture in the past did not produce a fully formed literary drama. Some scholars have attributed this to the fact that Buddhism maintained an austere attitude to the arts, and frowned on them as an indulgence of the senses except where they could be enlisted in the service of religious devotion, as in the case of sculpture and painting. It has been argued that the fact that the drama in pre-Western Ceylon did not

develop beyond the level of a folk-art had something to do with these circumstances. But it is doubtful how far a prohibition intended primarily for the monk and the seeker who had entered on the higher paths of salvation could have affected the life of the ordinary layman.

Buddhist culture in Ceylon was not irreconcilable with the cultivation of the art of dance; we know that Indian dances were practised in ancient Ceylon, and that indigenous dance-forms attained a high degree of development both in the low-country and in the Kandyan kingdom. There is no inherent reason why a Buddhist community should not have developed a literary drama if it could have produced the Kandyan dance, which is certainly not confined by the limitations of a folk-art. Is it not more likely, then, that Sinhalese culture in the past did

not produce a literary drama because the dramatic impulse found expression, as in some other Eastern countries, in dance and song? We must not forget that the exclusive association of the drama with the spoken word is peculiar to the modern West. All the most venerable traditions of drama, both in the West and in the East, were based on the bringing together of poetry, song, dance or mime, and dramatic action: this is true of the ancient Greek and Indian theatre, the Elizabethan drama, the French theatre in the age of Racine and Moliere, and the still living traditions of classical Chinese and Japanese theatre. The popular Sinhalese audience have remained wedded to this association: for them song and dance still take primacy over the spoken word in the theatre. The pioneers of Sinhalese theatre in the modern period, of whom John de Silva is the most famous, appealed to this taste, and it is the musical element which remains most impressive in their plays.

Demand for New Type of Drama

The *nurthiya* form which flourished in the early years of this century did not, however, solve the problem of reconciling song with speech in a coherent dramatic convention.

Meanwhile, Western influence had created a demand for a new type of drama which would hold the mirror up to society. The popular social comedies and melodramas of the 'thirties and 'forties attempted to satisfy this demand. But their authors, too, did not surmount the difficulties of mixing song and speech, for the closer a playwrights to get to a representation of real life, the more inconsistent it seems that characters should interrupt the dramatic action to break into song.

It was for this reason that about fifteen years ago, a number of playwrights broke completely with the tradition of the stage musical, and created a new form of drama using dialogue as its sole medium. T. B. Ilangaratne's *Handahana* (1944), which was revived at the Sinhalese Drama Festival, has been described as the first play to use this form. The most active experimentation in the new form came from the University and from certain groups like the Jana Ranga Sabha and the Visva Natyakala Mandalaya which included a large number of University students and ex-University men and women. *Kapuva Kapothi* (1945), *Rahas Komasaris*, and *Magul Prastava* (1951) are some of their productions revived at the

A scene from the play "Rattaran"





A scene from the play "Maname"

Sinhalese Drama Festival. These plays were social comedies, which attempted to give a more or less naturalistic representation of contemporary life, while satirising middle-class foibles and character types. Most often, they used plots borrowed from Western dramatists like Gogol, Moliere and Chekov. They rigorously excluded both song and the stilted declamation of the older Tower Hall

A scene from the play "Sanasuma"



A scene from the play "Kadawalalu"

drama, and their language was a fairly accurate reflection of the conversational idiom of the urban middle-class.

The revival of some of these plays at the Drama Festival makes possible a fresh assessment of their merits and deficiencies. Looking at them today, I feel that their



A scene from the play "Handahana"

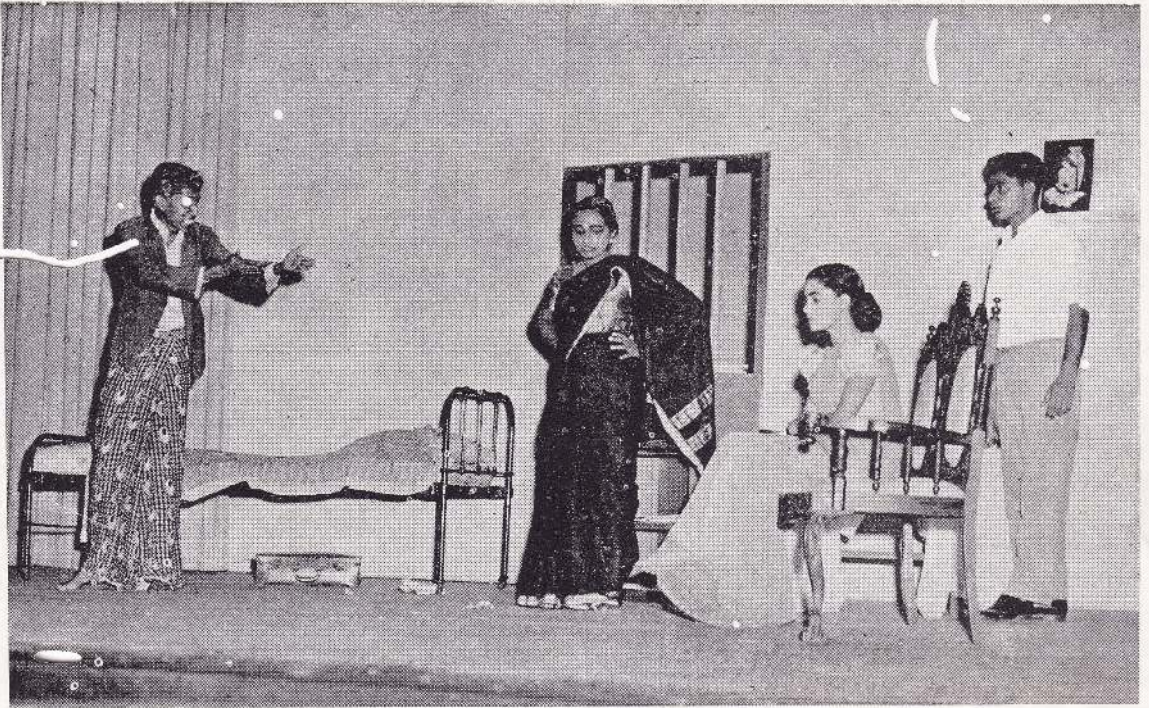
greatest asset was in the inherent strength of their borrowed plots. They did provide the Sinhalese theatre with a model of a well-constructed dramatic structure. It is the farcical situation, taken over from Gogol, which makes *Rahas Komasaris* tolerably amusing; the characters, however, are flat two-dimensional types, and the repetitious gags tend to pall as the play goes on. *Kapuva Kapothi* is superior because the characters have greater life, but even here most of the entertaining quality of the play comes from the borrowed situations.

The other undoubted merit of these plays was that they acquainted Sinhalese playgoers with a type of play which was based solely on dialogue. But if the use of conversational speech made for greater consistency than the earlier mixture of song, naturalistic speech and declamation, the kind of language used in the dialogue-drama was very limited in its possibilities. *Kapuva Kapothi* and *Rahas Komasaris* depict the life of an urban middle-class who use a hybrid idiom, in which Sinhalese is interlarded with English phrases like "dull life" and "society manners". I don't think it is correct to

describe the language of *Kapuva Kapothi*, as the programme of the Drama Festival does, as a "racy colloquial idiom." It exhibits not so much raciness as the slickness and superficial brightness of urban slang; it is not an idiom which can serve as the medium of anything more significant than topical satire and ephemeral entertainment. Neither the language nor the content of *Kapuva Kapothi* or *Rahas Komasaris* would have meaning for audiences outside a small semi-Westernised middle-class group. In fact, these plays appeal to very much the same kind of audience as the "Ralahamy" plays, and the chronicler of this period of Sinhalese theatre should place Mr. H. C. N. de Lanerolle as one of its presiding deities together with Moliere or Gogol.

Recent Experiments

The more recent experiments in dialogue-drama which were revived at the Drama Festival—*Pavkarayo* (1958) and *Sanasuma* (1958)—seem to show the intrusion of another influence into the Sinhalese theatre—that of the cinema. It used to be said of the Sinhalese cinema in its infancy that it was



A scene from the play "Pavukaraya"

A scene from the play "Rahas Komasaris"



too much under the domination of the stage-play; the cinema in turn seems to be stamping itself on the work of some Sinhalese writers of plays today. But the most interesting and fruitful experiments in Sinhalese theatre in the last few years have been cast in the form not of dialogue-plays but of a drama whose main media are song and dance.

In 1956 Dr. E. R. Sarathchandra, who had been associated with some of the earlier University plays, produced *Maname*—an adaptation of the nadagama form of folk-drama for the modern stage, using a traditional story and inherited tunes but new and original words. *Maname* showed immediately its capacity to appeal to wider audiences than those who had enjoyed the dialogue-plays. But it was not only the fact that *Maname* broke down the barriers of taste between urban and provincial audiences, English and Sinhalese-educated, that made it an event in the contemporary Sinhalese theatre, but also its successful fusion of dramatic action, poetry, song, dance and stylised movement. Music in *Maname* is not an element extraneous to the drama; it is that which moulds and gives shape to the dramatic action. The beautifully lyrical duet between the Prince and Princess in the forest, for instance, is not an indulgence in musical delight for its own sake; it is fraught with dramatic irony because this happiness is soon to be interrupted by the entry of the foresters. At the moments of greatest intensity the drama is heightened by the clash of melodic phrases. In *Maname*, music and drama have become truly one.

Maname has been followed by further experiments in the adaptation of the folk-drama, the most interesting of which was *Sanda-Kinduru*, performed at the Sinhalese Drama Festival. *Sanda-Kinduru* is, however, less perfect in its inter-relations of drama, music and dance. The dances and songs in *Sanda Kinduru* tend to become a succession of episodes instead of building up a dramatic continuity. The music of *Sanda-Kinduru*,

too, is not entirely suited to the theatre. Even when allowance has been made for the fact that dance takes precedence over song in this play, there appears to be an inherent weakness in the *kavi-nadagam* form which makes the longer musical dialogues stiff and monotonous. The *kavi* chanting, with its almost unvarying melody, is a better vehicle for impersonal narrative or choric comment than for the expression of a dramatic interplay of emotions.

There have also been two interesting attempts to assimilate certain elements of the musical and dance drama into the dialogue-drama—the short plays, *Rattaran* and *Kada Valalu* (1958). *Rattaran* represents a new departure for Sinhalese stage comedy because its material is drawn from folk tale, and it points to the possibilities of a type of comedy which can have a wider range of appeal and a greater depth than the ephemeral social comedy of the earlier University plays. *Kada Valalu* is a delicate and lyrical piece which provides an object-lesson in the use of song as an essential part of drama and not as extraneous ornament.

The fact that the Sinhalese Drama Festival was a great success from the point of view of public support is encouraging for the future of Sinhalese theatre, since no drama can flourish without the assistance and active co-operation of an audience. There was a time when playwrights and producers feared that the Sinhalese theatre had been completely swamped, as far as the boxoffice was concerned, by the cinema. That is no longer true, and the most hopeful fact is that the experimental drama of recent years which demands a fresh response from its audience has been able to command an enthusiastic public. If the plays presented at the Festival this year were unequal in quality, this was perhaps inevitable on a first occasion. The Arts Council intends to make the Festival an annual event, and it is to be hoped that next year we shall see new plays, including some specially produced for this occasion.

How Vesak Became a Holiday

ALEC ROBERTSON

IN the days of Portuguese and Dutch rule in Ceylon non-Christians did not have holidays. Not only was there no official recognition of days sacred to Buddhists, Hindus and Muslims as public holidays but the observance of any of their sacred days was looked on with positive disfavour by the rulers, if any non-Christian had the temerity to participate openly in the rites of his religion. The material prospects of non-Christians were jeopardised by open avowal of their faiths. Even the marriages of Buddhists were not recognised unless they were registered in church or school chapel. This policy was responsible for the conversion of a large number of Buddhists to Christianity.

The British, who ousted the Dutch in 1796, proclaimed religious neutrality, and numbers of Christian converts came back to their original faith. Christianity, however, continued to be the State religion, and Christian feast days were the only public holidays. Buddhists, Hindus and Muslims were thus compelled to leave home for public duty on the most sacred days of their religions.

The effect of religious intolerance was such that until the seventies of the last century Buddhists hesitated to declare their faith in public. A religious controversy held in Panadura in 1870 between Christian missionaries and Buddhist monks, led by Venerable Migettuwatte Gunananda Thera, broke the spell. The debate had the effect of reviving the suppressed self-respect of the Buddhist, and the publication of a report of the debate in English helped to create an interest in, and study of, Buddhism in Europe and America. One of those who read it in America was Col. H. S. Olcott who came to Ceylon, embraced Buddhism and worked for the revival of Buddhism.

Not until the eighties of the last century was Vesak Day, the Buddha's

birthday and the birthday of the Sinhala Nation, declared a public holiday. It came to be public holiday as the result of an agitation that followed an unfortunate riot between Sinhala Catholics and Sinhala Buddhists in 1883. The incident occurred when a Catholic procession clashed with a procession of Buddhists on Easter Sunday which fell that year on Sinhala and Tamil New Year's day, a day which Sinhala Buddhists celebrate. The Government took no action against the offenders on the ground of lack of evidence. Thereupon the Buddhists took political action. Although their main object was the punishment of the offenders, the leaders of the agitation did not lose sight of the larger issues involved, namely, the securing of national rights which had been violated. They demanded (1) that the birthday of the Buddha be declared a public holiday, (2) that the Buddhists be permitted to conduct their national and religious processions without restrictions, (3) that Buddhist registrars of marriages, births and deaths be appointed in villages and towns, and (4) that early steps be taken to decide the question of Buddhist Temporalities. But the Colonial Government of the day paid no heed to these demands. An appeal was then made to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, the Earl of Derby, Mr. Edward F. Perera, Proctor himself a Christian (father of Mr. E. W. Perera, Member of the Legislative and State Councils of Ceylon), signing the petition on behalf of the Buddhists.

The Petition

"THE appeal now made to Your Lordship would not have been presented if the Sinhalese people could feel certain that a policy of

strict neutrality might always be expected from the Colonial authorities," stated Mr. Perera in the course of his petition. "The fact that an assault has been made upon a body of unoffending Buddhists, their wives and children in broad daylight, upon the public road within the city limits, in the presence of more than three score policemen, that in this affray human lives have been sacrificed, many maimed, some for life, and much property sacrificed, without a single person having been even tried, as by law provided, least of all punished, has filled the entire Sinhalese people with dismay. They see that at any time, under a weak Governor or Police Director, their blood may again be spilled and even more grievous wrongs inflicted on them. It is not too much to say that a thrill of alarm is running through the heart of the whole nation, and that a repetition of such scenes would test their loyalty most severely. Since the country passed under British rule various causes of discontent have been gradually disappearing as the people have become accustomed to their new masters. But if they should see the prospect of the violation of every pledge of protection for their religious rights violated and the innocent customs of their forefathers ruthlessly broken down to please a riotous minority defiant alike of law and justice, it is to be feared that the outraged national feeling might manifest itself in disturbances of a most deplorable character. They have not the remotest desire to interfere with the religious privileges of their fellow subjects of other faiths, nor do they ask for special favours for themselves, though considering their numerical strength and the ancient promises held out to them when their country was surrendered to the British Forces, they might be warranted in doing so. They ask only for justice and the application to their case of that benevolent rule of regard for the rights of one's neighbour which the Christians boast of as the jewel of their moral doctrine,

"The petition to His Excellency the Governor will prove to Your Lordship that the Buddhists have attempted, before troubling the Home authorities, to obtain locally the redress of their wrongs, and the records of the judicial branch of the Colonial Government but too clearly prove how totally this attempt has failed, and how necessary it was to turn to the Imperial Government and beg the enunciation of a policy as regards the religious affairs of Ceylon that will remove all present cause of discontent and prevent the occurrence of similar ones.

"In view of the gravity of the situation, I have the honour, as leading Proctor for the petitioners and for the joint committee of the most influential Buddhist priests and laity in the recent legal proceedings, to beg as speedy a determination of this matter as may be compatible with Your Lordship's convenience and the views of the Government."

To his petition Mr. Perera received the following reply, dated January 10, 1884, from the Colonial Secretary of Ceylon:—"With reference to my letter of the 2nd November last, I am directed to inform you that the Governor has received a dispatch from the Secretary of State requesting him to inform you that he has received your petition, and that the unhappy riots to which you refer have formed the subject of much consideration and consultation between him and the Lieutenant-Governor of Ceylon: and that His Lordship much deplores that it has not been found possible to bring to justice those who took part in them: that instructions have been given which he trusts will enable all Her Majesty's subjects in Ceylon to practice the rites of their respective religions without interference; and that far from desiring to prohibit Buddhist processions, Her Majesty's Government have only been anxious to revise the Police Regulations, so as to ensure that such processions shall be permitted under due safeguards for the preservation of the public peace, and the avoidance of all danger from the violence or intimidation of unruly crowds in the public streets."

As this reply did not satisfy them, the Buddhists held a meeting on January 28, 1884, presided over by the Venerable Hikkaduwe Sri Sumangala Mahanayaka Thera, Principal of Vidyodaya Pirivena, Colombo, and adopted the following resolutions:—

1. "That in the opinion of this meeting the letter of the Colonial Secretary in declaring the inability of the Colonial authorities to punish those who took part in the disgraceful religious riots of Easter Sunday last, has set a precedent dangerous to the peace of the Colony, and calculated to invite a repetition of such outrages upon the Buddhists whenever the Government may be in the hands of weak or prejudiced officials".

2. "That the promise of future protection is so qualified as to leave it optional with any future timid or bigoted Inspector-General of Police to refuse permits for Buddhist religious processions on the plea of possible interference by 'unruly crowds in the public streets', that therefore the ancient rights of the Buddhist people are not adequately guaranteed, and finally that no assurance seems to be given that whatever revisions may be made in the present Police Regulations, they may not be abrogated and again altered for the worse at any time when there is a change of administration".

3. "That a committee to be known as the Buddhist Defence Committee be formed, with full power to adopt such lawful and proper measures as may from time to time seem advisable to promote Buddhist interests, and in the present instance to obtain redress for injuries to our religion and to persons and property during the religious riots of last Easter Sunday". The committee was composed of the following:—Messrs. William de Abrew, H. Don Carolis, Don David Abeyratne, J. P. Jayatilaka, J. R. de Silva, Simon Perera Dharma Gunawardana, B. H. Kure, Sederis Silva, R. A. Mirando, Charles Alexander de Silva (Proctor), and C. P. Gunawardana.

Invitation to Col. Olcott

ON the invitation of the committee, Col. Olcott, who was then in Madras, proceeded to London as the "chief agent of the committee" to seek redress. He undertook this mission on condition that he received no remuneration for his services. Arriving in London in May, 1884, he saw Hon. R. H. Meade of the Colonial Office and then wrote at length to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, the Earl of Derby, forcefully setting out the grievances of the Buddhists and demanding adequate redress. "I have also shown to Mr. Meade a copy of a Colombo newspaper which sets forth the unlimited power habitually enjoyed by the second law officer of the Crown—the local official primarily responsible, as alleged, for the apparent miscarriage of justice complained of", stated Col. Olcott in his letter to the Earl of Derby.

"I am sorry to inform Your Lordship that discontent and despair are rapidly spreading among the Sinhalese Buddhists; a fact to be the more deplored since there is not in all the imperial realm a more simple, peaceable, community", stated Col. Olcott. "Before the manufacture and sale of arrack was promoted for revenue purposes they were—unless history belies them—a most kindly, quiet, and virtuous nation. Their devotion to Buddhism appears in the fact that, despite the bloody policy of the Portuguese, and the despicable and crafty one of the Dutch, they ever remained secretly true to their forefathers' faith, and as soon as it became safe under British rule, openly professed it. They feel just now, however, as though the ruling powers were secretly willing to deliver them over to the Romish mob, and determined to deny them common protection. No seer is required to foretell what the legitimate outcome of such a feeling must be, and, on behalf of the better part of the nation, I do most earnestly implore Your Lordship to take such steps as shall, without dangerous delay, prove to them the sincerity of the professions of Government as made from time to time".

In the course of Lord Derby's reply dated June 17, 1884, communicated through the Under Secretary of State, it was stated: "Lord Derby has already expressed his great regret that it has not been found possible to prosecute the ringleaders of the riots of Easter Sunday last year, and is ready to acknowledge that the sufferers on that occasion have real grounds for complaint in this respect, but in the absence of fresh evidence it would be impossible to reopen the matter.

"Her Majesty's Government are resolved that in Ceylon, as in other parts of the Empire, the principles of religious liberty shall be strictly adhered to, and will do their utmost to remove any grievance under which any religious community can be shown to labour, and to put an end to any appearance of disregarding the Proclamations of Religious Neutrality which were made at the time when the English took possession of the Island. It is impossible to make any more explicit statement of the firm intention of the Government to abide by the spirit of those ancient Proclamations than has already been made by the Governor under the instructions of the Secretary of State, as given in Lord Derby's dispatch, to which reference is made in your letter of 17th May.

"Lord Derby has confidence in the loyalty and good sense of the Buddhist community in Ceylon, and feels sure that they will loyally accept his assurance in this matter". As regards the demands of the Buddhists that Vesak Day be declared a public holiday, that processions with music be allowed, that Buddhist registrars of marriages be appointed and that the question of Buddhist Temporalities be decided, Lord Derby expressed his confidence that "it will be the wish of Sir Arthur Gordon, as it is that of Her Majesty's Government, that every consideration possible should be shown in these matters".

Col. Olcott, in his final letter dated June 19, 1884, thanked Lord Derby on behalf of the Buddhists of Ceylon for his "frank and unequivocal declaration" and expressed his confidence that the Governor, Sir Arthur Gordon, would do all he could to give effect to the expressed sympathies of the Imperial Government.

Sir Arthur Gordon conceded the privileges the Buddhists sought and earned their gratitude.

(The writer is indebted for most of his facts to a historical paper written 30 years ago by the late Mr. E. W. Perera.)