

TRIBUNE



26TH YEAR OF PUBLICATION

PROPHET PRIEST AND PATRIOT

By

E. Seeman Pillai

A stirring recital of the simple life and signal achievements of a literary marvel unmatched in the long and chequered history of the Tamil race.

Below are excerpts from the introduction:

1. Hinduism, he felt, could be christianized and christianity itself indigenized. Even as the great Jesuit Baschi had essayed centuries earlier, soon to be immortalized himself in the Pantheon of Tamil Literature.

2. Tamil, he warned, was not a tongue of yesterday; it was as old as civilized man, a tongue like Hebrew.

3. Whether it was from the modern correspondent on overseas Tamil or the purchase of the printed pages of a Tamil newspaper, the author was struck by the richness of the Tamil language and the untold tales it held. He felt that the history of the Tamil people, which he had heard of in the past, was now being written in the present.

The element of time or of distance that had previously stood between him and the past, he felt, was now disappearing. He felt that he was now in closer contact with the past than ever before. He felt that he was now in closer contact with the past than ever before.

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OSBERT WILSON

CATHOLIC PRESS, BATTICALOA

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50TH YEAR OF PUBLICATION

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3. Whether it arose from the tiredness consequent on ceaseless travellings in pursuance of his professed purpose of augmenting the much-impaired prestige of the Tamil Race or of unfolding to an awe-struck world the inestimable treasures of the Tamil heritage. . .
4. . . .That elemental love of fatherland, that pro-patria surge welling up within his breast, resistless and uncontrollable, that spurred him on closer to the arena of conflict, an indomitable effective in the struggle then convulsing the dominant races in his land of Elam.

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Letter From the Editor

WITH THE SLFP out of the elections, there is nothing to look forward to in the results of the polling on June 4. The UNP has been returned unopposed in seven of the twenty-four districts, viz., Kandy, Kurunegala, Kegalle, Moneragala, Ratnapura, Nuwara Eliya and Matara. The UNP is the only party to field candidates in all twenty four electorates. Three other political parties are fighting the elections: The Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF); the All-Ceylon Tamil Congress (ACTC) and the Janata Vimukthi Peramuna (the JVP—contesting as an Independent group as it is not yet registered as a recognized political party). The TULF is contesting in seven districts in the North and East, namely, Jaffna, Mannar, Mullaitivu, Vavuniya, Trincomalee, Batticaloa and Amparai. The ACTC is contesting in Jaffna and Colombo. The JVP (Independent group) is contesting in Colombo, Gampaha, Matale, Badulla, Anuradhapura and Kalutara. Three political parties which have played a significant part in the modern political history of the country, i.e. Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP), the Lanka Sama Samaja Party (LSSP) and the Communist Party of Sri Lanka (CPSL), have kept out of the elections. In the seven districts in the North and the East, it will be interesting to see how the UNP fares among Tamil-speaking voters. The bulk of the Tamil-speaking Muslims—there are sizable pockets in Jaffna and Mannar and larger numbers in the Eastern Province—will vote UNP. What kind of showing the ACTC will make in Jaffna is yet to be seen. Will it fare better than the UNP? One cannot understand why it decided to contest Colombo! Can the ACTC survive the cut-off point? The most significant contest will be between the UNP and the TULF. This is the first time since Independence that a sectional and communally-organised Tamil party is being challenged in a serious, sustained and organised manner in the North and East by a nationally-based party under Sinhala leadership. The Left parties, the LSSP and CPSL have from the beginning proclaimed their opposition to communal, sectarian and separatist policies of the once 50/50 ACTC, the now defunct FP and the presently vociferous TULF, but they were never able to offer a serious challenge to them even in coalition with the SLFP distributing plums as well as crumbs of official patronage. The UNP under J. R. Jayewardene has set about fighting the separatist trends in the TULF with statesmanship, strength and understanding. The UNP has deliberately placed the election fight in the North and East on the Eelam issue—pushing the discontent arising from high prices, the inflation and other grievances into the background. What kind of challenge will the JVP offer the UNP in the six districts it has filed nominations? Will it be able to collect even a fraction of the votes that might have otherwise gone to the SLFP, LSSP or the CPSL? In the absence of the LSSP and CPSL, will the JVP be able to emerge as a major Left and Opposition force even in an embryonic form? Will the majority of the SLFP, LSSP and

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CPSL voters keep away from the polling booths? Or will some of them vote UNP or JVP? As a political party the JVP has not outgrown its 1971 immaturity. It romantically glorifies the suicidal adventure of 1971. It has no realistic political or economic programme to cope with the problems of the day. It still parades hackneyed agitational slogans based on oversimplified neo-Marxist formulae interspersed with abusive denouncements of the LSSP, CPSL and SLFP on the one hand and mild vituperations against the UNP on the other. JVPism leaves the bulk of the people unmoved. JVP propaganda has an appeal only to a section of the frustrated and uninformed youth, victims of the education system, or the lack of a proper one, in the last three decades. The JVP is well funded; and its activists display remarkable ability to organise impressive processions and demonstrations. Are these enough to make the JVP a major political party?



COVER

Jaffna

THIS WEEK we have chosen an aerial view of the old Dutch Fort in Jaffna to draw attention to DDC elections. It is only in the Jaffna District that the UNP is fighting with its back to the wall against the TULF (successor to the old Tamil Congress and the Federal Party) which has had a monopoly of political power in the Peninsula since the introduction of the Soulbury Commission in 1947. The only time this monopoly was broken was when P. Kandiah won the then Pt. Pedro seat for the Communist Party. Independents have occasionally been returned when the Tamil Congress and the Federal Party split the votes. The 1972 Constitution brought the Tamil Congress and the Federal Party in the Tamil United Front (TUF) together with Thondaman's Ceylon Workers' Congress. But frustration drove some Tamils to Eelam and they stampeded the TUF to become the TULF (Tamil United Liberation Front). Political terrorism also began to rear its head, but after a time it degenerated into brigandage using a political smokescreen. In the 1977

elections, the TULF swept the Northern Province, but in the East the UNP was able to score significant victories. Moreover, two of those who won on TULF tickets crossed over to the UNP. In the DDC elections scheduled for June 4, the hardest fought will be in the North and East. The UNP has decided to challenge the TULF on its home-ground. The UNP has moreover made Eelam the main issue of the election battle. The results are awaited with interest. The TULF is still enmeshed in its own Eelam logic and seeks to justify its participation in the DDC elections in terms of an indirect and invisible formation for Eelam. How far it will succeed in this is yet to be seen?



EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

What Next?

Colombo, May 21 : Sri Lanka is going through a period of heavy stress and strain. This has become apparent even to those who like to believe in the sunshine stories in the official media. But all the sunshine (really moonshine) in these stories only add to the growing credibility gap because realities do not match up to promises, and explanations more often than not are hopelessly contradictory. Unfortunately, the Opposition papers pitch valid criticism on an over-heated and over-simplistic plane and it has little impact on the public. The Opposition is also far too submerged in its internal ideological, factional and organisational problems: and, in the political arena, the Government can for the present, get away with murder. Even the Government's decision to apply for membership in ASEAN may pass without a ripple for the moment—for how long one does not know! To make a fetish about balanced trade with countries which produce, manufacture and export the same kind of commodities and services as Sri Lanka is only an exercise in futility and wishful thinking. The only way Sri Lanka can "balance" its trade with most ASEAN countries is to decrease its imports and deal with other countries where a greater balance can be struck. We have the same kind of problems with countries in South

Asia particularly India. We had greater balance with Pakistan when Bangladesh was out of the tea trade with that country. But soon the situation will go back to square one.

The country now faces an economic crisis: our foreign exchange resources are running low, the IMF has still not decided to restore the Extended Fund Facility stand-by credit, our Central Bank is discounting Treasury Bills to pay government salaries and also all commercial banks have been ordered to impose a credit squeeze that is likely to throw economic activity into the doldrums. Several high-powered delegations from this country are today going round the world begging for money as foreign investment, but there are indications that international financial circles are a little more careful than before about putting more and more money into a "resplendent isle" that may soon become a bottomless pit for foreign investors. Overspending, mixed up priorities, waste and corruption have all contributed to the present economic difficulties.

WHEN MAN is profligate, nature too turns against him. The drought which began last year continues. The Southwest Monsoon is already late this year. It can turn out to be partial or it can even fail. The last paddy crop was good because of Mahaweli water. If the drought continues, or the rainfall is insufficient, Mahaweli will have less water. And the next paddy crop may not be so good. In the meantime, at the time of writing, our hydrel reservoirs have less than a week's supply of power. The power cut—now in its fourth month—has devastated industry and economic activity. Many industries face bankruptcy. Only a few can afford to buy private generators and feed them with fuel at OPEC prices. No contract can be completed on time. New orders cannot be undertaken. There is a stalemate that bodes no good. Telephones are dead more often than before. Blaming the weather will not help beyond a point. Street corner talk now centres on why we should waste money on celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of adult franchise: why we should celebrate adult franchise and political freedom when Sri Lanka is to become a third-rate camp follower (a lowly "observer" like Papua New Guinea) of ASEAN countries

every one of which does not have the kind of civil liberties, fundamental rights, personal democratic freedoms or the rule of law as we have in Sri Lanka. Would it not be better to scrap all our freedoms and adopt the martial law administration of Marcos? Do we want to have 100,000 political prisoners as in Indonesia or the way of life in Thailand (where coups take place every two years)? The less said about fundamental rights in Malaysia the better.

There is nothing to be proud about in being a peripheral third class associate of ASEAN. The blah blah about ASEAN being non-aligned will convince no one. President Jayewardene had very correctly pointed out that Sri Lanka is one of the very few countries in the Non-aligned Movement which has a democratic system of government. Many NA countries are military juntas and dictatorships. Moreover, the concept of non-alignment has undergone such fundamental changes that it is no longer what it once was. The simple point is that the world in which non-alignment, as conceived by Nehru, Nasser and others, was a potent force is no more. The world may be bipolar or multipolar or both, but the balance of international alignments has changed so fundamentally "that the confrontation of the 1980s has a little in common with the confrontation of the 1950s as Anwar Sadat has with General Abdel Nasser". The Government should consider very carefully the value of third class or fourth class membership in ASEAN: that it should be also careful not to burn completely its boats with South Asian countries by jumping into ASEAN or the OAU (there is no reason why we should not beg for membership in OAU because the same Ocean washes our shores and some countries in Africa!).

NO COUNTRY with self-respect should beg for an invitation to join ASEAN. To add insult to injury we have been told that Sri Lanka is "geographically" not entitled to full membership. Hints have been dropped that we might be given observer status like the distant and very backward Papua New Guinea. The best that can be said of the Government's decision

s that this ASEAN membership interlude is a charming piece of innocence and naivete. At worst, it has devalued Sri Lanka's reputation as an independent country. It must be remembered that Philippines and Thailand are part of the American military set up in the Pacific. They are in military alliances and that is why they are not members of the Non-aligned Movement. It will be difficult hereafter for Sri Lanka to stand up and speak in international gatherings as a free independent nation. Our voice will be mistaken for the hidden voice of ASEAN.

HOWEVER, the darkest clouds have a silver lining. And happily there are a few in Sri Lanka today. Colombo is not what it was. It has become unrecognisable with over-head crossings, roundabouts dotted with statues and fountains with freshly painted buildings, mini skyscrapers slowly climbing up, covered shopping arcades full of the latest electronic gadgets from all over the world. The apologists of the regime never let up about the modernisation of old Colombo and its new air of opulence and Singapore-style bustle when they talk to visitors. With locals they are silent and dismiss them as inconsequential. We will revert to this UNP's 'capitalist revolution' in the coming weeks, but for the present we must mention that to the credit of this government, unemployment (especially among educated youth) has come down, foreign investment has increased, remittances from our manpower abroad had touched Rs. 2.5 billion in 1980, the tourist trade has increased and generally there is an air of affluence.

But more than all this, what has impressed *Tribune* are significant changes that have taken place in the agricultural sector. Agriculture is our salvation. Readers will recall that *Tribune* has so far been highly critical of the performance of the Ministry of Agriculture and more especially its active arm, the Agricultural Department Authority (ADA). We do not want to go into the past. We do not want to hold postmortems. What we are interested is the present and the future of agricultural production. Paddy production has gone up. If the present trends are maintained Sri Lanka will be self-sufficient sooner

than we had expected. What is of greatest significance is the fixing of floor prices for subsidiary food crops with the guarantee that what is not absorbed in the market will be purchased by government. There have been guaranteed price schemes in the past (paddy, ulundu, gingelly etc.) but they had all failed for a variety of reasons. In the new scheme in operation for a few months now, an earnest endeavour has been made to avoid these mistakes. It may be necessary to make changes in the floor prices and the system as time goes on, but these are matters of detail. *Tribune* attended a Seminar organised by the ADA on May 7 at the BMICH. We are not fond of Seminars or Workshops. They are the latest gimmickry of public servants (especially the international jet-set) to shirk work by creating a smokescreen to give the impression of intense activity. However, in spite of our inhibitions and prejudices about Seminars, we were persuaded to attend the ADA show and at the end we had no regrets. We learnt a great deal and met many people involved in agriculture—not merely departmental officials, but private farmers, parliamentarians and ministers from agricultural districts. We were also furnished with documents containing statistics and reports—and we are surprised why the media does not make more use of them to keep the public informed (without being side-tracked into futile sensationalism).

We had always complained that Agricultural Extension Services had collapsed. In fact, they had collapsed during the Kobbekaduwa regime and our complaint was that nothing had been done by the UNP. The ADA, we found, has been restructuring the Extension Services, electorate by electorate (so far, if memory serves us right, nearly 80 electorates had been covered and that soon the number will be over 100). Farmers from the electorates where the ADA is functioning told us that they were very satisfied with the facilities and services. *Tribune* will undertake an investigation in some of the electorates to see whether fulfilment and performance are anywhere near promise. One happy sign was that in the open discussions that took place at the Seminar with the press and radio in attendance, there was lively criticism. There was plenty of debate, of argument, give and take. There were criticisms, for instance

of the way the Ministry of Irrigation was functioning (the ADA chief had set the ball rolling). Minister Gamini Dissanayake in a short but brilliant discourse not only defended his Ministry but set out difficulties which called for a national effort. One point he mentioned must be considered very relevant and pertinent. He said that one reason why irrigation channels, anicuts, sluice gates, reservoirs and the like deteriorated and needed frequent repairs and restoration was because there was no adequate budgetary provision for "maintenance". Millions were voted for construction, but the Treasury refused to allow enough money for "maintenance". *Tribune* will examine some of the aspects of the work of the Ministry of Agriculture and the ADA in a constructive, objective but albeit critical way.

THERE IS yet another matter on which we have had to revise our views. In the issue of April 25, we had said that the US Seventh Fleet was seeking to bait Sri Lanka to grant Rest and Recreation facilities by promising to helicopter-lift heavy TV equipment to the top of Pidurutalagala. We had also said that the US helicopters could not do the job. The local office of the USICA in a written communication assured us that the job could be done and invited us to witness the operation. We could not go to Nuwara Eliya for the airlifting on May 4. But there is not the slightest doubt that the job was done without a hitch. Eye-witnesses testify to the precision with which it was done. We had also feared that this would be a *quid pro quo* for Rest and Recreation facilities. Such facilities have not been given. Inspired leaks in the official media have made it clear that such facilities were not on the cards. But we had reason for our apprehensions. A report in the *New York Times* and cited by *Xinhua* in Peking, speaks of Sri Lanka, as one of the places where US Marines had R/R facilities. The US has also made a significant advance in space technology in the Columbia shuttle—which goes up like a rocket and comes down like a plane. Whilst the world acclaims this scientific achievement of the USA, President Reagan's policies have set in motion conflicting and contradictory currents not only inside the USA but also throughout the world. Even conservative elements throughout the world which look to the USA for leader-

ship are apprehensive where Reagan's policies would take the world. A major arms race has been set in motion. The manufacturers of armaments have come to the fore.

IT WILL BE RECALLED that after the Second World War when the Anglo-Saxon world led by Churchill, Truman and John Foster Dulles unleashed a cold war upon the world, the result was a leftward swing in many countries in all continents. The US under Kennedy, Johnson and Nixon, had to use detente, to reverse this process. But Carter, and now more fully Reagan, with Thatcher as very much of a junior partner, have embarked on a new Anglo-Saxon (Anglo-American) offensive to push the world into diehard conservatism through the imperatives of an arms race. As in the 1950s when governments started swinging left, the recent French presidential election where a socialist was voted to power as President seems to be a harbinger of coming events. Liberalism and neutralism have begun to surface in West Germany. The local government elections in Britain showed a swing of 18% against Thatcher in favour of Labour. And the US is unable to twist the Saudis tail to make them abandon Syria on the missile issue in Lebanon. Reagan has lifted the grain embargo against the USSR though Haig was opposed to it. The US Congress imposed difficult conditions on the El Salvadorean junta for any military assistance—also against Haig's *diktat*. Reagan has indicated that he will start talks with the Soviet Union on strategic arms in September—though Haig was opposed to any dates or time-bound schedules. And the Reagan administration has a tough nut to crack in Namibia. The *British Guardian*, May 3, set out the position: "The saga of Namibia's decolonisation has already spanned more than thirty years. Harry Truman was still in office when the question of prising South Africa's grip from the territory first dawned as an international issue. Since then the British, French, Spanish, and Portuguese empires in Africa have disappeared, but South Africa's remains. Although Namibia is technically known as a mandated territory, it is in effect the largest colony left anywhere in the world". The *Guardian* says that the present US strategy is "stalling" and concluded "the time for stalling has drained away".

April 22-30

DIARY OF EVENTS IN SRI LANKA AND THE WORLD COMPILED FROM DAILY NEWS-PAPERS PUBLISHED IN COLOMBO.

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

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 22: A United States Navy helicopter will carry a six ton generator for the National Television tower to Mount Pidurutalagala from Nuwara Eliya early next month; Mr. Sarath Amunugama, Secretary State Ministry said yesterday that this operation which is being carried out for Sri Lanka free by the US Navy will save the government Rs. 8 million; the earlier proposal was to cut a road up to the Pidurutalagala peak and transport the generator by lorry; this would have not only cost the authorities Rs. 8 million, but would have pushed back the introduction of television by one year, which was the minimum time necessary to construct a road, he added. Foreign Minister A. C. S. Hameed said yesterday that we have good reason to hope that the time is appropriate for moving in the direction of formalised regional co-operation when he inaugurated the South Asian Foreign Secretaries Conference at the BMICH—*CDN*. A 4540 million rupee project to develop dairy farming in three districts of Sri Lanka has been undertaken by world famous Nestles Ltd., in collaboration with the Ministry of Rural Industrial Development and other institutions attached to the Ministry such as the National Livestock Development Board. Imports of crude oil increased by 41 per cent during January 1981 when compared with the same month last

year, according to selected economic indicators prepared by the Central Bank. The Labour Ministry has clamped down on night shifts for women workers in the private sector. The ban will apply in the city of Colombo, Ratmalana and Ekala areas—*SU*.

THURSDAY, APRIL 23: The Sri Lanka government will enter into an agreement with the Asian Development Bank for a loan in various currencies equal to about 12.8 million US dollars (approximately Rs. 230 million) to increase the productivity of the tea industry. The seven South Asian countries now meeting in Colombo to prepare the way for closer socio-economic and cultural cooperation yesterday evening identified five areas for detailed study; the five areas are telecommunications, meteorology, agriculture, health and family planning and rural development—*CDN*. The United States of America has authorised three loans totalling \$ 153.2M million (Rs. 2,808 million) to Sri Lanka in its program of economic co-operation between the two countries; the loans are \$ 85 million for Mahaweli Basin Development (Phase II), \$ 50 million for the Mahaveli sector and \$ 16.2 million Public Law PL 480, for import of wheat; the two Mahaveli loans totalling \$ 135 million constitute one of the biggest aid grants by the US to Sri Lanka. *CDM*. President J. R. Jayewardene yesterday directed Acting Trade and Shipping Minister M. S. Amarasiri to immediately study the sales of rubber; when the matter was discussed at the Cabinet meeting yesterday, several Ministers pointed out that rubber was not being purchased and consequently thousands of workers were affected; the Acting Minister of Trade explained that this was a result of the rubber-rice pact between China and Sri Lanka in which the quantity of rice to be imported by Sri Lanka had been greatly reduced because of the high level of local production; since rubber purchased by China was related to the rice purchased by Sri Lanka, the Chinese government had drastically reduced the quantum of rubber purchased from Sri Lanka—*SU*.

FRIDAY, APRIL 24: The power situation is worsening daily; there is only energy for eleven days; the torrential rains experienced in Colombo and its suburbs yesterday morning

fell on the coastal areas from Negombo to Galle; the catchment areas of the Castlereagh-Mousakelle did not experience any rainfall. Mr. Sunil de Silva, Deputy Solicitor General yesterday outlined before the Special Presidential Commission allegations of misuse of power, against Mr. Hector Kobbekaduwa, Minister of Agriculture and Lands in the Sirima Bandaranaike Government and Mr. D. M. Jayaratne, former SLFP MP for Gampola. Central Bank of Ceylon yesterday announced the launching of a secondary market for trading Treasury Bills; the Bank said that it was seeking to ginger the local capital market by initiating the trading of Treasury Bills by offering its current holdings to the public at a discount—*CDN*. A well planned racket in pilfering alcoholic spirits was brought to light following the Kekirawa police detecting spirits being robbed from a State Distilleries Corporation bowser at Thonigala junction on the Anuradhapura-Kekirawa road; it carried 1,481.3 gallons at the time. Surveys conducted by the Department of Labour have revealed that nearly 80 per cent of the women working in garment and textile factories are underpaid; this is contrary to the belief that big establishments who employed hundreds of women workers, in their factories, paid their workers good wages; the ruse adopted by these establishments is to make up the payrolls according to the Wages Board scales of pay and get the workers to sign receipts for the amount of pay specified while actually paying them much less through another set of checkrolls maintained separately—*CDN*.

SATURDAY, APRIL 25: The Ceylon Electricity Board announced that the water levels of the Hydro-reservoirs had yesterday gone down to dangerously low levels; the water in the reservoirs yesterday was only 5.6 percent of their full capacity; this would mean unforeseen power failures in some areas outside the normal power cut hours; power is now available only for 11 more days. Prime Minister R. Premadasa accompanied by Mrs. Hema Premadasa left yesterday on a 16-day goodwill tour of South East Asian countries; he is due to visit the Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand; he hoped to have talks with heads of governments with a view to obtaining their assistance for the development

projects that were under way here. Up to yesterday, commercial banks, the business community and public institutions had snapped up Rs. 256 million worth of Treasury Bills issued by the Central Bank, in its new scheme of Treasury Bill sales to the public which began on April 21—*CDN*. The police are probing publicity abroad by certain local hotels inviting homosexual tourists to Sri Lanka offering them male companions; advertisements published in various 'gay' magazines, particularly in the Scandinavian countries in this connection are now in the hands of police investigators; these advertisements which identify the names of several hotels in Colombo, Bandarawela, Hikkaduwa, Kandy and Nuwara Eliya offer young Sri Lanka males under what is described as "permissive and completely sympathetic managements". A message from President J. R. Jayewardene will shortly be flashed into space requesting Soviet spacemen abroad the orbiting Salyut 6 craft to photograph Sri Lanka; the President had granted permission for the photographing which could now be done without violating international procedure governing such matters Mr. Lyakhov said—*CDN*.

SUNDAY, APRIL 26: In a surprise decision taken late on Friday, the SLFP decided that it will not run for the Development Council elections for which nominations close at 12 noon tomorrow; the decision was taken at a meeting of the party's politbureau that was not attended by the party leader, Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike; Mrs. Bandaranaike has kept away from recent meetings of the politbureau where many decisions relating to the elections were being taken, observers regard her absence from these meetings to be a safety measure taken to ensure that her presence did not create any legal complications for party candidates as a consequence of her lack of civic rights; according to reliable sources the main reason that led the SLFP to decide to abandon the DC elections was the immense pressure being brought on the party by prospective candidates jockeying for places high up the party list. The visiting Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister N. P. Firyubin yesterday expressed his country's willingness to have closer economic co-operation with Sri Lanka in talks he held with Foreign Minister, A. C. S. Hameed; Mr. Hameed said that there

were many possible areas of economic co-operation between the two countries; Mr. Firyubin agreed to send a delegation of experts to Colombo to identify and study the various possible areas of economic co-operation; the Foreign Ministry in Colombo said that two rounds of talks had been held during Mr. Firyubin's visit here and described them as "cordial and frank" and covering bilateral, regional and international issues of interest to the two countries. The visits here of foreign Naval vessels has resulted in considerable foreign exchange earnings for the country; two Royal Australian Navy destroyers, the "Brisbane" and the "Perth" are now in harbour at Trincomalee; these two vessels have encashed Rs. 3 lakhs for expenses; last March, when two US Naval destroyers, the USS "Ranger" and the USS "Fox" were in Colombo a total of Rs. 8 million was expended including Rs. 3.8 million crew expenses; Sri Lanka does not permit any country rest and recreation facilities here although Naval ships are allowed to put into the country's ports on condition that the ships carry no nuclear arms and their countries are not at war—SO. The Customs at the Colombo Airport last year handled a total of 841,615 passengers, 406,940 inward and 434,575 outward; this year, this revenue-earning department will handle an all-time record of over one million passengers—ST. A statement issued by the SLFP yesterday stated that they had decided to participate in the DC elections to present a common protest of all anti-UNP progressive forces; that while the SLFP was making preparation to contest the elections during nominations fixed from between April 20 and 27 the UNP has launched "a political witch-hunt of unprecedented magnitude" to inquire into the conduct of Ministers in the last government, it alleged; "Added to this the conduct of our Ministers and MPs is being investigated by the Presidential Commission to run parallel with the DC elections; as a protest the SLFP has decided not to contest the forthcoming DC elections", the statement said. The Soviet Union yesterday expressed appreciation of the active role Sri Lanka is now playing to bring about regional co-operation among the countries of South Asia; Deputy Foreign Minister N. P. Firyubin disclosed Russia's view during talks with Foreign Minister A. C. S. Hameed in Colombo

two days after Lanka hosted a meeting of Foreign Secretaries of six South Asian countries—CDN.

MONDAY, APRIL 27: A few steady welcome showers over the catchment area on Friday night has pushed up levels at the reservoirs by an aggregate of just over 9 inches; this increase will be enough to maintain present supplies up to around May 23 or 24 with the third gas turbine due to be commissioned within the next few days—CDN.

TUESDAY, APRIL 28: United National Party candidates were elected unopposed to seven of the 24 Development Councils, nominations for which closed at 12 noon yesterday; the districts for which they were declared elected by the Returning Officers were Kandy, Kurunegala, Kegalle, Moneragala, Ratnapura, Nuwara Eliya and Matara; the UNP is the only party to field candidates in all 24 districts; apart from the UNP there are three other political parties in the fray; they are the Tamil United Liberation Front, the Tamil Congress and the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna which is contesting as an independent group as it is not a recognized political party; the TULF is contesting in seven districts in the North and East; the districts are Jaffna, Mannar, Mullaitivu, Vavuniya, Trincomalee, Batticaloa and Amparai; the Tamil Congress is contesting in Jaffna and Colombo, the latter a surprise move; the JVP (independent group) is contesting in Colombo, Gampaha, Matale, Badula, Anuradhapura and Kalutara; three political parties the Sri Lanka Freedom Party, the Lanka Sama Samaja Party and the Communist Party are not contesting the elections—CDN. An armed Police party yesterday rescued the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Kelaniya, Mr. Tilak Ratnakara and the Registrar, Mr. Tissera who were held prisoner by over 1500 students inside the Vice-Chancellor's office; the students also set fire to furniture, stationery and several documents and police estimated the damage to be in the region of Rs. 2 lakhs. Sri Lanka is one of the 36 countries with a per capita income of less than 300 dollars—the poorest category on record—according to the World Bank Atlas for 1980 which has just rolled off the press—CO.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 29: Sri Lanka today intimated its desire to join the Association of South East Asia Nations (ASEAN) saying that the grouping played an important role in maintaining peace in the region; Sri Lankan Prime Minister Ranasinghe Premadasa told a news conference on the third day of an official visit in Manila that ASEAN was also important in promoting trade among its five member countries; "the ASEAN countries are working together and we in Sri Lanka would like to join the grouping; in various ways it can benefit our country, especially in the matter of maintaining peace", Mr. Premadasa said. The administration of President Jayewardene has said before it would like to join ASEAN but has not made a formal application for either observer status or full membership, according to diplomatic sources here—*CDN*. Male prostitution in Sri Lanka is assuming alarming proportions and the Government was now taking a very serious view of it; legislation was being planned to eradicate it as far as possible; so said Mr. H. P. Siriwardene,

Chairman of the Ceylon Tourist Board in an exclusive interview with the *Daily Mirror* — *CDM*. Private buses jostling for vantage positions to pick up passengers are creating a variety of problems for other road users, the traffic police complain; "they stop any and every where they please with scant regard for the traffic jams that result; it is particularly bad near 'bus stops', police said—*CO*. The price of infant milk food such as Lactogen, Pelargen, Cow & Gate etc., have been further increased from the 15th of this month; the new prices will be about four to six times more than the prices that existed about a month ago—*DP*.

THURSDAY, APRIL 30: The Government yesterday decided to withdraw the additional 10 per cent Business Turnover Tax imposed earlier this month on the travel and hotel trade; the BTT on the hotel trade will be 15 percent (as before the additional tax) and 54 percent for the travel trade—*CDN*.



LETTERS

University Admission 1981 Science Faculties

Sir

1895 students were selected to the Science Faculties in the different Universities of Sri

Lanka this year. Of these 30% numbering 559 were selected on merit and the balance 70% numbering 1336 were selected on considerations other than merit. The district-wise distribution of the selections shows an alarming state of affairs in Scientific Education in this country.

<i>District</i>	<i>Total No. selected</i>	<i>No. selected on merit</i>	<i>No. selected on considerations other than merit</i>	<i>Percentage to total selection</i>
Colombo	445	291	154	35
Jaffna	245	203	42	17
Matara	72	19	53	74
Kandy	112	12	100	91
Kalutara	74	6	68	92
Gampaha	102	7	95	93
Galle	100	6	94	94
Other districts	745	15	730	98
	<hr/> 1,895 <hr/>	<hr/> 559 <hr/>	<hr/> 1,336 <hr/>	

In 21 out of the 24 Revenue Districts of the Island more than 90% of the students admitted to the Science Faculties of the Universities are selected on considerations other than merit. Obviously poor quality students are being selected and intelligent students are being kept out. The quality of Scientific Education will deteriorate and the country will suffer in the future.

S. KANAGARATNAM

Retired Deputy Director of Agriculture.

200, First Cross Street,
Jaffna,
10.5.81.

U.S. NAVY

Sir,

I am a regular reader of your journal and have read with great interest many of the illuminating articles in your paper from time to time. I feel compelled to say that I was disappointed to read some comments made by you as Editor in the articles entitled "Referendum—Before R.R." in your issue of the 11th April 1981 (Vol. 25, No. 38). These comments, which you admit are based on so called "Rumours" are, in my opinion most unfortunate and damaging to the image of Sri Lanka in the eyes of the world. It is a pity that the goodwill extended to our country by the US Government, is so readily and generously agreeing to help us in one of our projects, the erection of the TV transmitting station on Pidurutalagala, has been regarded with suspicion that it is a camouflage for other political or strategic operations in our country. I can only quote here the well-known axiom "Evil be to him that evil thinketh". In your article you yourself say that the difficult operation that the US Marines of the 7th Fleet has undertaken to carry out for the benefit of our Government and our country is "an exercise which everybody in the know privately admit cannot be done etc." I would say "hats off" to the US Marines who have now successfully performed this "impossible" feat. I was a witness to the proceedings on the Nuwara Eliya Race Course, and watched every movement of the helicopters and the groundwork that had to be planned out to see that this exercise was successfully performed, and so did the crowd of others who assembled on

the race course to witness this remarkable exercise. I do not wish to comment to some of the other comments in the articles regarding "Rest and Recreation facilities for the 2,500 sailors who are supposed to be in this country in connection with this undertaking, except to say that it is a "flight of imagination" and highly derogatory to the good name and honour of the US Marines and the US Government and highly libellous too. I therefore feel compelled to write this letter, which I trust you will kindly publish in your next issue of your "Weekly". I sincerely and earnestly feel that an apology is due from you to both the US Marines and also the US government for the rash and hasty conclusions in your article referred to above.

V. C. de ZYLVA.

30, Badulla Road, Nuwara Eliya.
6th May 1981.

SEETHA NOT RAMA

Sir,

This refers to your article captioned "In a Helicopter to Kantalai" appearing in the issue on 25.4.81 of your esteemed journal. As far as I was able to understand, your reference to Rama and Rawana was that they flew over Sri Lanka. I presume you had in mind the old story of "Rama and Rawana" who fought over a lady who was said to have been kidnapped by Rawana and taken to Sri Lanka in his "Dandumonara". If this is correct, I think you have made a mistake in mentioning that Rama and Rawana flew over Sri Lanka as according to the story it was Seetha, the wife of Rama who was taken in a "Dandumonara" by Rawana. In the circumstances, may I suggest that you check this up again if you intend to mention this in your continuing articles. Otherwise if my understanding of your article is incorrect, I would like to be corrected. Of course this is not by making a correction to appear in the journal but by a small letter. I hope you will not misunderstand me but take this up in the spirit in which I am writing this letter.

L. V. P. WIJERATNE

Kalalpitiya, Pasyala.
2.5.81.

**Thank you very much for pointing out that it was Rawana and Seetha who flew in the "Dandumonara" over Sri Lanka, according to the legendary story. I was not concerned as to who flew so much as the fact that the poet chose, metaphorically speaking, to take an overview from above of men and matters he described. In my piece, I was not even concerned with historical authenticity. I was only struck by the poet's ingenuity in using a flying machine to enhance the quality of the writing and infuse an element of science fiction to grip the interest of readers and listeners—S.P.A.*



IN A HELICOPTER—3

Kantalai

By S. P. Amarasingam

NO TIME WAS LOST in garlanding or speech-making when Minister Gamini Dissanyake got out of the helicopter and walked up to the Reception Committee waiting on the road. The only VIP among them was the MP for Seruwila, H. L. D. Leelaratne: the rest were a handful of technocrate and bureaucrats. There was a police party and a few locals attracted by the helicopter. Pilot Manamperi who had ferried us with sure confidence took off to China Bay for refueling. Without any fuss the party was taken to a building in the administrative complex of the SLFP-era Tobacco Corporation (Sooriyarachchi's) Livestock Farm. Thambili water was served and the Minister was briefed on the project the Mahaweli Authority had embarked on. Chris de Saram did the talking. In less than ten minutes he gave the Minister and the others gathered there the basics of the project in a concise form that missed nothing. There was very little left of the farm of the Sooriyarachchi incursion into milk, flesh and livestock from the drudgery of beedi and tobacco. Now, it was proposed to integrate what was left of the old farm into the Draught Animal Project. It was to consist of Holding Farms, Tract Breeding, Heifer Calf Salvage Units, Bull Calf Salvage Units and the Development of Coarse Grain Production under unirrigated

conditions. The Draught Animal Project at Kantalai was geared to the re-settlement programme under the Accelerated Mahaweli Scheme. The original Mahaweli settlement proposals were heavily geared to mechanised farm-power for haulage, tillage etc., to be supplemented by the existing draught animal population. But cost escalations following on international inflation, fuelled by oil crisis, have pushed the purchase of mechanised farm-power out of the reach of farmers here and elsewhere in the Third World. Equally, the prices of petroleum-based fertilizer are constantly moving upwards. It was also feared that the development programme under the Mahaweli will sharply deplete the grazing land of nomadic cattle herds in Anuradhapura, Polonnaruwa, Batticaloa and Amparai districts. Illicit trade in beef had also become lucrative following on the price hike of beef and other protein foods. This had led to a sharp depletion of existing animal stock. In any case cattle will have to be bred in paddocks in the future or enclosed pastures as proposed in the Kantalai Project. The improved stock will have to be provided to settlers under the Mahaweli and elsewhere to provide farm-power, milk, dairy products and to a certain extent even fertiliser and bio-gas. The Kantalai project was not merely timely but in fact overdue and its implementation therefore deserved national priority.

There was 5,000 acres available in the Kantalai Farm with the Mahaweli as one of its boundaries. Two reservoirs would provide water for the project. The spill of one of them near the Allai bridge was being repaired and this was intended to prevent flooding of the area earmarked for the Draught Animal Project. I have known Chris for some years, but this is the first time I heard him explain a project under such circumstances. Succinctly, he set out the cost, the capital outlays, the recurrent expenditure and the economic viability. The Minister asked a few questions and they were answered briefly to the point. There was no room for me to ask questions or seek clarifications because every aspect was covered. Chris had his facts on his finger tips: his papers and project reports were in his brief case (I glanced through them later). The feasibility study was a bulky document with statistics, graphs and the like: It was for

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the specialist financing agency, not laymen or journalists. I have been at many briefings by senior bureaucrats (of the famed CCS-CAS breed) and without in any way casting aspersions on their learning or detracting from their competence, I must say that the best of them would have taken over an hour (at least) to do what Chris did in a few minutes. And if a few questions had been raised, it would have meant another hour (I often do not ask for clarifications because it would have meant a flood of words enough to drown what little information I had gathered earlier). I also recalled that blackboards were used, in kindergarten-style, to assist these gentlemen to expound their views: they mistook briefing as sessions to educate and not merely inform. Chris spared us all that. I do not usually go round handing out bouquets (brickbats are more in my line) but I must say that I must hand it to Chris—in a little over five minutes I knew all that I needed to know about the Kantalai Draught Animal Project. No words were wasted. There were no frills. No crowing, no tom-tom beating or back-scratching. It was a down-to-earth business-only session. I am sure the Minister also felt the way I did.

I ALSO ADMIRE the way Minister Dissanayake handled the tricky problem where some of the MPs "educated youth" had been allowed to cultivate irrigated paddy lands in the Kantalai Farm. The Commissioner of Lands had permitted them to do so because the paddy lands were not being utilised. An army unit permanently stationed in the vicinity—after the communal troubles of 1977—also cultivated about 50 acres. Mr. Leelaratne's "educated youth" wanted highland in addition to the 250 or 300 acres of paddy lands which seemed a little in excess of what 17 youths could cope with. Whilst the Draught Animal Project did not intend to distract itself by indulging in paddy cultivation, the highland was needed for cattle during wet weather. The MP pleaded the case of his "educated youth" with great eloquence and even greater insistence. But the Minister quietly defused the situation by wanting to inspect not only the highland lands in question but also as much of the 5,000 acres as was visible from the periphery road built at great expense by the Sooriyarachchi

regime. We set on in jeeps and station waggons. The road was in a state of neglect, in many places overgrown with weeds, shrubs and small trees. Dotted at various places along the road were circuit houses residential hostels for girls (whose beauty had brought fame to the farm), saw mills, tractor stations, repair shops and a host of other buildings difficult to know why they were ever built. All of them were in a bad state of repair. With the change of government, the Tobacco Corporation had concentrated on the beedi industry for which it had been set up, and the Kantalai farm had eventually been forgotten. The herd had dwindled, but the two powerful generators had continued to this day to supply (free) thermal power to places in the neighbourhood. The Tobacco Corporation, for some strange reason, had continued to spend money on the "maintenance" of the farm for no purpose.

THE FARM which comes within the Mahaweli area has now been taken over by the Mahaweli Authority for startig its first major livestock project. In the present state of Sri Lanka, Mahaweli without animals will be like a tractor without fuel, or a plane without an engine. The Draught Animal Project has come not a day too early. If the livestock projects started by D. S. Senanayake had been maintained and developed, these present urgency will not be there. If the NLDB, under another Ministry, had been allowed to grow as it had grown since 1977, and if the dairy business and the animal (cum poultry) feed industry had been handled as they should have been, the current distress (emergency) signals that rightly alarm everyone could have been avoided, and meat, eggs and milk would be available at more reasonable prices. This is not a post-mortem, nor is it a litany on what might have been. I am only trying to focus attention on what to me seems to be the most pertinent at the moment. I am not alone in thinking that the draught animal project should enjoy top priority. A Sri Lankan, C. Perumal Pillai, long in the FAO and presently head of the Faculty of Veterinary Science at the Kabul University in Afghanistan sent a note dated 14.4.81: "I read the *Letter from the Editor* lead article in the April 4 issue of the *Tribune*. You have brought out the question of draught animals. I am

enclosing herewith a photocopy of an interesting article. . .” I shall not refer to his comments on the State of the livestock industry in Sri Lanka. The article he sent to *Tribune* was by N. S. Ramasamy of the Institute of Management in Bangalore and was entitled “Management of Animal Energy Resource: A National Need”. The article fascinated me. Well known truths have been re-stated with pointed incisiveness. I feel that *Tribune* readers should have the benefit of what Ramasamy has to say, and cite some excerpts *in extenso*: “The progress of civilisation has been closely linked with the services of work-animals to mankind. Work animals not only provide motive power to millions of ploughs, carts and agricultural implements, but also leave behind for man their meat and hide, hoof and horn, bone and hormone at the end of their working lives. The energy contribution made by work-animals to our economy is crucial and cannot be easily replaced by other energy sources for some years. Yet, by and large, we have neglected their development and welfare. The owners of animals extract outputs of power, far in excess of their normal capacity, by resorting to cruelty. Planned development, efficient utilisation and proper care, along with compassion to the work animals will lead to enormous benefits to all—poor farmers and cartmen, the environment, the economy and society. Unfortunately, the significance of management of animal energy is not fully realised by the policy-makers, planners and scientists, who should devote attention to animal energy—a vital resource always—and especially so now in the context of energy crisis which may become more acute in the years to come. All over the world, scientists are engaged in Research and Development to tap energy from new sources—sun, wind, tides, etc. Huge investments and millions of man-days of scientists and engineering talent are being deployed in numerous areas of investigation. Yet, we are not exploiting fully animal energy—readily available and most appropriate—which lies within the economic and technological capability of millions of our farmers. Even relatively small efforts would be enough to promote the efficiency of the work-animal system. Modernisation of the system would also reduce some of the avoidable suffering inflicted on the work-animals; and even these

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would lead to large economic benefits”. *Ramasamy develops the case for animal energy fully in his article. I will refer to them in the next part of this series.*

To be continued. . .



ELALA SOHONA—4

Was It Dutugemunu's Tomb?

By Dr. James T. Rutnam
President, Jaffna Archaeological Society

IN CHAPTER 3 of Part 2 of Volume I of the *University of Ceylon History of Ceylon* which Paranavitana had edited, and was published in 1959, he had occasion to refer to Elara and Dutugemunu. In a footnote relating to Elara's tomb he maintained his known position that it was “in reality *Dakkhina Thupa*”, and that Elara's monument “must have been a few yards to the north of the present Medical Officer's bungalow at Anuradhapura”, where he identifies the southern gate of Anuradhapura. He admits that up to the time of the commentator of the *Mahavamsa* “Elara's image received worship”. (62) He says nothing about Dutugemunu here, it is only when he describes the cremation of Dutugemunu that he allows his conjecture to come out in print as follows: “The body was cremated in the terrace outside the boundary of the Mahavihara where the *Sangha* used to assemble for public functions, *most probably* at the spot where the *Dakkhina Thupa* was later built” (63) (emphasis added). “Most probably” was the furthest he could go and the “ashes” thus remained undisturbed in the Museum. “Thirty-two years later”, wrote Marcus Joseph, a correspondent to the *Sun* newspaper in its issue of 2nd July 1980, “on hearing that the ‘ashes’ were lying unnoticed in the Museum, E. L. B. Hurulle, Minister of Cultural Affairs (who has since alerted the Archaeological Department to look for the bones and ashes of Vijaya and the garment of Kuveni) (64) was shocked. He immediately, rushed his officials and brought the ashes down to the Colombo Museum and sealed the ashes”. “Thereafter”

Joseph continued, "he (the Minister) brought it to the notice of the President and the Cabinet, and on their advice the Minister appointed a Committee consisting of the country's outstanding archaeologists and historians to study literary evidence surrounding the history of the ashes". This Committee was appointed in November 1978. It took nearly six months to study all relevant documents after which it is said to have submitted its findings to the Minister, who in turn brought them to the notice of the President and the Cabinet. On 28th February 1980, the *Ceylon Daily News* published on its first page under the caption "Yesterday's Cabinet Decisions" the following announcement: "The ashes of King Dutugemunu are to be laid to rest in the *Dakkhina Stupa* where they were found. Tests conducted in Paris by the Government of Sri Lanka established that the ashes are nearly 2000 years old. Other historical facts prove that they are the ashes of King Dutugemunu". On 12th August 1980 the *Ceylon Daily News* reported, "The Government has made arrangements to build a monument(64a) to deposit the ashes of King Dutugemnu at Anuradhapura. The ashes were taken in a motorcade from the National Museum of Colombo to Anuradhapura via Maagama, Tissamaharamaya, the birth place of the king. The ashes will be visible through the bullet proof glass which covers the open receptacle. This monument is estimated to cost Rupees eight lakhs."

The Report of the Committee has not been published. The Committee consisted of twelve individuals(65) some of whom have achieved distinction and now hold high office in their specialised fields, while, it would seem, some have still to win their spurs. The present Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner of Archaeology are two of its members. But R. H. de Silva, a former Commissioner who had differed from Paranavitana in this matter, was not one of them. Abaya Aryasingha, Head of the Department of Archaeology at the University of Kelaniya was a member, but we find he had dissociated himself from the Committee (vide his letter to the *Ceylon Daily News* of 10th January 1979).

FROM THE ANNOUNCEMENT of the Government we find that it had received a Report on (scientific) tests conducted in Paris, as well as a Report on the historical facts. *Where are these reports?* Did all the members sign these reports? And who were the scientists and what was the organisation that had conducted the tests in Paris? From the articles that appeared in the *Ceylon Daily News* of 29th January and 26th February 1980 we find that Dr. Granville Dharmawardene, Head of the Radio Iotope Centre of the University of Colombo, had engaged himself in these tests. **He is said to have worked with scientists in the Atomic Energy Commission of France. Well and good. But where is the Report? Was it signed by the Atomic Energy Commission of France?** We are obliged to ask these questions for we find from the two articles referred to, that Dr. Granville Dharmawardene has himself claimed to be an authority on a special type of technique which he had "developed for studying ancient materials". An article in 1969 in the prestigious British scientific journal *Nature* (66) is listed under Cousins and Dharmawardena. Evidently the latter is our Dr. Granville Dharmawardena from Sri Lanka of whose achievements, as disclosed by him, we should be very proud indeed. But since the "name" of the Atomic Energy Commission of France has been "dropped" in passing, it is nothing but fair to expect its *imprimatur* in any certificate produced. For our present purpose, however, the only question to be answered is whether the ash was from a human source (doubts have been expressed about it) and whether it was 2000 years (plus/minus) old?(67). Of course nobody can say whether it was Dutugemunu's or Elara's—the real bone (ash) of contention. Again, where is the certificate? And does it have the signature of the Atomic Energy Commission of France?

Although there has been much talk of scientific tests, these have hardly any relevance to the present controversy. There is written evidence and an almost uninterrupted tradition for 2000 years that the body of Elara was cremated in the south of the city and a *cetiya* was built over it. The only question is whether the southern *dagaba*, now in ruins was that *cetiya*. Against this position Paranavitana has speculated that as the

stupa was built at a spot where a *pulila* tree once stood, and as Dutugemunu was cremated at a place where a *picula* tree once stood, could these places have been one and the same? But there is no tradition to support this conjecture and the meagre, if at all any, literary evidence produced is too farfetched and fanciful. **Let us now see how the Committee had dealt with this problem. But again, where is its Report? Of the twelve original members⁽⁶⁸⁾ how many had signed it, indeed how many had seen it? Marcus Joseph's article in the "Sun" has fortunately given us some clue towards knowing the contents of this elusive report.**

The report (described as a summary) that appeared in the *Sun* of 2 July 1980 was evidently based on a copy in the possession of Marcus Joseph. This was made available to us. It is entitled "Report on (*sic*) the Subcommittee appointed to Examine the ashes of king Dutugemunu". It has a "bibliography" which is confined only to the 23 references indicated in the text. It rightly describes the position taken up by Paronavitana who, the report says, had declared "of course with a fair degree of uncertainty" that the ashes "could be" the ashes of King Dutugemunu. Paronavitana had made every effort to prove that the ashes were those of King Dutugemunu and had obviously failed. But the Committee had taken upon itself the task of going one better than Paronavitana by making "uncertainty" certain. They had however exposed their bias by saying that they were examining the ashes of Dutugemunu, not the *alleged* ashes of the king. Perhaps this was an honest mistake. Let it pass.

WE ARE NOT SURE who among the twelve had really drafted this Report, but it certainly does little credit to the scholar by stature of such men like Saddhamangala Karunaratne or Roland Silva. Most of the arguments advanced though to no avail, could not have escaped the eagle eyes of Paronavitana. The Report therefore looks like flagellating a deceased equine. It is now clear that the *malaka* that came into being over the *picula* tree is different from the *maha-pulila-maluva* where the *Dakkhina Thupa* later stood. The case to make them identical was based pri-

marily on an incorrect translation of a *strophe* in Geiger's *Mahavamsa*. The *Vamsatthappakasini*(69) had stated that the *picula* tree was in the south east of the Bo-tree, and the *Mahavoodhivamsa*(70) glossary has said that it was in the south-east of the royal house or pavillion. (A mistake seems to have been made by the writer of the Committee's Report in describing the *picula* terrace as the *pulila* terrace in page 2 paragraph 5). For our guidance we should also note here that it had been suggested that *picula* is the name for the Sinhalese *Himbul* tree, and that the *pulila* is different being the name for the Sinhalese *Kavudu-Bo* tree. Neither of these names apply to the *Tamarix Indica* given by Geiger.(71) The *kammamalaka* was definitely within the boundary of the *Mahavihara*, and we agree with Abaya Aryasingha that after the cremation of the king this *malaka*, becoming polluted could have been declared *nissimalaka* after we suppose a valid *simasamugghata*.(72) It is inconceivable that Dutugemunu who had always wanted to be identified with the *Sangha* even taking up the position of preaching *bana* to the monks,(72a) should have asked to be cremated on his death at a place *outside* the *Mahavihara*. He chose the *kammamalaka* and that surely was within the monastery. But the site [of the *Dakkhina Thupa* has not been at any time within the *Mahavihara*.(73) Thus this argument falls through. An apologetic attempt to argue that these ancient sites change is far from convincing. Paronavitana himself had never made use of such arguments.

This *Thupa* was known as the *Tissa-Maha-Cetiya* according to the slab inscription discovered by Paronavitana. Nowhere in the chronicles do we find any mention of this name. It only goes to prove that the *Dakkhina Thupa* had many names. Originally known perhaps as the *Elara Thupa*,(73a) it was described in the *Mahavamsa* as the so-called *Dakkhina Thupa*, the southern *thupa* as opposed to *Uttaravihara*, the northern *vihara* which was the alternative name for *Abhyagiri Vihara*. Both these places are situated almost in the same longitude.⁷⁴ Of one thing we are certain. *Elara's* body was cremated *at the southern gate* of the city and a *thupa* was built over it Geigee. following Turnour describes the spot as "Near the Southern Gate"⁷⁵

which is wrong, for the Pali "*pura Dakkhina dvaramhi*" means, "at the southern gateway of the city". The Sinhalese *Mahavamsa* of Sumangala and Batuwantudawe translate the strophe correctly as "at the south gate of the city", "*nuvara dakunu vahasal dora di*"⁷⁶ The writer of the Committee's report which is still being kept a secret, makes much of "funerary mounds over places of cremation of royal personages", but the three references; produced do not really acknowledge any such universal practice or custom. One of the instances quoted is the unique case of the *cetiya* built over Elara's cremation site.⁷⁷

In this dharmista era it is a cruel irony of fate that a cherished memory which had lasted for over 2000 years, and which has been a proud boast of the people of Sri Lanka, should now be threatened with extinction. There is not a tittle of evidence that Dutugemunu's ashes were buried in this mound. And the 'ash' that was said to have been found among the sand and charcoal that had contaminated it, may not be human ash, far less 2000 years old but if at all it is so, the likely one to whom it belongs is Elara. Let us not make ourselves the laughing stock of the world.

Concluded



ISLAM

And World Peace—3

by N. M. M. I. Hussain

This paper was read at the Asian Christian Peace Conference that met in Colombo in October 1980 on the theme "Theological Basis for Co-operation With the Living Faiths for Peace with Justice". This is the third part of a paper entitled "The Response of Islam to The World Struggle for Peace with Justice".

THE THEME OF THIS SEMINAR is not just the world struggle for peace, but for peace with justice. It is evident that there can be no

peace in the world unless there is also justice and this point brings me to a consideration of the issues of North-South economic relations, socialism and revolution. The countries of the under-developed South complain that they are unfairly treated, and indeed exploited, by the countries of the developed North. There is serious disillusionment over the fact that there has been so little progress towards the restructuring of North-South economic relations since the first UNCTAD of 1964. There is the view that the continuation of an island of prosperity surrounded by oceans of poverty will inevitably led to war between the rich and poor nations through a transposition of the Marxist class war to a global context. From what I have said about the Islamic notion of the oneness of mankind, of the importance of community, of all humanity constituting "one community", it should be apparent that on Islamic principles the North should recognise an obligation to help in alleviating and ending the poverty of the South. Unfortunately, there is great disillusionment in some countries of the North over the efficacy of aid, which has proved to have been to a great extent—we might as well face it—a colossal waste, and consequently there is a danger of a turning away from the obligation to eliminate the poverty of the South. What should be the answer of Islam to this problem? According to the ethical system of Islam every man is his brother's keeper, and it does not suffice for him to avoid wrong and do the right; he has to prevent others doing wrong, he has to exhort others to do the right and support the right against the wrong. From this ethical standpoint, it has to be said that a country which turns away from its obligations towards others will suffer a diminution of its humanity. But it will not do simply to engage in recriminations against the North. The societies of the South have to recognise their own responsibility for themselves and face up to some awkward facts which they are prevented from doing by the deafening torrents of rhetoric on the subject of under-development. One awkward fact is that given the inequities of North-South economic relations, given the same or similar handicaps, some developing countries have fared much better than others. It is surely important to try to understand the reasons for this awkward fact.

A BASIC PROBLEM is that development economics for the most part regards man as a machine, a consequence perhaps of Western philosophy taking a wrong turning after Descartes. It is too often assumed that given certain inputs certain outputs will inevitably follow, just as with a computer. It used to be assumed, by Arthur Lewis and Rostow for instance, that given a rate of savings and investment, of 10% or 12% or 15%, a developing country will without much ado and before long reach the take-off stage of self-sustained growth. But several countries have surpassed those rates for over a decade, and are very far from self-sustained growth. The problem is that man is not a machine and sometimes shows a propensity, unlike computers, to smash up the inputs. The truth is that economic development involves human beings and cultural factors such as their historically-determined outlook and attitudes, their aptitudes, institutions, and power-relations are of the essence of the problem, as sometimes they are conducive to development, sometimes inimical. Perhaps the problem of under-development is basically an ethical problem. Most development economists, apart notably from P. T. Bauer, assume those factors to be constants whereas they are variables, and consequently there is a failure to understand why some countries given the same or similar handicaps and opportunities have fared so much better than others. *These views may be controversial, but I do not think there should be any controversy on what should be the truly Islamic view on under-development: the developing societies are themselves to blame, largely or wholly, for their under-development.* I shall now buttress this view with quotations from the Koran. "Allah changeth not the condition of a folk until they change that which is in their hearts". It says "That is because Allah never changes the grace He hath bestowed on any people until they first change that which is in their hearts." It says further "And if the people of the townships had believed and kept from evil, surely we should have opened for them blessings from the sky and from the earth." It is to be noted that the blessings a people are given if they eschew evil ways are not only from the sky but also "from the earth". The same idea is given in the following: "My righteous slaves will inherit the earth". The

Koran also says: "How many a community that dealt unjustly hath He shattered, and raised up after them another folk". There are other appropriate texts, but these should suffice to establish what should be the Islamic view about under-development.

THE ONLY COMFORT that can be given to those who find these views unpleasant is that the plight of the under-developed can be seen as expressing the will of God. The Koran says "Every nation hath its final period," and further, "We alternate the days of successes and reverses among peoples." This raises the complicated theological problem of pre-destination and free-will in Islam, with which I am not equipped to deal. In any case it should be clear from the earlier quotations that in the Koranic view the under-developed are themselves responsible for their economic condition. In the words of Iqbal "It is one of the essential teachings of the Koran that nations are collectively judged, and suffer for their misdeeds here and now". On this point about collective responsibility Islam seems to be closer to Judaism than to any other religion. A clarification is required at this point. The views expressed here may seem to justify imperialism, neo-colonialism, and the exploitation of the poor nations by the rich. But they could equally have revolutionary implications by pointing the need for fundamental change in the developing societies. In any case I am only concerned with trying to establish what should be the Islamic position on under-development on the basis of what has been revealed in the Koran. Islam cannot be averse to fundamental change and to the establishment of a socialist society. The nineteenth century German scholar, Hubert Grimme, inspired it is said by the spectacular advances made by the Social Democratic Party in Germany, argued that the Prophet pretended to believe in hell-fire as a way of frightening the rich into allowing the introduction of socialism into Arabia. Though a Muslim cannot agree with this reductionist approach to Islam, it remains that a socialist message can certainly be extracted from the Koran. It may be that the Prophet, an impoverished member of the powerful Qureishi tribe, was mainly concerned, in inveighing against the rich, over the excessive individualism and the loss of the sense of community

on the part of the Meccan merchant aristocracy after they left the desert and became urbanized, as argued by Montgomery Watt. But the socialist message of the Koran retains its validity for our time.

THE KORANIC INJUNCTION against usury is very strong, and has to be taken as implying firm disapproval of exploitative economic relations. The Koran is very explicit in condemning luxury, and in particular what are known as the Meccan surahs regard most acts as praiseworthy or blameworthy in terms of man's attitude to wealth. Hell-fire is the lot of those who amassed or hoarded wealth, who did not urge men to the feeding of the poor, who treated orphans badly and seized their inheritance, and who are niggardly. The pious are those who are ready to share with beggars, and who are generous. It is worth mentioning at this point that the poor-tax, Zakat, is one of the five pillars of the Islamic faith. The Prophet's love of the poor and his abhorrence of luxury are very clear in the "traditions". On rejecting the proffer of a carpet he said, "What need I of this world! I am to the world but a rider who rests in the shade of a tree, then departs and leaves it". The early Caliphs followed the example set by the Prophet. The first Caliph, Abu Bakr, was known as "the man of the two pins" because he pinned his tattered clothes together, and the second Caliph, Omar, wore a garment patched in several places while being the head of a great empire. But it has been argued that the Koran in including legislation over property acknowledges property-rights, and in asking people not to envy the more fortune, it acknowledges a place for wealth. Perhaps the correct Islamic position should be that Islam is a religion which places man in relation to the realm of the transcendental, and a great religion cannot be identified with or subsumed under a socio-economic or political programme. The Koran does not decree that there must be socialism. On one hand, it cannot be said that it decrees there must be wealth. What can be said is that no Muslim can be blamed if, after studying the Koran and the life of the Prophet and of the Caliphs who chose him as their exemplar, he comes to feel that the wretched of the earth must arise. Socialism is entirely consistent with Islam.

To be concluded. . .

THIRD QUARTER 1980

Arab Aid to Developing Countries

By Dr. Madhat K. al-Kauraishi

WITH THE MOUNTING trade and payments deficits in the developing countries, due to the harmful effects of the economic crisis in the capitalist countries and the rising rates of imported inflation, the Arab countries have been providing increasing economic aid to the developing countries. By the beginning of the 1970s there was only one Arab Development Fund specialised in granting loans at concessionary terms for development projects, with financial resources not exceeding \$ 2.5 billions. Today there are about seven large development funds with financial resources exceeding 25 billions i.e., an increase in the loanable funds of about 25 times during the seventies.

As an annual average, the Arab countries provided grants and development loans for the developing countries of about \$ 5 billions. Since the increase in the oil revenues in the Arab countries, due to the adjustment in the price of oil, these countries actually disbursed about \$ 19 billion for development projects. In this article we shall concentrate on the activities of the Arab development institutions in granting aid to developing countries during the 3rd quarter of 1980. These development institutions include the Islamic Bank for Development, Abu Dhabi Fund for Arab Economic Development, the OPEC Fund for International Development, the Saudi Fund for Development, the Iraqi Fund for External Development and finally the Kuwaiti Fund for Arab Economic Development.

DURING THE PERIOD under study these institutions agreed to grant 35 loans whose total value amounted to about \$ 470 millions, that benefited twenty three developing countries in Asia, Africa and Central America. These funds were financed in development projects in various sectors, e.g. electric power, construction, roads and ports, agriculture and rural development, preparation of feasibility

TRIBUNE, May 30, 198¹

studies in addition to loans to support the balance of payments and financing trade. Regarding the sectoral distribution of those loans, they were characterised by concentrating on financing the infrastructure like road and ports constructions as well as power stations. Such projects received about \$ 183 millions i.e., about 39% of the total loans and were distributed among transport projects which received about \$ 142 millions, or 77.5% of the total loans allocated for infrastructure of projects, while the electric power projects received \$ 41 millions or 22.5% of this sub-total. As for the productive sectors, agriculture received about \$ 19.9 millions, making up about 4% of the total loans provided by the Arab Development institutions concerned. The industrial sector on the other hand, received a small amount not exceeding \$ 5 millions making up only 1% of the total loans. Thus the total loans provided for the productive sectors amounted to \$ 25 millions or 5% of the total loans. Looking at the geographical distribution of these loans we find that the African countries obtained the biggest share of the development funds, about \$ 178 millions or 38% of the total loans. In second place comes the Asian countries group which received \$ 173 million making up 37% of the total. In third place are the Arab countries which obtained about \$ 115 millions or 24% of the total loans. As for the Latin American countries only one Central American country obtained the loan whose value amounted to \$ 5 million making up 1% of the total loans provided. At the individual country level within the group of the African countries the Republic of Guinea obtained the biggest share of the loans provided for this group which amounted to \$ 40 million making up about 9% of the total loans provided for the developing countries and about 22.4% of the loans given to the group concerned. In second place comes the Republic of Zaire which obtained \$ 34 million making up about 7% of the total loans and 19.2% of the loans provided for the group of African countries. Third comes the Republic of Kenya which obtained \$ 20 million making up 4% of the total loan and 11% of the loans given to this group. Within the Asian countries group, India obtained the lion's share of the loans given to this group, amounting to \$ 104 million, i.e. 22% of the total loans and about 60% of the loans given to this group.

Then comes Pakistan with loans amounting to \$ 95 million making up 13% of the total loans and 34.3% of the loans provided for this group.

AS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT LOANS given to the Arab countries, the South Yemen comes in first place with loans amounting to \$ 68 millions making up 15% of total loans and 60% of the loans provided to this group. In second place comes the Arab Republic of Yemen, with loans amounting to \$ 35 million i.e., 7% of total loans and 31% of the loans provided to the Arab countries. Finally, considering the distribution of development aid by the individual Arab and Financing institutions during the third quarter of 1980, we find that the Iraqi Fund for External Development comes in first place. The total loans provided by this fund during the stated period reached about \$ 130 million or 27.5% of total loans provided by all the Arab aid institutions. In second place comes the Saudi Fund for Development, its total loans is almost equal to those provided by the former, i.e., about \$ 129 million or 27.4% of total loans. The Islamic Bank comes third with total loans reaching \$ 113 million i.e., 24% of total development loans. Fourth comes Abu Dhabi Fund which provided about \$ 56.7 million or 12% of total loans. In fifth place comes the OPEC Fund which provided about 7.4% of total loans. Finally the Kuwaiti Fund which provided about \$ 6.7 millions making up 1.4% of total loans provided by all Arab development aid institutions. It is worth noting that the Arab Development Aid is provided at easy terms with respect to the interest charged. Some of the Arab Development aid funds charge a low interest rate on their loans reaching 2.5% and 4%. While other Arab funds do not charge any interest except a service charge to cover the administrative cost which ranges between 0.5%—0.75% of the total loans provided. However, what motivates the Arab countries to provide development aid for the developing countries is their sense of solidarity with those countries and the necessity of contribution to the provision of all kinds of assistance to enable them to overcome their problems and the harmful effects of the capitalist economic crisis as well as to play a role in enhancing the economic independence of the developing countries. — *Baghdad Observer*.

Better Red Than Dead?

by Gennady Gerasimov

Moscow, April 16: Old tunes are staging a comeback, with the "retro" style again in fashion in Washington policies. At first the world was shocked to hear American Secretary of State Alexander Haig say that there are more important things in life than peace. Now Richard Allen, the US President's national security adviser, has condemned the "contemptible" slogan "better Red than Dead", being voiced in Europe. Allen has warned the Europeans against the "temptation of pacifism" with regard to the Soviet Union. Allen is echoed by Defence Secretary Caspar Weinberger who has likewise expressed concern about the growing pacifist moods of the "better Red than Dead" sort.

The simultaneous pronouncements by officials of the US administration show that these are not only a nostalgic slip of the tongue. Revival of cold war cliches is processing in unison with attempts to revive the corresponding policies. People are again being told that it is better to be dead than Red. Probably it appears even logical to the administration which blames others for lack of faith in after-life. Such a faith is a great help if one wants to die voluntarily, only not to be Red. As in the 1950s (when this cheap tinkling phrase was coined), so now the choice is a false one. It rests on the spurious premise about the "Communist" or "Red" menace now modified into the concept of a "Soviet" threat. No one is going to convert, say, the Americans to a red colour. But an external threat is quite often thought up by politicians with a view to rallying the people under patriotic banners. In our case the undoubtedly contemptible call "better dead than Red" bears a superficial resemblance to the slogan of the American revolution: "Give me liberty or give me death." The cold warriors value it for its mobilising punch.

IT SHOULD ALSO be added that even if, for the sake of truth in an argument, one allows for the existence of a choice between being "Red" and "Dead", such a choice in

our nuclear age is no longer an individual decision when only one's own life is at risk, as was the case with Patrick Henry, a hero of the American revolution. Fanatics choosing death have no right to demand that the rest of mankind should follow in their footsteps. The late British philosopher Bertrand Russell once explained the inconsistency of opposing "Red" and "Dead". Rejecting the fanaticism of any of the sides, he noted that neither communism, nor anti-communism could be built on a mountain of corpses. Now too the fanaticism of Allen and Weinberger has evoked among the sober-minded Europeans fears concerning the possible consequences. An official spokesman of the British government has described Allen's views as a "simplistic, black-and-white approach". It can be added that this approach is also very dangerous in practical terms, creating the atmosphere of a crusade. The "mood of Europe" (an expression of Allen's) is different. It is "better to live than die". This mood is expressed in actions for disarmament and peace and against Euromissiles and the transformation of the continent of Europe into a theatre of others' military operations, actions which for Allen mean dangerous "pacifism". Anti-war organisations and groups are growing in numbers. As the American weekly *Time* pointed out on April 6, the populations of NATO countries are feeling a growing repulsion to military affairs. This is a sentiment which governments have to reckon with.

BY TAKING UP the cliches of the cold war days, the present American administration would like to frighten Western Europe into joining in its course of confrontation with the Soviet Union, but the opposite is the case, with the anti-war movement mounting as a response to Washington's recklessness. The men overseas somehow see in that the growth of "anti-Americanism" and possibly even perceive the "hand of Moscow" behind it all. Caspar Weinberger has asked NATO leaders to change the mood in their countries, in the same way as the new administration has done in the United States. The American people won't march alone, said the Secretary. If the administration's efforts are not supported, he added, it would lose US public support which was won by such long and painful efforts. This utterance by the Secretary is

interesting in that it admits the artificial nature of the US public support gained through "painful" propaganda efforts for the Pentagon's plans. The Secretary is afraid of losing this support if Western Europe fails to join the colours of the Pentagon. The growth of the anti-war movement in West European countries holds out hope that Washington's adventurist course will be foiled, since the American nation will perhaps indeed appear unwilling to march alone.—APN.



FILM FOCUS

T.V. Sri Lanka

TRANSMITTING confidently and marching forward in the third year of its introduction to Sri Lanka, with its teething troubles already left behind, TV Sri Lanka has got into stride as a refreshing mass media entertainer in our homes. The daily scheduled programmes have been so well arranged to international norms, that having amused the children in the first hour or so, after which they are shooed away to their studies, the adults can settle down and relax to a fare that has come as a soother to the mental and visual faculties at the end of a tiring day when one has reached breaking point grappling with the inflationary spirals of the times. The programme is geared to several moods and tastes for the evening. Thus the TV media in Sri Lanka today is no longer the Idiot Box it has been referred to acidly by many, but one that has compressed the worldly happenings in several fields into a delightful entertainer, right inside many a home, bringing even scattered members of a family together at particular times.

The other day, for instance, when even many had missed out on the event that froze time, as a few bullets were pumped into the Reagan entourage in America, those very shots rang out on our local TV within a matter of hours, and Sri Lankans who were not prewarned, stunningly experienced the whole bloody drama when a President's life hung in the balance for a short while. Then

again, this column is aware that many Christian homes with TV were converted into mini cinemas recently when so many crowded around these sets to view Jesus of Nazareth—His life and Times, spread out with brilliance for four evenings and sponsored by the People's Bank. Well if this is the outlook for the future, then those behind the ITN network deserve a big bouquet for the complete dedication with which they are getting about a difficult task in the toddling years. This column has not been able to assess exactly, the cut in TV has had on Cinema, but it has certainly felt that with such quality presentations, people may take in a big way to the smaller media and keep film producers guessing for some time. Of course, after the novelty has worn off, as in other countries, both TV and cinema will stabilise in their respective fields and continue to fecundate each other.

The popular Minister of State, Anandatissa de Alwis, his secretary Sarath Amunugama and the competent authority D. T. L. Guruge, whom I had the pleasure of meeting over a meal, early this year, have all given the assurance that there would be no looking back on the quality receptions that will continue to improve in the future, with a change in the transmission towers from the lightning belt of Pannipitiya at present, to a more suitable site in Kotte, while Secretary Sarath Amunugama has his TV ideals fixed on bringing sports, science, music, literature and drama for our constant gaze. Competent Authority Guruge has clearly emphasized that the educational aspect would not be overlooked and will be sustained as a matter of state policy in the years to come. The channels too would be increased shortly to cater to the linguistic streams of the country. This column too would like to contribute its mite by suggesting that, for the moment, Tamil films too may be added on, as Sinhala films on TV are proving very popular, and that short telecasts featuring Crime Prevention measures too may be extended TV time, for the concern it is causing the law enforcing authorities at the moment.

COMA (*English*): This MGM presentation revolves around a rather unusual theme, but geared with imagination to suit our times,

when the ethics of organic transplants and the question of the definition of clinical death, have triggered off interesting informative debates and discussions at many a medical seminar. The novel in question was written by Robin Cook and instantly proved a best seller for the many controversial issues, that also ensured from Dr. Christian Barnard's first heart plant surgery. The story proper is set with some authenticity in the Boston Memorial Hospital where among a large number of surgeons, are a couple of them, Susan (Genevieve Bujold) and Mark (Michael Douglas), very much in love, but not in alignment on their professional outlooks, which at times mars their happiness. Young Susan with an inquiring mind is suddenly confronted with a dilemma, when she notices that the toll of young patients—including one of her dear friends—getting comotose after minor surgery in the Institute, registers a sudden increase. She decides to take a closer look into the anaesthetic aspect of these near fatalities and discovers that there existed at Boston an illegal attempt by a powerful group of those wielding the scalpel to block the neuro muscular junctions of those being operated by dose of Carbon Monoxide together with the normal anaesthesia to induce a "Coma" from which these patients never recovered—the diabolical purpose being to use their vital organs later at death, for export to experimental institutions to accomplish the various human transplants of tomorrow.

As Susan's life gets into jeopardy by this knowledge, she brings the problem to the notice of the Chief Surgeon (Richard Widmark) to be cunningly and curtly told off that "one should not forget that Hospital complexes are the Cathedrals of our Age and that individuals do not matter in the quest for medical knowledge". Thus surging concept of the new horizons that were being hatched in the surgery leaves her shocked and numbed. Let's leave the story here which moves on menacingly, and dissect the film which remains evenly tense, to strike fear without terror and is photographed grimly in various shades to keep one's mind tuned to every chilling sequence that overtakes one another in quick succession in an Alfred Hitchcock manner. Perhaps this is one of the first films

from Hollywood, where a female has taken on the main role in a film, which would have normally fitted a Paul Newman or a Robert Redford, but Bujold so exhibits a dynamism and finesse in the manly role—which may trigger more of such films in future. Michael Douglas returns to acting in this film after having had a hand in the production of *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* which collected many Oscars, but in a less demanding role. Apart from the squeamish and children, mature audiences would like this nauseating peep into the maddening safaris of Medicine, which brings to mind a memorable remark dropped by a local surgeon a few years ago that people die, it cannot be helped. It has been said of this film that it derives its strength as entertainment from its fictional and fanciful treatment of a real problem—it is realistic, but not real, provocative but not controversial. So *Tribune* readers and Medical luminaries with God like dispositions, take your fill of this film and decide whether it is bitter or not!

WAR DEVILS (*English*): Its war time in Tunisia in 1943 two captains in opposite camps, American George Vincent (Guy Madison) and German Heinrich Meinike (Van Tenney), are at each other's throats, but nature interferences to take a hand in the desert with sandstorms and treacherously laid minefields to bring them together for a spell, as comrades in distress. In France a year later, the captains face each other again, armed to the teeth, with the bottle at high pitch and their friendship at stake. An average war film, and such films I believe have now overstayed their welcome and should be given the *coup de grace*, Get it picturegoers?

PUTHIYA VARPUKKAL (New Moulds) *Tamils*: Director Bharathi Raja was a pace setter and trail blazer in South Indian cinema when he broke in, to introduce real situations so appealing to the young, as an effective substitute for escapist fare that had remained the order of the day. *Niram Maratha Pookal* was his first film to reach our shores, to leave behind a resounding impact, by its excellent love them, and the delightful music that enveloped it so soothingly. Well this follow up is an earlie release which introduced that attractive actress Radhika who kept many youth in a visual whirl. The relevant story has its settings in an

indignant village. where life goes on undisturbed, but for the arrival of a young school master (Bakia Raja) who mixes up his idioms, and lets his eyes stray between them towards the beauty (Radhika) across the road. In authority, as judge and executioner in this rural setting is a middle-aged widower and lecher on the prowl his eyes straying cunningly and constantly to lay many a young belle to his evil desires, till he meets his match in an unforgettable climax. The photography is excellent and so are the songs, and it does seem a pity that the film is not receiving the patronage it so richly deserves. You will like this film for its realism and simplicity and above all for the magic touch of Bharathi Raja. See it—I believe its for adults only and very rightly so.

TAXI DRIVER (*English*): A well timed Columbia release that has come in the wake of the attempted assassination of President Ronald Reagan, as it was widely believed speculation that this film not only triggered, but also motivated the dastardly act in the sick mind of the assassin John Hinckley, who not only saw this film more than once but developed a maniacal crush in Jodie Foster who also appears in this film as a teen aged streetwalker. There is a grim parallel between the film story and the shocking event that shock America all over again—it is becoming periodic now—that one just cannot resist the thought that this guntotting nation is growing up to the ideals of its politicians that shooting off the hip is part of the brinksmanship that it heavily indulges in. To get down to the film proper, it revolves around the routine rounds of a lonely Cab driver, Travis, who takes his daily hires with an air of nonchalance through the slushy streets of sin and sex in New York, till he is willy nilly drawn into its cesspool with a compulsive desire to indulge in deadly mock heroics and emerge traumatically as a superman of a sort. The Oscar winning actor Robert de Niro lives the little role every inch of the way as he transists from a forgotten Jekyll to a lively Hyde characterisation in his dream world, which incubates as a Hinckley paranoia—the target here too being a campaigning President. Attractive Cybil Shepherd comes easy on the eye as a political campaigninger who turns the driver's attention for a

while. A very stiking sequence in the film spotlighted the ridiculous ease with which one could purchase a GUN or a REVOLVER in USA—it reminded me of purchasing peanuts locally—and the super-salesmanship that made it a bomoing businss in America forgetting the famous and charismatic ex-Presidents it had laid low from time to time. This all revealing film gives credence to G. K. Chesterton's remark that "There is nothing the matter with Americans except their ideals; the real American is all right, it is the ideal American who is all wrong" and driven home by George Bernard Shaw that 'An asylum for the sane would be empty in America'. See this film, and it will provide sufficient fodder for thought.

James N. Benedict

GOVT. NOTICES

Land Acquisition Act (Chapter 460) as Amended By the Land Acquisition (amendment) Act No. 28 of 1964

NOTICE UNDER SECTION 7. Ref. No. /3126
The land described in the Schedule below has been acquired. For further particulars please see the Gazette of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka No. 142 of 21.05.1981 (Part III).

SCHEDULE—*Situation of Land*—In the village of Midigama North, D.R.O.'s Division of Weilgam, Korale West, Matara District. *Name of Land*—Eowland Estate. *Lot & Plan No.* Lot Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 in P. Plan No. 941.

G. S. Ediriweera
District Land Officer
Acquiring Officer
Matara District.

The Kachcheri,
Matara. 29th April, 1981.

The Land Acquisition Act (Chapter 460) as amended by the Land Acquisition (Amendment) Act No. 28 of 1964.

NOTICE UNDER SECTION 7.
Ref. No. LP/ACQ/90

It is intended to acquire the lands described in the schedule below. For further particulars please see (Part 3) of the Gazette of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka No. 142 of 21.04.1981.

SCHEDULE: *Districts*—D.R.O.'s Division, Vavuniya, Vavuniya South (Tamil); *Village*—Thachchankulam; *Name of land*—Selaikadu; *Plan No.*—Finally settled plan No. 4739-Supl. No. 13; *Lots Nos.*—From 369 1/3-379 (16 lots).

K. B. Sirisena
Additional Govt. Agent,
Vavuniya District.

The Kachcheri,
Vavuniya.
1981 April 28.

CONFIDENTIALLY

Inside The UNP?

IS IT NOT TRUE that many thinking people in the UNP are very disappointed that the SLFP has kept out of the DDC elections? That these old UNP loyalists had hoped that a hard-fought election would bring to the surface many of the ills that they say has grown in the UNP? That reverses in the DDC elections, it was felt, would then compel the topmost hierarchy to cleanse the Party of elements which should have been purged long ago? That some of these elements, it is said, are new elements that jumped into the bandwagon after the 1977 elections and had not only made good (money) but had also entrenched themselves in key positions? That many old time UNP loyalists have sent the *Tribune* articles and comments on the state of Sri Lanka today? That this paper does not have the space to publish even a fraction of what has come in? That the best we can do is to condense what comes in and serve them to our readers in small instalments? That these UNPers notionally accept the hierarchy's thesis that the high cost of living can be explained by the OPEC price hikes and global inflation? That they also are optimistic about public response to what the government has achieved in nearly four years? That big high-rise buildings have come up and a hundred model villages have already been opened? That big reservoirs are under construction in the Mahaweli and so on and so forth? That with all this, the common man keeps asking: "What have I got out of this?" That all are agreed that the only answer is "very little"? That the Party's political propaganda, the establishment machinery and the government media, naturally concentrates on the achievements? That there is also a continuing attempt to blackout the small man's (nearly twelve million of the fourteen million odd) never ending question: "What do I get out of it all...? How can I continue to pay the present prices for food"?

THAT without the SLFP in the hustings, the UNP need have no electoral worries for the moment? That the position may be very different in the General Elections of 1983? That the small man will even then continue

to ask: "What do I get out of it all"? That because of this many UNPers fear that the rapid building up of resentment, almost hate, against the arrogant fixers and contact men of MPs and Ministers may overwhelm the UNP at the next elections? That these side-kicks and "catchers" (as they are more popularly known) have begun to flaunt their power without even a little touch of PR (public relations of the Dale Carnegie variety) which is essential for a MP or a Minister to get re-elected and return to office? That in a PR (Proportional Representation) general elections on district lists, one bad egg (especially a Minister) can pull all the party candidates down? That it could have happened in some districts even now if the SLFP had contested the DDC elections and offered a serious challenge to the UNP? That what irritates the small man who has really got "very little" out of all the current government activity—except debts—is an avalanche of officials, viz., personal assistants, secretaries, assistant secretaries, additional secretaries, press secretaries, coordinating secretaries, media consultants and liaison officers, who have come between the common people and their MPs and Ministers? That these officials whose number is proliferating every day have enmeshed ministers and VIPs in silken cocoons which have turned out to be worse than the proverbial ivory towers? That fixers, catchers and contact-men, UNP stalwarts complain, see to it that officials keep the Ministers and MPs away from the people who voted for them and even away from those party activists who worked hard to elect them? That most of the old faithfuls—the honest-to-goodness people who did not want (or even know how) to make the fast buck—who had toiled and slaved to elect the UNP in 1977 are now in the dog house because they do not fit into the new era of contractors and smugglers? That Sri Lanka is now in the grip of a new (foreign and local) elite of hoteliers, travel agents, gem merchants, contractors, exporters, smugglers and five star (hotel) bureaucrats who insist on flaunting their wealth (made overnight) in the face of ordinary people who have tightened their belts to the point of suffocation and who see no future before them except pauperisation?

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