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TRIBUNE



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Letter From The Editor

AS THE YEAR COMES TO AN END it is customary to look back over the year that is ending and also hope that life would be better in the next. As in the years past, 1980 was a year of mixed blessings with the quota of misfortune that befalls all things human. Prices shot up, but there are many things to be thankful for. The Government has continued to muddle through, often aimlessly, buffeted hither and thither by pressures and tribulations that distracted it from the onward course that had been chartered on its new economic policies. Most people see only a confusing mass of conflicting and contradictory happenings in governmental activities in 1980. They cannot be blamed because the image that the official media has so far been able to project about UNP's Dharmapala does not do justice to the real achievements of the Government. Over-exaggeration, over-repetition, unnecessary boasting about trivialities, and personalised news that focussed attention on the wayside activities of Ministers and MPs—opening small buildings, presiding over potty little seminars and conferences have all contributed to enveloping the government in a credibility gap which is fast isolating it from the people. In this ever-growing maelstrom of ever-widening credibility gap, even the good work of the government goes unnoticed. It is also buried under the growing corruption that has overtaken the administration at all levels. Only the most discerning can detect the positive achievements of the government. The Ministry of State which has Information and Broadcasting (and now TV) under it cannot help very much because most Ministers have Press Officers who dish out news and use all levers of influence, patronage and otherwise to get the items they prepare (mostly blah-blah) into SLBC news bulletins and the columns of the daily papers. The same "sources" feed the media with "features" and photographs intended to boost the individual ministers. It is argued, in defence, that these all-too-frequent self-adulatory personal puffs about the inconsequential doings of Ministers would cumulatively help to build the government's image. But the perpetrators of this kind of propaganda little realise that they do more harm than good. It must be mentioned that as a general rule the Ministers who are responsive to criticism in the press and elsewhere are the most successful in getting things done for national development. On the other hand Ministers who resent criticism or ostrichlike refuse to see anything unpalatable or regard criticism of the work of departmental officials as personal affront to ministerial dignity are responsible for the yawning credibility gap. Among those who react healthily to criticism, the President stands in a class by himself—every little tid-bit of criticism in any paper, big or small, gets a ready response from him. The Prime Minister too does not let any press criticism pass without taking prompt action to find out what has gone wrong. The Minister of Trade and Shipping, the Minister of Lands and Mahaweli Development and the Minister of Fisheries—three whose names come readily to mind—not only have excellent rapport with the press but are quick to respond to criticism by taking corrective action—or correcting a wrong impression or statement of facts. We have in the past been extremely critical of different aspects of work of these three Ministries but we have found that instead of casting *Tribune* into the outer hell of "enemies"—as some Ministers and Ministries do by attributing *mala fides*—these Ministers have reacted positively and have tried to find out what had prompted the criticism. What some Ministers do not realise is that *Tribune* has no axe to grind and any criticism we offer or any critical article we publish is not to detract from good work, but to help in the process of getting better work done. This week we have published a critical review of the Mahaweli Project by R. Kahawita. This is not to show that Minister Gamini Dissanayake has fallen down on his job but only to point out pitfalls and possible mistakes his bureaucrats and technocrats can fall into. Minister Gamini Dissanayake is today one of the few Ministers who is able to get things done. He has been extremely successful in getting aid abroad for Mahaweli. And locally he has a fund of goodwill which he is often unable to utilise fully—why he may be able to discover only if the press and the media are alive to their responsibilities.

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The Lowly Earthworm

Once again we turn the focus of attention on the lowly earthworm. With all the artificial fertilizers, insecticides, weedicides and other toxic substances that multinationals and other profit greedy organisations have persuaded Sri Lanka and Sri Lankans to pump into their soils, this country faces problems of fertility and ecology. One of the ways of restoring soil fertility is to rehabilitate the earthworm.

We can do no better than reproduce an article by Stevens Bridges from the periodical *The Futurist* entitled *The Importance of the Earthworm*. On our cover this week, we have a picture of the habitat of the lowly earthworm.

THE LOWLY AND OFTEN MALIGNED EARTHWORM has begun crawling its way toward a brighter tomorrow. Of course, the earthworm has long been renowned as nature's best fishing bait. But only recently have many people begun to recognize the earthworm's true value as a vital component of fertile soil and as an efficient converter of organic wastes into valuable resources. Agricultural researchers have shown that introducing large number of earthworms into agricultural land doubles the yield of wheat, increases the yield of grass four times, and multiplies clover yields tenfold. Henry Hopp, a noted agricultural scientist, found that earthworms in poor soil boosted the yield of herbal plants more than 10 times. In experiments with millet, lima beans, soy beans and hay, Hopp also proved that the addition of live earthworms increased yields much more than the addition of dead worms did, showing that it is the action of live earthworms rather than just the nutrients in dead worms, that enhances soil productivity.

The excrement or "castings" of earthworms which consists largely of digested soil and particles of organic matter, is more chemically neutral than the surrounding soil. So by consuming soil, and excreting soil processing it and excreting the remainder as castings, sufficient numbers of earthworms help keep a field closer to the neutral pH range. Soil that is excessively acidic or alkaline can inhibit the growth of plants and microbes. Earthworms also transport minerals and subsoil compounds from deep in the soil, where they can languish beyond the reach of shallow root systems, to near the soil's surface. In the process the earthworms often transform these compounds into nutrients that plants can use much more readily. Chemical analysis of earthworm castings shows that they can contain up to two times as much available magnesium, five times as much available nitrogen, seven times as much available phosphorus, and 11 times as much available potassium as the surrounding soil. The passage of soil through the earthworm's gullet also greatly promotes bacterial growth. In particular, actinomycetes, bacteria that create humus, thrive in the pre-

sence of earthworms. The content of actinomycetes to castings is six to seven times greater than in the original soil.

SOILS WITHOUT EARTHWORMS usually become dense and compact, thus discouraging plant growth. But soils rich in earthworms remain loose, giving the soil a much larger capacity to retain air and water. Hopp determined that earthworms introduced into a test plot for a month increased the rate of which the soil could absorb water by 250 percent. The improved soil structures brought about by earthworms help plants develop longer and more penetrating roots. J. A. Van Rhee, a Dutch researcher, has found that in orchards "trees that had 800 earthworms placed around them grew heavier root system than did trees in soils without worms."

"There is no doubt", writes Helberg, "that earthworms are the most beneficial animals in forestry." In 1974, Americans produced 100 million tons of residential and commercial trash, seven million tons of sludge and 2,000 million tons of agricultural by-products. If earthworms were allowed to turn the organic part of these "wastes" into valuable castings, the stress on America's already overburdened solid-waste disposal system would greatly ease. By mixing organic wastes from human consumption with sewer sludge and animal manure, the earthworms can really get down to work.

Today over 90,000 earthworm ranchers are raising and selling earthworms in the United States alone. Thousands of families are profiting from the environmentally beneficial activities of improving soil, breaking down wastes, producing valuable castings and increasing the total biomass of earthworms capable of working for humankind. Almost every household can, with little training, capital, hardware and time, raise enough earthworms for an organic garbage transformer. Most growers use either the red worm, *Lumbricus rubellus* or the manure worm, *Helodilus foetida*, which are marketed locally under a variety of names. With only about 20,000 earthworms living in a 5 foot by five foot by one foot (1.5 meter x 1.5 meter x 1.3 meter) box in the backyard or basement, a family of four can process all of its kitchen wastes and much of its clippings from the yard.

ON A SLIGHTLY LARGER SCALE, a bed 8 feet x 4 feet x 1 foot (2.4 meter x 1.2 meter x 1.3 meter) holding approximately 100,000 worms can annually convert between 600 pounds (270 kilograms) and 1,200 pounds (540 kilograms) of organic matter into rich, useful castings. These castings can then go into gardens, farms and orchards as an excellent organic fertilizer.

Recently several large-scale applications of earthworm composting have begun operating in the United States, Canada and Japan as a supplement to existing solid-waste processing systems. Donald F. Gaddie, president of North American Bait Farms, points out that though still in its infancy, industrial earthworms processing has made a strong beginning: "The first commercial annelidic or earthworm consumption facility was established in Canada in 1970 and is cur-

rently processing about 75 tons per week of biodegradable refuse. There are now in Japan four such annelidic consumption facilities processing about 10 tons per day primarily for specialised manufacturing wastes."

Gaddie also believes that the industry has the potential for considerable growth in the future: Already, North American Bait Farms has begun developing an earthworm composting plant that could process refuse for a city of up to a million people. As population pressures and ecological limitations continue to grow, plants such as this could offer an economical and sensible means of waste disposal.

The national press has recently given much publicity to the possibility of using earthworms as a source of human protein. In fact, despite most people's squeamishness, several contests for recipes using earthworms have been held in Canada and the United States. Dried earthworms consists of up to 72 percent protein by weight, depending on the species. Even more important, earthworms contain certain amino acids that other forms of protein often lack. The amino arginine makes up 10.07 percent of worm protein. The earthworms form a small but very important link in the chain of life. As nature's alchemists and grist mills, their gizzards are working endlessly to transform dead organic matter into powerful living soil. By helping them to prosper, humankind can help to have itself.

Is it not time for governmental as well as private organisations in Sri Lanka to launch a campaign to foster the multiplication of earthworms and also to persuade farmers to make the earthworm their way to higher productivity and increased prosperity?

This is a campaign that will need no foreign capital or advanced technology. No bureaucrats or technocrats need undertake world-girdling jaunts to study the life-style of earthworms. Researchers in our Universities can easily establish that the Sri Lankan earthworm is unique and thus satisfy those of us who fondly believe that everything Sri Lankan is unique.

Sri Lanka, we are repeatedly told, is a unique country which every year scores many world "firsts"—much to the chagrin of bigger and richer countries. The unique Sri Lankan earthworm—we are sure that ours is—will no doubt be able to perform wonders that earthworms in other countries cannot. Once there are enough earthworms from Pedro to Dondra, Sri Lanka has nothing to worry about. Nationwide celebrations, in customary style, can be held to tell the world the story of the 4500-year old unique Sri Lankan earthworm and the wonderous acts it is capable of.

Nothing less than something unique will sell in the Sri Lanka of today. So let us make our earthworm unique and have it accepted by those who can take it to our farms and agricultural lands.

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

BUDGET-5

IN THE EARLIER PARTS on the Series on the Budget, we have examined the logic behind the Fourth Budget of the UNP—with our own comments in passing. The rest of the Budget Speech consisted of (a) short summaries of different sectors, agriculture, industry, GCEC, Tourism, banking, Fisheries, Mahaweli etc. etc. and (b) the proposals. It is not necessary for us to go into a detailed examination of these two categories. The survey of the different sectors of the economy is based on statistical data and although we may have differences in regard to emphasis and industry, there is really nothing important to quarrel about the analysis presented by the Finance Minister. The proposals have been discussed threadbare in the daily papers and in parliament. We have ourselves published for the record the full summary of the Finance Minister's proposals. All that is left is to refer to a few significant comments that were made about the Budget. One of the most interesting comments had come from LSSP leader Bernard Soysa in a letter to the Sun of November 10. It was entitled *Non-Budget*.

"There is much that can be said in criticism of this Budget which is under discussion today. However, I should be grateful if you would be so good as to grant me the space to draw attention to one aspect of what is being done, which I think goes to the root of Parliamentary control of public finance. The accepted procedure for the presentation of the annual estimates and Appropriation Bill appears to have been turned topsy-turvy by the Minister of Finance when he made his budget proposals for 1981 on November 5. Whether any procedural changes to correct the position are to be made before the committee Stage or at least before the votes are taken both in committee and at the end of the third reading is not evident from what the Finance Minister has said. What is evident is that he presented estimates and an Appropriation Bill with a deficit of Rs. 14,923 millions and revised the deficit to Rs. 15,173 million. Then in discussing how this deficit could be bridged, he announced a reduction in the capital votes projected as amounting to Rs. 13,841m by Rs. 2,722 m. He then went on to say that in the final reprint of the estimates the actual (reduced) capital expenditure votes would be shown against each Ministry according to the figures he then read.

"I hope I am wrong but it would appear from what the Minister has said that no amendments are to be moved to implement these announced reductions in the course of this budget debate nor are the detailed estimates to be recast according to the reduced votes of the Ministries before the discussion of the detailed estimates takes place in committee. The reduced figures themselves are to appear only in the final print, and it is not known whether even at that stage the rearrangement of the details according to the reductions will be known.

"Where does this leave Parliament and those who elected it? What we have after taking into account the Minister's proposals for financing the deficit to the extent of Rs. 12,455m is a gap of Rs. 2,772 million which he says he will abolish by reducing the capital votes. This is a reduction in advance of the figures already presented. Parliament is thus left in the position of passing votes that are said to be unreal. Discussion of the detailed estimates is also rendered unreal because the impact of these cuts on the detailed estimates is not known. It was open to the Finance Minister to have proceeded with a Vote on Account and come later to Parliament with his revised estimates. Parliament could then have discussed the estimates with some idea of what is going to happen. To use the terminology now more in vogue after the TV interview of Shri Krishnamurti by Minister Anandatissa de Alwis—we have to realise that what we are now left with is "a non-Budget".

The LSSP did not issue any other statement on the Budget. Its daily paper *Janadina* has ceased publication and the party has no other periodical publication. The *Ceylon Daily News* published a three-inch report of a statement issued by the NSSP on the Budget:

"Dr. Wickremabahu Karunaratne, General Secretary, Nava Samasamaja Party says the fourth Budget of Ronnie de Mel signifies a shift from inflationary expansion to a conscious deflation. This budget will start the reversal of so-called job creation which was the only argument government had to justify its existence. Measures proposed in the budget will not contain inflation. Instead it will cause stagflation. That is stagnation with a significant degree of inflation. Gripped in international capitalist crisis the government cannot find any other solution than what has been proposed" he adds, in a statement issued to the press. This is probably only a small part of the NSSP statement. It must have been much longer—one cannot imagine a Left Party issuing a short statement on any subject. But this statement was not sent to *Tribune* nor have we been able to trace a copy.

The SLFP and TULF being in Parliament presented their views in full. Whilst the SLFP endeavoured to pick holes in the Budget to spotlight sensational cases of alleged family bandyism, corruption and the like (except Maithripala Senanayake who had some constructive criticism about Mahaweli), the TULF made an honest effort to evaluate the Budget from a "socialist angle". This new interest of the TULF in matters economic is a welcome departure from the sterile and negative boycott policies it had followed for years.

The CPSL has no representation in Parliament, but its daily *Aththa* has appeared with unfailing regularity. The party's fortnightly *Forward* too has made its appearance from November. The *Forward* has set out the position of the CPSL very clearly. The *Forward*, 15/11/80, under the title **LESS DEVELOPMENT AND MORE INFLATION**.

"The UNP government's 1981 Budget will mean even less economic development for the country and even more inflation for its people. It symbolises the

collapse of the 'new economic policy' which the present UNP government initiated in 1977-78 on the formula then advocated by the World Bank. The essence of this policy was (1) the dismantling of economic controls and the public sector, (2) major cutbacks in consumer subsidies and social benefits; (3) a return to a "market economy" domestically; (4) an "open door" to foreign private capital and imports and (5) a 3-prong "development" effort (i.e. "accelerated" Mahaweli, the FTZ and housing) which will depend heavily on foreign finance. The grim facts mournfully cited by the Finance Minister when introducing his fourth Budget are eloquent testimony that this policy has not worked.

"The rate of economic growth, he confessed, had progressively DECLINED. From 8.2% in 1978, it fell to 6.2% in 1979, and would be less than 5.2% in 1980. After repeating that Sri Lanka is "still an agricultural country", he told us that agricultural output in 1980 would only increase by 1.7% as compared with 5 per cent in 1978 and 2 per cent in 1979. Plantation output had declined by 8% in 1980 (tea by 2.9%, rubber by 1.3% and coconut by 16.4%), while the increase in paddy production was only a marginal 4 per cent. Manufacture, which was 14% of the GNP in 1978, had fallen to 11% in 1979 and to 4.3% in 1980. External assets had declined from Rs. 9652 million, in December, 1979 to Rs. 8014 million at the end of June 1980. Although the Minister glossed over the vast increase in external indebtedness and in the amount spent on servicing and repaying foreign loans, he did disclose that foreign credits and "aid" up to now amounted to Rs. 22,829 million and that negotiations are also in progress with several West Asian countries and multi-national organisations for obtaining additional assistance."

"The deficit in the balance of payments, which was Rs. 1032 million in 1978, had more than doubled to Rs. 3556 million in 1979 and had already reached Rs. 2337 million by mid-1980. The trade deficit was also widening considerably. In 1979, the terms of trade had deteriorated by 28 per cent, with import prices rising by 52 per cent and export prices by only 9 per cent. In the first six months of 1980, import costs had risen by 41 per cent as against the corresponding period in 1979, while export earnings had only risen by 13 per cent. This left a trade deficit of Rs. 7629 million for the first half of 1980 alone.

"The Minister of Finance also admitted ruefully that the Budget estimates for 1980 had gone completely haywire. Recurrent expenditure had been 41 per cent higher than anticipated, and capital expenditure 24% higher. As a result, the anticipated Budget deficit of Rs. 8920 million had increased by 61%. But after reciting this long tale of woe and blasted hopes, the Minister had no solution to offer except the new formula of the World Bank i.e. to cut back whatever little "economic development" remains (in the same way as consumer subsidies were cut earlier) and to concentrate on export-oriented, quick-return investments in which foreign capital will play a major role.

"Any change in the basically neo-colonialist strategy followed in the past three years was, of course, un-

thinkable for this government, however detrimental its consequences may be for the country and the people. The extent of the cutback on "development" expenditure (incidentally, the main reason given by the government for its economic strategy) in the 1981 Budget has not yet been fully realised. In monetary terms, the allocation for capital expenditure for 1981 (Rs. 13,641 million) is a little more than the Rs. 12,382 million in 1980. But with a 40 to 50 per cent rate of inflation, the effectiveness of the "development" envisaged for 1981 is halved to begin with.

"On top of this, the Finance Minister, when opening the Budget debate, announced further cuts—even in the Estimates presented to Parliament. He hoped to save about Rs. 3 billion by these new cuts. The new cuts are both savage and concentrated precisely on those "development" activities in whose name the government withdrew rice ration books and sharply reduced expenditure on consumer subsidies and social benefits in the past three years. Called upon to forego subsidies in the name of "development", the people are now called upon to forego much of this "development" in the name of helping the government to solve the crisis that its policies have produced!

"Before preparing the 1981 estimates, the "accelerated" Mahaweli development scheme had already been pruned by postponing Randenigala and reducing the size of the Kotmale dam. Now a further cut of nearly Rs. 1 billion (25.6%) has been added. Housing and Construction, which the Finance Minister called "the most vibrant sector of economy", has been cut by a further Rs. 624 million (24.9%). On top of this, further restraints have been added by raising the BTT on cement sales from 1 to 10 per cent. Land development has also been cut by a further 25 per cent (Rs. 184 million). The Ministers of Health and Education have already told us that there will be no new hospitals, dispensaries and schools next year. It should also be noted that, while "development" expenditure is heavily slashed, wasteful expenditure on merely prestigious and self-glorifying projects like the so-called "Jayewardenepura" Parliamentary complex remains untouched, while the restraints on "defence" expenditure are purely minimal and symbolic.

"As far as the mass of the people are concerned, the extra burdens on them are mainly extra-budgetary. Together with the Budget but not included in it—are the very considerable increase in bus and rail fares, together with the price of milk and milk products. The Minister has, however, announced that postal, telegraph and telephone charges will go up again in January, 1981, by a still unspecified amount. It is also no secret, as admitted by columnist Migara in the Weekend (9/11) that a proposal to do away with the food stamp scheme (already devalued by inflation) was put to the Cabinet for inclusion in the Budget but "postponed" for more auspicious times! Even diehard UNP apologists have been too shamefaced to make much of the Rs. 70 a month wage increase announced in the Budget. For, first of all, it only just compensates, if at all, for the extra charges on bus and rail fares. Secondly, it applies

only to public sector employees whose cost-of-living index was "frozen" over many years and to such private sector employees who do not receive the non-recurring cost-of-living index adjustments. At most, this increase only puts such employees on a par with what their fellow employees received earlier, and is no compensation for the actual decline in real wages due to inflation.

"On top of this, all wage and salaried employees (like the rest of the population) will be severely hit by the still greater rise in the rate of inflation that must inevitably follow from the policies that the government has announced. The Minister of Finance has said that, in his opinion the inflation rate of between 40 to 50 per cent estimated by the World Bank and the Central Bank is "somewhat exaggerated". But even he admits to a rate of 32 per cent, which is appallingly high by any standard. Yet the main means he has adopted to bridge his budget deficit of Rs. 15 billion (which, he admits, is more than his expected revenue) are highly inflationary. Taxes on the wealthy (a mere Rs. 605 million) and budget cuts of Rs. 2722 million are to be accompanied by foreign assistance and borrowing of Rs. 8,100 million and domestic borrowing of Rs. 3,750 million, of which Rs. 2,000 million will be by way of Treasury Bills.

"As foreign 'aid' by way of government-to-government grants and credits will not (as the "Aid Club" made clear) exceed what was promised in 1977 (at those prices and values), the government will have increasingly to resort (as the Minister made clear) to commercial borrowing abroad at onerous rates of interest. In fact, the Minister disclosed that in 1980 the government has already borrowed 150 million US dollars from such sources, although he did not disclose either the sources or the rates of interest. So, from every point of view, the people of this country are in for an even thinner time in 1981 than they experienced this year. And this will remain so until the neo-colonialist policies and the capitalists forecast that follow them are rejected and thrown away.

But no analysis of the Budget is complete without dipping in extenso into the Migara column in the Weekend. Migara is a welcome phenomenon on our journalistic horizon with his uncanny genius for ferretting behind-the-scenes detail of men, matters and political parties (mostly correct—his slip-ups being few and far between). In the Weekend of November 9, his piece was entitled **BEG, BORROW AND BUDGET—SO MUCH OF MONEY PRINTED BUT NEITHER THE GOVERNMENT NOR ORDINARY PEOPLE HAVE ENOUGH**. Migara began "Finance and Planning Minister Ronnie de Mel was with us this week to present the nava United National Party's fourth Budget in Parliament."

The gentle hint that this Minister "was with us this week" "This week" was intended to remind readers that Ronnie de Mel was out of the country often for long stretches. This remark is only one more expression of the continuing cold-war the **Dawasa-Sun** group has persistently carried on against Minister Ronnie de Mel.

Migara first dealt with the pruning of the estimates: "When the estimates were printed sometime last week the expenditure for 1981 was in the region of Rs. 30 billion while the estimated revenue was some Rs. 15 billion—therefore a gap of Rs. 15 billion which the Finance Minister had to bridge. The fact that the Government was going to spend Rs. 30 billion in one year was viewed with alarm. The amount was so high. The question was whether an economy such as ours could absorb such a large volume of money. And whether so much money would not send already galloping inflation to uncontrollable levels. Thus, the Government quickly formed a committee comprising President J. R. Jayewardene, Prime Minister R. Premadasa, and Finance Minister Ronnie de Mel. They began going into the estimates to seek ways and means of cutting-down on the expenditure of Rs. 30 billion.

"On one side inflation where money chases goods had to be checked and on the other side if the deficit of Rs. 15 million was narrowed then less hardships would have to be imposed by way of Budget proposals. Therefore, there was no two words—expenditure had to be cut and the Ministers who were at first pleased about the amount of money they were receiving, got instead a rude shock when the three-member committee called them one by one and told them about necessary cut-backs. Finance Ministry officials also told that Cabinet Ministers last week that the amount of Rs. 30 billion was the highest in the island's history and about the highest compared to any country with an economy of our size. By this time it was known in top government circles that the President was giving his full support to his Finance Minister to cut back on expenditure. The three member committee therefore concentrated on making drastic cuts on the capital expenditure—mainly buildings, new projects etc.—of the various ministries.

"Over last weekend too, it was pruning off the original budget estimates that had the government's attention and this was possibly the reason for Trade and Shipping Minister Lalith Athulathudali to announce at a well publicised meeting at Rakwana that Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike's civic rights issue was now over and that there was more urgent business for the government to now concentrate on. This same view was echoed on Tuesday by President Jayewardene at the Government Parliamentary group meeting. By this time, the Government had more or less agreed that as much as about Rs. 5 billion had to be cut out of the Rs. 30 billion on expenditure. The question was how? If Rs. 5 billion could have been cut, then the deficit was only Rs. 10 billion. So what happened was that Ministers were told to cut back almost as much as one fourth of the original estimated capital expenditure.

"For instance, the Ministry of Mahaweli Development which is responsible for the island's most ambitious multi-purpose project in contemporary history, was originally allocated Rs. 4,035 million. But this was cut to Rs. 3,000 million. The cut was therefore more than Rs. 1 billion and percentage wise it was a 25.6 cut. The Ministry of Housing and Construction

which comes under the Prime Minister himself faced the next largest cut of Rs. 624 million. Percentage wise a cut by 24.9. The allocation for the Ministry of Lands was cut by Rs. 184 million 25 per cent. The other Ministry allocation cut by more than Rs. 100 million were those of Defence, Plan Implementation, and Higher Education, (all three under the President), Education, Power and Energy, and Agricultural Research and Development.

"Sixteen ministries considered 'large spending ministries' under twelve ministers were effected. It was natural for many of them to have been disheartened throughout this week. Those Ministries that were left untouched were Finance and Planning, Foreign Affairs, Transport, Food and Co-operatives, Justice, Home Affairs, Trade and Shipping, Industries and Scientific Affairs Rural Industrial Development, Social Services, Plantation Industries and Labour. Having effected these cuts, the Government decided that the ministers should at least be given the option of choosing in which particular areas in their respective ministries the cuts should take place. It is for this reason—that of last-minute cutting of the expenditure of the various ministries—that the Finance Minister said in his budget speech that only in the final print of the estimates would the actual capital expenditure votes will be given for each ministry.

Migara continues with the story of the Budget cuts:

"But all these cuts amount only to Rs. 2.7 billion. If the agreed amount was in the region of Rs. 5 billion there is another Rs. 2.3 billion to be cut. This, therefore, will be the interesting exercise of the Government that could be witnessed in the weeks to come. Will it be the unkindest cut ask some political observers. If the expenditure of ministries is over, from where will the cuts come? One of the proposals, it is now known, is to cut on the food stamp scheme introduced a little over an year ago. But the government was obviously not decided on it. On Tuesday at the Government Parliamentary Group meeting, President Jayewardene explained to MPs the Budget that was to be presented the next day in Parliament though it was still not final at that stage. In fact the Finance Minister was reported to have been absent from the group meeting. He was possibly attending to the Budget at the Secretariat building.

"President Jayewardene told his MPs that there was no going back on the economic path, the government had decided, to venture on. He told them that he felt that with all its inherent faults the present system was yet the best. Both the communist system and Mrs. Bandaranaike's system of controls and restrictions were rejected by the people. He called for 'financial discipline' as the theme for the future and asked members to be careful with the expenditure of public money. Otherwise they would have to go back to unemployment queues, food shortages and the like of yesteryear he said.

"The following day, on Wednesday, the Finance Minister once again briefed the President on the Budget proposals over breakfast and then proceeded to out-

line the main proposals to his ministerial colleague at the weekly Cabinet meeting. At this meeting another bomb-shell was dropped when they were almost asked to decide on whether the food stamp scheme was to be knocked off or whether the monthly wage increase of Rs. 70 for state sector employees was to be scrapped. It was obvious that money was needed badly. There was a howl of protest. The food stamps scheme involved nearly 7 million of the poorest of the poor. As for the wage increase some ministers pointed out that this as a promise given on UNP public platforms during the general strike days in July and August this year. It was a promise that had to be fulfilled because many workers in the state sector did not participate in those strikes, and one reason could well have been the fact that the Government promised a wage increase.

"Finally the wage increase and the food stamps remained.

(This shows that tortuous way in which the Budget estimates were cut. But the process was not over—Ed.)

"It might therefore be suggested that the Finance Minister may have expected some last minute persuasion of his colleagues to work. This is reflected in the fact that of his 83 page budget speech there are two pages which are additions to his original speech. These two pages are marked 61 A and 61 B and pinned between pages 61 and 62 of his speech. They were obvious last minute additions. It is in these pages coming under the "proposals" category of his speech that contain the Rs. 70 wage increase announcement that was made. The cost of the wage increase was announced as Rs. 700 million for 1981. The ministers are reported to have also 'promised' the Finance Minister that they would not bring supplementary estimates to the Cabinet and then to Parliament throughout the year as they did this year. That afternoon, Minister de Mel announced the budget. It was a cut and dry budget. Rs. 8.1 billion is to come from foreign aid and loans and according to a government source a 3 per cent cut on recurrent expenditure of the various Ministries is going to find the monies for the Rs. 700 million needed for the wage hike. It therefore was a careful balancing act. Apart from the wage increase and the floor-price for paddy being increased to Rs. 50 per bushel there were no other real benefits. On the other hand apart from the cigarettes, liquor, income tax surcharge and other minor levies which will yield Rs. 605 million there were no real hardships either. The actual unfinanced gap at present stands at Rs. 3.1 billion."

(The real reason for all these cuts was disclosed by the Finance Minister. It was to keep the "International Community happy, meaning the World Bank, the IMF and Western Bankers. If these groups make the "International Community" then the people of Sri Lanka have to wake up before we are completely in the Shylockian clutches of this "International Community" —Ed.)

"The Finance Minister said "if we bring our deficit to manageable proportions, the international community will continue to have confidence in us. Outside the

budget many developments also have taken place and it appears that more will take place. For instance, the Finance Minister announced in his budget that postal and telephone rates would go up soon. Yesterday bus and rail fares went up by 50 to 60 per cent respectively. Mid week the prices of locally produced milk and milk foods went up. All these were outside the budget proper. The corresponding services of these same items have on the other hand come down. It is learnt that the railway has virtually been asked to find its own money and not to run to the Treasury every time for its money. What service they give, none yet knows. Managerial expertise will have to be sharpened in both the bus and rail services. Operational costs will have to come down by such means. Otherwise public discontent among the vast populace of daily commuters will reach alarming heights if inefficiency is met merely with higher fares.

"With regard to milk production, one wonders where all the milk goes. Several milk booths in the city have imported bottles of cordial on their shelves and not milk. They sell toffees and make profits. As for telephone services, Minister de Mel in his remarks on "sectoral developments" in the Budget referred to an improvement in their efficiency during the year. While the output may have been more the efficiency is doubted. It was President Jayewardene himself who said only about two months ago that when he lifted his telephone receiver most often he found it out of order. This is the angle often neglected. What about the service given every time prices, rates or fares are increased? In some countries inefficiency of providing services renders them liable to be sued."

"The Finance Minister admitted in his budget that though he managed to balance it, 'there are bound to be leads in expenditure and lags in receipts'. As a result to implement this budget smoothly he intends to present a resolution during the debate to enhance the limit on treasury bills by Rs. 2,000 million. It will be the third time he or his Deputy has come before Parliament to ask permission for more money through such means. The dangers of such measures, President Jayewardene himself has pointed out. The more you have recourse to the Central Bank to finance your Treasury bills, naturally the greater is the inflationary process that sets in....." (NSA July 21, 1972). It is therefore noteworthy mentioning a letter sent by Minister de Mel to President Jayewardene recently on such a matter, which was a follow-up to a letter dated August 18, 1980. Part of the letter to the President states: As you know our issues of Treasury Bills, unlike those of other countries, are taken up entirely by the Central Bank, and financing through Treasury bills taken up by the Central Bank is inflationary under normal circumstances I would not recommend that we go for a further increase in the Treasury bill limit. I have to do so most reluctantly and very much against my better judgement, as we have no other choice in the matter.

"The fact that we have to go before Parliament on three occasions this year, speaking increases in the

Treasury bill limit by as much as Rs. 5,000 million serves to underline the need for proper budgeting by ministries and avoiding recourse to supplementary estimates during the year. All ministries must operate within the votes that are sanctioned by Parliament in the annual budget. No doubt that ministries could plead that cost escalations have resulted in the need for supplementary provision. But this is no excuse. The Treasury does not get any additional revenue to meet cost escalations and therefore a much more serious attempt must be made by line ministries to phase out their programmes of work in such a way that cost escalations can be absorbed within the votes allocated to them. I shall be glad if you bring these observations to the notice of the Line Ministries." (Sgd.) **Ronnie de Mel.**

Migara concluded his piece thus:— So it seems that inflation will not be checked all that easily. Performances in local production, particularly in the agricultural and plantation fields were once again condemned by Minister de Mel. He referred to a "worrying feature the last two years"—that of the "declining performance of the agricultural sector, which includes the plantations." 1980 has been referred to as a "disappointing one for the agricultural sector" where output dropped to a fantastically low 1.7 per cent in 1980 compared to five per cent in 1978. It was way back in February this year during the days when a Cabinet reshuffle was in the air that President Jayewardene focused the attention of his parliamentary group as well as that of the nation on what he called a "warfooting for food production." In years gone by the Ministry of Agriculture was one of the most important ministries. Its portfolio has been held, among others, by D. S. Senanayake, Dudley Senanayake, and J. R. Jayewardene. Today nobody talks about the Ministry of Agricultural Development and Research.

Tribune sticks to the view it had expressed in 1977 when this kind of budgeting was resorted to; that it was a gamble. And the Budget this year we said that the gamble has begun to wobble. Singapore's economic miracle worker Dr. Goh said the same thing in a gentle way: that Sri Lanka had attempted to go "too fast". Only the gambler does

Concluded.

OFFICIAL EXCHANGE RATES

Official Exchange Rates of Commercial Banks to their customers for Telegraphic Transfers fixed on Tuesday this week were as follows:—

CURRENCY	PER 100 UNITS	
	Buying Rate	Selling Rate
U.S. Dollar	Rs. 1802.50	Rs. 1805.50
Sterling Pound	Rs. 4227.50	Rs. 4233.50
Deutsche Mark	Rs. 941.50	Rs. 943.10
French Franc	Rs. 405.35	Rs. 406.05
Japanese Yen	Rs. 8.4400	Rs. 8.4550
Indian Rupees	Rs. 226.80	Rs. 227.20

Govt.



Notices

Notice Under Section 7 Of The Land Acquisition Act (Chapter 460) As Amended By The Land Acquisition (Amendment) Act No. 28 Of 1964

Ref. No. /5/302

It is intended to acquire the land/lands described in the Schedule below. For further particulars see the Gazette of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka No. 120 of 19.12.80.

Schedule

Situation : Hikkaduwa village (Ward No. 3 Wellabada in the T.C. limits of Hikkaduwa D.R.O.'s Division of Wellabada Pattu (South) in the District of Galle.

Name of land : Kudagoda Maradana Watta alias Kurunduwatta alias Wellawatta crt of Assessment No. 20, Kurunduwatta Road.

Plan and Lot No. : P.Plan No. Gaa/1514 Lot No. 1

W. Somadasa

Acquiring Officer, Galle District.

The Kachcheri, Galle.

28, November 1980

The Land Acquisition Act (Cap. 460) As Amended The Land Acquisition (Amendment) Act. No. 28 Of 1964 Notice Under Section 7

Ref. No. : 3/62/621

J. 78 E. 626

It is intended to acquire the Land/Lands described in the Schedule below. For further particulars please see Government Gazette No. 120 of 19-12-80 (part III).

Schedule

Name of Village etc. :— Wilbawa village in Tiragandahe West Korale, Kurunegala D.R.O.'s Division, Kurunegala District.

Name of Land :— Somiwatta

Plan and Lot No. :— Lot No. 1 in F.V.P. 970

H. M. W. Chandraratna

District Land Officer, Kurunegala District.

The Kachcheri, Kurunegala.

25, November 1980

Madrid Conference

Following is a VOA commentary reflecting the US position at the 35-nation review conference on Corporation and Security in Europe (CSCE), now under way in Madrid.

Washington, November 25,

After a ten-week procedural wrangle, the Madrid conference is finally down to its proper business—reviewing compliance with the 1975 final act of Helsinki. The procedural roadblock stemmed from Soviet unwillingness to talk about two major embarrassments: the Soviet invasion in Afghanistan and Soviet treatment of dissidents. Moscow wanted a severely restrictive agenda, with minimal discussion of how the East-West code of conduct is being applied; instead, it wanted the Madrid meeting to devote itself to new proposals, including a Soviet plan for still another conference on European disarmament.

The compromise agenda will allow ample time for both—full discussions on how the Helsinki accord is being observed; then, in January when the delegates return from a year-end recess, talk about new proposals. What made the restrictive Moscow position untenable was the Helsinki final act itself. It pledges its 35 signatory nations to observe, among others, the principles of territorial integrity, non-interference in internal affairs, inviolability of frontiers and respect for human rights—to observe these principles in their relations with all states.

The presence of 85,000 Soviet troops now on Afghan territory quite clearly violates these principles. The imprisonment of Soviet citizens who have tried to monitor their government's observance of the human rights provisions of the Helsinki accord represents additional violations. And these unkept pledges raise justified skepticism about any new pledges, just as the continued presence of Soviet troops in Afghanistan makes a mockery of grandiloquent proposals on behalf of some new form of disarmament. The initial conflict could have doomed the Madrid meeting to early failure. But the western nations—the NATO allies, along with Europe's neutrals and non-aligned countries—have shown remarkable solidarity in seeking to preserve the Helsinki process. In the long negotiations that produced the 1975 final act, they insisted that their efforts toward East-West detente benefit people in their everyday lives.

The accord they signed calls not only for security measures and economic exchanges, but also the observance of human rights and the freer movement of people, information and ideas across international borders. And it calls for periodic review conferences like the one in Madrid. These provide the opportunity for the process now going on in Madrid—to name names and cite cases of separated families, barriers to travel, the harassment for foreign journalists and the denial of fundamental freedoms. The purpose of this process is not

recrimination, but remedy—to search out the source of international tensions and enhance the cause of peace.

—USICA.

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SOVIET VIEW

Why Anti-Americanism

Washington's frenzied attempts to revive Pax Americana concepts during the years of the Carter Administration are in the opinion of Professor Viktor Cheprakov D.Sc. (Economics) a reaction to the United States steadily eroding leadership. In this article he analyses the economic aspects of the problem.

Some Americans are quite puzzled and cannot explain the acridly critical approach by Europeans to everything American. They don't know why Europeans are increasingly hostile to everything coming from the United States and why anti-American feelings are mounting in Western Europe.

Only recently the United States was the universally recognized leader of the Western world. Its social and economic system was considered a model, and was described as the very "structure of free enterprise". American technology and its economic system were copied. Investments by American corporations were hailed. Everybody was after the dollar. Praises galore were accorded the US armed forces stationed at military bases girdling the globe. The American-led NATO was considered the ultimate creation.

And now? Now we see a different time, a different frame of mind and different sentiments.

THE PERCEPTIBLE SUNSET of American capitalism began 10-15 years ago. The USA's position as the leader of the Western world began to erode. It began losing its lead in technology and the economy. Labour productivity rose more slowly in American industry than it did in Western Europe and Japan. There was a long period of declining investments. Last year, the Common Market GNP was greater than the USA's. Many American products were no longer as competitive as those from western Europe and Japan. American cars, TVs, shoes, electrical appliances, clothes and steel —i.e., products which the USA used to satisfy its requirements through domestic industries—are now being shoved out of the American market by foreign goods. The dollar fell by nearly 30 per cent during the last decade, and its role as a reserve currency has weakened.

The American economy is relentlessly going downhill and, as it does, pulling the other Western countries down with it. The reason is not only in the cyclic recessions afflicting the USA—this latest depression is happening in a chronically ill American economy. And the foreign economic policy conducted by the mono-

poly capital-administration tandem has entailed grave consequences for Western Europe's economy.

INFLATION in the United States resulted in overall financial instability in the West, and the lamentable state of the world monetary system. All the more serious analysts agree that increased oil prices are not the sole cause of inflation, as the higher cost of oil produces only a third of the inflation, according to the most optimum calculations. Jacques de Lirosiere, Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund, believes that inflation has been caused by the United States' overly wasteful budget policy. And this squandering is the result of huge military expenditures, the maintenance of military bases abroad and preparations for military ventures. The devalued dollars are flooding into the central banks of West European countries, which accelerates the growth of inflation throughout the Western world and paralyzes the world monetary market. Western experts are predicting a 30 per cent inflation rate in the United States by the mid-1980s. This poses an extremely grave threat to the West. The United States is trying to shift the burden of its own inflation onto the shoulders of its allies. Washington's pressure on the European NATO members to get them to raise their non-productive spending by a minimum 3 per cent in real terms per annum serves this purpose to a great extent, as well as weakening its own trade rivals.

ONE VERY LARGE REASON for the considerable balance of payments deficit plaguing most West European countries is the financial manipulations by the USA, and its policy of regulating foreign trade and erecting of customs barriers. This is the place to point out that having lost the Soviet export market on its own account, the United States is trying to make up this loss at the expense of other countries, and at the same time putting pressure on them to reduce their trade with the USSR.

The unceremonious high-handedness in Western Europe by transnational corporations with head offices in the USA combined with the increased trend in American protectionism, is undermining the national and the regional economy of Western Europe. The result is a crisis in economic growth in industrialized capitalist countries, a growth which has declined from 3.4 per cent last year to 1.4 per cent this year.

The Western world's reaction to the many calamities for which the United States is to blame is only natural. These calamities have triggered off a wave of anti-American sentiment in Western Europe and what is most important, are also now invading top political circles in the West. Western Europe no longer responds to the economic domination of the United States, nor to its leadership and, even less so, to American ultimatums.



MILK FOODS

Code In Offing

By C. Raghavan

Geneva,

THE World Health Organization is presently working on a draft international code of marketing of breastmilk substitutes and related products to be submitted to the WHO executive board, scheduled to meet in January 1981.

The code, with the recommendations of the executive board, are to be considered by the World Health Assembly (WHA) at its next annual conference in 1981.

The drafting of such a code began with consultations in October 1979, jointly organised by the WHO and UNICEF, with representatives of governments, the UN system and its technical agencies, non-governmental organisations active in the area, the infant food industry and scientists working in the field. Following this tripartite meeting, and on the basis of the recommendations that came out of it, the WHA 1980 endorsed the idea of a code and asked the WHO Secretariat to hold further consultations and submit a draft code for the consideration of the executive board, and through the board for a decision by the WHA.

INDIA IS ONE OF THE COUNTRIES that sponsored the move for a strong code. Since then, the WHO has held, several consultations, including two major ones in recent months, one with non-governmental organisations, scientists and the industry, and the other with government representatives. These consultations were preceded by the circulation of a draft to government and obtaining their written comments.

The last series of consultations have been on the basis of what is being called the Third Draft prepared by the WHO. The consultations and the draft do not cover the issue whether the code should be mandatory, like the WHO's other international sanitary regulations, or a voluntary code of recommendations to member states. This issue is expected to be tackled by the executive board and ultimately by the World Health Assembly.

Third World countries by and large prefer a mandatory WHO regulation, while the industrialised countries, though not all, would prefer the issue to be regulated at national level on the basis of an international voluntary code. As some of the participants in the various consultations so far see it, this may involve ultimately a trade of between a very strong but voluntary code, with national laws and regulations to enforce it, and a somewhat weaker international mandatory regulation.

The drive for the code has been mainly due to the efforts of several non-governmental organisations, many of them based in the North and involved in non-official developments work in the Third World, and backed by overwhelming pediatric and medical opinion that breastfeeding is the ideal food for infants, that it

is beneficial to the health and well-being of mother and child, protects infants against infection, and costs less than infant-feeding.

ALSO, THE MARKETING AND OTHER PROMOTIONAL TACTICS adopted by the infant-food industry, mainly transnational corporations (TNCs) specially in Third World countries—where both the costs of such artificial breastmilk substitutes and the inherent sanitary and other hazards of use in tropical climates—have been held responsible for many, often fatal, ailments of infants. This has led to an active NGO campaign, specially in the home-countries of the TNCs, against them, including boycotts of such giant TNCs like Nestle etc. After a period of silence shrugging off and resistance, the industry itself has apparently come around to accepting the need for changes in their marketing and promotional practices and adoption of a marketing code.

However, many NGO groups, specially some of the activist groups who have been monitoring the industry practices in the field, argue that the industry's professions at international consultations were very much at variance with practices in the field. These NGO groups, knowing also the weaknesses of many Third World governments and administrations, wish to develop both a strong code eschewing many current practices, and one that would be legally enforceable.

Though the NGO groups sometimes complain about a tendency to water down or weaken the original guidelines agreed upon at the tripartite meeting a year ago, the draft code prepared by the WHO appears to be holding pretty strong to the long-sought objectives in this area. The draft has explicit provisions prohibiting promotion of infant food substitutes to the masses or presenting them as equivalent or superior to breast-feeding. All such product, sold or otherwise distributed, would have to meet the applicable standards recommended by the Codex Alimentarius Commission, in the FAO, that provides food and public health standards.

THE DRAFT CODE explicitly states that there is to be no advertising or other promotion to the public of infant formula, milk products marketed for infant feeding, or other breastmilk substitutes or supplements for bottlefeeding or feeding bottles or teats. None of these products should be marketed or publicly referred to in any way implying or creating a belief that bottlefeeding is equal to or superior to breastfeeding. Containers of such products should carry clear labels about the superiority of breastfeeding, and warning about use of the product only on the advice of a health worker, both on the need and method of use.

Marketing personnel, in their business capacity, should have no contacts with pregnant women or with mothers at home or any health care facility. Free samples should be given out only to mothers whose infants do need breastmilk substitutes, and never through a health worker. There are other provisions relating to breastmilk substitutes and information to be provided in health care facilities, and the obligation of such facilities to encourage breastfeeding by mothers, and prohibition of the practice of using "mothercraft nurses"

paid for by manufacturers or distributors, to demonstrate or promote infant food formulae, and the practices to be followed by manufacturers and distributors vis-a-vis health workers, medical profession, and health facilities.

Some issues, on which there are some differences of opinion—for example among the NGO groups, the industry and some of the governments like the USA and Canada—are those seeking the prohibition of the practice of bonus payments to sales people dependant on the volume of such sales (which is felt to encourage aggressive promotion techniques) and prohibition of short-term or cut-price offers on products by manufacturers or distributors.

THE INDUSTRY apparently takes the view that these ideas impinge on employer-employee relationships and practices (outside the scope of the WHO) and might involve prohibited restrictive practices in some of the countries, where agreement not to offer price-cuts would be interpreted as monopolistic agreement. A resolution of some of these issues might involve the question whether the code is a voluntary one or an international mandatory sanitary regulation to promote the health of the people.

Whatever the nature of the code, member-states would be asked to adopt appropriate measures, including national laws and regulations, to promote its principles and aims. The responsibility for monitoring compliance with the code would lie with governments with manufacturers required fully to collaborate with these efforts. Consumers and professional groups are also to be involved in this process. The Director-General of the WHO would be required to report annually to the World Health Assembly on compliance with and implementation of the code. —IPS

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TALKING POINTS — I

TRIBUNE In Parliament

—Mrs. Amaratunge, Mrs. Wijeyaratne & Miss. Menikdiwela—

By Veritas

On the 26th November 1980, when the Budget debate on the votes of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was taken up, an Article in the *Tribune* of was cited in Parliament by two SLFP Parliamentarians (Mr. Wijesiri and Mr. Anura Bandaranaike). The *Tribune* article referred to the appointments of 3 Women (Mrs. Amaratunge, Mrs. Ranjan Wijeratne and Miss Menikdiwela) and one man (Mr. Mano Ginige) to serve in high posts in our diplomatic missions abroad (London, Washington, New York and France). The *Tribune* article had stated that these appointments were unjustified and "stink". SLFP's Mr. Wijesiri in fact, read out the entirety of the *Tribune* article and asked Mr. A. C. S. Hameed the Minister of Foreign Affairs for

his comments. Mr. Wijesiri also observed that "the editor or publisher of the *Tribune*, Mr. S. P. Amarasingam was a big supporter and loyalist of the UNP and therefore any criticism in the *Tribune* must be taken notice of and should be seriously considered by the Government unlike criticism by the SLFP which the UNP Government always ignores on the ground that it is mere mud-slinging."

The *Tribune* and its editor wish to categorically state that it is not the loyalist or supporter of any particular political party in Sri Lanka. The *Tribune* which is now in its 26th year of publication attempts to report and comment on News and Current Issues as best as it can. On the other hand we are honoured if our article was taken seriously and cited into in the Sri Lanka Parliament but we are unhappy about the reply given by the Hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs to the issues we had raised and which were re-agitated by Parliamentarians Wijesiri and Anura Bandaranaike.

We do not share or endorse the criticism made by Wijesiri and Anura Bandaranaike about the use of Mr. Hiran Jayawardena (son of Mr. H. W. Jayawardena Q.C. who is the brother of the President) or of Mr. Devinda Subasinghe (son of Mr. J. W. Subasinghe, Chairman of the Press Council who is said to be related to Mrs. J. R. Jayewardene). In our view the use of both these young men by the Foreign Ministry is more than justified. Despite their relationships, they are both very competent and qualified young men and from all reports of the work and services rendered by them, both Mr. Hameed, the Government and the people of Sri Lanka can feel proud. They have done excellent work in every endeavour they were involved in for Sri Lanka and they are both held in high esteem by the international community abroad.

We also do not criticise the nomination of Mr. H. W. Jayewardene to the International Court of Justice. Mr. Jayewardene is by far the ablest and leading lawyer in Sri Lanka today although he may not have a long line of academic degrees and publications to his credit and no one could seriously object to the Sri Lankan Government supporting his candidature. The only other Sri Lankan of eminence who could have been considered for this post was Mr. C. G. Weeramantry a former Supreme Court Judge who is now a Law Professor in Australia. Mr. Weeramantry however had left Sri Lanka as far back as the 1970s and had given up his career in his home country. Therefore, there was no good reason why the Government should have supported his candidature. Accordingly, the choice of Mr. H. W. Jayewardene was the best choice for Sri Lanka.

ON THE OTHER HAND, when it came to the justification for the appointments of Mrs. Amararatne to London, Mrs. Ranjan Wijeratne to Washington, Miss Menikdiwela to Canada and then New York, Mrs. Ranatunge (married daughter of Mr. E. L. Senanayake) to Canberra, and Mr. Ginige to France, Mr. Hameed was bowled out by the middle stump. He gave poor answers. He begged the question. He made matters worse and in fact in our view he avoided the basis of

the public criticism relating to these appointments. What did Mr. Hameed really say?

First, he said, "I take full responsibility for these appointments." (We were blaming the President for these appointments)

Next, he said, "these appointments were not to the Overseas Service."

Thirdly, they are only temporary appointments—not permanent posts. They are on contract. So why worry about them and raise such a hue and cry. Surely, Mr. Hameed, would you expect the Sri Lankan public to be satisfied with this type of answer. Surely this is not the type of answer you give or the argument you use at U.N. or at International Conferences or when you negotiate so well across the table when Foreign Missions come here. Surely, you could have done a little better than lose all credibility.

There was a time, Mr. Hameed, when our people did not know that a Foreign Minister may often have to travel a lot abroad. We were then also the Chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement. Our people did not fully understand then why you were so often abroad. That is why once—as you may recall—there was a cartoon in one of our papers of you dis-embarking from a plane and asking the Airport officials "the way to Harispattuwa." In other words, that you had forgotten even your own electorate Harispattuwa as a result of your frequent trips abroad. (In the case of some other Members of Parliament who were not seen in their electorates, the constituents put-up "WANTED—Dead or Alive" posters reminiscent of the Wild-West Films and Police manhunt posters.)

We are also not contesting your right or prerogative to nominate any Sri Lankans of your choice to attend International Conferences or U.N. Sessions. But let us come back to these "appointments." According to Parliamentary rules, when a Hon. Minister makes a statement or gives an explanation it must be accepted whether true or false or whether it is acceptable to the Member asking the question. If a member wishes to challenge it, he must bring a substantive motion against the Minister on that issue.

But please do not take a Journal like the *Tribune* to task (as your Government did to some Newspaper editors) for asking further questions on the answers you gave. We are basing our right to ask this question on fundamental freedom of the Press and the Right of the Public to know.

Let us take each case Mr. Hameed.

(1) Mrs. Amararatne in London. The question is not whether she has the J.S.C. or S.S.C. There are over half a million unemployed in Sri Lanka who have this qualification. You say Mrs. Amararatne is good in her English. So what of it? There are so many who are better. But what you did not say—although you took full responsibility for this appointment—is that you were requested to give this lady this appointment in London. Is it not a fact that her son (a brilliant

student no doubt) was to be educated in England at Oxford or Cambridge. Her son was an avowed admirer of the 'top people.' (Both the President and P.M.) Mrs. Amaratunga is a wealthy lady in her own right; she had lost her husband a few years back and may have appealed to the top people for an opportunity to go abroad to educate her son. An appointment in the Sri Lanka Embassy in London was seen as the means of complying with her request. And so it happened she was sent to London. The rest really does not matter whether she is a temporary employee or on contract etc. What is important are the following points.

- (i) Mrs. Amaratunga is a mother who primarily wanted to educate her son in England at Oxford or Cambridge.
 - (ii) Her appointment in London as the equivalent of a First Secretary enabled her to do that.
 - (iii) She has a JSC or SSC qualification and may be able to converse in English. We are also told that she is attractive and has a pleasant personality—she was in the Fashion pages during a recent holiday in Sri Lanka. But apart from this, she has nothing special to qualify her for a "contract appointment". Contract or temporary appointments outside the normal service can be justified only on special grounds or for people with special talents or expertise. Mrs. Amaratunga does not fall into this category.
 - (iv) To say the least it is wrong for her to use public money to ferry her across to London and maintain herself and her son for the sole purpose of educating him.
 - (v) Although she is outside the service she enjoys all the salary status, perks and allowances of a First Secretary of the Overseas Service including a flat or house allowance in London.
 - (2) The same goes for **MRS. RANJAN WIJERATNE**. She too has no special qualifications as admitted by Mr. Hameed. According to the Foreign Minister she holds "a Matriculation Certificate and also has wide experience in office administration." You can tell that to the Marines. Surely, the Foreign Minister does not expect the public to take this as a sufficient justification. We are told that Mrs. Wijeratne openly states that she came to Washington to educate her son—like Mrs. Amaratunga. We can only assume that this appointment was given at the request of or to please Mr. Ranjan Wijeratne Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture who is also a relation of Mrs. J. R. Jayewardene.
 - (3) The same applies to **MISS MENIKDIWELA**. Mr. Hameed says "she holds the H.S.C. in English. There is no such qualification. She must have offered English as subject. That is all Mr. Hameed added, "I want people who are qualified in English." Surely, there are so many others qualified in English—other than Miss Menikdiwela. What is so special about her.
- All three—Mrs. Amaratunga, Mrs. Wijeratne and Miss Menikdiwela hold high posts with high salaries

and perks. The fact that they are temporary and on contract etc. makes no real difference to the criticism levelled at these three appointments.

Surely, Mr. Hameed, for credibility sake you should have said, "I take responsibility for these appointments. They are appointments based on political considerations. Every Government has to make some appointments on political grounds. So What".

If this was said that would have been a true statement and there would be credibility although the criticism can be made. But one must not try to fool the people by talking about appointing Three Women because of their knowledge of English.

We are closing this chapter. We only hope that there are no more appointments of this nature. Please Mr. Ranjan Wijeratne, Please Mr. Menikdiwela, do not embarrass our Foreign Minister Mr. Hameed again in this way. Do not ask him to grant unjust and unpopular requests. This is our final plea.

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TALKING POINTS — 2

• Ceylon Tea • No Sermons • Milky Frog • Important People

By Veritas

THE PLANTATION RAJ — A EYE-OPENER ABOUT OUR PLANTATIONS

A 163 page book that has just come off the Printing Press is one entitled *The Plantation Raj*. Written by a Planter with over 20 years planting experience it analyses the problems and woes of our tea and rubber sector and the two Corporations that run the sector and the reasons for the continuing fall in production in these sectors. Apart from the historical development of nationalisation of the estates, the value of this searching insight study lies in its identification of the present ills of the industry and the remedial measures that could (and should) be taken by administrative or Ministerial fiat to put them right. But is this asking too much? Our plea is that the powers that be—especially the two Chairman/Secretaries, Pemsith Seneviratne (abroad for sometime now) and Mr. Kenneth Ratwatte (no respecter of criticism) should read and re-read this valuable book and implement some of its recommendations. The crux of the question is whether they will be big enough to take the advice from another planter especially one who is younger (the author of the book is Herman Gunaratne aged 40 former Superintendent of Dunsinnane Estate and Regional Manager JEDB Nuwara Eliya) and who has now gracefully left the Plantations Sector for the greener pastures of the Mahaweli.

The Plantation Raj has been well reviewed and well received by our reading public especially the profes-

sional planters. It is a hard hitting book with an equally bold Foreword by Plan Implementation Secretary, Dr. Wickrema Weerasooriya. It will sell as fast as a good cuppa of good Ceylon Tea. More power to such books and authors who have the guts and the dedication to write them.

MINISTRY OF TOURISM OR MINISTRY OF CULTURE? We refer to the recent demise of Mr. Chandra de Soysa from the post of Chairman Tourist Board to Secretary, Ministry of Education Services. No doubt, Chandra de Soysa was a man of integrity and all that, but the general consensus of opinion (which took 3 1/2 years to crystallise and move the politicians to action) was that he was just not suited for the post of Tourist Board Chairman—despite the 5 column write-up in the papers praising all the massive achievements of Tourism during his tenure of office. Basically, a good accountant, he did not grasp the vibrant atmosphere and heavy private sector weightage of the Tourist Industry in Sri Lanka. His speeches at Tourist seminars were so dull and equally laboriously long that many fell asleep and thought of his predecessor Dharmasiri Senanayake as perhaps the best that sat on that chair.

Now we have Mr. H. P. Siriwardene, former Chairman of the National Library Services Board (and a Volleyball player of no mean repute) as our new Boss of Tourism. His background (publication of Hansard—the official text of Parliamentary Proceedings and Sinhala short-hand) does not seem to equip him (at least on qualifications and experience) for the job but let us not judge him by text book theories. Let him prove himself. One word of caution however. Please do not push culture, religion and spiritual conquest over and above the normal tenets of Tourism. Spare us from sermons from the pulpit and culture-culture theories of development of Tourism in Sri Lanka. What is required is basic decision making which poor Chandra de Soysa lacked. Don't pass the buck or postpone taking decisions. You have also to make up for 3 1/2 years of lost time.

THE FROG IN THE MILK BOARD

The Frog in the Milk Board, they say, is not the frog in Milk Board bowlers as spoken of by Mr. Merryl Kariyawasam M.P. for Agalawatte in Parliament recently—but the Chairman of the Milk Board himself. The wonder is that he has been kept in that post for the past 3 1/2 years of this Government. At one time there was a talk of a link to the Top by the possibility of an impending marriage proposal but when this fell through everyone expected a quick change. When quite unusually the Government papers (the *Daily News* and the *Dinamina*) spotlighted the woes and corruption in the Milk Board, the Public expected the guillotine to fall and the head to go—but wonder of wonders, this did not happen. Next, when Mr. Merryl Kariyawasam exposed the *Kabaragoyas* (lizards) and the frogs in Milk Bowlers and the rot that has set in, we felt (in auctioneer language) that it was "Going, Going, Gone" for the Chairman. But without shame he still hangs on. It appears that little instalments of waste, corruption and inefficiency at the Milk Board will nei-

ther move him nor those who have power over him. The wig must be totally removed and everything bared. Perhaps, then and only then will the guillotine finally fall. The curtain has.

"MEN WHO MATTER" TO EXPLAIN TO CABINET WHETHER THEY REALLY MATTER

For the past two months, the *Daily News* has been carrying a series in their paper entitled "Men Who Matter." Under this heading and in this series, a fairly long article (naturally with photographs) was devoted to some of the more important Public Sector Corporations, their Chairman and other senior management. There are about 160 odd public sector Corporations or statutory bodies today in Sri Lanka each functioning under the several Cabinet Ministries. The ones selected by the newspaper for their series "Men who matter" were some of the more important ones that had a direct bearing in our island's economy. Among those covered were the two plantation or estate Corporations (JEDB and SPC) the State Trading Corporation, the C.W.E. the State Printing Corporation, the Plywoods Corporation, the Petroleum Corporation etc. A fairly good account was given of each of the State bodies, how they function, their problems and their achievements. We were also given inside biographies of the Chairman in charge of them e.g. as to how some of them were top sportsmen etc. like being volleyball champions and hop-step-and jump champions (a very apt ability when it comes to politics. It was the Hon. Mr. Cyril Mathew who referred to tie-maru (tie changing) bureaucrats i.e. public servants who change their colours (ties) into green, blue and red according to the changes in the political system). The "Men who matter" series in the *Daily News* was no doubt intended to paint a success story to the reading public. What it wanted to say was simply this. "Look chum, despite the severe problems, see what a good job these people are doing. Let us all give them a small pat on their backs and say well-done. Keep it up."

But Lo and Behold, what did the Government decide just two weeks ago. On Wednesday 20th November, the Minister of State, Mr. Ananda Tissa de Alwis told newsmen after the Press Conference that now traditionally follows each Cabinet Meeting, that "the Chairman or Chief executive of each Corporation would be brought before Cabinet and their performance subject to a complete review." The *Sun* newspaper proclaimed in banner headlines "Chairmen to appear before Cabinet". "All Corporations to be called to Account." We understand that this was the President's wish. The "Men who Matter" have now been asked to Account to Cabinet—to prove themselves and what they have done. Some of them must be thinking that they were taken for one big ride; that a joke was played on them. Just a shortwhile ago, most of these were in the public limelight, as a result of a State-controlled national newspaper giving them all the publicity under the banner headlines of "Men who matter". And just as they were enjoying all this publicity and limelight and putting their collars-up (and

naturally their wives feeling quite proud etc) the Government at the highest level of the Cabinet of Ministers, has directed they should come before it and Account for their Performance. Some of the Men who mattered must be individually within their own minds, wishing that they had not mattered. To give them some free advice, please note that to be called before Cabinet and asked to account and explain will not be as easy as giving an interview to a newspaper reporter in the cool comfort of an air-conditioned room relating anecdotes and stories to show how close you are to the top people etc. etc. etc.

THE YOUNG POLITICOS. While the *Daily News* started the series "The Men who Matter" and covered Chairmen of State Corporations, the other Government controlled paper, the *Sunday Times*—perhaps not to be out-done—has now started a series under the title "The Young Politicos". It may not be a coincidence that just one day before the *Sunday Times* started this series on Sunday 23rd November the President speaking at a Public Meeting at Dodangaslanda stated that the United National Party is a Party for the Young and invited young people, the Youth to join the Party. He told them unlike in the SLFP which is now governed by Family Bandyism, the UNP is now based only on Merit—Anyone can rise to the highest position in the UNP and will not be obstructed by Family considerations, or favouritism or by caste or creed. Just one day thereafter on Sunday 23rd November the *Sunday Times* commences its series on "Young Politicos". According to the paper "this is a new series on the lives of the younger politicians, the men and women helping to shape the country's destiny."

One would like to ask on what criteria Anura Bastian (the member for Colombo South) was selected to lead the series. Age-wise (he is 30 years) he fits the description but from other criteria perhaps not. The majority of our population are rural and among the younger UNP politicians who are not Ministers, Deputy Ministers, and Project Ministers (these 3 categories have almost 90 in their cadre and may have been excluded from this series) there are others more deserving to have been First in these series on Young Politicos. Perhaps, the outstanding feature about Anura Bastian that distinguishes him from all the other young politicians in Parliament today and which may have prompted the *Times of Ceylon* to start the series with him is the fact that he wears DARK GLASSES as shown in his picture accompanying the article!

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BOOK REVIEW

The Presidential System

THE GAULLIST SYSTEM IN ASIA : THE CONSTITUTION OF SRI LANKA (1978) BY DR. A JAYARATNAM WILSON (MACMILLANS) £ 20
Available at the Academic Book Service, 16, 32nd Lane, Colombo 6 at the special Sri Lankan Price of Rs. 350.

THIS BOOK is a masterly exposition of the Second Republican Constitution by a scholar and political scientist of eminence. The Constitution has been set both in its historical and living context with a practical insight into its working and potential. There has been a skilful examination of every nut and bolt with a critical mind. Wherever the author has indulged in condemnation of certain provisions in the system, he has not hurt personalities. On the other hand he has expressed his sustained admiration for President Jayewardene whom he regards as the architect of the Second Republic, the progressive minded, innovative and forward looking President who strides like a Colossus in the political life of the country.

The Westminster system left much to be desired both in its content and in its performance. The professor recognizes the need that there was for a change and so the New Constitution was tailored by the lawyers for the special talents if not the requirements of the first incumbent in the office of President. It could certainly be said that a Constitution tailored to suit the aspirations of a sovereign people is, by far, better than one tailored to suit the genius of one individual. The Chapter on the Making of the Constitution provides the reader with some information as to what went on in the labour room with the views and opinions of those who were thrilled and those who were disappointed with the new born Constitution. Here are the author's general observations on the Second Republican Constitution. "It is a hybrid, a cross between the French and British styles of government with a little bit of the United States thrown in".....a strained effort in the direction of developmental depoliticised government the prime purpose being to promote economic growth and national unity.....a hankering after democratic Constitutional government. Behind the facade however is the harbinger of political authoritarianism and firm streamlined bureaucratic performance. Only time can tell whether the delicately poised system can weather the storms of street battles, trade union struggles, student unrest, ethnic rebellion from the Ceylon Tamil minority which nurse a strong sense of grievance and retaliation from the forces of majoritarian ethnocentric Sinhalese nationalism."

THE NEW CONSTITUTION however, it is observed, is in many respects an improvement on the first Republican Constitution. The fundamental rights are made justiciable in the Supreme Court which also rightly takes over the powers of the old Constitutional Court. The Tamil language is given a national status. Any distinction between a citizen by registration and a citizen by descent is removed and at last the

stateless have been given a place under the sun enjoying practically all the fundamental freedoms guaranteed to citizens for a period of ten years. On the other hand Professor Wilson comments. "It is an attempt at experimentation with pseudo-representative devices, proportional representation, the paraphernalia of referendum, a plebiscitary presidential election, the maintenance of Parliament, though as the house without windows. The show case of democracy is there for the world to see—fundamental rights, language concessions to the principal minority (Sri Lankans and Indians) an independent judiciary, the Ombudsman, a functional separation of powers and fairly permanent road blocks to stop any movement towards dictatorship."

There is a warning however persistently expressed throughout the treatise that "French Presidentialism in a South Asia setting can however go further in the direction of authoritarian government.....the presidential system stands midway between classical democracy and authoritarianism. It could be the style for pluralistic developing societies. But there is the ever present prospect that it could degenerate into the Asian counterpart of Castroism or Bonapartism. The greater problem is to maintain a just equilibrium. That would be the test of success or collapse." Side by side with this warning however, there is a measure of optimism pervading throughout that this Gaullist system being tailor-made for Jayewardene a committed parliamentarian for 40 years is in safe hands. The present incumbent has at best been able to "establish only a half way house between a strong presidency and a resilient though demoted Parliament."

It is the author's view that the Constitution in the possession of another incumbent could well be transformed into a dictatorship. The author then asks the question as to what will happen when Jayewardene moves out of the political scene. He himself answers the question: "Our conjecture is that it will in incremental stages be transformed by successive Presidents from what was originally intended to be a quasi-presidential system into something that could be hyper-presidential and it could well end up in the hands of an intrepid incumbent of the Supreme office as an ultra presidential device for governing a difficult country." One does wonder however why the author's forebodings should be post-Jayewardene despite his references to some of the government performances under the present Constitution. The reader is left to make his own conclusions with his own personal knowledge and familiarity with the path and pattern of the political life and trends in the country. Professor Wilson however has presented both the performance and the potential of the Constitution with fairness and detachment. The treatise certainly aids the reader to assess the Constitution practically, scientifically and politically.

THE AUTHOR deals with 3 major instances in the performances of this government which perhaps unmistakably indicate its philosophy: (1) The conduct of the government when there was a general strike in September 1978 and the stand taken by the state when a complaint was made to the ILO; (2) The swift response by the passing of two laws when the Court of Appeal

found in favour of Mrs. Bandaranaike in a writ application against the members of the Special Presidential Commission of Inquiry, has been described as "ill-advised". There is a critical reference to the Parliament annulling the judgement of the Court of Appeal; (3) the safe journey assured, by an amendment to opposition members to cross over from a miserably depleted opposition to the Government Benches and not vice versa.

It is rather unfortunate that this book has been published before other events that have taken place in the recent months. Professor Wilson's comments thereon and his treatment of healthy constitutional conventions would have been of great assistance to the reader. The author has hardly made any comments on the amendment passed to the First Republican Constitution whereby Prime Minister Jayewardene is transformed into a President deemed to have been elected by the people. The reader is left alone again to assess what impact this had at the very outset on the sovereignty of the people especially when the President who was never elected by the people as such, survives the elected representatives among whom and like whom he had been elected. A chapter on the sovereignty of the people and conventions would have been most helpful to both the government and the governed.

It must be said, however, that certain problematic situations that may arise in the future have been carefully examined such as "the ever present prospect of a President and a majority in Parliament being hostile to each other." It is Professor Wilson's view that if the President is faced with a hostile legislative majority, the President and the Prime Minister may come to an understanding under which the former will either revert to the role of a Constitutional head of State or there will be a sharing of power without either of them exercising disproportionate authority, one acting as a check on the other. There is a warning however that the President when he controls a majority in Parliament can transform himself to a Constitutional dictator. In such an event the author sees the prospect of an incumbent scornful of democratic conventions not following the American or French examples but "those of the Philippines and Mexico. Both the Philippino and Mexican Presidents refused to accommodate oppositional elements. Therein lies the greatest danger to the Sri Lankan system." Is that danger still far ahead of us? Do we have to wait for the Second Incumbent? Or can we depend always 'on the reservoir of skill and techniques' of the present incumbent?

THE PRIME MINISTER, it is said, under the Second Republic does not in any way compare with this counterpart under the previous Constitution. "His importance has been greatly reduced to an extent that makes his position even lower than that of the Prime Minister of the First Republic. He is not even a first among equals....." The whole system reveals, according to the author, the President with an ample scope for patronage "casting his net wide to secure support in the legislature." At the apex, holding the reins tightly is the Executive President. By a distribution of a multitude of Minis-

tries, district Ministries and deputy Ministries despite the meagre resources of the State, a President perhaps can perform the miracle of the loaves and fishes and remain in power over them all. This is a situation Professor Wilson exposes to the reader without expressing it in so many words.

Parliament and Members of Parliament are faced with danger from the Executive. Any bill rejected by Parliament can be submitted by the President to the people by referendum. The proportionate representation in some measure reduces the individual personality of a member and subjects him to party discipline. There are occupational risks for members of Parliament. They can run into trouble. Parliament, Prime Minister and Members appear to have all been devalued and the super power of the President overshadows them all. Will it overshadow the people in a bigger way? A reader may well ask the question: Did the people's representatives really know what and how much they were surrendering to the Executive? It is perhaps one of the quirks in the history of our politics in the country, if we take one view, that the people's representatives used their unprecedented steam roller majority on themselves!

Let us hope that this great surrender, if there was one, was made for the good of the people and the country and not for the elite and the foreign investors. Under the proportional representation system it is very unlikely there will be another steam roller majority leading to a radical change of policies and the abolition of the Constitution. Professor Wilson says that the Constitution as it is today is too tempting a thing for any President who may be elected in the future to abandon and so it may go on. It would appear again in the present political setting that a Free Democracy and a stable climate so necessary for foreign investments and the economic growth that is claimed are in sharp conflict. Inflation, the cost of living, and corruption place a severe stress and strain on the present system. The necessity for a unity in outlook between the Government and the opposition parties on fundamental issues has been stressed by the author but he regrets that in actual fact that the opportunity for forging a unity in outlook has been missed.

The President's efforts at consensus building seem to have failed and now "a war between the First and Second Republic is in full swing." Is this war of any meaning to the people? On the bold economic policies adopted and in the context of slow development and poor performance, in the absence of consensus, an open confrontation is inevitable. What is this unity of outlook? In which area can the government and the opposition have a unity of outlook. Perhaps here lies the national tragedy. Unity of outlook is confined to an area of power for the sake of power. There is much to learn in the use and purpose of power for the sake of the people and the country. A sovereign people have to educate themselves to educate their leaders.

ON THE QUESTION of fundamental liberties, comments have been made on the variety of limitations

which have been made justiciable. There are so many restrictions placed on the fundamental rights in the interests of national security, racial and religious harmony, national economy, public order and a whole gamut of hard-to-define considerations. In other words the citizen is left to the mercy of Court with such vague and general provisions which may lead to conflicting and equally vague interpretations. "It is a gold mine for lawyers and the humble citizen is left vulnerable" observes the author. The only absolute rights are: (1) Freedom of thought, conscience and religion; (2) the right not to be tortured or inhumanly punished; (3) the accused's right to be heard at a fair trial in person or by an Attorney-at-Law. The first right is hardly meaningful for no one can control another's thought or conscience. The second right will however be difficult to be enforced in respect of police torture. This is a prophetic observation in view of the recent Supreme Court decision which ruled that errant police action is not executive action and therefore is not justifiable as a violation of fundamental right. The lack of time afforded to Members of Parliament or citizens preventing Civil Rights Movements from activating themselves against objectionable laws in the prelegislative stage has been adversely commented upon.

Professor Wilson has not shown much appreciation of the unprecedented removal of judges in terms of the Constitution and does not favour the retiring age of Court of Appeal judges being fixed at 63 when that of Supreme Court judges has been raised to 65. He fears the prospects of an Executive President appointing judges with "a coincidence of interests." But this is nothing new in most cases. It has been the general pattern in appointments under every Constitution. It is his view that the Supreme Court has been placed right in the centre of the political maelstrom and he foresees the possibility of it becoming a third Chamber or the centre of a raging political controversy.

On the language provisions, we find the observation: ".....Some of them are contradictory, others are quite explicit and a few beggar description being more in the nature of a political optical illusion.....the Tamil language is relegated to an inferior status under which but for a number of notable exceptions, the whole exercise is merely a provision for governing the Tamil-speaking people, by translations from the Sinhala official version." The author fears that the Members of the Cabinet may not go along "with the progressive minded president to find a solution and in the end the Tamil-speaking political leadership may have no alternative but to stand firm on the demand for the creation of a separate Tamil State of Eelam." It is unfortunate that the author who was himself a member of the Presidential Commission appointed to report on District Development Councils has published this treatise before the law was enacted on the subject. His comments on the Act and the impact it may have had on the Tamil question would have been invaluable to the reader together with his present views.

THE ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICE with its falling standards has received a measure of criticism. He laments the politicised bureaucracy especially in respect of the top echelons and recommends that the higher civil service must be converted into a technostucture. The Minister and his civil servants must be agents for the execution of the presidential system and must function as "a motor" for change. He emphasises the importance of an efficient technostucture. He is silent with regard to the delay in the appointment of an Ombudsman.

The treatise ends with this note: 'The principal motivation for the introduction of this Gaullist Constitutionalism is two-fold—to attract foreign investment and to convince international aid givers that Sri Lanka is a safe bet. The danger is that the objectives may be reached for only so long as the present government remains in office. In that event the Constitutional historian will argue that the system was counterproductive; the island would have accumulated a huge foreign debt and foreign investors would have fled the country, acting on the assumption that they had only a limited time at their disposal to obtain returns for their outlays.' On this question facts and figures speak for themselves.

The whole exercise of examining the Constitution of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka with Professor Wilson takes the reader away from the field of romanticism and ideals such as are usually attached to Republican Constitutions. The reader is taken close to the Constitution and its setting to make his down to earth assessments. This treatise is the best that has been ever written about our Constitutions past and present. The language is eminently readable. It is altogether a work of excellence by a reputed political scientist.

T. W. Rajaratnam

X X X

BUDGET DEBATE

MAHAWELI

—Review Essential—

By R. Kahawita

THE DEBATE has become rancid. The 142 members of the Government group are virtually patting each other's back and are throwing hypocritical adulations at each other; except Mr. M. D. H. Jayewardene, whose acid comments on the budget is today the subject of an analytical dissection by a committee. All this seems unnecessary. If his comments are not within the tenets of the party doctrine, excommunicate him and show him a seat on the opposite side. Save us the time and money on a post-mortem of the speech. Nothing will come out of it.

The Mahaweli Development—its planning, priorities, construction and progress—did not draw anything worth recording during the budget debate except from Mr. Maithripala Senanayake. He should know what

he is talking about; for, Mahaweli was his charge for seven years. His comments on Victoria and Kotmale are very pertinent and knowledgeable. They are worthy enough to be underlined. A lower Kotmale, whatever the reason for lowering the height of the Dam, will create a serious problem in water management. Less water stored at Kotmale means less volume of water to be diverted to Ambanganga Basin via Polgolla. This will affect the success of cultivations during the yala season in the Kalawewa system. These are the areas now being developed and settled. If there is no additional storage in between Bowatenne and Elahera, then the cultivations in Minneriya, Giritala, Kantalai and Kandulla will also be affected in a very serious way. P.S.S. will be able to limp along with the residual flow in Kalu ganga.

As Mr. Senanayake pointed out, maximum storage should be at Kotmale and not at Victoria. Victoria is not in a position to contribute anything to the Kalawewa or Minneriya systems. More storage at Kotmale means greater flexibility in the management and distribution of water to the currently developing areas. Mr. Senanayake's point seems to be, it is not the loss of 50 Megawatts at Kotmale, but the serious water shortages that would be experienced in the irrigable area in the systems D, G and H that should be the decisive factor.

Shortage of power will not cause misery. Crop failures, and starvation of thousands of new settlers will. Victoria Dam will be redundant for irrigation when Randenigala site is developed. This has been put off for a year or so, so reports the debate. A High Victoria Dam cannot rescue Ambanganga region, but it will inundate the most fertile valley in the Kandy district. It is from the resources of this valley that the Kings and Adigars alike, financed the administration and defence of Kandyan Kingdom and maintained its independence. Also on the reliance of this Fertile valley that the last king of Kandy was able to perpetrate the most atrocious punishments to those who did not agree with him. Some of the Chieftains also participated in these crimes for personal gains. This is a sordid story of the last days of the Kandyan Independence.

All place-names connected with that story will be inundated and the land-marks that would have brought to memory those crimes will be under 300ft. of water. We should be thankful for this, but not for the mess that is being created in the Mahaweli region. The Mahaweli is the brain child of the 1939 UNP. It will be a great pity of the 1980 UNP dealt a blow to reduce its usefulness for the future generations for whom we are asked to sacrifice.

THERE HAVE BEEN so many changes since the "swearing in of the accelerated Mahaweli Programme", so should we not take stock of the present situation before we muddle along because we promised an accelerated programme to an imaginary audience. We are not

Gods so we can make mistakes—let us put country before self and revise the commitment. We said this once. We repeat it and may do so more often.

There is fantastic waste in men, materials, equipment and there are shortcomings in out-put. This is inevitable when we try to spend millions when we are geared to spend only hundreds. Mr. Senanayake need not have mentioned this in the House. Waste in Mahaweli work has become a household word today. It is an Eldorado to make quick money. The whole complex, plan implementation, and execution have ended up in political, financial and technical difficulties Mr. Senanayake has predicted the result.

Mahaweli should be above party politics. It is a national undertaking never to be repeated. Therefore all political parties must give their fullest support to it. This is what we have been pleading since 1952. There should be a forum for constructive criticism and discussion and let all political parties come to agreed plans and programmes of implementation so that the project will move on, irrespective of the party in power. Let us not repeat what happened to Gal Oya development from 1956 to 1965. Let us be wiser as to what would happen to national projects if we were divided politically and tear down what each preceding government did.

THE KOTMALE SITE is difficult, we were aware of these since 1946. That is why it was given a low priority in the UNDP recommendation. When the development of the site became problematic early this year, we brought to the notice of the President and the Minister for Mahaweli, the dangers of rushing through this Project. However, little by little, the people are being informed of the setbacks. Once the controlling parameters of this dam are changed, it is common sense that the other projects lower down should be reviewed. If we have to slow down in our programme we cannot help it. We have to do it in the interest of an Integrated Mahaweli. Our comment earlier is to prevent the accusation: "The UNP messed up the project". This is going to be thrown at us, as Mr. Senanayake has already done so and he has promised to say more during the committee stage of the Budget. We have no defence.

What follows may not be relevant to the foregoing, nevertheless we wish to point out—Kotmale Reservoir has a catchment area of 217 square miles or 138,880 acres of land resting on a very unstable rock formation. As a safety to the life of the reservoir it will be necessary to evacuate and resettle almost all the villages in this area. These settlements are very old—they migrated into the area pre-1818 rebellion and the region was one of the defence posts of Kandy. Nevertheless they have to be uprooted from their ancestral homes and replanted elsewhere.

For the safety of the dam at least, 130,000 acres will have to be re-afforested and declared a sanctuary particularly the ravines, streams, elas and gullies that feed the Kotmale River. This has to be done while the preliminary work on the dam is being done. This is of paramount importance to the safety of the reservoir. With 18" to 21" of rain in 24 hours,

the outcome is any body's guess. This happened about seven or eight years ago—the debate is on, but it will not help to lessen the dangers.

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CONCLUDING

Dairy Development

—how to use gifts—

By Dr. V. Kurien

Now I think I should conclude because I know the distinguished Ministers are busy and want to go, but what is Anand now as you see it. Let me tell you about what the Government of India is now thinking. The government asked me—can we replicate Anand. Yes, and so now we have a Scheme called "Operation Flood" which the Dairy Board has evolved. I asked for a gift of Rs. 1000 million worth of milk powder. You may be surprised—I am a bit surprised that you are commercially buying things which you can get free. So I asked for Rs. 1000 million, may be Sir, you are not asking for larger enough amounts—so I asked for Rs. 1000 million worth of milk powder as a gift from the World Food Program. Now what did I do? Everyone knows of the surpluses in building up European Economic Community—mountains of butter, mountains of powder and one fine morning I knew that some kindly old gentleman will come from the Economic Community, go to Delhi and tell my Minister "here is milk powder free, take it and feed your children" and no government will be able to resist such kind offers. Now, if you use it to stimulate a demand, how will you stop it thereafter. How can a democratic government start a free feeding program for children and then stop it the next year when they don't give you the powder. Gifts can be dangerous. What happens when the gifts stop? So I knew that we should have a scheme to use these gifts, constructively to help dairying in India rather than to harm it and that was "Operation Flood". We received these gifts. We gave it to the Bombay, Delhi Calcutta and Madras Milk Schemes to capture a commanding share of the milk market of these four cities, but we gave it to them at the Indian price of milk which gives in our hands Rs. 1000 million which we give back to the State Governments 30% as a grant, 70% as a loan to develop Anands in their own states and to organise 1.2 million farmers into this structure.

That having been reasonably successful, the Government of India wanted to go further. I asked for Rs. 2,500 million worth of milk powder as a gift. Sir, the bigger the easier it is and I asked the World Bank for another Rs. 2,500 million. They gave and we took this and this is "Operation Flood 2" and what is its dimension? Ten million farmers to be organised into Anand pattern. Ten million farmers means 50 million rural population. To feed every city in India in the form of a national milk grid which means 155 cities,

with a population of 150 million. Total population of India involved 200 million. Still only unfortunately 1/3rd of the country. Still 200 million and that is the task on which the Dairy Board and the Dairy Co-operation is at present embarked upon. So the Dairy Board of India is in a position to design and put up schemes, get approvals, design and build dairies, train the Managers to run them and even this very large project will have trouble in implementing it but we will somehow or the other hope to do it, so that is called "Operation Flood 2" but this, in turn, has created another problem. The Government of India at the highest level called me and he said "Kurien what is true of milk, is true of other agricultural commodities". I said, "what have you in mind Sir". He said, we have spent Rs.7,400 million of free foreign exchange importing vegetable oil into India. How can this country afford such imports. Can you do something about vegetable oil along the lines of "Operation Flood". So, we are now, as a Dairy Board of India embarking upon a vegetable oil project—I allowed it to be known that I want some gifts, so the American Ambassador came and saw me, "you don't have to travel very far, they come to you" and I told him, "you are looking for powder. I said, "how much", I said, Well I would like to have 1/4th of a million tons of vegetable oil as a gift, of course it must be understood Mr. Ambassador that the freight should also be paid by you." So he said, "of course naturally we understand that very well" so that project is proceeding.

In processing and marketing of agricultural commodities there is gross exploitation in India of farmers on the one hand, and consumers, on the other. You know, we call the British a nation of shop keepers but you should see the Indians, Oh God, you probably see them here too Sir. The exploitative structure that the traders in India have built in the agricultural business is really frightening and why the farmers of India who are 75% of our population have tolerated this system so long is something that I can never understand fully. But, in any case, we are now as a Dairy Board to handle the vegetable oil, and the implications are tremendous.....We were given many things to do when we were actually young and under this responsibility we grew. Take the farmers—if you give them the responsibility they too will grow. Under Indian conditions the way in which they handle milk the income of our farmers are doubled. In other words the farmer on 3 acres of land—that all he has as an average farmer—gets an income from keeping 1.5 buffalo on an average. It is interesting domestic adjustments which is also to the good.

Now, therefore what is Anand? Let me sum up in this way. In Anand 1/4th of a million farmers stand in line twice a day, every day of the year, at 900 collective centres to sell their milk. They stand in this line irrespective of sex, irrespective of caste. It is not easy to achieve. What does it do to a high caste Brahmin to stand behind an untouchable because he came after him. What does it do to an untouchable to stand ahead of the high caste because he came earlier and for both

of them to watch their milk going into the same can from which those in the village who have no milk or no cattle buy their milk. Is it only orderly milk collection? Is it not a blow at the caste system. The village milk collecting centre, like the village, is a dirty place. The village is a dirty place, so is the collecting centre but someone in that collecting centre sprinkles water round the collecting centre to try and keep the dust down—someone has used a flit gun to try and keep the flies away, some is using sanitas to wash the pots and pans and measures, someone, how can you have clean milk production without clean water, how can you talk of clean milk production without talking of hygiene and sanitation. You may well find that the milk scheme is the first to introduce sanitation and hygiene into a village environment.....

....So that is Anand! Anand, Ladies and Gentlemen, is not merely a dairy scheme it is not merely an institutional structure through which rural leadership will emerge and that is also necessary because when rural leadership is emerging how can there be balance between cities and villages. For a longer time will fountains play in Delhi with no drinking water in a village 30 miles out because of this imbalance, unless this leadership emerges to restore the balance between agriculture and industry, it is not only an institutional structure, it is not only a structure that produces milk to improve the nutrition of our people, it is a structure, a pattern that improves the quality of life of our rural population.

Thank you Ladies and Gentlemen—Thank you for this opportunity of speaking to you.

* * *

CHRISTMAS

A Woman, A Child And Some Food

By Michael Rodrigo O.M.I.

I was wondering how people could wish each other this Christmas and be joyful, except in hope for themselves and for others. Then I picked up a review from a waiting-rack and found these lines:

"It has become fashionable of late to be cynical about Christmas, to complain that its true and sacred meaning has given way to crass commercialism. But when all is said and done, the fact remains that at Christmastime a presence pervades the air. It is palpable and it sets the nerves a-tingle, its only manifestation is deep and utter stillness. The spell cast by quiet beauty is a reflection of this presence....."

I felt the warmth of the truth of these words. Reflected a little and then read on:

"The soft radiance of a Chinese Long-Life Urn Lamp, or a pair of Naga Head book-ends or a brace of Birds of Paradise, or even three miniature Candlesticks. Shown here in Thai Celadon's cool Emerald Jade glaze, but also available in the sultry Jungle Jade. These lovely things can be seen in the sumptuous splendour of CELADON HOUSE".

How cheap. How low.

I suddenly felt cold at the utter callousness of this Airline magazine which had not dealt with the "crass commercialism" but had descended to the "wisdom" of the children on this world, into a base, subtle commercialism, and here again by selling the name of the Prince of Peace, for whom Peace is the fruit of Justice and not something that comes at the end of a long cool day with dark curtains and celadon vases or candlesticks!

And then I thought of that retreat-preacher, a priest, who told me about his cousin who, as has happened to many, "was caught on strike, for he feared the threatening letters that came to him the day before". "He did not go to work, in fear, and today, his three teenage girls are thin and emaciated; he himself is reduced to a stick. They have no food, no income, and nobody gives them to eat. He and his wife pluck some leaves and boil them and eat; how many long months now." A gloom has settled over the country. And it is Christmas, the Birth of the Man who died for all men and women, and who still lives on.

Then I read on: Text by Alexandra Greeley and photos by Dean Barrett on *How to Get Stuffed in Hong Kong*: p. 49 of this Airline-magazine (name withheld):—

"The fare offered is basic, strictly fresh and right before your eyes.....the menu has many other offerings, but stick to pigeon, roasted, sliced, baked, sauteed and steamed. If you are an oyster fancier, hire a driver and go out to LFS in the new territories..

.. During cold months, tell the waiter you want a barbecue menu and when cooked in oil on the blazing griddle at your table, they stuff sesame buns, sprinkled with sauce, and eaten. Order early, toffee apples and bananas for desert. Then, in real homestyle food is there such as dosas, parathas, sambals, curries and murtabas and the food is consistently good.

Or do you want fiery food: cuisine of.....country is filled with various kinds of chillies. There, in modest surroundings, you can eat an authentic meal that will bring tears to your eyes. Suggestion: order lots of beer with your meal....."

And so it goes on in a crude setting frightening the hungry poor with the saliva emitting figurative language of the affluent rich. I remembered a little verse in the Office book of old: it was on the little Baby of Christmas:

"He was happy with just a little milk, as food,

He, who does not leave the hungry birds, hungry".

But what happened to Christianity, somewhere along the line? As it fossilised itself into a rubricism, and retreated into canonical rigidity, it froze to death and stratified Star and Crib and Angels and Shepherds and Carols and all. No going out from Star to lighting up of homes; from Crib to seeing to Housing for the poor; from Angels to an intuitive understanding of the meaning of joy, peace, sharing; from Shepherds to the poor around us, now; from Carols to formation of your heart by word, heard and lived.....and why not. For this is religion.

And the business page of the *Nation Review* of a South-East Asian country shouted out on November 26th 1980:—"World Food shortages to hit Africa severely. We are truly faced with an alarming shortage next year in Africa. Saouma said: There are nine million refugees in

the world and in Somalia alone, 1.5 million refugees have been added to the population" (p. 14).

And I thought of the little Child who was a refugee in Egypt, fleeing from petty potentate and power, a little time after His birth. Today He suffers again in His people. How can we truly rejoice when He is suffering in them? The Buddha asks: "Ko nu haso kim anando... what joy when the world is burning?" And Bethlehem could mean Beth (House), Lehem (Bread)—Bethlehem, the House of Bread, the house of Food. And Christians gather round the Food and Drink every day and know in faith that they gather in and around Christ the Food for the Life of the World, *pro mundi vita*, as the holy, Book says.

AND THEN that young girl yawning on the Jaala bus at four a.m. She was going back to work: "another day, another tragedy," she said, between two yawns, for tiredness. I thought of that day too, when I picked up the *Kantha Handa*. After all, at the Crab of Christmas, Mary was a young woman, a shepherd's daughter, a village girl, a carpenter's bride. I read on: "80-90% of the employees in the Free Trade Zone are female.

"This is often their first job. They work strictly under regimented conditions and are subject to police surveillance; they are compelled to do regular overtime. There is now a concerted effort to persuade the government to abrogate the ILO conventions which preclude employers from using female labour on the night shift. They are unorganised, and there is managerial pressure against the organisation of trade unions....."

Then I looked away, and in my mind's eye, I saw the 'joyful' faces of the rich at the Crib, crowding it, surrounding its figures of men and animals (and yet treating live men and women as animals in real life), shedding copious inner tears of joy at the Christmas gifts for their children; at the drink that flows from the unstoppable coke jar, the music that reaches no surfeit so that the appetite may sicken but not die... "Lord you have blessed me and my family superabundantly this Christmas". And he forgets his neglect, his silence, his violation of human rights, his complicity in evil, his ambition which rode to a thicker purse on sheer maximization of profits, cheap labour and rank, downright avarice.

Who can stop me from my Christmas meditation? No one. Not even iron bars or a cage or a gang of two that may gang up against a whole nation and hold it to ransom." Conditions of service among the girls, are harsh; there is no job security. In the absence of organised pressure, employers are even callous about observing minimum conditions in such areas as compensation for accidents etc., Wage rates may be higher, but negated by harsher working conditions" the *Kantha Handa* echoes.

Christmas. The tinsel, the bunting, all will be pulled down soon. Christmas is a disturbing feast. Many superficial people love it; many serious, saintly ones are quite disturbed about it. I have met them. So will you, this Christmas, more than ever before.

O provoking Presence of Christmas, yours is not the jasmine jade of quiet coolness but a jolt to reality.

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To Be Commemorated With An Island-Wide Poster Competition Rs. 54,000 IN PRIZES!

The Department of Information of the Ministry of State in association with the Prime Minister's Secretariat and the Department of Education sponsors this island-wide POSTER COMPETITION in Sinhala and Tamil to mark the significance of this historic event.

The benefits of **UNIVERSAL FRANCHISE** for the greater good of the common man is the theme of the poster competition. All entries should depict this and the people must be made to cherish their right to vote so much so that they will never compromise it.

The three best entries in Sinhala and the three best entries in Tamil in the Open Competition as well as in the Senior and Junior Schools Competitions will be awarded separate prizes.

* **PRIZES : Open Competition**

1st Prize — Rs. 5,000/— 2nd Prize — Rs. 2,500/— 3rd Prize — Rs. 1,500/—
(Three prizes for Sinhala and three prizes for Tamil)

* **SCHOOLS COMPETITION (Junior)**

1st Prize — Rs. 5,000/— 2nd Prize — Rs. 2,500/— 3rd Prize — Rs. 1,500/—
(Three prizes for Sinhala and three prizes for Tamil)

* **SCHOOLS COMPETITION (Senior)**

1st Prize — Rs. 5,000/— 2nd Prize — Rs. 2,500/— 3rd Prize — Rs. 1,500/—
(Three prizes for Sinhala and three prizes for Tamil)

FREE HAND TO ARTISTS

Artists have a free hand in making full use of their imaginative faculties to depict the theme. Posters may be created in black-and-white or in colour, using whatever technique or shade of colour most suitable to his or her concept. Water colours, oils, pastels, crayons, chalk, Indian ink can be used.

SIZE The poster should be 22" X 17" in size and should be drawn on white board or paper.

LEGEND Each poster can have a legend of not more than 25 words in Sinhala or Tamil.

YEARS OF UNIVERSAL FRANCHISE

NAME AND ADDRESS

The name and the address of the person submitting the entry should be clearly written or typed on the reverse of the poster.

OPEN COMPETITION

Citizens of Sri Lanka are eligible to take part in the Open Competition. There's no age limit. Any number of entries can be submitted.

SCHOOLS COMPETITION

There will be a Junior and a Senior Schools Competition. School children under fourteen years, born on or after 1st December 1966, will be eligible for the Junior Competition. Those born on or before 30th November 1966, that is, over fourteen years of age, will be eligible for the Senior Competition. Children in all schools, both Government and private, can take part. Further details about the schools competition can be obtained from the Ministry of Education or from the Principals of schools. All entries from school children should carry the following endorsement from the Class Teacher or Principal preferably on the reverse of the poster:

This poster was designed and drawn by

Master/Miss: who is
at present a student of my school.

His/Her date of birth is

.....
Signature of Principal/Class Teacher.

Name of School

JUDGES

A jury appointed by the Director of Information, Ministry of State in consultation with the Prime Minister's Secretariat and the Ministry of Education will judge the entries and select the prize-winning entries. The decision of the jury will be final and shall not be questioned or canvassed.

All rights in respect of the publication or reproduction of the prize winning entries shall be vested in the Department of Information. One or more of these posters will be selected by the jury for printing and distribution.

OPENING AND CLOSING DATES

The Poster Competition shall commence on the 1st DECEMBER 1980 and close on the 31st DECEMBER 1980.

All entries should be received before the 31st DECEMBER 1980, by the

DIRECTOR OF INFORMATION — P. O. BOX 1416 COLOMBO 1.

• Vietnam, Kampuchea & The NAM

By Omega

THE KAMPUCHEAN ISSUE is bound to provoke important discussions at the forthcoming meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the Non-aligned Movement (NAM) to be held in New Delhi early in February 1981. As most of the NAM countries had helped Pol Pot regime to safeguard its seat in the UN, it will be interesting to watch whether NAM will adopt a different attitude in New Delhi. It is unlikely that NAM will change its stand. It is essential, however, for the NAM countries to once again review the Kampuchean problem in all its aspects. They have to decide whether they want to subscribe to the continued isolation of Vietnam (as presently required by US-China axis) or reverse it by suggesting solutions acceptable to the parties to the dispute. Viewed from such a perspective the problem assumes a different dimension. It concerns not merely Kampuchea but Vietnam too, and the last five years have clearly shown that certain interests and countries in the South East and Far East Asia do not view with favour the emergence of Vietnam as an independent power. Some of the forces which helped Vietnam to fight the long-drawn out war against her colonial masters have now turned against her.

The presence of Vietnamese forces in Kampuchea and the mass exodus of "ethnic Chinese" from Vietnam have been used as the main excuse for anti-Hanoi propaganda and postures. In fact the so-called mass exodus of ethnic Chinese is actually a device invented to embarrass the young republic. One does not deny that there was no exodus from Vietnam and that this exodus continues even today. It is also well to remember that there has been an exodus from China into Hongkong after the People's Republic was established. In fact the population movements arising from revolutions, wars and change of rulers are common to all countries and climes—since the outbreak of the two World Wars there were mass exodus from eastern European countries to US, from India to Pakistan, from Bangladesh to Pakistan and vice versa during the partitions and independence struggles respectively. Men shaken up by the administrative changes and those who held high positions and enjoyed privileges often join the migratory movements. It was not merely fear or difficulties in adjustment that compels such an exodus, but it often stems from psychological discomfiture caused by the sudden changes. Apart from the obviously propagandistic materials provided by the Vietnamese and Chinese as to the nature of the refugee problem, independent and impartial observers too have made a deep study of the problems for entirely different purposes. These reveal that Vietnam cannot be blamed for the exodus.

The "victimised Chinese residents" or "ethnic Chinese", known as the Hoa people in Vietnam, are

actually victims of Chinese propaganda rather than Vietnamese harassment. Except for the congenitally migratory Chinese who go in search of greener pastures ever so often, the Hoa people numbering more between one to one and half million were actually Vietnamese. Their history could be traced to the fourteenth century onwards—and their influx into Vietnam from that time occurred under well known historical circumstances. The repression following the Taiping rebellion (1866), the Chiang Kai Shek campaigns against the Communists, the Sino-Japanese war etc. etc., it is estimated, compelled nearly 60 million Chinese to leave the country, and a good number sought asylum in Vietnam. In 1955, the Workers Party of Vietnam and the Communist Party of China agreed that Hoa residents in North Vietnam (numbering about 200,000) should be placed under the leadership of the Workers Party of Vietnam and gradually naturalised as Vietnamese citizens. In the South, under the Ngo Dinh regime from 1956 they enjoyed Vietnamese citizenship (they numbered nearly a million). Only those Chinese who entered Vietnam with passports from Taiwan, Hongkong and those Chinese expelled by the Pol Pot-Ieng Sary regime in Kampuchea were considered as foreign nationals. But when relations between China and Vietnam became strained, China began to incite the Hoa people—they were told that unless they fled the country their future was doomed. China, it was made out, would attack Vietnam in support of Kampuchea in which event it was said that the Hoa people who did not quit would be killed as traitors; on the other hand if they chose to remain in Vietnam, Vietnamese would harass them.

APART FROM THE ABOVE REASONS there are other good reasons for the exodus. Vietnam inherited a severely battered and shattered economy when the whole of Vietnam was liberated in 1975. By American estimates, in South Vietnam 9,000 villages were damaged, nearly 1,435,000 civilians were rendered either sick or disabled or mutilated or had died in prison; war cripples numbered 362,000, widows 1,000,000 and 600,000 orphaned children or abandoned by American personnel. Nearly 15 million hectares of arable and forest lands were destroyed and dairy industry had been practically wiped out. Of course the havoc wrought by thirty five years of war in the North cannot be estimated at present—every railroad, bridge, factory had to be reconstructed. As the expected economic aid from US (in 1973, in a written message Nixon promised to grant 3.2 billion dollars of assistance for the reconstruction of Vietnam) was not forthcoming.

Vietnam was therefore compelled to adopt her own economic strategy. Chinese aid too now began to have strings attached and when they were rejected the aid ceased. The Vietnamese government then made a policy pronouncement declaring that while, North Vietnam will concentrate on industrial sector the South will concentrate on agricultural development. This declaration brought home a truth to the South Vietnamese especially in the unproductive and parasitic sectors. In the twin city of Saigon and Cholon, nearly 700,000 ethnic Chinese had the monopoly of all

commerce and trade. In fact this city of Saigon (now Ho Chi Minh city) controlled by ethnic Chinese, was considered to be the most unproductive settlement on earth.

Its economy depended purely and solely in catering to the wants of the war. When the war ceased and American personnel left, the booming trade began to collapse. Thus the "aristocracy" of the war day economy began to feel the change in the artificial life style crumpling under the gradually but steadily growing socialist economy. The agricultural economy of South Vietnam could not any longer sustain the urban economy of Saigon and urban centres in the Mekong delta. It was therefore quite natural that there would be voluntary departure of those who would not like to adjust themselves to changing circumstances. To such "ethnic Chinese" Communist China was no attraction and therefore they looked to countries like the USA and Australia and also toward Malaysia and Singapore. Boats hired by them at their own risk, therefore, became heavy and overcrowded. To blame Vietnamese for such developments is to ignore basic realities.

COMING TO THE KAMPUCHEAN PROBLEM. there is no doubt that there is an unfortunate suspicion that the Kampuchean problem is a "global problem" between the super-powers, more specifically between China and USSR. This has made matters worse. By globalising the problem the UN has made the task of finding an early solution difficult. The recent UN resolutions to call all parties to the conflict for an international conference and decide on a free elections under UN control would really confuse issues. The expenses to hold such an international conference would be about US \$ 1,350,000 and travel expenses for the important figures at such a conference would amount to \$ 128,500. The entire cost would be in the region of \$ 10,000,000 which if given in the form of economic aid to Kampuchea would be a big help to her.

The Kampuchean problem is a local one—that may perhaps concern China and Vietnam on the one side and Kampuchea and Thailand on the other. Even the fears of Thailand and China, and more especially of ASEAN, are unwarranted. As far as the countries of Indo-China are concerned it was purely a local matter emanating from a long shared and cherished historical experience. The nationalists and communists in these three countries fought shoulder to shoulder against the French during the colonial era and US in the neo-colonial era. The Indo-Chinese now fear that forces beyond their territories have been mobilised to destroy the fruits of their victory before they could consolidate it.

There is also mutual suspicion between ASEAN and Indo-Chinese countries. The members of the ASEAN countries have not yet learnt to adjust themselves to the historic changes that have taken place in Indo-China. ASEAN countries are troubled that many of those they had helped have turned communist. This is utterly unpalatable to them and hence the delay in

accepting the realities of the day. It is time that ASEAN recognized the changed circumstances and climate.

When Pol Pot was in power nearly 321,000 persons from Kampuchea sought refuge in Vietnam. They included Kampuchians, ethnic Chinese, Buddhist bonzes etc. It is significant that Pol Pot prevented the outflow to Thailand. The crimes committed by the Pol Pot regime, universally admitted now, compelled many thousands to flee the country. But in Kampuchea itself, nearly 3 million people were killed and they included 80,000 Buddhist monks and 26,000 ethnic Chinese.

In this connection it is well to recall that one of the reasons advanced by Indian strategists as to why India went to war with Pakistan was to lessen the pressure of Bangladesh refugees. It meant not merely money which could have been partly obtained from international relief agencies, but it led to other social problems. Similarly the Kampuchean exodus to Vietnam must have been one of the compelling reasons for Vietnam's intervention in Kampuchea. It appears that all those who migrated to Vietnam have now returned to Kampuchea. The frontier question was a smokescreen to hide the Chinese and Khmer Rouge attempts to destabilize Vietnam. Kampuchea had more Chinese advisers and Chinese ammunition before the fall of Pol Pot than Americans in Iran before the Khomeini Revolution.

The Kampuchean problem is really not as difficult as made out. If one carefully studies the Vientiane resolution of the Conference of Foreign Ministers of Laos, Kampuchea and Vietnam of International problems, dated 18th July 1980, it will reveal how faithfully close they are to the aspirations of the NAM. No reasonable and acceptable solution to the Kampuchean impasse could be reached if the UN persists in raising technical objections.

It does not make any sense to say that Pol pot regime was atrocious and yet canvass and accept its credentials for the UN seat. The only sensible course of action at this juncture would be to leave the seat vacant. And this might have persuaded Vietnam and Kampuchea to take appropriate measures to justify their claims. Nor does it serve any purpose to "declare that it is not possible to recognize Heng Samrin's Government because there is that element of aggression in the establishment of that government" without analysing and appreciating the circumstances under which Heng Samrin came to assume power. (A. C. S. Hameed, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sri Lanka—Hansard Vol. 13 No. 2, column 313).

BY ALIGNING with China, ASEAN, Japan and Australia, Sri Lanka may hope to reap other benefits but that does not help to solve problems. It only intensifies them. Nor does the solution suggested by John L. S.,

Cairling satisfactory (vide, "Crisis over Kampuchea, Regional and Global Implications". *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. II, No. 4, October 1980—pp 746-752). He suggests that one great nation, the US, should (a) guarantee, along with others an "international settlement"; (b) provide the inducement to Vietnam to make compromise worthwhile (economic aid in return for withdrawal from Kampuchea); (c) assure a neutral Kampuchea acceptable to all its neighbours; and (d) use its clout with China to bring it into line (p. 752).

These suggestions are based on fallacious logic. They are, to say the least, ridiculous. They pre-suppose that Vietnam in fact has committed an aggression and that it could be coerced to withdraw by providing massive economic aid. This is also intended to devalue all that Vietnam gained during the course of the last thirty five years. It is a fact that Vietnam faces an enormous problem of reconstruction and is disappointed at the treatment she has received from some of her allies (and adversaries). Vietnam has been stoutly independent and her present economic dependence on USSR was forced on her by circumstances beyond her control.

Vietnam does not appear to entertain any expansionist ambitions—she no longer even subscribes to the grand design of an Indo-China Federation. The Vietnamese helped Kampuchea to achieve independence and withdrew their forces in 1975. It is true that up to 1951, there was a talk of the possibility of an Indo-China Federation. The Vietnamese Communist Party was founded in 1930 and later rechristened as the Indo-China Communist Party in the same year. This formation was necessitated by the need to establish one party for the whole country—the French Indo-China. In French colonial times the three countries were divided into five territories: Cochinchina, Annam, Tonkin (these three now form Vietnam), Laos and Cambodia. In 1941, when the national movements began to take final shape each of these countries had their own national fronts—Viet Minh in Vietnam, Issala in Laos, Isarak in Kampuchea. When these movements found their struggle approaching victorious culmination they introduced a strategy of concerted action—they formed three communist parties one each for the three countries and set up an alliance amongst the three national fronts on the basis of free consent, equally and mutual assistance.

In 1954 the Geneva Agreement recognised the independence, sovereignty unity and territorial integrity of Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos and from that time onwards any allusion by an Indo-China Federation was abandoned. There is no evidence that Vietnam made any attempt to revive it. But Pol Pot conjured it as a bogey to win support for his regime among Khmer people and from China by raising of "Vietnamese expansionism". Even if Vietnam harboured any such illusions it would not have had the mind and material to give it a practical shape because Vietnam's first priority was the reconstruction of its own country. A country devastated by thirty-five years of modern warfare cannot think of venturing out on impossible

tasks. Secondly, internally, the Hanoi did not face any political resistance, to divert the attention of her people elsewhere. It is the persistent and chronic xenophobia of Pol Pot that compelled Vietnam to intervene in Kampuchea.

That Vietnam is anxious to solve the Kampuchean problem, nay the Indo-China problem, is evidenced from the speech of its foreign minister at the recent UN sessions. Vietnam no doubt can be persuaded to withdraw from Kampuchea if the UN would recognize Kampuchea. It is essential that ASEAN countries should enter into a dialogue with Indo-Chinese countries to guarantee peace on Thai-Kampuchea, Thai-Laos borders and enter into non-aggression pacts.

The NAM should take a firm stand to help Kampuchean people enjoy peace and stability which was their dream for the last hundred years, especially during the last three decades. The recognition of the Heng Samrin government which is now admittedly in control of the territory is the first step forward.

x x x

FILM FOCUS

The Ten Commandments

This column wishes its readers a happy and meaningful Christmas 1980, before moving on. The Liberty Cinema Ltd., which is a non-Christian concern, in the field of cinematic entertainment, has struck a magnanimous note in presenting a seasonal film "The Ten Commandments" for the benefit of its Christian patrons and I hope the opportunity of seeing this perennial will not be missed. While we are on the subject, I wonder how many Christians could rattle off these finely chiselled bedrocks of their faith, for a random quizzing by me revealed that many Christians have left them behind at school. This column therefore reproduces a rare pamphlet printed by the Apostolate of Christian Action in California, which expatiates on the content and meaning of the Law that was given to mankind through Moses at Mount Sinai, before it gets down to reviewing the film proper.

I. I am the Lord thy God: Thou shalt not have strange Gods before Me. *Commands* Faith, hope, love and worship of God; reverence for holy things; prayer. *Forbids*: Idolatry, superstition, spiritism, sacrilege, attendance at false worship.

II. Thou shalt not take, the name of the Lord thy God in vain. *Commands*: Reverence in speaking about God and holy things; the keeping of oaths and vows. *Forbids*: Blasphemy, the irreverent use of God's name, speaking disrespectfully of holy things, false oaths and the breaking of vows.

III. Remember thou keep holy the Sabbath Day. *Commands*: Going to Church on Sundays and Holy days. *Forbids*: Missing church through one's own fault, unnecessary servile work, public buying and selling, court trials.

IV. Honour thy Father and Mother. *Commands:* Love, respect, obedience on the part of children, care on the part of parents for the spiritual and temporal welfare of their children, obedience to civil and religious superiors. *Forbids:* Hatred of parents and superiors disrespect, disobedience.

V. Thou Shalt not Kill. *Commands:* Safeguarding of one's own life, and bodily welfare and those of others. *Forbids:* Unjust killing, suicide, abortion, sterilization, dueling, endangering life and limit of self or others..

VI. Thou Shalt not commit Adultery. *Commands:* Chastity in word and deed. *Forbids:* Obscene speech, impure actions, alone or with others.

VII. Thou shalt not steal. *Commands:* Respect for the property and rights of others; the paying of just debts, paying just wages to employees, integrity in public officials. *Forbids:* Theft, damage to the property of others, not paying just debts, not returning found or borrowed articles, giving unjust measure in weight or selling, not paying just wages, bribery, graft, cheating, fraud, accepting stolen property, and not giving an honest day's work for wages received, violation of contract.

VIII. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour. *Commands:* Truthfulness, respect for the good name of others, the observance of secrecy when required. *Forbids:* Lying, injury to the good name of others, slander, tale-bearing, rash judgement, contemptuous speech, and the violation of secrecy.

IX. Thou Shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife. *Commands:* Purity in thought. *Forbids:* Wilful impure thoughts and desires.

X. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbours goods. *Commands:* Respect for the rights of others. *Forbids:* The desire to take, to keep or to damage the property of others.

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS (the film): To me it has been amazing how multitudes of picturegoers have been drawn repeatedly to this Biblical revival, wherever and whenever it was shown. This film is based primarily on the life of Moses, whom God chose to give his commandments for a Dharmishta society. And so the people of all ages have made it a virtual pilgrimage, to witness in awe for 3 hours and 39 minutes, and absorb with fervour, the life and times of Moses, in this magnificent masterpiece, laid down neatly in celluloid, by one of the greatest film makers of all time—the late Cecil B. de Mille, in Technicolour Vistavision and released nearly a decade ago. The infant Hebrew Moses, who was set adrift by his mother, from the wrath of the Pharaoh King, is drifted back by a Divine and fortuitous tide to the latter's castle, to grow up as an idol worshipper himself, till a series of circumstances make him trek to the 'apex' of Mount Sinai, where he discovers the "Life" and the "Truth", and resultantly becomes the deliverer of his downtrodden people in response to an overpowering "Voice."

It would be difficult to span in this column, the glorious and God touched life of Moses, for this film captures it all so revealingly and brilliantly, in every

meticulous detail of the "Holy Book" and I will turn on some of the highlights only. The turning of the waters into rivers of crimson blood, the slow flow of the Angel of Death, to the wails of mothers and the first born of the Pharaohs, the dividing of the Red Sea to save the chosen people and swallow up the pursuing Pharaoh. Charioteers and the final confrontation of Moses with his Maker of Sinai, where he receives the code of Christian living, gilded in rock by tongues of fire, are moments that keep one spellbound, not for a moment, but for a lifetime. Charlton Heston as Moses, Yul Brynner as King Ramses and Anne Buxter as queen Nephertaria excelled in their triangularly inter-linked roles. Amidst the fabulous settings, there were some blistering Biblical quotes for our times like, "Are men the property of the State" and "Man shall be ruled by Gods Laws and not by the whims and wills of mere men". Make this season of peace and harmony blend with the message of this great family film, which for Christians will fortify their faith.

SUBRABATHAM (Tamil): This film dedicated in depth to emphasise the divinity of Lord Krishna in Hindu belief, commences with a cursory challenge in the heavens which is hurled down to earth to prove a point or two. A Krishna Bakthan among the mortals (Nambiar) glorifies and lives perpetually in the love of his God, but amidst abject poverty. Rewards however come his way as he elevates his humble mind, and keeps it over matter, no matter what indignities beset him. With his devoted wife (Vijayakumari), son (Jai Ganesh) and daughter in law (Lata), the devotee is on a pilgrimage of love and humility, while the fruits of his belief, blossom along on a parallel course. Several facets in Lord Krishna's life are resurrected with devotional songs as the camera sweeps through Kasi, Tirupathy, Tirukovil, Rishikesh and Periamalai shrines dedicated to Krishna. The purifying "Ganges" and the glistening "Imayamalai" in the background and much fervour to this religious film. I thought, the screen villain Nambiar metamorphosed effortlessly into the haloed role, while K. R. Vijaya, Muthuraman and Sri (Neeya) Priya, as guest stars shone momentarily and twinkled away. No Hindu worthy of his faith should miss this film—it was elevating all the way.

James N. Benedict.



HELD OVER

Journey To India - 7

The Brezhnev Visit

By Ariel

Colombo, December 15,

It is strange that in a politically developed country like Sri Lanka reactions to international happenings have become virtually non-existent. Joint statements are issued at times of bilateral visits by foreign heads of state or foreign ministers reiterating rigid formulae which is claimed to be an expression of a broad spectrum of consensus in the non-aligned movement.

On the most controversial matters of current significance Sri Lanka has well-defined views only on two: Afghanistan and Kampuchea. She is against military intervention by an outside country. So far so good, and nobody can complain about this attitude as a general principle. But what about the finer nuances—the real currents and under-currents, regional and global—that invest each problem with new dimensions? How much longer can Sri Lanka continue to support the seating of Pol Pot in the UN? Most countries now admit that the Pol Pot forces have no base in Kampuchea—and that the "fighting" exists only in the fictionalised reporting by certain news agencies. Will Sri Lanka refuse to recognise Heng Samrin (because his regime was set up by outside intervention which seems acceptable to most Kampucheans)? How many other governments exist today which Sri Lanka recognises which were set up with outside intervention. Take Uganda. The Tanzanian troops which set up the new government are still very much there. Numerous other examples can be cited.

But apart from Kampuchea and Afghanistan, the Sri Lanka government reactions to many questions are not known. On Palestine, Namibia and Apartheid, the usual formulae are repeated in the UN and elsewhere. Silence on the Iraq-Iran war is understandable, but there are many other matters on which silence has caused misunderstanding. One matter relates to the matter of bases and the build up of naval, military and airforce power in the Indian Ocean. Sri Lanka's silence, especially with visits of two American Admirals to the island and a whisper talk of a sell-out of Trincomalee as a base to the US has made India apprehensive of the UNP Government's policies and intentions. The Tribune of 6.12.80 commenting on the Foreign Minister's statement in Parliament on 27.11.80 that Sri Lanka "would on no account allow any of its ports to be used as a base by any foreign power" had stated that in spite of such official denials, "those stories persisted and the impression has been successfully created in India and other non-aligned Third World countries that America was on the verge of making Trincomalee a US Naval base.....".

Rex de Silva in his column *Comment on Current Affairs* (Weekend, 14.12.80) entitled **BASELESS FABLES ABOUT AMERICAN BASES IN LANKA** discussing the Indian Foreign Minister's recent statement wanting

a categorical statement from Sri Lanka whether "R.R. facilities" were being granted to the US Navy suggested that these misunderstandings should be cleared up in bilateral talks at Ministerial level. He concluded his piece thus: "There is no reason why this relationship should be sacrificed over a couple of diplomatic misquotations. Perhaps these petty misunderstandings could be cleared during the forthcoming visit of Indian Finance Minister R. Venkataraman in a few weeks time. Later in February when Hameed meets Rao at the non-aligned Foreign Ministers Conference in New Delhi they could exchange their 'categorical this and that' and work hard towards making the Indian Ocean free of any big power. This is one objective that is commonly sacred to both India and Sri Lanka. Meanwhile it would be better for the Lankan leadership to ascertain why the Indians are rather perturbed. Understandably something is worrying them. There simply can be no smoke without a fire. Could it be the reported establishment of an American oil refinery in Trincomalee, of which the real partners are still deceptively or supposedly based in some insignificant capital of convenience? An official statement on the exact position of this Trinco deal is of vital importance and most timely. It could invariably terminate the speculation. A few months ago Sri Lanka was able to overcome a serious diplomatic crisis when some of our bureaucrats tried to have direct talks with some American officials about 'R and R'. But when the Foreign Office realised this, appropriate action was reportedly taken on time against this fool-hardy attempt. It is therefore fairly clear that a naïve officialdom could not only embarrass their bosses but create confusion among the global fraternity and spoil the good image of the country." It is clear that the Government should pay a little more attention to its External publicity.

NO REACTIONS not even discreet leaks, have been forthcoming from our Foreign Ministry on the Brezhnev visit to India. All Lake House publications have been singularly silent. Even the *Sunday Observer* did not have its foreign affairs column last week end. Lucien Rajakarunanyake in his *Sunday Times* column on Foreign Affairs on 14.12.80 summed up the visit thus: "If Soviet President, Leonid Brezhnev came to Delhi to woo Indian opinion he left with nothing much gained. The Joint Declaration by the Soviet leader and the Indian Prime Minister after their lengthy talks was significantly non-committal on the Afghanistan issues and was full of generalities about hotbeds of unrest in South West Asia which only indicated a firm agreement to disagree. For India there was the ritual statement of the need for political settlements of problems in this region and the condemnation of all foreign interference in the affairs of another country. Some would read this to mean Afghanistan. But for the Soviets this would only mean interference by the west or China, because the official Soviet explanation for their presence in Afghanistan is an invitation from Kabul. Mr. Brezhnev did get a standing ovation from the Indian Parliament, specially for his comments about supporting the moves for the Indian Ocean Peace Zone. He

also made use of the Indian forum to permit a new proposal for a pact banning nuclear weapons and foreign military bases in the Gulf region. Reports from Washington indicate that the US Administration views the new Brezhnev Plan with considerable scepticism, and is doubtful whether it could be the major basis for future negotiations."

This was a non-committal appraisal of the situation to please everybody, but the *Sun* (editorial on 12.12.80) and Rex de Silva on 14.12.80 could not resist the temptation to have a swipe at the USSR by using Afghanistan as a handle to indulge in familiar anti-Soviet logics: the only matter the *Sun* group dealt with was the "Gulf" and "Afghanistan" and to deride Brezhnev's proposal for peace in the Persian Gulf. It is not difficult to make snide remarks on Afghanistan or the Gulf—either from the US angle or the Soviet angle—but what people in Sri Lanka want is an objective and interpretative analysis of the totality of Brezhnev's visit to India which covered political, economic, trade and cultural relations.

Though many Indian newspapers were disappointed that Indira Gandhi was not able to make Brezhnev change the Soviet attitude to Afghanistan, there was all-round recognition that Brezhnev's visit at this juncture was "a serious consideration in the process of stabilisation of the situation in the Asian continent"—especially at a time when there was a return to the cold war, when a new arms race had begun and now hot spots of war had appeared in many parts of the world including South Asia. Like the previous visit in 1973, even conservative papers in India made the point that the present visit amply demonstrated the fact that the USSR attached great importance to the links with India as a growing Asian power.

The discussions and even the joint declaration showed that the USSR and India had an identity and similarity of views on the majority of international problems, including many events now taking place in Southwest and Southeast Asia. There was no reference to Afghanistan in the joint declaration, but admittedly there is a difference of opinion between the two countries on this matter. But on a very large number of issues there was agreement. Although nothing was said of the US, NATO and Chinese policies in Asia and the world, there is no doubt that the near identity of views on the situation in the Indian Ocean and about the role of the non-aligned countries made it clear that both countries still believed in détente and were opposed to the revival of cold war strategies.

It is a pity that there was inadequate publicity in Sri Lanka to Brezhnev's proposals for normalising relations in the Persian Gulf. Addressing the Indian Parliament the Soviet President Leonid Brezhnev appealed to the United States, other western powers, China, Japan, etc., to agree on mutual obligations to create a normal, calm situation in the Persian Gulf and Indian Ocean regions. He spelt them out thus: (1) not to establish foreign military bases in the area of the Persian Gulf and adjacent islands; not to deploy nuclear or any other weapons of mass destruction

there; (2) not to use and not to threaten with the use of force against the countries of the Persian Gulf area. Not to interfere in their internal affairs; (3) to respect the status of non-alignment, chosen by Persian Gulf states; not to draw them into military grouping with the participation of nuclear powers; (4) to respect the sovereign right of the states of the region to their natural resources; (5) not to raise any obstacles or threats to normal trade exchange and the use of sea lanes that link the states of that region with other countries of the world.

He pointed out "The region of the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean is becoming an increasingly more dangerous seat of international tension. On the invented pretext of the protection of their 'vital interests' powers, situated many thousands of kilometers away from the region, have concentrated there a military armada and are intensively building up armaments, expanding the network of their military bases, subjected to pressure and threats the small countries which do not follow in their wake." The USSR had no intentions of encroaching on the Middle East oil or its supply, he had declared. He also stressed, "The Soviet Union is a staunch champion of the idea that the Indian Ocean be turned into a peace zone. We are ready to actively work together with other interested states in this direction. We believe that the Indian Ocean has been and remains the sphere of vital interests of the states, located on its shores, but not of any other states". He welcomed other initiatives that would lead to relaxation of tension, that would be prompted by the care for consolidation of peace in Asia or any other continent.

A Reuter correspondent's comments that India had not endorsed this proposal was given more columnage in Sri Lanka than the proposals themselves. Indian commentators and papers point out that the proposals were not intended to be part of the joint Communiqué, the draft of which was ready before Brezhnev's arrival and which was only smoothened out after the discussions. Nor have our papers or media kept the public informed of the economic, trade, technological and cultural co-operation in many fields. The USSR had also undertaken to supply to India more crude oil and also sophisticated military hardware—against rupee payments.

Understandably there are pro-western and anti-Indira forces and papers in India which are unhappy that India was not able to get the Russians to quit Afghanistan, but has anybody been able to persuade the USA to withdraw its troops from over a 100 bases spread all over the globe? Has anyone been able to persuade Israel to quit Arab territories it had occupied by military action? Everyone will naturally wish that the Soviets withdrew from Afghanistan, but they are committed to the Babrak Karmal regimes' request asking them to stay on. And who can complain that the Babrak government has not been duly "elected". Is not the Zia government a ruthless military dictatorship without democratic endorsement by the people of Pakistan? Has Zia held an election in Pakistan though he has

promised it often? How can he demand an election in Afghanistan or Kampuchea?

These are questions that must be considered in a realistic manner before categorical assertions are made as to how the governments in the USSR, India, Afghanistan, Hanoi, or anywhere else should behave. Pakistan has not had an election for a long time, but it is not for us Sri Lankans to demand that Zia should hold one—it is for the Pakistanis to do so, and certainly not by Pakistanis and others financed and incited by foreign countries.

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SRI LANKA CHRONICLE

Dec. 4 — Dec. 8

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

CDN—Ceylon Daily News; CDM—Ceylon Daily Mirror;
CO—Ceylon Observer; ST—Sunday Times; SO—Sunday
Observer; DM—Dinamina; LD—Lankadipa; VK—Virak-
esari; ATH—Aththa; SM—Silumina; SLDP—Sri Lanka-
dipa; JD—Janadina; SU—Sun; DV—Davasa; DP—Dina-
pathi; CM—Chinthamani; WK—Weekend; RR—Riviera
DK—Dinakara; EN—Eelanaadu; IDPR—Information Dept.
Press Release.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 4: A draft law to prevent monopolies, mergers and anti-competitive practices from adversely affecting the economy of the country, has been approved by government. Government will set up a Rs. 16 million joint stock company for fruit processing on about 2000 acres of land to develop the fruit and vegetable industry, which in Sri Lanka is relatively under-developed. The 15-member Japanese investment mission, led by Mr. Kikuo Ikeda, President of Nippon Koei Co. Ltd., of Japan, would after a week's round of negotiations with Sri Lankan investors return to Japan with 12 viable joint-venture projects identified for further negotiations. Finance Minister Ronnie de Mel has secured a five million dollar loan from the OPEC Fund, the Ministry said yesterday—CDN. Sri Lanka will receive a loan of nearly Rs. 850 million from the United Kingdom Government shortly; this follows negotiations initiated by the Ministry of Finance and Planning to meet the shortfall in foreign exchange components for the Victoria Project—CDM. A further meeting of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party is to be held shortly to decide on the party's MP elector Attanagalla; this follows the abrupt ending to Tuesday's meeting of the Politbureau after party leader Sirimavo Bandaranaike walked out; Mrs. Bandaranaike is learnt to have recommended to the Politbureau the nomination of her daughter Chandrika Kumaranatunga, as MP for Attanagalla; the move however, was opposed by other members of the Politbureau including her son Anura. The Ministry of Health has finalised arrange-

ments to set up a national drug quality control laboratory with foreign assistance at a cost of 10.85 million rupees—SU. The retiring age limit of teachers employed in Government schools has been increased from 58 to 60; this was approved by the Cabinet—VK. With a view to improving the Hindu culture, a pilgrims' resort is to be established at Kataragama at a cost of Rs. 50 lakhs; a proposal submitted by the Minister of Hindu Affairs, Mr. Selliah Rajadurai was approved by the Cabinet yesterday—DP. The power struggle between President Jayewardene and the Prime Minister has come to light again with the death of the MP for Baddegama and the Kalawana by-election; President Jayewardene wants to promote Mr. Upali Wijewardene and is seeking to appoint its present MP for Kamburupitiya Mr. Albert de Silva to Baddegama and appoint Mr. Wijewardene as MP for Kamburupitiya; the PM is strongly against such a move—DK.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 5: Hamilton Shirley Amerasinghe, President of the United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea and former President of the General Assembly died in a New York hospital yesterday aged 67. The Bank of Ceylon will shortly effect sweeping changes in its agricultural credit schemes to quicken the pace of agricultural development in the country; the thrust of the Bank's new scheme will be to make timely and adequate finances, inputs, and agricultural services available to the farmer based on the Farm Plan and Farm Budget—CDN. The Government will import 80,000 tons of rice next year; this decision has been taken by the Government consequent on the Minister of Finance and Planning, Mr. Ronnie de Mel querying the quantum of the purchase of rice next year. Mr. Ranil Wickremasinghe, Minister of Education, Youth Affairs and Employment has decided to set apart one of the existing teacher-training colleges to train English teachers in a bid to raise the standard of English in schools—CDM. Sri Lanka's entire work force, including farmers administrators and industrial labourers, will soon be provided with free medical facilities under a new occupational health scheme being prepared by Government. Ex-Kalawana MP Abeyratne Pilapitiya who attended sittings of Parliament yesterday was requested to leave the chamber by Deputy Speaker Norman Waidyaratne—SU. Silver has become one of the most lucrative items to smuggle out of the country; according to a spokesman for the Customs 300 kilos of Silver worth Rs. 15 millions has been seized by them this year from those who have attempted to smuggle it out CO. The Lady Lochore Loan Fund has taken steps to set up the proposed workers banks in 20 public corporations and institutions; these banks are being set up to help workers financially; nearly 500 institutions have requested the Fund to set up such banks in their institutions—DM. President Jayewardene has ordered the Cabinet to in form all heads of public corporations to clear up their accounts by December this year; the Cabinet has decided to review the work of all corporations one by one—LD.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 6: "A united is Lanka, aim of the Constitution and there is no place for communalism, caste in our elections; vote is for the party, not for individuals" so said, President J. R. Jayewardene who was chief guest at the prize giving of Hindu Ladies College, Colombo yesterday—CDN. Saudi Arabia has granted a Rs.900 million loan to Sri Lanka; this is the largest-ever loan from the Saudi Fund and is earmarked for the development of the Colombo Water Supply and Sewage project and for the Electricity Power Transmission project from the Mahaweli area. A new salary scheme for all the Co-operative Society employees will be implemented by January 1, 1981. About 7.5 million people in Sri Lanka do not have sufficient energy or protein; this shocking announcement was made by the Minister of Trade and Shipping, Mr. Lalith Athulathmuni yesterday when he made the keynote address to the third annual sessions of the Nutrition Society of Sri Lanka held at the Sri Lanka Foundation Institute—CDM. Sri Lanka Tea Board Chairman Bertie Warusavitharana has been asked to relinquish duties from his post by Public Administration and Plantation Industries Minister, Major Montague Jayewickrema. Several popular brands of imported cement are substandard and should not be used for building construction where high strength is required, the Ceylon Institute of Scientific and Industrial Research (CISIR) has warned. A new law on banking—setting out the guidelines for banks operating in Sri Lanka—is to be introduced by the Government; this law, among other matters, will make provision for banks to declare minimum deposits they will accept from customers, authorise them to issue credit cards and operate a 24-hour teller service. Food stamps will be issued on a bi-yearly basis from next year in order to save Rs.5 million in printing costs. Food and Co-operative Minister S. B. Herath announced in Parliament yesterday. One of two patients admitted to the General Hospital Colombo from Maligawatte with a history of diarrhoea, has been confirmed as suffering from cholera; they were later transferred to the Infections Diseases Hospital, IDH—SU. Prime Minister R. Premadasa will visit Jaffna on January 29th and will stay there till February 2 to discuss matters concerning the development programmes of the Jaffna District—DP. Harispattuwa M.P. Mr. R. P. Wijesiri submitted in Parliament a statement yesterday showing a travelling expense of Rs. 160,839 and Rs. 576,274 for fuel paid to District Ministers so far—EN. The Ministry of Higher Education is proposing to set up 16 massive scale technical schools; the first of these technical schools will be set up in the Matale District at a cost of Rs. 1.2 million. The Paddy Marketing Board is the newest entry in to public corporations that are to be closed up—ATH.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 7: The Committee on Transport Reforms has recommended sweeping changes in traffic control and management in Colombo and the outer suburbs in a bid to cope with heavy congestion on city roads following the mounting tide of new vehicles; the main thrust of the committee's recommendation has been in the direction of curtailing parking

on the key Colombo and suburban roads. Proposals are now afoot to set up two more Sri Lankan Embassies in the Middle East; the two embassies are to be set up in Kuwait and Riyadh; there is one Sri Lanka Embassy in Abu Dhabi already—SO. The Director General of OPEC, Dr. Ibrahim Shihata will visit Sri Lanka on January 13th on an invitation of the Minister of Finance and Planning, Mr. Ronnie de Mel—ST. The threat of immediate oil rationing in Sri Lanka has receded with the Ceylon Petroleum Corporation being successful in negotiating supplies for next year; the Corporation's Chairman, Daham Wimalasena, is despatching two official delegations next week—one to Saudi Arabia and another to Iran—to conclude contracts for 1981. President J. R. Jayewardene will shortly appoint 24 Assistant District Ministers who will be responsible for the administration of the water supply and sanitation programmes in the districts. The Chief Minister of the South Indian State of Tamil Nadu, M. G. Ramachandran escaped injury when a dagger was thrown at him today near Tirunelveli. Singapore's first Deputy Prime Minister Goh Keng Swee has told local industrialists that the private sector should play a more significant role in Sri Lanka's development—WK. The Police Department is preparing plans to trace about 600 prisoners who escaped from prisons—CM. It is now understood that joint efforts are being made to develop economic unity and friendly relations between India and Sri Lanka—VK. The Ministry of Industries is considering ways and means to help small industrialists to improve those industries; an island-wide survey was carried out recently for this purpose; the survey has revealed that small scale industrialists are facing stiff competition from imported goods and that there are difficulties in getting bank loans to improve or to start industries—SM.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 8: A seven-member Australian team of geological experts now in Sri Lanka told Industries and Scientific Affairs Minister Cyril Mathew last Saturday that the chances of striking oil in the Northwest coast of Sri Lanka were "pretty good." The Department of Internal Trade will today launch a campaign to check profiteering and hoarding during the coming festive season—CDN. More than a hundred and fifty thousand householders in Colombo and its suburbs will have to pay for their water when the Water Supply and Drainage Board introduces metering by the middle of next year. There will be a separate general certificate for vocational and technical studies in the GCE Ordinary Level shortly—SU. The number of Tamil Police officers working in Tamil areas will be increased from next year; for this purpose, a number of Tamil Police officers from the south will be transferred to serve in the Police Stations in the North and East—VK. President Jayewardene has advised the MPs to stick to the Job Bank system and not to give jobs outside the Job bank.

* * *

Confidentially

Milk, Water & Hotels

IS IT NOT A FACT that practically all sections of the Fourth Estate have turned spotlights of criticism on the affairs of the National Milk Board (NMB) and even this onslaught has had no effect either on the concerned Ministry or the Government as a whole to compel corrective measures? That earlier the *Sun* group, the *Dinakara*, the *Janadina*, the *Aitha* and the *Tribune* had focussed attention on the deteriorating conditions in the NMB that stemmed from inefficiency, mismanagement and corruption? That the *Dinamina* joined the ranks of the sharp shooters against NMB rackets a few weeks ago? That ultimately even the premier government paper the *Ceylon Daily News* has joined the fray in a centre-page piece on December 8, 1980 entitled ARE WE CRYING OVER SPILT MILK? The title should really have been SHOULD'N'T WE CRY OVER MILK THROWN AWAY? That the *CDN* article ended with an apt comment ".....why their fleet of bowisers is not maintained properly when they could be repaired with the money due to be spent on a luxury car for the Board still standing in the Port of Colombo?" That it can be now disclosed that the 3 1/2 lakh luxury car mentioned in this column last week is in fact the luxury car spotlighted in the *CDN* article? That this Milky way car is a Peugeot Super and the price and duty tott up to morre than 1.25+2.30= Rs. 3.55 lakhs? That there may be aadditional charges for demurrage? That an interesting postscript is that shortly after the *CDN* article appeared on 8.1.80, the car was hastily paid for—not by the NMB but another government organisation which did not need such a vehicle? That everybody involved in this transaction has been ordered to maintain sealed lips silence and secrecy? That however, the car was not cleared until this week because of the financial regulations that made it difficult for one government organisation to pay for something that some other organisation had ordered (and paid a desposit of Rs. 45,000)?

THAT AS WE GO TO PRESS we have received news that compels us to invite the NMB to answer the questions we raise below—to correct, deny or amplify? Is it correct that (1) there were three or four separators installed a year ago both at Ambawela and Narahenpitiya with a capacity of 1800 gallons per hour each? (2) That they ceased to be operative after a few months and that some of them are said to have been removed from their foundations and put aside? (3) That no standardisation of milk has taken place at Narahenpitiya for many months now? (4) That because of this alone, the NMB suffers a loss of Rs. 1-2 million a month at both factories? (4) That the important question is whether the allegation that no standardisation of milk is now taking place is true or untrue?

IS IT ANY SURPRISE that the producer of bottled water and also mineral water should react promptly to the comments of our columnist *Veritas* in last week's *Talking Points*? (That this is testimony to the fact that *Tribune* is read?) That our columnist had complained that the price of bottled water had been put up by the producer from —/35 cts. to Rs. 2/35 a bottle and the price of aerated mineral water had not been so increased? That *Tribune* has been told that the producer has facts and figures to show that it actually costs more to produce bottled water than a soda water? That the price of Rs. 2/35 was a fair price (based on c.o.p.) to hotels that cater to tourists who pay five to ten times that for the water they drink in their own country? That the producer, it was argued, could not be blamed if five star and four star hotels in Colombo charged Rs. 8/50 to Rs. 9/50 a bottle for which they paid the producer only Rs. 2/35? That the hotels in Colombo were only seeking to charge what foreigners would pay for the same product or service in their own country?

THAT THIS SAME LOGIC seems to underlie the justification for charges for rooms in some hotels in Colombo. That one hotelier stated that without holding any brief for the charges made by Lanka Oberoi or the Ceylon Intercontinental, he would say that the charge for a room alone in a similar hotel in London was £ 67 for a day? That the idea seems to be the tourist should be made to pay what he has to pay at home (if that is so, he may not leave home!)? That apologists for local hoteliers seem to overlook that *Veritas* had only complained about hotel charges that were not in keeping with services and facilities offered? That in this connection, the managing agents of the Bentota Beach Hotel and Coral Gardens Hotel at Hikkaduwa have informed us that their charges are as follows: Bentota—for room only US \$ 46 single a day, US \$ 60 double and the all-inclusive charge was \$ 50 and \$ 78 respectively? That at Hikkaduwa it was \$ 34 for single and \$ 37 for a double room and that the all-inclusive rate was \$ 44 and \$ 57 respectively? That it is openly proclaimed that these hotels and facilities are not for Sri Lankans ("like you and me") especially when our currency has devalued itself by over 30%? That this is a matter *Tribune* will go into fully? That unfortunately we are not in a position to compare the service and facilities offered by hotels here with those abroad? That it may be a good for some people (and the "country—whose"?) to make money from tourism, but what are the socio-political implications of the new caste system (worse than the brahminic) that is being imposed on the country.



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