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Letter From The Editor

AS THE NEW YEAR DAWNS there is growing gloom among all classes and sections of the people that the government has very little on the credit side—except rhetoric and a few showpiece items like housing, tourism and the FTZ which have provided employment for about 20,000 people but increased the inflationary burdens on the people. There are serious doubts whether tourism has brought in any real benefits except to provide employment in a trade that in the long run might undermine not only national cultural values but also our environmental balance. Economists are doubtful whether the inflow or the outflow of foreign exchange is the greater in the tourist trade, but there is not the slightest doubt that a new "caste" of hoteliers, travel agents, transport mudalalis, bell boys, waiters, hostesses, pimps, narcotic peddlars, smugglers, prostitutes and the like have proliferated. But once the tourist trade wanes or vanishes as such parasitic industries have done in many parts of the world owing to changing fashions or conditions, this country will have the problem of a socially undesirable group of misfits on its hand. They will be the nucleus of a future exodus from Sri Lanka as from Cuba and South Vietnam today. At the moment the tourist trade has all the glitter of gold but for how long? The SLFP had chased this mirage and the UNP has now tumbled into the same race with gusto. The FTZ is admittedly an exercise only for employment—so far 10,200 have obtained direct employment. What ultimate benefits, if any, this country can obtain from the FTZ is hard to say, but in the meantime, the wages foreigners pay for the cheap labour has added to the inflationary spiral. And the expenditure on housing is meaningless and becomes inflationary without any corresponding growth in local production. Economists are agreed that the only protection in an agricultural-based "free economy" that the consumers and the nation can have against inflation is higher production in grains and all other food items together with increased production of all traditional and non-traditional exports (which are again mainly based on agriculture). Unfortunately, in the 3½ years of this government's rule agricultural production in the main plantation crops as well as in all the so-called subsidiary food crops has continued to decline—as official statistics reveal. There has however been a marginal increase in the production of fish in 1980 and one can only hope that this trend will continue—and this can happen because the Ministry is the only one that has carried out a thorough clean-up in its administration and the operational wings. But in all other sectors, the record of the government is poor. Even the much publicised increase in paddy production may prove another mirage and this will be brought home soon with the current failure of the North-east Monsoon. What is most disheartening is that the government has failed to arrest the decline in the production of the traditional export crops like tea, rubber and coconuts. All the rhetoric over the SLBC and in the official media about increased production serves only as a smokescreen to hide realities. The money remittance that comes from the export of our manpower no doubt increases the purchasing power of the recipients but this does not more than add to the inflation. It will at least take 20 years for the present expenditure on the Mahaweli scheme to bear fruit. What is important is increased production immediately. If all the investment, work and energy put into tourism, housing and even the FTZ had been put into agriculture (not to wastefully expand acreages quantitatively but to increase yields and productivity and secure qualitative upgrading—this country would have registered a real economic miracle in the 3½ years of this government. Unfortunately, there are still no indications that a re-orientation in policies is in the offing—with clean-ups in the administration of key ministries in charge of the agriculture and livestock. The portends for the future are therefore dismal.

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CONTENTS

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

—Kalawana, Trinco p. 2

JOURNEY TO INDIA—8

—Afghan Lobby p. 3

FILM FOCUS

—Best In 1980 p. 5

GRAMA SASTRA—32

—Pesticide Pest p. 6

LETTERS

—Disenfranchisement

Poultry p. 8

NGUVU

—Of Buffaloes & Men p. 9

INTRODUCTORY—I

—Iran Today p. 9

CUBA AND AFRICA

—Introductory—I p. 12

IN PAKISTAN

—Checking Inflation p. 14

IN JAFFNA DISTRICT

—Megalithic Burial Site p. 16

BOOKS

—Sri Lanka, Indonesia p. 17

SRI LANKA

—Taste Of Dictatorship? p. 18

THREAT TO INDIA

—New Delhi Letter p. 21

US AND CHINA

—London Letter p. 22

IMF AND PAKISTAN

—Soviet View p. 23

WNPS

—Talking It Like It Is p. 25

AMERICAN PUBLIC

—And The Middle East p. 28

CHRONICLE—Dec. 24-31 p. 31

CONFIDENTIALLY

—oultry, Inflation p. 32

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

• Kalawana • Oil • Trinco

Colombo, January 7.

If the UNP thinks it has impressed anybody in this country with its circumlocutory strategies to retain the Kalawana seat for Pilapitiya, it is sadly mistaken. Thinking people are disgusted with the mockery that is being made of the parliamentary system in the name of democracy. Ordinary people think the zig-zagging over Kalawana is a joke, so much so that bus and train commuters have already coined a new term "to do a Kalawana"—that is two persons to sit on a seat meant only for one. In the Sinhala language, this terminological quip is much more expressive than the English translation of this latest addition to Sri Lankan vocabulary. To "do a Kalawana" is already a classic.

Repeated rhetoric that everything has happened or was done about Kalawana is "according to the law" has not increased governmental prestige or credibility. The kindest sentiment is that the Kalawana acrobatics is a contemporary confirmation of the old adage that "law is an ass". The willingness to pass special legislation, even by holding a referendum, to accommodate an additional member is not being viewed as genuine and sincere adherence to democratic principles as understood by ordinary people. The UNP would have come out with flying colours if it had asked Pilapitiya to resign his seat after the Speaker's ruling that he was the duly nominated member for Kalawana under the New Constitution.

It is pointless speculating on the many "ifs" that Kalawana has spawned. This country will have to bear the expense of a national referendum and the cost of an additional MP—for what? To blame the Opposition for the Kalawana tangle and the ensuing Referendum is only to say that an Opposition was an unnecessary luxury—as Singaporean leaders say. The less said about this unsavoury episode in the Constitutional history of this country the better.

Kalawana has devalued the parliamentary system of government. Parliamentary democracy has meaning when it is played according to the true spirit of the rules. Formal protestations and loud claptrap about the virtues of the law as a justification for the Kalawana mock drama may delude a few, but only a few. If the people of Sri Lanka lose faith in the parliamentary system, Kalawana will have a lot to do with it.

THE NEW YEAR has dawned for Sri Lanka with a rush of interesting visitors to the island. Dr. Sheikh Yamani from Saudi Arabia dropped in unexpectedly from out of the blues—and confirmed that Sri Lanka would get more oil and also aid. A team to sign an agreement for the aid is in the island this week. But what is of real significance is that petrol rationing has been postponed by a few months. "This is our New

Year gift to motorists", Mr. Wimalasena, Chairman of the Petroleum Corporation had said. The successful negotiations to purchase additional 720,000 tonnes of crude oil from Saudi Arabia was the reason for continuing the splurge of oil that may soon drown the economy of the island.

The Minister of Finance and Planning, Mr. Ronnie de Mel, has warned the country (as he has often been doing in recent months) about the dangers inherent in the increasing oil bill this country has to meet. Manik de Silva in a report in the *Sunday Observer* of January 4, 1981 had stated, "Finance and Planning Minister, Ronnie de Mel who summoned the Secretaries of all Ministries to an urgent meeting on January 1 has told them that this year's oil bill will gobble up a huge Rs. 11,500 million. This sum, the Minister pointed out, represented a 42.6 per cent slice of the national budget and some 58 percent of the country's export earnings. '1981 will be a very difficult year for all countries. For us in Sri Lanka it will be the most difficult year since independence', the Minister said in a candid exposition of the economic difficulties the country faced. With further OPEC increases in the air and a 10-percent price hike already announced, the pressures the oil will exert on the economy will be tremendous.

"Mr. de Mel remarked that the cost of oil imports for this year alone exceeded the total budget of the previous administration. The Government had been able to carry on the economic development program and import oil and other essentials without a break only because of Rs. 10,000 million foreign aid obtained on the most concessional terms. 'If the foreign aid has not been available, we would have had to cut down both on development and imports. The present climate for foreign aid is not bright,' the Minister said. In the perspective of this gloomy economic picture, the Government has decided to appoint all Secretaries of Ministers as chief accounting officers of their Ministries so that the strict financial discipline required is rigidly enforced....."

"The Minister called upon all Secretaries to prevent unnecessary expenditure and curtail waste which still existed in many Government Departments and Corporations. 'If inflation is not brought under control this year, the whole process of bringing inflation under control in the country will become much more difficult in the future', he said. Mr. de Mel stressed that notwithstanding the difficulties Sri Lanka had to press on with its development programs 'developing more, producing more, exporting more and giving more employment to our people to better equip them to meet the rise in the cost of living'. Sri Lanka, he said, could not afford to cut down economic activity and cause unemployment as some developed countries are doing today. Britain, he pointed out, will have 3 million unemployed this year and minus growth rate. West Germany will have 1 million unemployed, France 1.5 million and the US 3 million unemployed."

In spite of these salutary warnings, most of the elitist groups, in this country, including parliamentarians, do not seem to be worried about the worsening economic

situation in the world and in this country. The daily papers, with over 70% of their columns filled with advertisements (mostly of consumer goods), do not focus attention on the economic realities confronting the country. One does not know when the volcano on which we are all sitting will blow up.

MINISTER RONNIE DE MEL added another feather to his cap with his negotiations with the Indian Finance Minister Vankataraman. The agreements on the new line of credit and further economic co-operation have no doubt brought India and Sri Lanka closer. But the most important part of the visit was that the Indian Minister was convinced that the stories that had been circulated by certain foreign correspondents and papers about Sri Lanka granting base facilities to the US were incorrect.

The *Ceylon Daily Mirror* in a frontpage splash on January 6, had reported: "The visiting Indian Finance Minister Mr. R. Vankataraman, has securely nailed the lie to the story that caused quite a flutter in some capitals of the world that Sri Lanka was geared to provide rest and recreation facilities to American Naval forces stationed in the Indian Ocean. Mr. Vankataraman has told a select group of Indian Pressmen: 'My information is that there is no such proposal.' The Indian Minister was answering a question about the widely reported proposal that America had sought rest and recreation facilities in Sri Lanka for its servicemen in the Indian Ocean....."

It is unfortunate that certain foreign correspondents, based in Colombo, citing unnamed "Western diplomatic circles", had despatched reports that Sri Lanka had already leased Trinco to the US (under cover of a refinery) but also permitted "rest and recreation facilities" to the US Navy. *Tribune* had for weeks endeavoured to run these stories to earth, but had failed. We were not able to find any basis for these stories.

It may be that certain western diplomatic circles in Colombo may have wishfully entertained hopes that the Sri Lankan government would give base and R/R facilities to the US. It may also well be some Sri Lankan circles would like to tie up with the West by having the US navy in Trinco. Such intentions may have floated in the minds of some people who may have even indulged in some drawing room chit chat, but *Tribune* has not been able to discover any concrete action to translate these wishes into practice. And what is even more significant is that the Sri Lankans who may entertain such dreams are not those who are in a position to do anything about implementing them. The President, the Foreign Minister and all responsible members of the Government have at all times maintained that Sri Lanka will not grant any base facilities to any foreign power.

Whether there will be any change in this matter in the future is not for us to say, but for the moment, as the *Ceylon Daily Mirror* put it the "Lie Has Been Nailed".

X X X

JOURNEY TO INDIA—8

The Afghan Lobby

B. S. P. Amarasingam

As I mentioned in my last piece, I was plagued with telephone calls from a "spokesman" of the "Afghan people in exile" no sooner I had installed myself in my room. The first call had come within two hours of my arrival. I asked him for his name—he said that it was not important until I agreed to meet him at a place of his choice. He did not want to meet me in the Lobby of Asoka Hotel where I was staying because he said it was over-run with security men.

I told him that I hadn't the time to go out for a meal at some other hotel. "Don't you, as a journalist, want to know the real truth of the situation in Afghanistan?" I said I would like to know the truth, but he could either see me in my hotel or my room or he could send me whatever literature or material he had to enlighten me on the subject.

"That won't do", he said, "there is so much to tell and I (and may be some friends of mine) would like to relate the stories first hand."

I said I hadn't the time for this because I had come to report on CHOGRM and attend another Conference.

"I know all that", he said, "but wouldn't people in Sri Lanka like to read first hand stories from real Afghan refugees....."

I told him I could meet him at my hotel for half an hour or so—no more and I could in that time elicit all the information he could give me. I rang off.

Within half an hour, he was on the line again. He would prepare all the material and stories, but he would give them to me only in person—because there were some matters which could be only conveyed in person. "Can you meet me for an hour or two?" I said, I couldn't, and rang off.

He came on again within fifteen minutes. "I have a world scoop for you about the latest developments in Kabul.....". By this time, his American drawl with his Pushtu nasal twang was getting on my nerves. I told him to give the scoop to *Reuters* to get a real world coverage and rang off abruptly.

But that did not stop him. He came on once more and this time I became really rude. Then he asked me "Are there no other Sri Lankan journalists (not official media men) whom I can contact?" I referred him to the Sri Lanka High Commission.

When I next heard his voice on the phone, I put the phone down. This happened once more—and I was rid of the pest.

The Afghan Lobby in Delhi has for many months made it the world propaganda headquarters for the anti-Babrak Karmal government. All stories were from "travellers" "diplomats" who had recently arrived from Kabul—no names or credible sources were cited.

A day or two after I arrived, a local paper, may be the *Times of India* published a report sent from New Delhi to the *New York Times* by its correspondent Michael T. Kaufman. It threw a great deal of light: "Amid widespread reports that the Soviet-backed Afghan government is exploiting old tribal vendettas to divide Islamic rebels, one insurgent leader today in New Delhi told of violent fighting between his men and other Islamic guerillas. The source, Mr. Mohammed Amid Wakman, the Secretary-General of the Afghan Social Democratic party, reported that on the night of August 26, about 25 fighters from his groups were attacked by rebel followers of Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, who commands the fundamentalist Hezbi Islami Organisation. In a full night of shooting, 13 of his men and 32 of Hezbi forces were killed and Mr. Wakman arrived here yesterday after spending two months in eastern Afghanistan. Mr. Wakman, who claims to have more than 5,000 men under arms and fighting against Soviet and Afghan forces, said his group has been isolated and scorned by the more militant Moslems. 'They call us third-class communists, but we are all good Moslems and we are also fighting the Russians.' He said that his 15-year-old party is, however, committed to sweeping progressive reforms such as land distribution and education for women. 'But we want to change through democratic means, not through force,' he said. Because of its policies the Party has been shunned and ostracised by the six Islamic groups that have formed a loose rebel alliance. In recent weeks, old suspicion has burst into open warfare, which Mr. Wakman said may have been encouraged by Soviet-sponsored provocateurs. He said there are more than 30 groups fighting in Afghanistan, ranging from outright brigands to tribal militias to large group of zealous religious warriors. 'If we cannot unite among ourselves, then how can we fight a superpower' said Mr. Wakman, adding that the internecine conflict is surfacing in Pakistan, the Pakistan border city where the major guerilla groups have their bases. He said six members of his group were recently kidnapped in the city and are being held captive by another group.....".

A few days later the *Statesman* published a *London Times* report datelined Peshawar by Trevor Fishlock: "The loose alliance of Afghan resistance groups with headquarters in Peshawar has all but crumbled. There is no prospect of any central leadership emerging in the struggle against the Russians, or of any concerted effort. The numerous bands of tribesmen in the hills are said to carry on a war of independent brave, sporadic and often futile actions. The only common thread is the fervent wish that the Russians would leave. Beyond that there is no joint purpose or sense of interdependence: indeed, there is resistance to it. The ill-equipped mujahidin (fighters in a 'holy' war) tenacious and fearless as many of them are, are just as enmeshed as the Russians who, given the nature of things in Afghanistan are not likely ever to eradicate the guerillas. The Afghan groups in Peshawar are deeply divided by other religious and ideological outlook as well as by family and tribal rivalries. Attempts to form a Govern-

ment in exile have failed, and an alliance between five of the groups is tenuous and likely to fragment. Leaders of the 10 liberation fronts, parties and revolutionary councils have rigid ideas about the Government and social system in an Afghanistan freed from the Russians, but jealousy and prejudice prevent them forging a common plan. This makes it harder for their movement to attract money and support. The mujahidin rely to a great extent on captured Soviet weapons and originals and copies of their favourite Lee-Enfield vintage rifle. Their constant demand is for modern weapons to attack tanks and helicopter gunships.

"It was only when people in Arab countries, especially Saudi Arabia told them to form an organisation as a conduit for money, that five of the Peshawar group joined in a liberation alliance which at the January Islamic Conference was able to present a paper unity. But one of the most important groups, Hizh-i-Islami led by Mr. Gulbuddin Hikmatyar would have nothing to do with the alliance. Mr. Gulbuddin is well-educated and strong-minded and his group has a hardline Islamic programme. He is intensely disliked by many of the other leaders. A spokesman for his group said: 'How can you expect us to join up with others who are so different from us. Some of them would even like the King to come back (King Zahir Shah was overthrown in 1973), so how could we unite with them? We are the oldest of the parties and have been working for an Islamic State in Afghanistan since 1963. Now we are the largest and control more mujahidin than any group'. Clearly there could be little agreement between Mr. Gulbuddin and two other leaders, Mr. Syed Gallani and Mr. Sibghatullah Mujadedi who both have large personal followings, are liberals and have the title of Pir, roughly the equivalent of 'Saint.' Mr. Mujadedi was once a religious adviser to the King, and Mr. Gallani is suspect in some eyes because he had ties with the King. Both men are part of the alliance but may have it and join the loyal Jirga (Big Council) set up by nationalists as a political body and headed by Mr. Gallani's nephew, Hassan. It is not a popular organisation and has so far failed to get off the ground. The expected departure of the two liberals would have three conservatives in the alliance, the groups

COVER

IN JAFFNA

FOR THE COVER this week we have resurrected an old picture of typical scene from Jaffna. We have done this to spotlight an article we publish in this issue about the discovery of a megalithic burial site at Annaikoddai in the Jaffna district. Dr. James T. Rutnam, the President of the Jaffna Archaeological Society, has written an introductory piece about this discovery. As we were not able to get a suitable picture about the site, we have fallen back on a stock picture with an endless array of palmyrah palms which are associated with Jaffna. Dr. Rutnam's article merits attention as it opens new visits to Sri Lanka's proto-history.

headed by Mr. Mohammed Mohammadi Professor Burhabuddin Rabbani, a senior and scholarly figure and Mr. Younus Khalis a tough tribesman in his sixties who spends much of his time fighting and whose group is active on the road from Kabul to the Khyber.....

"So the rebel groups will pursue essentially independent paths, obtaining money, not through a common funnel but through the efforts of their envoys in West Asia..... There is no co-ordination of the activities of more than 60 mujahidin groups. Attacks on special targets are sometimes arranged through negotiation with tribal leaders. A guerilla group wanting to cross another tribal area will have to negotiate, or even pay a toll. In many cases arms are handed out before an action and have to be returned after it.. There is a romantic image of the Afghan tribesmen, the fierce black-bearded, hawk-eyed fighter, governed by strict tribal codes in which hospitality and vengeance have a strong part. To some extent this is true. But there is also another aspect. The tradition of banditry is well established in Afghanistan and it is sometimes difficult to draw a line between acts of war and the acts of brigands. There is also the slippery nature of the truth about the war in Afghanistan. The mujahidin and their supporters tell lies of handsome proportions, reporting great successes in their battles with the Russians, with large numbers of enemy dead, helicopter shot down and burnt-out tanks. Yet, incredible though their claims are, and divided as they are, it seems unlikely that the guerillas will be beaten. It is partly a matter of their fierce loyalties and fighting skills. But more important, the idea of defeat, like the concept of unity, is not in their blood."

I had no more calls from this Afghan refugee. The Sri Lanka High Commission told me that they had given this caller the name of S. Piyasena from Lake House, but in the rush of events with CHOGRM I never found out whether the Afghan Lobby got any where with him.

(To Be Continued)

X X X

FILM FOCUS

Best In 1980

It could be said without any reservations that 1980 was a vintage year for Sinhala films. At least ten of the releases moved away from the formula rut, and captured the imagination of audiences in a very positive way. These were in alphabetical order, *Dandu Monara*, *Ganga Addara* (colour), *Hansa Vilak*, *Hewaneli Eda Minissu*, *Karumakkarayaya*, *Mayurige Kathawa*, *Para Dige*, *Parithyaga* (colour), *Sinka Bahu* and *Uttumaneni*. As the assessment for awards gets under way in 1981, there is no doubt that these films would vie for honours. Of these films, at least three of them—*Hansa Vilak*, *Hewaneli Eda Minissu* and *Para Dige*—veered more towards the artistic, and as always in such creations, could not make their creative deviation

felt appreciably at the Box Office, while the rest did not test or tease the tastes of average audiences and presented their themes with clarity and without the artistic mood over-running their course. Thus it was I believe, that *Ganga Addara*, gripped the people totally while *Hewaneli Eda Minissu* left them all at sea, confused and confounded.

I do not wish to dwell further on the qualitative aspects of this Big Ten, as they were reviewed in detail in this column for the benefit of *Tribune* readers and leave the task to the respective jurors whose task would be an unenviable one this year. I would like to add, however, that of this ten, the Gamini Fonseka inspired *Uttumaneni* and *Mayurige Kathawa* were at pains as in *Sarungole*, whose praises continued to be sung as at the Inter-Racial Festival for Harmony held at the Holy Family Convent, Bambalapitiya, recently—to surface the cankers of an antiquated social order, and visually present the cures for them. To this extent, these films shed a meaningful glow on the cine media, which did get across to the people, messages, where many sanctimonious sermons have failed to accomplish.

Moving on, I wish to reproduce here in this context a few lines of what a reputed film maker, Tarun Majumdar of India, has to say on artistic films, which he classifies as elitist creations, which prove unintelligible to the majority of movie goers. As he continues, and I would like to go with him a good part of the way, he states that "A film is essentially for an audience. What depresses me most in this regard, is the attitude of some of the most gifted exponents of art films, who have made it public, that they are not concerned whether people see their films. This is sheer hypocrisy and I would most humbly ask them for whom do they make films? Certainly not for self consumption! This attitude of theirs, I strongly

LETTER

Sir,

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

In introducing the contents of a pamphlet, published by the Apostolate of Christian Action in California on the above Commandments in toto, as a prelude to reviewing the relevant film, it was not my intention to tread on anyone's toes—least of all Father Claude R. Daly's. His chapter and verse objections to 'images' 'numbers' etc., should be therefore addressed to the source of this pamphlet, instead of chasing shadows in this column. There was absolutely no intention too, to kick up any anti-ocumenical dust. My apologies too, to my Christian comrades, who may have taken to the "Commandments" I reproduced, in the spirit that Fr. Claude has done. I hope however, there are none! Besides I am all for benevolence all around the Christian world.

James N. Benedict.

108, Manning Place,
Colombo 6.
4.1.81

—Correspondence on this subject is now closed—Ed.

assert, is the very negation of the basic objective of cinema, which is communication." I might add that a fine combination of art, clarity of presentation, and basic realism are the ingredients, if not the goals, which our cine creators should aspire to, and this column is more than certain, that 1981 will be stream with a worthwhile crop of films, with these tenets in mind. We are already on the right road, on which we have travelled a long way, and cine perfection by popular and elevated norms is not beyond us.

MAYURIGE KATHAWA (Sinhalese): Both behind and in front of the Camera, Gamini Fonseka strained with dedication, in this presentation, to surface a story that cuts through some of the deplorable "grains" that exist among our people with shades of hypocrisy to protect certain dying norms and conservative customs, that we would very well do without. To get down to this earthy story, which keeps one absorbed throughout, a young and attractive wife (Veena Jayakody) is tragically bereft of her rather buoyant and alcoholic husband (Tony Ranasinghe), and left a widow in her green years, with three school going children to tend and love, through the vacuum that had been suddenly sprung on her. Into this empty space strolls in a friend (Gamini Fonseka), rather mature in years, having sacrificed them to settle his sisters in marriage. A mother in law (Shanti Lekha) who does not understand or forgive easily, plays into an inquisitive and ruthless society, personified brutally by a thug (Somi Ramayake) who is well oiled by the former to keep the widow and the bachelor apart—after having been drawn to each other by a bond of sincerity during their working hours. The children are used as innocent pawns to help in the treacherous plot to keep the couple apart. Hovering like a hawk, Somi played the villain to perfection, while Shanti Lekha gave an award-worthy performance. Gamini, Veena and the former's son Dhamith, did just what was expected of them to keep the story on an even keel, while Tony and Iranganie Serasinghe as Gamini's mother twinkled brightly and briefly, before leaving the "spotlight". The film is directed towards indicating the plight and turmoils of young widows similarly placed and surfacing the sacrifices that tax young men of their "lot" when born among many sisters that moor them through the roots of their hearth and homes through the years. A family film that ends in a furious climax of righteousness that rules at curtains, to peel off the scales that blind many of us often. Do not miss this excellent film.

NINATHALE INNIKKUM (Tamil): Reputed Director, K. Balachandrar scours uncharacteristic terrain, and with the two raging young stars of South India, Kamalahasan and Rajani Kanth, has produced this musical which packs nearly a dozen busy songs, while touring Singapore, as in *Ore Vaanam*, *Ore Bhoomi* style which concentrated on America. The "yours lovingly" troupe is led by Kamalahasan into the "Boom Town" where every prospect pleases and only petty political perks and litter are held vile. The cleanliness of Singapore and the housing complexes that dot all around are taken in by the camera in beautiful colour. A thin

story twines around the film which also introduces the vivacious startlet Jayapradha, whom leukaemia claims in the end. The film is geared for the modern generation and for those who would like to take in mentally and visually the success story of Singapore under Prime Minister Lee Kwan Yew. It is also a travelogue that pleases to stimulating music—so why not stride into it for an evening's light entertainment.

James N. Benedict.

GRAMA SASTRA—32

—Scribblings On Uva Villages

The Pesticide Pest

by Gamiya

"You can call me Tillekeratne. I live in Wellawaya and have been living and working for a long time. I fell for all the advertisements and worked hard to get into a pesticide—weedicide—fungicide scheme, but now I find it was simple suicide. See what has happened to me: my feet are swollen. A few days ago, I went with my buffaloes to plough in Syaneris' small 1 1/2 acre plot, and I did it well, but by evening my feet had swelled up very badly. I happened to walk over a *nidikumba* grove (*mimosa pudica*) and soon, suppuration set in and my feet, as you see here, are more swollen than ever, more painful and I can hardly stand. I went to see a doctor and he said it was due to pesticide-weedicide-filled soil. I too thought so. I then went to the local ayurvedic physician and he said the same. He advised me to wash my feet three times a day with *delun* leaves, *siyambala* leaves and *kohomba* leaves (pomegranate, tamarind and margosa) and now I feed a little better, but what a sad sight to see those who suffer in silence after having gone through their fields with or without buffaloes. I feel those who advise to use these tragic pesticides are the worst buffaloes"....

So said Tillekeratne of the swollen feet about the agricultural officers of the swollen head! Why, Gamiya has even met an agricultural officer who has built up, all by himself, a big name in the area (the people think differently), who said: "I know pesticide is bad and dangerous for the farmer and his field, but what is to be done, that's my job. I have to push it, or, else go home."

Of what good is growth, if it is only economic or political growth? Isn't the struggle we are engaged in, on behalf of Man, and on behalf of the full man or total man, i.e. economic and social, and political, and cultural and religious man? Or is *dharma* going to be relegated to "Religion" only? Today, many governments have overriding commitments to economic growth and so, they would give up effective protection of the environment.

Even our government, for all its promises to uplift the whole man, is now pledged to satisfy a not-so-small group of capital-prone, profit-maximizing individuals who consider growth in their best interests, and all this in the name of human rights, development, progress but the feet still get swollen, more purses still get emptied, the small-holder still sells out, the cut-throat competition still goes on, the richer widening their empires and the poor eternally paying bankloans because their fields are small, their hopes smaller.

Tillekeratne, the tiller is getting his feet swollen again, and he is not so knowledgeable. He hasn't read this:

"The Green revolution is making the third world more dependent on the USA, especially on the already powerful American corporations such as those controlled by Ford and Rockefeller interests. The control over food and hunger is a new form of imperialism"

Moving Toward a New Society, Gowan, Lakey, Mayor, Taylor, 1976, p.44)

To share this with him, is a part of education, a part of killing *avijja* (ignorance) by *prajna* (wisdom). Otherwise, where is dharmista?

LETTERS

Disfranchisement

Sir,

The caption above may seem strange, Sir, may even cause annoyance to some of your readers accustomed as they are to what apparently to some others is a licentious departure from established terminology. Even Sirimavo's script-writer admirable in many respects uses disenfranchisement which the ex-Premier herself ever meticulously observant of dictionary norms, would brusquely repudiate if appraised of its spurious existence.

The O.E.D. which in Baldwin's words is "the nearest approach to infallibility on this side of Rome", gives it no currency. And the O.E.D. is generally admitted to be the English counterpart of Richelieu's creation, the statutorily established French Academy.

What however is passing strange is that the Chesteronian Editor of the *Tribune*, himself so finical and fastidious in such matters, should have passed in muster this strange phenomenon lurking in the serried columns of the *Tribune*, a newsweekly editorially far above contemporary journals in elegance of diction and appropriateness of idiomatic expression. Parallels may be adduced in support of the chopping dis-en-franchisement but the erratic genius of the English Language knows no restricting bounds of analogy or terminology. Free as the mountain air it moves uncontrolled and uncontrollable.

Mathew Arnold refers to the repetitious use of diocese for diocese by the *London Times*, a journal so much now in the news, with no warrant however for such licentiousness in either orthography or etymology. Disenfranchisement is not, whatever else it might be, an orthographical antic: however much

its genesis might conform to observed patterns of word structure, it is nevertheless a noticeable departure from entrenched terminology. The *Times* eventually returned to, remarks Mathew Arnold, or rather adopted the ordinary spelling.

There is no such thing as a small thing in such matters. Not every one may take his own way: that is the preserve and prerogative of genius undeniable which when it speaks transgressing the bounds of accepted usage, is itself creative of fresh idiom to pass thereafter into current usage unchallenged and unchallengeable. Critics may rave and pedagogues fret and fume; but the native eccentricity of the English tongue has to be honoured and adhered to without meaningful demur in the interests inseparable of both uniformity and intelligibility.

E. Seemanpillai

Mylambavelli.

06 December 1980

Poultry Farming

Sir,

I am a small poultry farmer. I take this opportunity to write to you seeking your assistance to expose, through the media of your much respected journal, the *Tribune*, the utter chaos, incompetence, inefficiency and may be even corruption that subsists in The Oils and Fats Corporation.

Among other projects, Poultry Farming was encouraged at the outset by the present UNP Government to help the Middle classes and the poor as a means of countering unemployment and inflation and the high cost of living. For this purpose bank loans were and are still readily available. Many of us have taken bank loans to run these projects such as Poultry Farming. Mr. Thondaman when he took office as Minister encouraged such projects as Dairy Farming and Poultry Farming.

From about a year ago there was a great shortage of poultry food. Then the Oils and Fats Corporation started a Permit System. Then a few months ago an advertisement appeared in the newspapers of the Oils and Fats Corporation calling all Poultry Farmers to forward to the Corporation a prescribed form duly filled up. Some of the cages to be filled up required the farmer to state the number of layers he had in his farm, the number of eggs per day produced and strangely the names of the places where the eggs are sold. About two months later came the nuclear missile from the Corporation to exterminate for all time the Small Farm who subsisted on loans. The prices of poultry food spiralled exceeding more than 50%. This price hike, sudden as it came, was unreasonable, unconscionable and unnecessary. The price of a 25 kilo bag of Customix which was Rs. 41/25 shot up to Rs. 67/—, Growers Mash shot up from Rs. 43— to Rs. 72—per kilo bag. The paradox of it all is that before the price hike the price of an egg we sold was about 65-70 cents. After the price hike the price of an egg fell to 55 and 60 cts.

and the market was suddenly flooded with egg. Small farmers like myself have to shut up shop, but the rich farmer flourishes. Though poultry food is not available freely in long established Forage shops, it is free available in certain favoured shops.

You will be doing a great service by all Small Poultry farmers in this country if you are able by the media of the *Tribune* to spotlight the unfortunate fate of the Small Poultry Farmer who has been brought to his very knees, and compel the Oils and Fats Corporation to reduce the price of poultry foods. Even if the price of eggs rises in the next few months to even a rupee or more, then what happens to the Consumer who is not rich enough to buy mutton, beef or fish and relies on eggs? Who will be able to buy an egg for one rupee? The majority of the people of the country cannot do so. Then the fate of the Consumer is at stake.

Chandra Kodituwakku.

12, Watarapoluwa,
Housing Scheme,
Kandy.

Editor's note :

A perennial problem is that of adequate amount of poultry feed. Each consecutive government has totally neglected this important aspect and the policy of the Ministry has seemingly taken a similarly disinterested view of the overall picture. *Tribune* understands however that the present management of the Oil and Fats Corporation has increased the production of feed substantially but at the expense of quality. The increase in livestock feed is still far below current requirements and the appeal exhorting dairy, poultry and pig farmers to produce more is as futile as the permit system now reportedly in force. *Tribune* inquires too as to the purpose of the advertisement and what arose from the replies reveals that it was another meaningless exercise to divert attention from the root cause of the problem? Now prices of feed have gone up, supplies remain inadequate, the black marketeer flourishes, the farmer suffers and the government loses more votes. One thing is certain—the rural youth who sought village poultry/egg production as an alternative to streaming to the urban sector for employment, will now neither have the opportunity to eke out a living at home and will hardly be in a position to pay bus fares to seek urban and FTZ employment. The purpose of bank credits to small farmers in these circumstances calls for no comment. As for the marketing of farm produce *Tribune* does not wish to emphasise the obvious.

Nuisance

Sir,

I would be grateful if you would publish the following on your "Letters" page.

Under what mistaken action of public-spiritedness have the authorities in Kandy permitted for the past two months the loudspeaker broadcast of pirth for twenty minutes every morning at 5 a.m.? It can be heard on the hillside where we live, more than one mile from the market square.

If the object is simply to awaken and mobilise the populace, a bull-horn or siren, essential features of concentration camps and prisons, would be more effective and appropriate. The use of a scratchy, poorly-recorded, distortedly amplified tape cassette, operated apparently by a child who randomly and repeatedly twiddles the dials from high to low volume and back again, only reinforces one's suspicion that the purpose is not edification but public coercion and nuisance.

Few sounds are more beautiful, putting one in mind of 'higher things' than *unamplified* pirth chanted in its natural context of *pirivenas* or private almsgiving. In the present circumstances, however, what it gained by this public annoyance is only further evidence of the vulgarisation and trivialisation of Buddhism in Ceylon.

Civilised countries promote regulations that respect their citizens' physical and mental privacy. Pirth should be the expression of religious sentiment, not of personal or sectarian power. The perpetrators of this barbarism, are one hopes, reaping large quantities of negative merit, and in their next lives may be found where they really belong, broadcasting at earsplitting volume the virtues and rewards of the National Lotteries.

Provoked Resident

Kandy.
12.12.80

Rent Act.

Sir,

The recent piece of legislation amending the Rent Act to "One House Owners" will definitely cause untold hardship to long standing tenants who fall into the category of over Rs. 100/- rentals per month. Most of the middle class and low income groups pay rents ranging from Rs. 150/- to Rs. 175/- per month. Everybody today is fully aware of the extreme difficulty in obtaining alternative accommodation and if at all one is successful in obtaining one it will be at a fantastic rent and a large sum as Advance which these two income groups can ill-afford and as a result thousands of families will be rendered homeless and be compelled to be on the streets.

May I suggest these three facts to be considered in the Amendment to the Rent Act to "One House Owners". To qualify as a "Genuine One House owner and obtain relief as indicated in the Amendment, a Landlord should be the owner of a single House for at least a period of 5 years prior to the date of the Amendment. A Landlord who has recently become a "One House Owner" by way of transfer, purchase or gift should go through the normal Law to evict his tenant. The new Amendment to the Act be made for houses whose rental is Rs. 200/- and over.

I trust this letter will catch the eye of our energetic and sympathetic Prime Minister who is also the Minister of Housing & Construction and he will consider making certain amendments to this piece of legislation before it becomes Law and thousands are left roofless.

— TENANT —

Colombo 6.

Of Buffaloes & Men

By Bwana Rafiki

On our estate we use buffaloes to draw a double bullock cart. It was training the first buffaloes to draw the cart that was an almost insuperable problem. For months we were held up for lack of men who would do it. When we had the men we made several false starts. It was only when I had declared my intention to sell the buffaloes that we really got started. One of the two buffaloes was a wild one, and he had been aptly named *Walimbe*, the Veddah name for that wild peak, *Friar's Hood*. The other buffalo was more placid and was called *Nuwaragalla* after that once inhabited hill in Veddah country. *Nuwaragalla* is still with us.

As I said, it was when I was about to get rid of the buffaloes that the man who had already made some ineffectual starts at training them came to me and said, "Come, I am going to train them". This time they were yoked to the cart without more ado, but one at a time with one of our cart bulls. The day I started writing this week's article a new carter who said he had worked with buffaloes before he came here had his arm caught between a buffalo and a post in the cart shed while unyoking buffaloes and opened his forearm which required stitching. He returned from hospital the next morning, which was yesterday. The day following the accident the regular carter refused to handle the buffaloes which had been in the fracas and I had to get the two yoked with the aid of a watcher, my superintendent, the regular support man when the buffaloes draw the cart and the stockman.

That night I caught a bus at Colpetty at 12.30 a.m. for Galle. I had a back seat and was able to stretch out my legs with my bag beside me and secured with its strap round my neck and slept all the way. At Galle there was a delay of an hour before I got a bus to Matara where I arrived at 4.30 a.m. again sleeping the way through. I found that the man I had come to see was in India. In charge of the house was his Sinhalese brother who was his image and had his voice and I changed into a sarong and slept for two hours. Then I got a bus back to Colombo and stood all the way to about Wellawatte. I caught the last bus from Colombo to the estate where by the dint of a little exertion I was able to get to bed by 11 p.m. In my round the cattle I found the bull shed had collapsed in my absence. The bull was out.

The next morning passed quickly enough at my desk in Colombo, all estate work, and two estates to look after now. There were cheques to sign by both owners, papers to file, letters to be written, all to do with the estate. My desk was a mess of papers, but it was tidiness itself when I finished. I think I must be a slow worker. The time spent at my work goes very quickly, often an hour in five minutes, so to speak. Then there was the regular business of getting to the estate as always by the skin of my teeth, but I have

anticipated events, I find. This comes of being a day late in writing this. Next, I was hopelessly late where I wanted to go, but my faith and persistence were rewarded.

What follows next takes an unusual turn. I was out for a run and as was my wont I visited an artist friend whose house overlooks the place where I run. He was putting the final touches to a large portrait. My friend asked me if I recognized the man. It was a magnificent portrait and the face looked familiar, but I could not place this very young looking face. I was told his name and still I could not place him. He was a boy I was told who used to do exercises on parallel bars while I had my runs. My runs are infrequent. However, it transpired that it was the young man who lived in the house virtually behind my friend's, and I visited his home where his dead body was laid out a few minutes later. He had been knifed in a fight.

The last day of this week's *Nguvu* was spent in Colombo and in coming down to Colombo I slept all the way and after a late lunch I slept again. Then I went out to buy birthday presents for two relatives abroad and another birthday present for the relation who was carrying them, all dictated by weight, two ties and a handkerchief. Then it was the Lionel Wendt the second time for that particular show made possible by its being put on again for three days. The first half was brilliant, near perfection itself, but the second half did not reach that standard. Perhaps the first half of the show had taken it out of everyone including the producer of the musical. In this respect I think we Ceylonese lack staying power, even in boat racing as it has been proved.

* * *

INSIDE IRAN TODAY — I

Introductory

By Nikil Chakravartty

The author went to Iran in August 1980 for an on-the-spot understanding of the extraordinary development in that country. He stayed there for four weeks. On his return, he wrote a series of articles for different journals including *Times of India*, *Indian Express*, *Ananda Bazar Patrika*, *Mathrubhoomi* and *Illustrated Weekly of India* and also for *PTI Features*. This Special Report is a complete piece out of all these contributions to different papers. Though six months have gone by, this Special Report in five parts will give a perceptive insight into present day Iran.

THE MORNING SUN was not strong but the chaos that prevailed in the crowded customs counter at Teheran's well-laid-out Mehrabad airport was overpowering. Fortunately for me, a couple of illustrated brochures on new Iran carrying Imam Khomeini's

portrait in my suitcase pleased the lady inspecting the baggage and I was let off earlier than I had expected. From the walls of the airport building, the father figure of the Imam looks down upon the passengers, quite a few of whom are Indians working in hospitals as nurses or doctors in the deep interior or technicians working in half-finished plants. One poster attracted me more than other—of a mosque in silhouette with clenched fists and an upraised bayonet symbolic of the new temper of the Revolution in the name of Islam.

This concept of the Islamic Revolution is precisely what took me to Teheran: the curiosity to know what stirred the millions in the Shahenshah's empire of glitter and gold, how the fourteen-century old call of Islam could be the motive-force behind a twentieth-century revolution. The presence of the Revolution could be felt as I was driven by a very friendly and highly intelligent IFS officer barely thirty years old. In a city with a totally Western get-up—unending streams of fast-moving cars with brand names familiar in any European city Datsun, Peugeot, Impala, Mercedes, Dodge—with Paykan (the British Hillman assembled not manufactured, in Iran) dominating. And as you look around you see the street names drastically changed—the longest avenue, the very artery of Tehran, changed from Avenue Pahlavi to Avenue Mossadegh, Reza Shah changed to Inqilab, the Boulevard is divested of its prefix honouring Elizabeth II: Roosevelt, Eisenhower all packed off along with the fleeing Shah's enormous baggage.

There is a new air of freedom, of relaxation, hardly any tension in this lovely city of Teheran, grown in the lap of Elbruz Mountain, snow-capped in winter but now wrapped in the autumn haze with the pollution of a million strong automobiles and a refinery, restarted in the neighbourhood. This city of Chinara trees lining every road, with green patches nurtured with tender care by every householder is a living testament to the progress of affluence in this poverty-infested country. Perhaps two-thirds of its area, the abode of those made rich and super-rich, came up with the oil boom since 1973-74 going up to the hill-side, while the indescribable squalor of primitive slums, is kept away from view in the southern fringe of the city, bringing out more than any other city in the world, the stark contrast between the two worlds of the Rich and the Poor—the rich enjoyed and got soaked in the depravity of the Pahlavi's false grandeur, while the poor looked up to the mosque, their only haven when all other political dissent was brutally suppressed by the Shah's CIA-trained terror police, the Savak.

A VERY DEAR FRIEND when I left Delhi, asked me to find out why Iran's revolutionaries were chopping off heads, a natural response to whatever came out over the media in our country. When I put this question to people around in Teheran—whether a hotel acquaintance, a friendly face at the restaurant or the more serious-minded in the National Guidance—the bulk of them had the same answer: the Amnesty International has counted 1200 executions since the Revolution; did they not know that in one single week pre-

ceding Imam Khomeini's banishment from the country in June 1964, over 15 thousand of his faithful flock had been shot dead by the Shah? Does not the world remember that on September 8, 1978—only two years ago—the Shah's troops surrounded a crowd of twenty thousand in one street square in east Tehran and moved down four thousand unarmed men and women and children by machine-gun fire from all sides and helicopters shooting them down from above? It was a magnumsize Jailanwala Bagh, only General Dyer did not have a helicopter. Today, this square is called Maydan-e-Sahoda, the Square of the Martyrs.

A little outside the city there stands Behist Zahra Cemetery, where is personified martyrdom, thousands upon thousands of them lie there, with sobbing relatives sitting with the portraits of the dead, young faces—the flowers that gave their life-blood to end the satanic rule. It is a national pilgrimage which can move millions all over the world—only if they knew the saga of these revolutionaries standing up to the brutalities perpetrated by the Shah's Savak. There is the grave of Ayatollah Talegani, one of the towering personalities of the Iranian Revolution: he died last year after seeing the consummation of his dream, the exit of the hated Shah and his entourage. This respected leader defied the worst tortures of the Savak—his own daughter raped by the brutes in his presence; himself forced to drink urine in the Ramzan. When they washed his body after his death, his mourners saw branded on his body, Savak's inscription.. "Long Live Shah"—which nobody knew when he was alive. At his grave people go, men and women, with flowers and tears.

THE ROAD WHERE I STAYED in a hotel is now renamed Avenue Talegani replacing the old name Takht-e-Jamshid (the Throne of the ancient Persian king Jamshid). Fifteen minutes' walk down this broad avenue brings you to the extensive American Embassy compound, now barbed wired and sand-bagged by student militants with rifles on guard duty. Here was the hub of the American overlord, now taken over by the sons of the Revolution. This is not a rowdy crowd you find when you talk to these earnest youngsters: for them, more than diplomatic immunities what matters is the nation's self-respect, the anger of independent Iran at finding their bloody executioner of yesterday being feted by his American bosses.

Will the hostages be released? Ask the man in President's Residence or the crowded Majlis building of the sombre-looking dignitaries in the Supreme Court: and you face the counter question what about returning the Shah's gold and the frozen national assets of Iran? What about uttering one word of regret for all the crimes committed by the Shah under the American aegis? Today nobody in Teheran says hostages would not be released, but they ask in exchange what they genuinely believe—and the world has to concede—is the rightful dues of the Iranian people.

From Western sources, I could learn that the entire brood of the Pahlavis owe their country about 17 billion dollars which they carted away from Iran: the former Shah had kept aside for himself one billion

worth of assets abroad. The Governor of the Central Bank of Iran, however, claims that the Shah's look would come up to 32 billion dollars. The aircraft by which he fled out of Iran cost 115 million dollars; its gold fittings—which included a solid gold toilet, cistern, flush, faucet and bath—are worth two million dollars. Obscene vulgarity indeed.

Out of the shop windows, whether it is the pastry shop—where you get delicious jilebis—or the dress-makers or the chemists or the booksellers, you can't miss the presence of Imam Khomeini's portrait, large or small. At places you come across the bespectacled intellectual face of Talegani. The chain of Kentucky Fried Chicken restaurants has at places dropped Kentucky—another sign of anti-Americanism that pervades in Tehran today—a sort of catharsis after the Shah's servile days. The cinemas showing semi-blue Western movies, the discotheques and the dance halls are all closed—some with marks of their having been burnt down in the turmoil of the week of the revolution less than two years ago; others just walled up.

IN THE MIDST OF THIS FERVID PROTEST against anything American, one is baffled by the sight of the very same shops stacked with imported goods, the American or Japanese camera, Dielena Rubinstein or Chanel perfumes, the latest issue of *Herald Tribune*, the plastic milk pack or the packet of Nescafe, and paper napkins everywhere—even in a taxi—an entire city culture made a prisoner of American presence, the happy hunting ground of multinationals. When I interviewed President Bani Sadr he repeatedly emphasised the dependent character of Iran's economy and naturally the American economic blockade has been playing havoc in it. Today most of these goods from the West come from either the Gulf ports or via Vienna as Austria has not joined the American blockade against Iran.

The stand-still state of the economy can be measured even from the hundreds of idle cranes that dot the skyline not only of Tehran but other Iranian cities as well. The Central Bank of Iran has estimated that one-third of the country's total work force of nine million people, are without jobs. By all yardsticks, an uncertain economic situation. Inflation runs high, while the new regime has yet to evolve a clear-cut economic policy. The Imam has of course issued his directive to the Government that "the welfare of the mostazafin (dispossessed)" must be guaranteed.

I heard from a research scholar that as early as 1961-62, assets of 361 US firms operating in Iran stood at 52 million dollars; out of these 100 big ones earned over 30 percent of the total profits of all industrial enterprises in Iran. The process was accelerated in later years. Some more figures were more startling. In 1974-75, four million dollars were spent by Iran on consumer goods imported from US. Ten Billion dollars were spent on arms purchase from US and eight billion dollars were paid in salaries to 40 thousand American military advisers in Iran (each got one lakh dollars a year).

The stunning figures were that out of 104 billion dollars earned by Iran from oil revenue between 1974 and 1978, as much as 78 billion dollars were spent on imports in the same period, the bulk from USA.

This anomaly between the euphoria on being freed from American domination and the helpless attachment to the western way of life, brings out the biggest contradiction that faces the Iranian patriot today. There is hardly anything that Iran can produce on her own; it is a grotesque example of a one-commodity economy—oil. Everything else from luxury goods to necessities—were spent out of the money made on oil. To this is to be added the bill for the huge arsenal that the Shah built. I got a glimpse of it when I went to Isfahan: along the airport runway, I saw miles and miles of helicopters rusting in the open, and I remembered a friend telling me that the Bell Helicopter enterprise had a base there, and the American engineers imported even their comfort girls from South Vietnam or the Philippines, despoiling this majestic city of Shah Abbas.

IN THEIR EATING HABITS, the average Iranian could not be totally denationalised. He loves his *nan* and he takes rice, delicious Persian rice with lots of butter, a piece of meat, a kabob but very little of spice. He is fond of sweets and his favourite ice cream is extra-sweet. It is a treat to watch *nan* being made in the open bakery at the street corner, how the sweating youngster kneads it and the elder one skillfully puts it in the oven—four qualities of them—and takes it out, and the queue waits at the right hour to take it home, hot and soft. In a health survey paper, I found that the average Iranian diet though falling short of the desirable by many points, exceeds by 150 grams in the consumption of wheat—thanks to the *nan*.

And they take fruits in plenty—melons, peaches, plums and apples; and at every get-together there is the plateful of salted pistachio and almond to munch.

They all drink tea—without milk but mouthful of sugar, in dainty cups. Under the Islamic Revolution, the beer shops that dotted Tehran streets have all closed down, no alcohol even in hotel rooms and even the diplomatic corps is struggling hard to get the alcohol import permit; Would Morarji have been happy in the Iran of today, I wonder since there is no Hinduja to help Kanti. Leaving behind only a sign board, the Hinduja's are not to be seen, since their patron saint, the Shehanshah is gone.

Iran with all the glamour of Tehran and the grandeur of Isfahan, the scholarship of Shiraz, or the oil wealth of Abadan and the chic Caspian resorts (no mixed bathing any more), the real Iran where more than eight per cent of her citizens live is to be found in the poverty-ridden villages. Rich peasants, numbering 17 per cent hold 45 per cent of land, middle peasants constituting 39 percent of the village population have just about 29 per cent of land; and poor peasants, 43 percent of the population with less than five percent of land. Side by side, there were huge estates held by the big shots in the Shah's court: a survey in two districts alone showed the Commander-in-Chief Amjadi, among others,

had 400 hectares plus a garden of three hectares. Another General had 200 hectares, an officer 400 hectares, a small fry Pahlavi 1750 hectares, and so on goes the list of ghastly exploitation. The survey showed that 55 percent of loans taken by the peasants was for their own livelihood and 91 per cent could not meet the cost of farm production.

Much is made of the Shah's White Revolution and there are "experts" who still think that had Iran not got messed up in political turmoil, much good would have come out of it. In a paper presented at the International Conference on American Interventions in Iran held in Tehran last June, Dr. Kazem Rajavi, formerly Professor of Political Science at Geneva University, exposed the hollowness of this claim and the loot cornered by the American firms from Iran's countryside; it is worth quoting a passage from the paper I picked up in Tehran:

"The land reforms that aimed at industrialising agriculture, didn't take any positive action to exploit the arable land, and, as a result, 80 percent of such land remained unutilised. It is strange that as per official figures, released by the former regime, indigent productive units were economically more fruitful than mechanised agricultural units. The former Pahlavi regime invited the US firms to make investments in Iran by granting privileges to them such as exemption from taxes and customs duty, and by undertaking to bear up to 50 per cent of the investment expenditure, and payment of 60 per cent of the expenses incurred on levelling of land. Out of a total of 40,000 hectares of agricultural land brought by the Iranian Government from poor farmers and put at disposal of the US firms, only 18000 hectares were cultivated by them. This happened at a time when such firms had received two billion dollars in aid from the Government during 1974-75. If the figure of 355 million dollars, wasted by the US firms on account of non-utilisation of 20,000 hectares of farmland allotted to them in 1974 and 1975, is added to the above, then we would be able to have an idea of the destructive role played by these firms in the Iranian agriculture."

Until 1965, Iran was surplus in food grains and to export rice. But the large-scale importing of American wheat ruined the small peasants, many of whom jobless tramped to the city.

No wonder that in this world of stark impoverishment, the Iranian peasant had turned to the clergy for succour. The mosque pointed not only the way to heaven but the clergy (who drew his livelihood from the contributions from the faithful) offered him hope and the strength to resist grinding injustice. Herein lies the secret of Ayatollah Khomeini's success and his emergence as the great Imam of the Revolution. (Incidentally, it is a sacrilege if he is called the Twelfth Imam, Mehdi, for whom the Shiites the world over are waiting, the Imam who disappeared and is expected to return when the world would be rid of injustice and inequity).

IT IS NOT EASY for the clerics to enforce the Islamic order of society. In this context, I noted how the

storm over chador blew. Chador is not a burqa, it is more like our chaddar covering the woman's head and the upper part of her body. Even under the Pahlavis, the chador was universally used in the villages. In the cities, the Western mode was introduced with such vehemence that the Iranian male or female could hardly be distinguished from a European. In the nationalist upsurge against Western domination, that the Ayatollah led, they tried to popularise the chador; when they tried to enforce it there was resistance from the city-bred. The present Government regulation is confined to women employees in Government offices being asked to keep their heads covered with at least a scarf even if they do not wear a full-scale chador. During this controversy last year, I was told, Ayatollah Taleghani quoted with approval the example of "Khanoum" Indira Gandhi's sari and her practice of keeping her head covered.

It is not that the role of women is ignored or devalued under the present dispensation. Throughout the Revolution women fought the Shah's regime side by side with men. I saw a huge mass rally on the Jerusalem Day in which the most striking feature was the active participation of a large number of women. Yet as part of the adherence to the Islamic law, the new Islamic Constitution has gone back on many of the gains won by women in the past, such as the right of divorce and abolition of multiple marriages.

—Mainstream, 11. 10. 80

To be Continued

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CUBA AND AFRICA — I

Introductory

By Robin Hallett

Cuba celebrated its 21st anniversary on January 1. We publish in three parts an article which appeared in the Bulletin of the South African Institute of International affairs. Vol. 4 No. 2 1980.

This article is an attempt by one who has never been to Cuba and is never likely to go there, to see what the world in general and Africa in particular looks like when viewed through Cuban eyes. It would be presumptuous, to make such an attempt had there not appeared in the course of the last ten years a number of remarkable scholarly works on Cuba in English, the largest and most readable of which is the richly documented historical study by Hugh Thomas, *Cuba, the Pursuit of Freedom*, a work which covers the last two hundred years of Cuban history. One should begin by getting one's own prejudices and preconceptions out of the way. Cuba, it has often been said in recent years, is a small country that follows the policy of a great power.

To many observers this seems somehow inappropriate. It will become an Englishman to condemn a relatively small island for sending some of its people on dramatic errands to different parts of the world. What else have the British been doing for the last two hundred years?

Cuba is also a country whose national leader, Fidel Castro, has carved out a special position for himself on the world stage. If one is looking for comparisons, one might point to the role of General Smuts, also the leader of a relatively small country yet one who played a large part in the founding of the League of Nations and the United Nations and the evolution of the British Commonwealth. One recalls the pride which some South Africans took in Smut's achievements: one also recalls the resentment his preoccupation with world affairs caused to his critics who felt he should be devoting more attention to the problems of his own country. These comparisons may perhaps help to lessen the shock with which Cuban activities are regarded. Therefore, to a historian there is nothing basically novel in what Cuba and Fidel Castro are doing. The novelty lies only in the fact that these activities come from a country of which most Europeans, and almost all South Africans, are totally ignorant.

TO BEGIN WITH SOME BASIC FACTS: Cuba is a small country, with an area of 44,000 square miles, not much larger than the Orange Free State, and a population of some ten million souls. This small country has had a tough and brutal history. In the sixteenth century its indigenous Indian population was completely wiped out by the depredations of the Spanish conquistadors and the ravages of the diseases brought with them. For the next three centuries it was a plantation colony based on the most unpleasant form of slavery, drawing all its slaves from Africa. Africa has thus made a massive contribution to the genetic make-up and to the culture of modern Cuba. At least half the island's population has some African ancestry, and African religious practices, music and dance forms, are still a part of Cuban life.

Long after the liberation of the mainland of Latin America, Cuba remained a Spanish colony. Today when Cubans look back on their history in the nineteenth century they see its most significant theme as one of anti-colonial revolt, culminating in the war of liberation of 1898, in which with American assistance, the Cubans finally succeeded in ridding their island of Spanish domination. Modern Cuba must be seen as a country with a long revolutionary tradition, reaching back into the nineteenth century. A powerful echo of this tradition occurred in November 1975 when Castro ordered the dramatic airlift of Cuban troops to Luanda and code-named the operation "Carlota", after an African slave woman, Carlota, who had led a slave revolt in the 1840s. Thus Cubans, like some Frenchmen, can see themselves as the heirs of long revolutionary tradition.

THE NEXT PERIOD of Cuban history that needs to be stressed is that from 1898 up to the revolution of 1959, when Cuba was a dependency—*de facto*, if not *de jure*—of the United States. The Americans had no hesitation

about intervening in Cuban politics. They possessed a massive stake, through their ownership of land and industries, in the island's economy and they exerted a massive influence on contemporary Cuban culture. "Even our bad taste", one Cuban writer bitterly remarked, "is imported from the United States." This brash American culture was deeply offensive to the Spanish pride of Cuban patriots. The signs of "Yankee Imperialism" were everywhere to be seen. Havana, once a proud Spanish city, had become the "Sin City" for American tourists. What cause could a patriotic Cuban feel for pride even when he looked at his own rulers? Batista, who ruled the island during the 1950s was not the most vicious of contemporary dictators, but he could certainly not be regarded as a President who inspired much respect.

In this world where Africa, Spain and America met and uneasily mingled, Fidel Castro was born in 1926. His father had come over from Spain after the war of 1898 and had carved out a sugar plantation for himself in one of the remotest parts of the island, so Castro is only a second generation Cuban. However, from his childhood, he must have been aware of the violence that is an endemic element in Cuban life. The eastern province where he grew up was notorious for its violence and at the age of thirteen Fidel himself led a strike of his own father's workers. In 1945 he moved to another violent setting, the University of Havana, where student activists carried revolvers and were always prepared to use them. He threw himself into University politics from the start and also enlarged his political education by visiting other parts of Latin America and observing revolutionary activities from close quarters. The belief, born of this experience, that it was the duty of revolutionaries all over the world to help one another and so develop a spirit of revolutionary international solidarity became one of the corner stones of his thinking.

CASTRO MADE HIS FIRST REALLY SIGNIFICANT APPEARANCE on the Cuban political scene on 26 July 1953, a day later regarded as the most memorable in modern Cuban history, by a dramatic gesture against the Batista regime. He collected a personal following of 150 young men—not students but working class people—and launched an attack on the police station of Santiago, one of the largest towns in the interior. The operation was a disaster, many of the rebels were killed and Castro was lucky to escape with his life. But he had achieved what he set out to do, make himself one of the folk heroes of Latin America. Castro was captured and imprisoned, but was released in an amnesty in 1955—an act which Batista had bitter cause to regret, for Castro immediately returned to the offensive, leaving Cuba for Mexico where he set up a training school for guerillas. Among those who joined him were his younger brother, Raoul, and an Argentinian medical student Che Guevara. With eighty men Castro returned to Cuba in 1956, set up a base in one of the most remote parts of the island, and rapidly attracted so much support that the Batista regime collapsed and Castro and his men were able to enter

Havana in triumph in January 1959. One is strongly reminded of that great hero of nineteenth century liberal England, the Italian patriot Garibaldi; charisma, mystery, drama—an intoxicating blend of attributes for a political leader, especially a revolutionary leader. For Castro must be seen as a man obsessed with the concept of revolution—nor was this obsession born in a vacuum. In his two years in the Sierra Maestra, Castro had come closely into contact with the poorest of Cuba's peasants. One did not have to be a Marxist—and Castro in these early days was too eclectic in his ideas to be a Marxist—to conceive the idea of bettering the lot of "the wretched of the earth."

THIS ARTICLE'S MAIN CONCERN is to look at Cuba's foreign policy over the last twenty years and it is based on "Cuban Foreign Policy" an excellent article by Jorge J. Domínguez, published in the journal *Foreign Affairs*, Volume 57, 1978. Domínguez makes the point that Cuban foreign policy has been based on the pursuit of five goals, which he lists as follows in order of priority: (1) survival to preserve the revolution intact and maintain the revolutionaries in power; (2) economic development, a necessary pre-requisite to survival and one that entails extensive foreign aid; (3) good relations with a range of foreign powers in order to ensure the necessary aid; (4) a significant part in the whole movement of international revolutionary forces; (5) the encouragement of revolution in other countries.

Every political leader has to be a pragmatist once power has been achieved and every political leader has to make choices. For Cuba, as for any "revolutionary" state, survival and economic development are more important objectives than engaging in revolutionary crusades.

From the start the policy of Castro and his associates was dominated by the hostility of the United States, but need Cuban/American relations have soured as quickly as they did? Certainly there were faults, errors of judgement or of behaviour on both sides. Many Americans wrote Castro off as a Communist from the start, yet it is clear that he was not a convinced Marxist-Leninist when he came to power in 1959. Americans were quick to resent the Cuban policy of nationalisation, the taking over of estates and industries usually with inadequate compensation. No doubt the Cuban could have handled nationalisation more tactfully—but Castro had an abrasive manner and he and many other Cubans were smug under a sense of American exploitation. By 1960 American attitudes to Cuba had moved beyond suspicion and resentment to unrelenting hostility. The US government was influenced by a powerful anti-Castro lobby, which had at its core a group of Cuban political exiles. The number of such exiles increased steadily during the 1960s. By the end of the decade half a million Cubans, 5% of the population, virtually the whole middle class, had left the island.

To Be Continued

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IN PAKISTAN

Checking Inflation

By Economist

INFLATION is perhaps the most ubiquitous, most pervasive and most visible phenomenon of economic developments of our times. In Pakistan, increase in the prices of domestically produced and imported goods and services was much sharper in the 1970s than in the 1960s. Pakistan is one of the many countries which has suffered from both domestic and imported inflation. The incidence of inflation virus has not been uniform among various countries of the world depending upon their stages of economic development, economic policies, resources endowments and importance of external trade, etc.

The annual rate of inflation in Pakistan averaged about 14.6 per cent during 1970-78 as compared with 3.3 per cent in 1960s. The purchasing power of the rupee has thus been slashed down to paisa 29 only since 1969-70. There have been critically high international inflationary pressures all around in 1970s on account of oil price explosion and other factors. The annual average rate of inflation in low income countries was lower at 10.6 per cent in the 1970s. Even the developed countries' record of inflation was not very appreciable either—9.4 per cent in 1970-78 as against 4.2 per cent in the 1960s. So inflation in Pakistan cannot be described to be unusually high as compared with other countries of the world. Surprisingly, the lowest inflation rate was recorded in Afghanistan during 1970-78 at 4.4 percent as against West Germany 5.9 per cent and Malaysia 7.2 per cent. The oil-exporting countries themselves suffered an inflation rate of about 20-25 per cent during the same period.

IT IS NOT POSSIBLE to completely halt inflation in Pakistan or as the world's soundest and most powerful economies such as West Germany and Japan have failed to achieve it. The rate of inflation in Pakistan, which looks so immense seems insignificant if compared with inflation in Argentina and some other South American countries. During 1970-78, the rate of inflation in Chile was 243 per cent per annum followed by 120 per cent in Argentina and 65 percent in Uruguay which were the world's top three inflation-ridden countries. Perhaps only before in 1923, the German rate of inflation was higher when it peaked to 30,000 per cent a month.

For certain specific items, the inflation rate in Pakistan can better be termed as hyper-inflation as in the case of housing-lands and construction inputs, which have gone up by about 900-1000 per cent and 500 per cent respectively during the 1970s. If land and construction inputs continue to go up as in the past, a room (of 16x12 ft.) which now costs about Rs. 25,000 will cost about Rs. 1 lakh in 1990 (including the cost of land). A 5 MALA plot which now costs Rs. 25 thousand

is expected to be available for about Rs. 2.5 lakh or so in 1990.

Inflationary pressures constitute only a part of the complex economic problem. Other important symptoms are unemployment, widening import-export gap, increasing dependence on foreign aid, budgetary deficit, heavy taxation and deficit financing. There is a net addition of nearly 24 lakh persons to the country's population every year at a growth rate of 3 per cent as against an increase in per capita GNP of a little over this percentage. The long gestation period of annual investment of Rs. 3000-4000 crore, credit expansion of Rs. 500 crore or so annual fresh taxation of Rs. 100-200 crore and international inflation running at about 10-15 per cent per annum, a large population of children of about 39 million, i.e., nearly about 50 percent of the total population as dependents consumers, and finally an insignificant per capital growth in national income are bound to add fuel to the inflationary fire.

Only in the past few weeks, the country has seen another hike in the prices of powdered milk, butter, biscuits, jam canned food, soaps and fruits and vegetables and other items by about 25 per cent or so. It is not yet clear whether the manufacturers/importers got the required permission from the authorities or not. Ostensibly there could be no reason for such a steep rise. The surprising fact is that whatever the producer or importers charge what they feel there seems to be no check on them. They are fleeing the poor consumers at will and no administrative machinery is in operation at the moment to check them or to ensure just increases. Apparently it is free for all everywhere and consumers are being exploited without let or hindrance. Although administrative measures for checking profiteering are not permanently successful it cannot be denied that they have not proved their utility at times. Prices of many commodities remained somewhat checked and did not rise for a number of months in the recent past mainly because the administration took severe measures, but as soon as these measures were relaxed, the price increase started once again.

THE FRESH WAVE OF INFLATION has added to the sufferings of the people and would further cut into their already miserable living levels the recent price increase cannot be attributed to any conventional economic factors like deficit financing, increase in taxation, gap between supply and demand etc. The only factors are that there is hardly any competition and local administration has apparently decided to keep its hands off. The business community in Pakistan is used to earning high profits which cannot be reduced by the Government through economic tools alone. Unless they earn astronomical profits, their lust for money does not stop. So in such circumstances, price control measures backed up by sound economic policies can manage to bring down or stabilize prices and make them earn reasonable profits. This is not to say that price controls are found to be always effective or useful but they are necessary in Pakistan supported by sound monetary and fiscal measures. The moment the price controls of commodities are lifted or relaxed, their prices shoot up.

Another evidence which confirms that the industrial and business community is engaged in plundering the public is the annual or seasonal "sales" weeks organised by them in which they apparently reduce prices by 30 percent or so. The fact they reduce their prices by 30 percent, or so means they are otherwise making profits by 40 or 50 per cent or even more. The pinch of inflationary pressures is felt more in a poor populous country like Pakistan than elsewhere firstly because the income of most of the households increase by about 5 per cent a year as against normal growth of inflation by about 15 percent increase in number of dependants and rise in expenses of the existing dependents as a result of natural growth and higher needs during the year. So whereas income increases by 5 per cent per annum, it is roughly estimated that total increase in the expenditure of a family is anywhere around 20-25 per cent per annum on account of above factors. So at the end of the year, he finds himself still poorer and his income availability per capital substantially reduced. IT IS ESTIMATED that if a family earned an income of Rs. 500 per month in 1969-70, his monthly earning should be between Rs. 2500-3000 in 1980 in order to maintain his 1970 living standards. Prices in Pakistan have also shot up because of increase in imported prices. For instance, in 1972-73 the crude oil import value/ton was 18 dollars which rose to 104 dollars in 1978-79, wheat per ton from 29 dollars to 158 dollars, fertilizer from 105 dollars to 180 dollars, edible oil from 287 dollars to 709 dollars and tea from 718 dollars to 1652 dollars. The Government can do little to reduce the costs of imported goods. The causes of inflation are generally demand-pull or cost-push. Sometimes, neither of these factors is in operation and yet the prices of certain goods go up. On other occasions, it also happens the impact of cost induced factors may be 5 per cent or so but the price of the commodity would rise by 20 percent or more.

The problem with the Pakistani entrepreneurs and businessmen is that they have an inexhaustible craving for limitless profit. There is no cause to question profits or grudge if they are obtained through skills and knowledge, entrepreneurial innovation, technical and scientific or by efforts, exertion, diligence and performance but in Pakistan, our entrepreneurs have not such record to show. Their profits are multiplying at the cost of consumers. It is undeniable that inflation is inevitable in a development progress because of certain inherent factors such as time lag between investment and production, increase in taxes, duties, defence expenditure, etc. It is, however, necessary that the rate of inflation should be restricted to a manageable and safe range for the sake of a vast majority who are living at a bare subsistence level. Any fresh wave of inflation would hit them much harder than it may hit the richer or affluent classes of the country and leave them still poorer.

The government has undertaken a number of corrective measures to stabilise prices by liberal imports

of essential products, increasing production of food and other domestic items, rationalising distribution, curtailing monetary expansion and allowing subsidies on wheat, edible oil, fertilizer etc. Subsidies which amounted to only Rs. 30 crore in 1970-71 have now gone up to over Rs. 700 crore. The administrative machinery must also be geared up to mount an offensive against profiteers, hoarders, black-marketers, smugglers, etc. There should be no let up and the machinery must be in regular operation to enforce price discipline.

There is a Directorate of Price and Supplies under the Ministry of Industries. Nobody knows what it is doing. A new high-powered organisation, Federal Price Commission may in its place be established directly under the President to keep a constant watch and determine the prices of commodities. The new commission should have the powers to regulate, freeze or enforce prices of commodities. The proposed commission should have branch offices in all the provinces with full staff comprising accountants, economists, engineers, agriculturists along with separate enforcement staff of magistrates and police force dealing exclusively with the task of price-determination and enforcement in the country.

It should be made obligatory on the part of manufacturers to print ex-mill wholesale and retail prices on the goods produced by them, wherever practically possible. It is also essential to reduce deficit financing to the minimum. Budgetary deficits should be met by improved tax collection and eliminating evasions, under invoicing and over invoicing of foreign trade, etc. It is common knowledge that corruption is rampant in the revenue collection departments. The Government must take strong and effective measures to cut down the leakage. Towards this surprise raids may be conducted on the residences of the officials of the Income Tax, Customs and Excise Departments to assess their living standards. Such officials as may be found have misused their position should not only be dismissed but also their assets confiscated.

Pakistan imports commodities worth Rs. 4,500 crore annually. The costs of imports are usually inflated through invoicing by private importers. When a commodity is imported into Pakistan its price is charged according to the price quoted in the documents and he thus fixes or gets prices fixed from the Government at an inflated rate. With a view to overcoming this problem, it is suggested that the Government should get rates prevailing in the market of exporting countries and accordingly make suitable adjustments for freight, insurance, profit margin etc., to fix the prices.

The condition for getting prior permission of the Government for any rise in the prices of the commodities may be extended to at least 100 items. The present list is too short.

AT ANNAIKODDAI

A Megalithic Burial Site

—in the Jaffna District—

By Dr. James T. Rutnam

President of the Jaffna Archaeological Society and the Member of the Council and the Faculty of Courts of the University of Jaffna.

IT IS OVER FIFTY YEARS since the first megalithic urn burial site in the Island was discovered at Pomparippu. Not much excitement was created by the discovery, as its significance was not known at that time. In the past fifteen years more megalithic sites have been discovered in the Island and their importance for the study of the early history of this country is beginning to be realised. It is not surprising therefore that the discovery of the first megalithic burial site in the Jaffna District some days back has led to much excitement in that area.

The discoveries made by the archaeological survey team from the University of Jaffna in the first two weeks of December 1980 are indeed sensational. For a very long time nothing was known about the pre-and proto-history of the Jaffna District and one had to be content with the legends of the Nagas of the chronicles that passed for history. For the first time now a scientific study of the proto-history of that region has been made possible by the archaeological discoveries at the mounds of Annaikoddai, about four kilometers north of Jaffna town.

One of these mounds had been harbouring a veritable burial complex dating back to pre-Christian times until it was laid bare some weeks ago by workmen removing earth to fill the Navanthurai Lagoon. It was at this point that the team from the Jaffna University moved in to save some of the precious artefacts and skeletal remains from being subjected to a second burial in another place that was being reclaimed from the Lagoon.

The discoveries include skeletal remains from extended burials and urn burials, iron tools such as spear heads and daggers, parts of copper bangles and a copper rod, a large amount of black-and-red ware that is typical of megalithic sites in Sri Lanka and South India, Roman rouletted ware and even objects with dateable writing one of which goes back to the third century B.C.

There is a reference by the Dutch writer Valentyn to some finds suggesting a sort of Roman settlement in the first century A.D. in Mantai in Mannar, more or less comparable to Arikamedu on the opposite coast of South India. But the evidence now appearing is of very much greater significance, for they confirm the lurking anticipation a few of us have had, since the discovery in the twenties of urn burials at Pomparippu, that there was a megalithic phase common to the whole of South India and Sri Lanka preceding the early historic period.



LOOKING BACK, it would seem that we had treated the large number of discoveries in many parts of the country where evidence of a megalithic phase had been observed, with indifference, not to say, very little appreciation of their far-reaching significance.

As far back as 1886 levers had found an ancient burial place in Gurugalhinnai in the Anuradhapura district. This had been also noted by H. C. P. Bell in 1892. It was a megalithic site, but the report of further investigations by Godakumbura in 1965 has yet to see the light of day. Hugh Nevill is on record as having discovered a cinereal urn at Malikam Pitti in 1887. A. C. Hocart announced the discovery of the Pomparippu urn burials in 1924.

It will be sufficient here to note a few names of places where discoveries had been made of urn burials, dolmens, cists, extended burials, black and red ware, etc. all pointing to a megalithic phase in Sri Lanka. These are, to be brief, the Gedige in Anuradhapura, Kantarodai in the Jaffna District, Kollankanatte in the Puttalam district, Katiraveli in the Batticaloa district, Padavigampola in the Kegalle district, Gurugalhinnai in the Anuradhapura district, Kokebe in the North-western Province, Makewita in the Gampaha district, Habarana, Okanda, Mantai, Tissamaharama, Galsohankota at Pinnewa, Asmadala, Kummargoda, Ibbanatawe in the Gampaha District, Itikala, Bambaragastalawa, Kudubigala and Panamamoderagala.

Vimala Begley and others of the University of Pennsylvania did some excavation in Pomparippu in 1970, but their report has not been published as yet. It is understood that Begley had estimated as many as eight thousand graves in the three to four acres that form the megalithic cemetery at Pomparippu.

Commencing on some of these sites, S. Paranavitana in his work entitled *Sinhala*, published in 1967, wrote on page 7: "These megalithic sites and urn fields are found throughout the regions inhabited by Dravidian-speaking people. The burial customs to which they bear witness are referred to in early Tamil literature. It is therefore legitimate to infer that the people who buried their dead in dolmens and cists, as well as in large earthenware jars, were Dravidians". He continued (on page 9): "The few megalithic monuments and urn burials discovered in Ceylon are obviously an overflow from South India." We have now discovered that these are far from being "few" and with further study are also compelled now to accept that they are not an "overflow" from South India, but a part and parcel of a single matrix of culture and identity that bound South India and Sri Lanka together in the past. While Paranavitana had chosen to call the bearers of this culture Dravidians, we would prefer to avoid names for the present and to confine our attention purely to scientific study as distinct from political chauvinism or religious fanaticism. Is there much point in wanting to know in the present context which came first, the chicken or the egg?

THE UNIVERSITY OF JAFFNA has an excellent staff of historians and archaeologists, led by that indefatigable scholar Professor K. Indrapala, who is also the Director

of the Evelyn Rutnam Institute for Inter-Cultural Studies in Jaffna. A senior lecturer, S. K. Sitrapalam, has now finished a doctoral course in Archaeology at the University of Poona and young P. Ragupathy is already an M. A. (Archaeology) from the University of Mysore. They have a set of keen and diligent graduates working with them.

These scholars seem to attach great importance to the discovery at Anaikoddai. Jaffna seems to have shared a common culture with Tamil Nadu in the pre-Christian and early Christian centuries. Roman rouletted ware has been found at such sites as Uraiyur and Kaveripattinam in Tamil Nadu, and its presence at Anaikoddai shows that Jaffna too was in its own way influenced by the Roman trade with Tamil Nadu in the 2nd and 3rd centuries.

The excavation at Kantarodai in 1970 had exposed megalithic cultural artefacts, especially black- and-red ware, in the earliest phase of that site, dating back to the 2nd century BC.

One noticeable fact at Anaikoddai was the discovery of a large number of potsherds with graffiti marks comparable with those of South India. No Buddhist, Jain or Brahminical influence is revealed by any one of these finds. The Pomparippu finds compare in some cases with those at Adichanallur in the Tinnevely District, which some date as early as the 9th century B.C.

One is reminded on this occasion of the prophetic words of Dr. Paul E. Pieris, when he declared publicly at a meeting of the Royal Asiatic Society as far back as 1919: "I hope the Tamil people will realise that in truth there is buried in their sands the story of a much more fascinating development than they had hitherto discovered... for, 2000 years ago, Jaffna was an important and flourishing district. Coins in abundance have been discovered indicating a flourishing condition of commerce not only in Roman times but far anterior to that."

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BOOKS

● Sri Lanka ● Indonesia

NIGHT OF THE DEVIL BIRD AND OTHER STORIES by Rita Sebastian (published by Niloo Bhatt and printed by the Times of Ceylon Ltd.)

One with a flair for good prose writing quite often opts for the Short Story as a literary exercise, both to derive pleasure for oneself and to give pleasure to others. Whenever the necessary equipment is lacking, be the narration ever so good, the story fails to quicken the pulse and stir the imagination.

Rita Sebastian in her *Night of the Devil Bird* offers the reader a collection of eight Short stories everyone of which is well up to standard narratively. Those among them that quicken the pulse and stir the imagination the reader could pick out for himself with ease, and

these amply compensate for others in this anthology that appear to be basically short of these ingredients.

What is common to all the stories is the author's very clear perception and understanding of and sympathy with a way of life far removed from the urban and therefore so much closer to realities which are socially pervasive. This close-up look without blinkers sensitizes *Night of The Devil Bird*, giving it the authentic dignity of the literary short story. And "Two Worlds", though a much briefer piece, comes a close second.

In each, however, designedly there is an apparent dichotomy. To take for example *Night Of The Devil Bird*, there is the dichotomy of subjective fact—the felt love persistent on Saroja's part—and Ananda's patent unconcern for the inter-communal travail leading up to the brutish ravishing of his sweetheart. This is the strength of the story, calling upon the reader to pass judgement upon two sectors of society, one harming the other harmed, one loving despite being harmed, the other harming, and yet grasping the opportunity to become possessive.

Night of The Devil Bird lays the literary gateway wider open for Rita Sebastian.

R.B.T.

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KALEIDOSCOPE Vol. V. No. 9 Published by Eurasia Publishing Corporation, Hongkong \$ 3.

The issue reviewed here takes a close look on Indonesia covering the country's History and Culture, Economics and Banking, Industry and Agriculture, Hotels and Tourism, People and Science and Technology. Dr. Ruslan Abdulgani, formerly the country's Ambassador to the U.N. is of the view that this issue gives the "readers a detailed picture of where the nation stands in its efforts to achieve a greater level of prosperity and social equality for all Indonesians."

Indonesia comprises of some 13,700 islands with a history that dates back thousands of years. There are around 300 different cultures speaking over 350 different languages and dialects. Of the country's population of 140 million, 58% is concentrated on the 8% land area in the Islands of Java and Madura. On achievement of independence in 1949, the people chose as their national motto "Bhinneka Tunggal Ika" which means "Unity through Diversity" and this is etched on the state crest. Raj Ghose has contributed a most useful article tracing the progress of the country from ancient times to the present day when "the nation is charting its course towards a new era of peace and prosperity under the present pragmatic leadership". According to Ghose the fossilised remains of the Java man excavated in 1891 is believed to have belonged to one who had lived "half a million years ago and marked a definite stage in the evolution of man."

The publication opens with an interview by Kaleidoscope with President Soeharto during which he discusses his concerns, hopes and goals for the future of

the country. In her interview with Kaleidoscope, Madame Soeharto speaks of the construction of Taman Mini (Indonesia in Miniature) which is intended to provide a setting in the country in order that the people in the different islands will be able better to understand each other and their country.

The sections on Javanese Batik and Hotels and Tourism are lavishly supplemented with delightful colour plates. The Batiks in particular are of rich hue and it cannot be an accident that the models portrayed are equally pretty.

The Minister for Administrative Reform, Mr. Johannes Sumarlin has also been interviewed by the magazine. Speaking of the need to create an efficient bureaucracy the Minister points out that "efficiency of the public service is a key determinant of the success of any development effort and adds that the depth of this awareness is under-scored by the fact that the Government established a position of a Minister of State to handle this area. The Minister refers to the creation of "greatly improved foreign investment machinery which will now provide 'one-stop-service' to the interested potential foreign investor". It has been pointed out that procedures have been simplified as an incentive to foreign investors.

Recreation for the people has not taken a back seat. A vast swamp has been transformed into South East Asia's largest and most complete recreation center. Taman Impian Jaya Ancol (The Dreamland of Indonesia) opened its doors to the public in 1967. During the first year of operation it is reported that there were 200,000 visitors. In 1978 there were over nine million. "It is another world, a hedonistic escape from routine and realities, a place where anyone and everyone can relax, roap and recreate" says the article.

Devaratnam Danforth

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AS OTHERS SEE US

Sri Lanka—A Taste Of Dictatorship

Reprinted with Acknowledgements to **The Economic & Political Weekly**, Bombay, November 22, 1980.

SRI LANKA has long prided itself on being a parliamentary democracy. Ever since it became free of its imperial master in 1948, a multi-party system has flourished in the island, governments have been regularly turned out of power and except for the insurrection of 1971, political dissent has normally expressed itself through parliamentary and legal trade union channels. Now it is quite clear that the fundamental rights associated with parliamentary democracy are being fast eroded with intensified violations of human rights, the menace of authoritarian rule looms over the country, and as has happened with many other countries,

appears as the necessary concomitant of an economic policy based on foreign investment, export-led growth and the blessings of the IMF.

The United National Party came into power with four-fifths of the electoral seats, promising to open up the economy and invite foreign investment in an effort to create jobs, while generally following the welfare policies such as subsidised food, free medical and educational services, cheap transport etc., that had marked Sri Lanka's policies since independence. However, in opening up the largely stagnant economy, the government had to fall back on the IMF for balance of payments support and was actually forced into all the forms of available IMF support including the fourth tranche, becoming liable to the severest terms of "conditionality."

IMF PRESCRIPTION. Thus, in terms of IMF prescriptions for third world countries in financial difficulties: (1) The currency was devalued over 100 per cent from the earlier official rate; (2) Import controls were removed, letting loose an indiscriminate flood of goods consisting of largely non-essential items such as reconditioned vehicles, electronic equipment etc; (3) Foreign exchange and foreign travel restrictions were generally lifted; (4) Subsidies, especially on food, were removed to be replaced by a food-stamp scheme for the poorest sections, i.e., those below a monthly income of Rs. 300. The overwhelming majority of urban workers are above this level of income; (5) Realistic price levels were established for services and goods supplied by public sector industries and utilities—transport, power, postal facilities etc.—resulting in large price increases; (6) The management of certain state-owned industries was handed over to local and foreign private firms; this is a continuing trend and will result in privatisation of the public sector; (7) Banking was opened up with legislation to provide for off-shore banking and foreign banks were invited to come in. Earlier the banking system had been monopolised by two State-owned banks; (8) Generous tax allowances and rebates were offered to private investors in tourist facilities, industry, transport, housing etc.

The government has promised generous tax holidays and guarantees for foreign investors, guarantees which will even supersede the sovereign laws of Parliament, and has created for their benefit a free trade zone. Foreign banks have been encouraged to create in Colombo and off-shore banking centre. Tariffs have been adjusted in favour of imports and to the detriment of import substitution industries which had been established earlier. Imports have even damaged the subsistence agricultural sector; the real prices going to the producers have sharply declined, causing much hardship to the peasantry.

This package of measures has effectively meant the dismantling of the welfare system which had been built up in Sri Lanka over the past four or five decades, a system that was unique among third world countries and had indeed contributed to its high ranking in the so-called quality of life indicators.

DISASTROUS FOR PEOPLE. The effect of these new policies on the large mass of people has been disastrous. The inflation rate over the last three years has been generally estimated to be well over 30 per cent annually. The government itself has said that the inflation rate last year was about 35 per cent; a World Bank estimate quoted in the *Lanka Guardian* has spoken of a 42 per cent inflation.

The official Cost of Living Index computed by the government's department of statistics (Colombo Consumers' Price Index) showed an increase of 15 per cent during the twelve months of 1979. However, it is generally accepted that this index is defective in many respects and is a gross under-estimation of the actual rise in the cost of living. Since there is no comprehensive index of price movements, it is not possible to gauge accurately the actual rise in prices. However, the *Economic Review* of the People's Bank has attempted to calculate the purchasing power of the rupee under varying sets of assumptions, as shown in the Table.

TABLE: PURCHASING POWER OF THE SRI LANKA RUPEE

	Based on the Col. Consumers' Price Index.	Based on Whole-sale Price Index.	Based on GNP Deflator.	Based on the Estimated Rise in the General Price Level
1977	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
1978	0.89	0.86	0.87	0.85
1979	0.80	0.79	0.76	0.69

The Government has tried to mitigate the effects of the drop in real incomes of wage earners by giving since 1977, three wage increases. But, in a situation where the minimum wage in 1977 was about Rs. 200, these rises have not kept pace with inflation. Though there is no national minimum wage and different criteria operate in different sectors of the economy, it is general experience that the minimum wage would now be about Rs. 350 to 400 per month. It should also be noted that most wages are not tied to the cost of living index. And this is in a situation where a member of Parliament of the ruling UNP has calculated that a family of three requires at today's price levels an income of Rs. 1,000 a month merely to stay just clear of the starvation line. The *Jatika Sevaka Sangamaya*, a trade union affiliated to the UNP and of which current Minister of Industries is the president, has passed a resolution that the minimum wage should be Rs. 800 a month.

The Government has attempted to lay all the blame for rising prices on world inflation and the rise in oil prices. However, while there is no doubt that externally-induced inflation has also contributed, it is actually the policies of the State that are primarily responsible for the alarming rise in prices. The main economic policies of the government—the Mahaweli multi-purpose project, the Free Trade Zone and its enclave industries

manufacturing for an export market, the free imports of goods leading to a drop in local production, the investment of over Rs.2,000 million on a new Parliamentary Complex, the investment in luxury and middle-class housing and on hotels and commercial buildings—are all of a kind that would necessarily lead to inflation. It is interesting to note that even the World Bank which played a key role in fostering the export-oriented development strategy has viewed with grave concern the inflationary impact of the Urban Development Programme and other grandiose projects. Money supply, which grew by 11 per cent in 1978 recorded an increase of 29 percent in 1979. The government's policy of massive foreign loans for development as well as consumption—64 per cent of the government's capital budget is financed by foreign loans and grants and the total debt burden is now over one billion rupees—has also contributed substantially to the growth of money supply.

This steep rise in prices, coupled with the withdrawal of subsidies on such items as food, fuel and transport has meant enormous difficulties for the urban working and middle classes in particular as well as the large mass of peasants. There have been equivalent increases in the prices of agriculture inputs but the government guaranteed price of paddy has actually declined in real terms. A bushel of paddy which was valued at Rs. 36 in 1976 now fetches only Rs. 40. This coupled with imports of subsidiary food crops and a consequent lowering of prices, has tended to depress the conditions of the rural poor.

However, the rate of inflation figures hide the grim reality. To consider only a few few basic items—kerosene, the general fuel for illumination and cooking, has gone up from Rs. 3.88 in 1977 to Rs. 15.30 in 1980, a rise of 394 percent; wheat flour from Rs. 1.05 to Rs. 2.35 a rise of 124 per cent; bread from 60 cents to Rs. 2.00, a rise of 241 per cent.

REPRESSIVE MEASURES. The government appears to have been well aware that its economic policies would set up intolerable stresses and strains, which might have been difficult to overcome within normal parameters of parliamentary democracy and trade union rights. It has therefore prepared for this situation under the guise of ensuring efficiency in government and political stability. The measures they have taken include the following:

(1) The promulgation of a new constitution which established an executive Presidency. All power is now concentrated in the President, who is elected by popular ballot. His term of office is not concurrent with that of Parliament; for example, the present President, who was elected to the post by Parliament, will continue till 1984 while Parliament will dissolve in 1983. He will preside at all Cabinet meetings, arrogate to himself all portfolios not allocated to ministers and be the chief executive of the State. He is not directly answerable to Parliament.

(2) The power of Parliament has been in the process devalued. Members cannot cross over, even on a matter of conscience, without forfeiting their seats.

(3) A system of proportional representation has been introduced. The imposition of a "cut-off point" of 12½% of the total number of votes polled in any electoral district will deny representation to small parties and minority groups and interests. UNP spokesmen, including the President himself, have often stated that this system was introduced in order to ensure the continuing dominance of the UNP.

(4) The enactment of the Essential Public Services Act makes it possible for the government to declare any service or industry essential, thus banning strikes in such services or industries. The penalties for infringing this act are draconian. Any one who participates in, encourages or incites strikes, go-slows etc., in services or industries declared essential faces prison sentences and confiscation of property.

(5) Severe restrictions have been imposed on the freedom of expression and dissent. Not only has the government extended its direct control of the national newspapers and the broadcasting services, but it has also suppressed criticism and comments directed at its own actions. The Parliament has assumed powers to punish newspaper editors and publishers for breach of privilege, thus functioning both as prosecutor and as judge.

The erosion or denial of democratic rights is not confined to the working class and the trade unions. Since the trade unions are the base of the political power of the left parties and are a primary counter-vailing power, they are naturally the victims of this process. However, the government has also moved in other directions. The promulgation of the anti-terrorist act which the nationalist struggle of the Tamil people and the rule by emergency of their areas for over a year reflects the government's attitude towards dissenting groups. Academics in the universities are coming under increasing restraint; student assemblies are rigidly controlled. Newspapers, the radio and TV are all under government domination. No doubt all these measures are the necessary pre-conditions for a development strategy based on foreign investors, capitalist donors and the international agencies. It is also interesting that intellectuals associated with the government are now talking of the ethical dilemmas of development; they are implying that the pressures of economic development must necessarily mean some sacrifice of democratic and human rights. The intellectual climate for authoritarianism is now being created.

The trade unions and the working class have felt, however, not only legal repression. Many small expressions of dissent, many strikes, have been met with thuggery and physical terror; organised gangs of hooligans have assaulted such demonstrating or striking workers. Associated with this repression is the governmental and managerial pressure against the formation of trade unions in the FTZ factories. Recruitment to such factories is often conditional on the promise of not joining trade unions.

To Be Concluded

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Threats To India

January 1, 1980.

In spite of loud protestations that with the installation of President Reagan, a new chapter in US-Indian relations would begin, no one is certain whether it will be for the better or the worse. Cautious hints have been dropped that Washington has already worked out a plan of action for the next twenty years to ensure US dominance in the Indian Ocean—no doubt until the oil reserves of the Gulf and other Middle East countries are exhausted. In this scheme, US circles are unhappy that India is unwilling to accept US hegemony and was also staking a claim for "a place under the sun" in the Indian Ocean.

Political strategists in New Delhi are convinced that the main motivating factor of US policy towards India for the next 20 years will revolve around attempts to circumscribe Indian foreign policy by diversionary pressures on the Indian government from Pakistan and China and also by setting up a new military and political structure in the entire Indian Ocean region. To achieve this objective, it is likely that China will increase its threats to India's frontiers and China will also be helped to dominate Bangladesh. In addition to this there will be attempts to slow down India's economic development and destabilise the international situation by using separatist and dissident groups and organisations that can be influenced by the US and other Western Powers. Washington no doubt feels that if the attention of Indian Government was distracted in this way, it would not be able to pay any attention to the problems of the region and claim to have a say in the status of the Indian Ocean.

It is in this context that the increasing number of articles that have begun to appear in the press apprehending fear for the future of India's integrity. Girish Mathur (*Blitz*, 27/12/80) had a piece entitled "War of Loans on India". It read: "A two-pronged danger has arisen for India as a result of the United States securing a loan of 1,600 million dollars for Pakistan from the International Monetary Fund (IMF). This is the largest single loan made available for any developing country by the IMF. The next largest is slightly less, 1,450 million dollars, to Turkey, which too is under military rule and occupies a place as important as Pakistan in the United States' military plans for the region. Significantly the third country to receive assistance from the IMF is Sri Lanka, which is also being involved by the USA in its military plans by seeking 'rest and recreation facilities' for its naval personnel deployed on a permanent basis in the Indian Ocean region. The amount sanctioned is much less but equally massive in relation to the country's size. The fourth in the queue for similar financing is Bangladesh.

"The strings attached to these loans constitute one prong of the danger for India, which is already facing difficulties with the World Bank in regard to some contracts negotiated and agreed upon earlier. It is

feared that the conditions on which loans have been advanced to Turkey, Pakistan and Sri Lanka may become the model for the World Bank's negotiations with India for future credits. These three loans, as also the one Bangladesh is likely to get, are described as balance of payments support for structural adjustments in the economies of the recipient countries. They thus open the economies of the recipient countries to manipulations by the IMF and make them subservient to neo-colonial interests. India will be the only country on the sub-continent unwilling to allow its economic policies to be influenced and manipulated by any outside agency, and pressure on it to fall in line with others is bound to be intensified in view of the difficulties the country is facing today. The other danger of the military rulers of Pakistan, in particular, being bailed out of the crisis in which they have landed their country, lies in that they can now use other funds available to them for military purchases and pursue their nuclear ambition.

"With its oil-rich Arab friends to back its military purchasing, Pakistan has had no dearth of funds. But it needs more for the kind of operations in connection with which three of its agents have been arrested in Canada and charged with smuggling US-made equipment for its nuclear project (incidentally, the project is not listed in the budget of Pakistan's Atomic Energy Establishment but comes under its 'defence' budget). Pakistan also needs additional funds for arms and other hardware it is getting from China, which now insists on payment in hard currency. Viewed in this context, the visits of Saudi Crown Prince Fahd and two military delegations from China in recent weeks to Pakistan are a matter of concern for India.

"The London *Guardian* has reported from Islamabad that Pakistan has already received 750 million dollars from Saudi Arabia and is likely to get more under an arrangement which provides for military purchases by it. Iranian newspapers have reported that Pakistan is forging a secret military alliance with Saudi Arabia. Pakistan has officially denied reports that Chinese troops, which recently participated in exercises with Pakistani troops in the northern region of occupied Kashmir have stayed behind and not gone back to China. Indian officials dealing with the subject, however, confirm the presence of Chinese personnel in the area. They agree with the view that Islamabad writ does not run there and that the local tribal population is being heavily bribed by the Chinese although it remains hostile to their presence."

It is not without reason that Prime Minister Indira Gandhi has in recent weeks spoken about external threats of war hanging over India.

Tribune Correspondent

Indian Ocean, U.S. & China

January 2, 1981,

The US arms build-up in the Indian Ocean has been spotlighted in the press in Britain with some degree of satisfaction. An AP report from Washington dated December 24 stated that: "An amphibious brigade of US marines would be stationed in the Indian Ocean as part of proposals before the US Congress and President-elect Ronald Reagan to improve US ground forces; the additional cost of the proposals range from 5.8 to 80.3 billion dollars over the years 1962 to 1980. For the year ending next October, the US defence department has allocated about 50 billion dollars for ground forces and ships and planes to move them. The plans do not cover increased spending on the navy and air forces which is also expected to have strong support in the new administration. Information on how ground forces could be improved was made public by the Congressional budget office in a report that gave six options, all of them calling for stationing an amphibious brigade of marines—about 8,000 people—on the little island of Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean. 'To counter non-Soviet threats to US interest', the report says, 'there is a premium on quick reaction even though that may mean initially using a small force (of say, 3000 to 4000 men). The US marine corps has the ability to fill this role, but it needs to be more widely deployed if reaction time is to be kept short. In particular, a marine brigade with amphibious capabilities needs to be deployed closer to the Gulf.

"In a preface, director of the Congressional budget office Alice M. Rivlin says the study assessed the capacity of US ground forces to meet the 'one and a half war requirement.' The study defines that as a clash between the forces of NATO and Warsaw Pact, plus one of several possibilities outside Europe—most probably in the Gulf area. The first and cheapest option calls for no increase in manpower except the marine brigade. In addition to present US forces, equipment for another five US divisions would be stationed in western Europe. The report says the Pentagon evaluates present US forces against a threat of 90 divisions from the Warsaw Pact. Nuclear weapons it goes on, would have to be used to counter any larger number of hostile troops, option II would depend less on nuclear weapons, increasing US forces by two armoured divisions at a cost of 18.6 billion dollars. On the assumption that European allies would make comparable increases, there could be what the report calls an elastic defence against 120 divisions. It does not speculate on the chance of further increases by the allies, some of which are now failing to meet spending increases pledged in 1977. For 37 billion dollars, the Pentagon could buy more ships and places to move US men and equipment, as well as more lightweight tanks and infantry fighting vehicles. By adding support forces, the report says, the US would be able by itself to counter a Soviet attack on a country with which the Soviets

have no border, such as Saudi Arabia, this is option III."

For many empire conscious Britishers (and there are many still) the vacuum "east of Suez" created by the British withdrawal is now being appropriately filled by the currently dominant Anglo Saxon power.

Whilst the bogey of a Soviet threat to Middle East oil is being used by the US as an excuse to step up military strength, the Saudis themselves have brought in Pakistan mercenaries to protect the Riyadh regime. A UNI report reaching London, cites a senior Pakistan journalist to point out that Iran looks upon the stationing of Pakistan troops in Saudi Arabia as a threat to its security: "Mr. Altaf Hassan Quereshi, editor of the rightist monthly URDU DIGEST of Lahore, says in his journal that during his recent visit to Iran he found the authorities very upset at the news that Pakistan was sending two divisions to Saudi Arabia. There was suspicion that the military build up in Saudi Arabia was aimed at toppling the Iranian Government. This suspicion was strengthened when Gen. Zia ul Haq met Iraqi President Saddam Hussain in Saudi Arabia. Iranian newspapers wrote that Iraq, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia were forging a secret military pact against Iran. Mr. Quereshi says that there is 'a great contempt in Iran for the Pakistan's military Government. 'The Urdu Service of Radio Zahedan pours poison against Gen. Zia ul Haq.'

"Mr. Quereshi supports Pakistan's Jamaat-e-Islami which was most enthusiastic about the Islamic revolution in Iran. Soon after the revolution Ayatollah Khomeini sent his representatives to Pakistan to meet Maulana Abu Ala Madoodi, founder of the Jamaat to thank him and the people of Pakistan for their support to the revolution. But all this changed in less than a year. Explaining the change Mr. Quereshi writes: 'The Iranians say that while they were fighting the Shah in 1978, the Government of Pakistan was supporting him. Gen. Zia visited Iran on 7 September, the day the Shah launched a military action against the agitating civilians. The impression spread like wild fire that the military action was taken on the advice of Gen. Zia. Incidentally, Gen. Zia has already incurred the displeasure of Palestinians on whom he had cracked down as military adviser to the king of Jordan in 1970. After the success of the revolution, Gen. Zia wanted to go to Iran to greet Ayatollah Khomeini, but the Iranian Government did not approve of this, Mr. Quereshi writes. There there rose a psychological confrontation between the two governments. Khomeini had defeated the military might of the Shah while in Pakistan a civilian government had been toppled by Gen. Zia. An Iranian leader asked Mr. Quereshi why could Pakistan not have a civilian representative government."

REPORTS FROM HONGKONG reveal that throughout 1980 there have been US-Sino discussions about the problems of the Indian Ocean and the presence of the US navy and air force in that region. Among the

matters discussed that one most stressed by the US concerned the difficulties Washington faced from the pressure that arose from the Non-aligned Movement and in particular the African countries especially the littoral states against the US naval build up in the Indian Ocean. Such pressure was becoming incisively more embarrassing to the US from these countries which had now begun to distinguish between the different scales and magnitude of the US and USSR military presence in the region. What seemed to wrong the Americans most was that these countries were moving away from the Washington stance of "Equal condemnation of the two super powers."

News about these Sino-US discussions indicate that Deng Xiaoping was strongly for close and co-ordinated co-operation in the diplomatic arena as well as in mass media between China, America, Western Europe and Asia against the Soviets. Peking, it would appear, has assured the fullest co-operation through the Xinhua and also through all other channels. Observers point out that this is advantageous to Peking because it carries no military expenditure or involvement and at the same time gives China the opportunity to increase its influence in South and South-east Asia.

In the meantime, the Peking regime is greatly upset by the new upsurge of anti-Chinese riots in Indonesia. The Paris paper *Le Monde*, in a special report, has pointed out: "Fifteen years after the organised massacres and anti-Chinese killings subsequent to the attempted coup attributed to the Indonesian Communist Party, the centre of the Java island had been the theatre, during the last week of November, of a new flare-up of racial violence of which the Sino-Indonesian minority has borne the brunt. The sudden character of the unforeseen explosion did not fail to remind one of those Javanese volcanoes that are seemingly dormant, but whose depths are boiling with tensions and pressures accumulated over the long periods. It is due to the fragility of the racial, religious and political mix of Indonesia. Was this eruptive alchemy so profound and irrepressible that a simple tariffic accident, followed by a fist-to-fist between the Chinese and Javanese, should degenerate within hours to a communal confrontation and that it should extend within a few days to nine cities and many regions.....".

The *Le Monde* examined the basic facts about the problem of the "ethnic" or "overseas" Chinese in Indonesia and said: ".....The explosion has brought to the surface the 'Chinese problem'. This issue is vast and complex due to the difficulties in the assimilation of the Chinese minority in a predominantly Islamised world, a tenacious doubt which subsists as to its national belonging and to its political loyalty, to its financial and economic domination in general and in particular to the lucrative association of its richest and most enterprising representatives with the military regime of President Suharto. This problem is not peculiar to Indonesia. The difficulties of assimilation, the economic domination and the variations of the tutelary policies of Beijing towards the Chinese communities in South-East Asia and also its support to the Maoist communist

parties in these regions lead to similar phenomena and tensions in Malaysia and Indo-China and to a lesser degree, in Thailand and Philippines. It is estimated rather approximately but with evident resentment that the Chinese community which represents about five per cent of the total population of 145 million might be controlling about 80 percent of the wholesale and retail trade. Whether he is a shopkeeper, pawnbroker or usurer who operates in the smallest villages or the rich cukongs (intermediaries) who are on their heels for all sorts of adjudications and often shady dealings with government circles, military cliques or foreign capital, the Chinaman easily becomes the object of public contempt.....The students denounce, to the extent the authoritarian regime would allow, these 'business' associations and the corruption and the privileges that they could bring about. There perhaps lies the principal theme of the criticism of the opposition to the new order of regime of President Suharto, a regime that seems to them to be more favourable to the Chinese and foreigners than to the underdeveloped masses. This situation leads some to think that the anti-Chinese upheavals have not only assumed a racial character but also it is this military-business establishment that is clearly being aimed at via the Chinese traders.....".

The way *Le Monde* concludes will bring little or no comfort to the Deng Xiaoping clique in Peking or even the Suharto regime and its western backers: "Its latest eruptions have been calmed, but the causes are profound; the violence, injustice, privileges, corruption and exploitation, which stir up racial hatred and widen the social cleavages, remain at the mercy of a new spark, nay at another attempt at manipulation to purely political ends."

Every country in the Indian Ocean region seems to be in ferment and the process of change will probably be accelerated by the US military build up. The British Navy had "ruled the waves for about a hundred years." Can the US do it for a hundred months in the contemporary world of contradictions, confrontations and conflicts?

—Tribune Correspondent

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SOVIET VIEW

IMF And Pakistan

By T. Fyodorov
Moscow,

Sayed Zafar-ul-Haq, a political analyst of the Pakistani daily *Tameer*, commenting on the political situation in South Asia pointed out recently that "it is not the presence of Soviet troops in Afghanistan, but the US naval armada amassed in the Persian Gulf that spells danger to nations in the region." As far as the Afghan crisis is concerned, the Pakistani journalist wrote, the United States favours the fomenting of a civil war in Afghanistan, and this underlies its political and military

scheming—plans for establishing its bases and bridge-heads in the region.

In the light of this, there is a "topical" air about the words spoken by US Senator Bradley, who urged his Administration to increase greatly the arms supplies to the terrorists operating against the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan from Pakistani territory. Simultaneously, he advocated the rendering of substantial aid to Pakistan. That this view is shared by many in the USA has been confirmed by the granting of a loan of 1,600 million dollars to Pakistan by the IMF controlled by the USA. In the 35 years of existence of the IMF, such a large sum has never been given to any State.

And though, according to the IMF's official statement, the loan has been granted to facilitate the economic growth and financial stability of Pakistan, the timing and large size of it with due account taken of the foreign-policy line of that country's military regime, and also of increased tension in the region, reveal rather clearly the far-reaching military and political plans of the United States for creating a new springboard for its expansionist and subversive activities in Asia.

As is known, not only has Pakistan made its territory available for the insurgent formations of enemies of the Afghan revolution, but it is also acting hand in glove with Washington and Peking in carrying out interventionist and counter-revolutionary activities against the DRA. It is precisely Pakistan that serves as the main centre of training and equipping the insurgents with US and Chinese arms, of smuggling them into Afghanistan for subversive activities against its lawful people's government. The granting of the sizeable loan to Pakistan by the IMF not only means encouraging its government playing an unseemly role towards sovereign Afghanistan, but is also a channel of financing anti-Afghan activities.

Facts show that the announcement by the IMF of its large credit to the military regime of Islamabad has coincided with the activation and expansion of Pakistani-US and Pakistani-Chinese co-operation in the military field. Quite recently an unofficial US six-member mission has arrived in Islamabad for the purpose of studying Pakistan's current requirements in arms. Not long before this, a visit to Pakistan was paid by US Admiral Long, Commander, US Pacific Command, who is in charge of a vast area from the western coast of the United States to Africa, including the Indian Ocean and the Persian Gulf. Long was received by ministers and other high-ranking officials and had talks with the Pakistani military authorities. These meetings and talks, as he put it, were "exceptionally useful."

Parallel with this, Islamabad continues playing its own "China card". Following the signing in June 1980 of a secret Chinese-Pakistani agreement on supplying Chinese arms to the Zia-ul-Haq military regime, Islamabad started another round of negotiations with Peking's representatives led by Liu Dapsheng, Acting Commander of China's Navy. This time, the sides are discussing the question of a further increase in modern arms supplies to Pakistan.

Besides, the IMF's decision to grant 1,600 million dollars as credit to Islamabad cannot be viewed in isolation from the overall situation taking shape in the region. The continuing arms build-up by the USA had its allies in the region, with an armed conflict raging between Iran and Iraq, where the USA has already amassed nearly 60 warships and has a whole network of military and naval bases, confirms the intention of the future White House administration to form a permanent US Fleet in that part of the world. In these plans Pakistan is being assigned quite a specific role. Plans for strengthening Pakistani's military potential, and also reports on the Chinese-Pakistani intentions to secure an "independent" status for Kashmir, are elements of the same policy, which is correctly regarded by many countries as a real threat to peace and security in the region, to their national independence and sovereignty.

The Indian External Affairs Minister Narasimha Rao expressed his growing concern over all these events in his statements in the Rajya Sabha. And at the 35th session of the UN General Assembly, Shah Mohammad Dost, the Afghanistan Foreign Minister, also spoke with anxiety about this at the current UN General Assembly session. M. A. Tatari, member of the Iranian parliament, scathingly criticised Pakistan interference in the internal affairs of Iran. Apprehensions in many countries neighbouring on Pakistan are also being caused by the fact that besides still abstaining from acceding to the international treaty on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, it has also refused to discontinue research and development in the nuclear field aimed at making its own atom bomb.

Formally, in keeping with existing American legislation, the USA shall not render assistance to countries failing to comply with the provisions of the treaty on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. The granting of a large sum as credit to the Islamabad regime through IMF channels is nothing but an attempt of the present US administration to by-pass existing legislation using for the purpose the signboard of an international organisation, so as to enable Pakistan to continue serving as its bastion in South-West and South Asia.

—APN

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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. 1788.50	Rs. 1791.50
Sterling Pound	Rs. 4319.00	Rs. 4325.00
Deutsche Mark	Rs. 919.20	Rs. 920.88
French Franc	Rs. 397.15	Rs. 397.85
Japanese Yen	Rs. 8.8845	Rs. 8.8995
Indian Rupees	Rs. 229.05	Rs. 229.45

Telling It Like It Is

By Loris

THE OCTOBER 1980 NEWSLETTER of the Wildlife & Nature Protection Society (WNPS) of Sri Lanka appears to be a singularly noteworthy attempt by the General Committee to advise the general membership "in some greater detail", as the Newsletter puts it, "of the circumstances relating to the proposal to set up an Asian Elephant Secretariat in Sri Lanka and the reasons that led to the Committee of Management to take the stand it did in respect of this matter."

Having given the contents of the Newsletter serious consideration, this writer takes the view that it is of some immediate importance that the people of this country—and not merely the members of the Society—should also be advised in some greater detail of the implications of what the Committee has tried to achieve through the Newsletter. It is proposed first to put down in point form the conclusions this writer has drawn, and later to enlarge on them "in some greater detail" wherever necessary to enable readers to decide for themselves whether the Committee, in doing what it did, has played fair by the general membership and by the country.

The conclusions, in brief, are: (1) that the issuing of the Newsletter is the second attempt (the first having been successfully made at the Annual General Meeting in May '80) by the General Committee to mislead the membership and, through it, the people and Government of this country; (2) that the Newsletter cleverly draws a red herring across the trail in the form of selective extracts chosen to show up Dr. Olivier's heartless and wholly research-oriented approach to the problem of elephant conservation, while it equally cleverly attempts to gloss over a crucial and incontrovertible fact: that the then President, Mr. T. W. Hoffmann, brazenly lied to the membership at the May '80 Annual General Meeting on a matter of great concern to every member of the Society and was, within minutes, proved to be a liar—and an unrepentant one at that; (3) that the Newsletter deliberately but quite untruthfully seeks to imply that knowledge *then* of information the Committee was now retailing to the membership via the Newsletter (concerning the World Wildlife Fund's Asian Elephant Secretariat proposal) was what actually prompted the Committee "to take the stand it did in respect of this matter." Note the choice of phrase that the membership should be advised "in some greater detail" as though the Newsletter was merely amplifying points already made at the AGM in support of the Committee's stand; (4) that the Newsletter in seeking to do an expose on Dr. Olivier and the WWF/IUCN, succeeds admirably only in establishing that it is the Society, and not WWF/IUCN, which fully meets Mr. Hoffmann's derogatory description 'insider organisation of the worst kind.'

Now to go over the points mentioned "in some greater detail" where necessary. The Newsletter

opens thus: "It is regrettable but true that during the past several months there has been some considerable controversy concerning the stand that this Society has taken in relation to the World Wildlife (WWF)/International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) proposal to set up an Asian Elephant Secretariat in Sri Lanka. This was a matter that was taken up for discussion at the Annual General Meeting of the Society held in May 1980 and is also the ground of a proposed motion of no confidence in the present Committee of Management of the Society. In these circumstances.. .."

TO FULLY UNDERSTAND why the Newsletter should be regarded as the second serious attempt to mislead the general membership and, through it, the people and Government of this country it is necessary to go back to the AGM in May '80. At that meeting a member asked the President (Mr. Hoffmann) why the WWF's panda-logo had been dropped from the Society's Letterheads. In answer Mr. Hoffmann said that he had four years earlier suggested to the Director-General of WWF that there should be a 'special relationship' between the Society and the world body, a suggestion that was readily accepted because the two bodies were already collaborating closely. So, pending approval by the WWF Committee, the Society was allowed the use of the panda-logo. But when nothing happened to give effect to the 'special relationship' concept for four years, the Society decided to drop the panda-logo, the decision happily coinciding with the Society's need to order new stocks of stationery. Mr. Hoffmann concluded his answer thus: "That, from our point of view, is the answer to that question, thank you."

That was indeed Mr. Hoffmann's answer, but was it the truth? The answer to that was not long in coming at the AGM itself. The member who asked the original question then read out and tabled a copy of a letter sent by the Director-General of WWF to Mr. Hoffmann in his capacity as President of the Society. The letter, dated November 21, 1979 said that ".....the World Wildlife Fund requires the Society to take steps to remove any reference to an association with the World Wildlife Fund, including any use of the panda logo as from January 1, 1980." We shall presently come to the reasons for this express prohibition by, and virtual expulsion from the WWF, but right now let us see what happened next at the AGM.

Another member got up to ask: "Might we know why the President did not disclose the contents of this letter in his explanation given earlier?" Mr. Hoffmann's belligerent report was: "Why should I?" and when the member persisted Mr. Hoffmann said, with an air of finality "I have given my explanation and the subject, as far as I am concerned, is closed." It was not, as far as the member was concerned, for he said: ".....in the context of this letter, being tabled the Chairman's explanation is incorrect."

We come now to the reasons for the WWF's letter to Mr. Hoffmann, the way the drama unfolded at the

AGM. Quoting from the WWF letter, a member read "Particular note has been taken of your letter of 11th June 1979 to the Ministry of External Affairs of Sri Lanka.....which is clearly detrimental to the World Wildlife Fund.....". Mr. Hoffmann took it from there. "You may certainly table that letter", he told the member, "you may comment on it. There is nothing at all wrong with it. In that letter I wrote very simply that the World Wildlife Fund and IUCN were insider organisations of the worst kind in which neither we nor our country could get a hearing....that is true.....my experience with these bodies extends over a much longer period than anybody else's.....".

We must stop at this point to ask once again: did Mr. Hoffmann tell the truth about the non use of the panda logo? To put it very simply, he did not. The manner in which he dismissed the subject the moment he was shown up as having stated an untruth (".....this is not the forum for this sort of thing.....") suggests that, in Mr. Hoffmann's view, the 'yakkos' who make up the Society's general membership, to say nothing of those in the Committee, neither deserve nor can fully appreciate an apology from him for conduct unbecoming of a man in his position.

THERE IS ANOTHER ASPECT to the panda logo affair which deserves attention. Mr. Hoffmann's letter of 11.6.79 to the Ministry of External Affairs was written not as a private individual but in his capacity as President of the Society. Why was it not then, even at the late a stage as the AGM in May '80 (almost a year later), brought to the notice of the general membership? Mr. Hoffmann's rejoinder is obvious: in that case, one would have to disclose to the general membership all the hundreds (or thousands) of letters written by him as President. The point to remember, of course, is that his letter to the Ministry can in no way be lumped with the hundreds (or thousands) of other letters he writes as President. Here was a letter from him to an important arm of the country's Executive in which he condemned in the strongest possible terms an international body, and at a time when that body was proposing to set up a project here for the conservation of elephants. It might have been different if nothing came of Mr. Hoffmann's letter to the Ministry. But the WWF's reaction was a decision to deny the Society an 'associate status' with the Fund, to withdraw permission to use the panda logo on the Society's stationery, and to inform all international bodies concerned with conservation of the Fund's decision with regard to the Sri Lanka Society.

Considering the serious consequences that followed Mr. Hoffmann's letter to the Ministry, there can be no question that the general membership had a right to be informed of Mr. Hoffmann's letter and its aftermath no sooner the WWF's letter of 28.11.1979 was received by the Society. But in fact no mention was made even in the Annual Report for 1979 and, to judge from what transpired at the AGM in May '80, it

is clear that the President and the General Committee acting in concert, had every intention of withholding from the general membership at all costs, even by resort to lies, the truth and the magnitude of the tragedy behind the panda logo affair, all because of what Mr. Hoffmann had done as President, and supposedly on behalf of the Society's 6,000 members, but without their knowledge or approval.

It is a matter for shame that despite the impassioned pleas at the AGM from members such as Professor Hillary Cruz, Mr. Sidney de Zoysa and Dr. Olivier—all this after Mr. Hoffmann's untruthfulness was exposed—the AGM decided by a majority of 34 to keep in the Annual Report the paragraph on the Asian Elephant Secretariat containing derogatory references to the WWF.

The Newsletter has presumably been sent to the Society's 6,000 members. Only 238 of those were present at the AGM. So that 5,762 members who were not present at the AGM (and hence know nothing of what actually took place) may be forgiven for concluding that they were merely being ".....advised, in some greater detail....." of points already put forward by the General Committee at the AGM in support of its opposition to the WWF proposal.

Let us go back to the AGM and see what, if any, of the points mentioned in the Newsletter about the WWF proposal were in fact made or discussed there. Here is Mr. Hoffmann's reply when asked about the Society's objections to the WWF proposal: "Well, er.....there is nothing to add to what we have....er....said in the Annual Report."

Member: "The question has not been answered in the Annual Report. What we want to know are the reasons for the objections of the Society to the setting up of the Elephant Secretariat."

Mr. Hoffmann: "The main objection is the secretive manner in which the projects are being promoted....our point of view was not seriously discussed...."

Member: "We wish to know the other objections of the Society....."

Mr. Hoffmann: "These are good objection....."

Member: "We wish to know the other objections, if you have any....."

That exchange at the AGM is illuminating if only to show how precious little was actually discussed about the WWF proposal and the Society's objections. Mr. Hoffmann went on to say: "If they, IUCN or WWF jointly promote a project here, it is their duty, according to their own rules, to consult with us, to ask us, submit these proposals.....they have failed to do so.....and it is one of the main reasons why we, a self-respecting body, cannot accept their dictate."

The use of words like 'us' and 'we' and 'self-respecting body', when considered in their context, are no more than mere euphemisms for the one and only

Mr. Hoffmann himself. It is clear for all to see that it is Mr. Hoffmann's personal pique, and not any serious scientific consideration, that prompted him to persuade the General Committee to reject the WWF proposal out of hand.

AT THE AGM MR. HOFFMANN WENT ON RECORD that the Society had not been consulted and also that the Department of Wildlife Conservation had not been consulted on the WWF proposal. This is what Professor Crusz, Head of the University's Zoology Department, had to say on that point at the AGM: ".... when the Elephant Secretariat was mooted, it was put to the Wildlife Department, it was put to the Zoology Department at the University, and it was discussed..... It did not come surreptitiously, it was not a thing that was discussed surreptitiously, and we are now on the verge of getting it passed,.....". (Shortly after the AGM the Department of Wildlife Conservation, in an official communication to the Press, contradicted Mr. Hoffmann's assertion at the AGM by stating that the Department had in fact been consulted on the Elephant Secretariat project). So that's another debit on Mr. Hoffmann's credibility account.

Now to Dr. R. C. D. Olivier, who was also present at the AGM and had this to say of Mr. Hoffmann's charge: "I am very grateful for this opportunity to respond.... because I am also aware that this matter has been discussed in Committee for many months now and this is the first time I've been invited to make any explanation although I've been here from October..... This Society has already opposed and attacked the Secretariat project before we even drafted the first version for this country....I myself put it to Mr. Hoffmann..... I'd like to know what he means by certain projects. He said 'Our point of view was not seriously discussed', but the attitudes taken by the leadership of the Society have precluded any discussion..... we know what they think about it, they think the whole thing is a waste of time."

Next comes the Newsletter's attempt at an expose of Dr. Olivier by resort to the use of selective extracts from a paper submitted by him to IUCN in January 1972. The excerpts quoted relate to the problem of pocketed herds of elephants, and a possible solution. After defining 'pocketed herd' as "an elephant group that has become isolated to a greater or lesser extent in a pocket or island on undeveloped land within a sea of human cultivation of habitation". Dr. Olivier is quoted as saying that it was his "firm conclusion that this is not a conservation problem" and adding, "these elephants pocketed in various areas are not last representatives and have no conservation value whatsoever." The Newsletter adds that Dr. Olivier advised IUCN/WWF to "give higher priority to funding the research necessary to prevent such situations continually recurring in the existing elephant range in Sri Lanka and elsewhere."

The next quotation is merely one of Dr. Olivier's proposed solutions to the problem: extermination. He is quoted thus: "This approach would seem a simple and cheap solution, provided the animals are considered

expendable from the conservation point of view. This can be argued here. Certainly it has been in Africa where this approach is taken..... the large animals.... are obvious cases for destruction, and it seems to me, since many officials are not against the idea, that a suitable compromise can be reached by administering a deliberate, but apparently accidental, overdose of a drug such as scoline..... by dart gun.....". The Newsletter does however successfully create in readers the impression that this is Dr. Olivier's only solution to the problem. Wrong again, and wilfully so.

THE INTENTION OF THE GENERAL COMMITTEE in presenting a distorted picture is obvious. The idea is to show up Dr. Olivier as cynical, callous and cold-blooded and thereby induce in readers a feeling of outrage at what he proposes to do to helplessly trapped animals. Yes, full marks to the Committee on this exercise, but let us also be clear about one thing: the main objective of the Wildlife & Nature Protection Society of Sri Lanka is—well, certainly should be—to promote scientific conservation, not sentimental conservation, not because one's feelings have no place here but because a sentimental approach to such complex matters can never help achieve desired objectives and, indeed, can even ultimately prove disastrously counter-productive.

The former President and the present General Committee of WNPS are being somewhat less than fair by the Society and its general membership by attempting to promote wildlife conservation on childish sentimental lines. Before undertaking the translocation of pocketed herds—of elephants or of any other species—what has to be carefully studied is the capacity of the new area or 'home' to sustain the additional numbers to be introduced into it. Since elephants to not feed on anything and everything they can lay their trunks on, any long-term project to conserve the animals must of necessity include ways and means of conserving sufficient elephant eco-systems as well. As the 'pop' song has it, 'You can't have one without the other. By thoughtlessly creating situations where, after translocation, the new 'home' has more elephants than it has food to go round, one manages not to save the translocated herd from death but only to endanger the survival of the entire elephant population in the new areas.

The point, then, is that the many-sided research advocated by Dr. Olivier seems very necessary if Sri Lanka is to successfully save the elephant. The least the Society can do is to promote serious discussion on Dr. Olivier's proposals instead of quoting from his writings selectively and out of context, and then arriving at the following conclusion in the Newsletter: "The Committee of Management was left with the feeling that the entire project heavily emphasised the research interests of one individual and however interesting such research may be, the Committee of Management felt that there were other priority areas....". As Mr. Sidney de Zoysa told the AGM: "..... why on earth are we not told what the other

projects are? If there are better projects, tell us what they are.....the general membership is also interested in such things....."

Readers will note that the Newsletter's Annexure 'C'—the WWF's Action Plan—makes no mention whatsoever of exterminating pocketed and troublesome elephants, but instead recommends the establishment of a second 'holding centre' for captured elephants and the provision of vehicles, equipment and drugs to enable the Wildlife Conservation Department to respond rapidly and effectively to situations as they arise. In view of what the General Committee seeks to imply about Dr. Olivier's ruthless and wrong approach to the problem, let us go back to the 'Action Plan' (as quoted by the Newsletter): "As the effectiveness and efficiency of Departmental trapping teams increases, and with the ecological advisability and cost-effectiveness of translocating and liberating elephants still in question, there can be no doubt that the Department must expand its capability to care for captured elephants."

Nothing terribly outrageous about that, is there?

This is what Dr. Olivier told the Society's AGM: "A primary function.....was to identify what exactly needed to be done in various countries with wild elephants in order to achieve our aims.....the sum total of needed action or activity for a country constitute what have we called an 'Action Plan'. However I now come to a very important point which I beg you to try and understand: that is, that is a sense the Action Plan will never be finished.....they are open documents, they are meant to be evolving they are to be continuously revised and up-dated and improved. Anybody and everybody is invited to suggest additions, alternatives, or to debate the merits of any or every component of the Action Plan.....".

What could be simpler than that to understand? But if, as is implied in the Newsletter, the General Committee opposed the WWF proposal because it had ".....some serious doubt as to Dr. Olivier's capacity to perform the role of a consultant in respect of a project of this nature" after the Committee had learned of the doctor's views on pocketed elephants (1977 vintage), why was the matter not brought out at the AGM for a full and frank discussion and Dr. Olivier himself asked what he had to say?

The truth is that the General Committee could not have had any doubts, serious or otherwise, regarding Dr. Olivier's suitability when the Committee first decided to oppose the WWF proposal simply because it had no knowledge then of the doctor's views or even, for that matter, as recently as the AGM itself.

But on the other hand, for the then President and the present General Committee to have been in possession of what they consider damaging evidence against Dr. Olivier which they now put out in the Newsletter, and not made the general membership privy to all of it at the AGM, is also a measure of the utter contempt in which nineteen office-bearers have collectively held and continue to hold, the rest of the Society's, 6,000 members.

THE AMERICAN PUBLIC

And The Middle East

By William Schneider

William Schneider is an International Affairs Fellow of the Council on Foreign Relations, New York, assigned to the office of Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan in Washington. He also serves as a political consultant to the *Los Angeles Times* and as Senior Editor of *Opinion Outlook*, a public opinion newsletter. From 1976 to 1979 Schneider was Associate Professor of Government at Harvard University where he learned a Doctoral Degree in Political Science in 1972. He is the author of the book, "The Confidence Gap: How Americans View Their Institutions," and numerous articles on voting behaviour, American radical attitudes, Public opinion and Foreign policy and other topics. Schneider has two books scheduled for publication in 1981: "From Discrimination to Affirmative Action: American Racial Attitudes, 1935-1980" and "Israel and The Jews in American Public Opinion." Below is the first part of the article on "The American Public And The Middle East".

Two concerns—peace and security—dominate the American public's attitude toward foreign affairs generally and toward the Middle East conflict in particular. Public opinion polls show that Americans have become more concerned about military security and national defense in recent years. That concern helped elect Ronald Reagan President. On Election day, November 3, 22 percent of American voters polled nationwide by ABC news said that "US Military Strength" was a major issue leading them to decide how to vote: in this group, Reagan defeated Jimmy Carter overwhelmingly (Reagan 72 percent, Carter 21 percent). But it is not clear that this apparent "hawkishness" amounts to a renewed commitment to interventionism or to the crusading anti-communism that characterized the cold war. While concern over military preparedness definitely helped Reagan win the election, the issue of war and peace worked to Jimmy Carter's advantage. In the same poll on election day, 25 percent of the voters indicated that "Foreign Affairs" attracted them to their candidate; this group voted for Carter over Reagan, 49 to 42 percent.

Polls taken during the campaign showed that Carter was regarded by the voters as the candidate most likely to keep peace in the world and to do a good job handling US foreign relations. A survey taken by the *Los Angeles Times* in September showed that the voters preferred Carter two-to-one over Reagan as the candidate "who would do the best job handling our relations with the Middle East." The electorate appears to have chosen Reagan despite his reputation for aggressiveness, not because of it. Does the election signify a desire to change US policy in the Middle East in any important respect?

Americans have always been more sympathetic to Israel than to the Arab cause, but prior to the six day war in 1967, the difference was not great. In the twenty-year period between 1947 and 1967, sympathy for Israel averaged about one third of the US public, with pro-Arab sentiment averaging about ten percent. Most Americans were essentially ignorant of or neutral toward the Middle East conflict. Support for Israel increased substantially at the time of the six day war and has remained high in the years since. From 1967 to 1977, sympathy for Israel averaged 45 percent, or close to half of the American public, while sympathy for the Arab cause fell to about six percent. The implication is that support for Israel has not diminished as World War II and the holocaust have grown more distant in time; quite the reverse, in fact. The groundswell of US support for Israel appears to have resulted from Israel's military victory in the 1967 war. As far as most Americans are concerned, sympathy for Israel derives more from admiration for that country's success and determination than from pity for the persecuted Jew or guilt over the holocaust. Neither the October war in 1973 nor the ensuing oil embargo appears to have disturbed this basic American sympathy for Israel.

President Anwar Sadat's trip to Jerusalem in November 1977 had a more noticeable effect on American public opinion. It created for the first time the image of a peaceable Arab nation led by a man sincerely committed to making peace with Israel. In the three years since that momentous event, American sympathy for Israel has remained high, but there is also evidence of increasing favourability toward certain Arab countries, particularly Egypt and Saudi Arabia. The Harris Poll carried out extensive surveys of US public opinion concerning the Middle East in 1976—that is, before the Sadat visit and the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty—and again in the summer of 1980. In both polls, a cross section of the US public was asked, "In the dispute between Israel and the Arabs, which side do you sympathize with more—Israel or the Arabs?" Sympathy for Israel was the same in 1980 as it had been in 1976, 52 percent. But sympathy for the Arabs increased noticeably, from six to twelve percent. Other polls show the same pattern—support for Israel holding strong at about half of the American public, with support for the Arabs increasing from 6-7 percent before the Sadat initiative to 12-13 percent afterwards.

The 1976 and 1980 Harris surveys provide more detail on how Americans feel about specific countries. Between 1976 and 1980, the view that Israel is either friendly toward the United States or a close ally increased from 74 to 81 percent of the public. The view that Egypt is a friend or ally more than doubled over the same period, from 35 percent in 1976 to 73 percent in 1980. In 1976, a plurality of Americans, 33 to 35 percent, considered Egypt unfriendly toward the United States. By 1980, that sentiment had decisively reversed; by 78 to 17 percent, an overwhelming majority of Americans now consider Egypt as a friend.

The feeling that Saudi Arabia is a friend of the United States also increased, from 32 percent in 1976

to a majority, 52 percent in 1980. Positive sentiment about Jordan rose from 34 to 47 percent in this four year period. On the other hand, feelings about Lebanon, Libya and Syria changed only marginally; about 40 percent of the American public continues to consider these countries unfriendly to the United States, while about the same proportion does not know how to characterise these countries. It is interesting to note that while sentiments about Communist China improved notably (from 68-23 percent unfriendly in 1976 to a virtual tie, 46-44 percent unfriendly in 1980), Americans' view of the Soviet Union became more negative. In 1976, Americans considered the Soviet Union unfriendly or an enemy by a margin of about three to one. In 1980, with the souring of detente and Soviet incursions into Africa and the Middle East, the margin of hostility is over eight to one.

The 1976 and 1980 Harris surveys also asked people whether they considered the leadership of various Middle Eastern countries "reasonable" and willing to work for a just peace settlement in the Middle East or "unreasonable" and therefore making it impossible to work out a just peace settlement. In 1976, 60 percent of the American public considered Israel's leadership "reasonable" by this definition. In 1980, the image of Israel's leadership had improved slightly, to 69 percent "reasonable". But the rating of Egypt's leadership improved even more markedly, from 52 percent "reasonable" in 1976 to 77 percent "reasonable" in 1980—that is, now more positively rated than Israel's leadership. Feelings about the leadership of Saudi Arabia and Jordan also improved between 1976 and 1980. But there was little change in the public's negative assessment of Syrian and Libyan leaders.

Two conclusions are suggested (1) Americans are increasingly able to distinguish between moderate and friendly Arab regimes on the one hand and radical and unfriendly Arab regimes on the other; their feelings about the former have improved substantially since the 1977 peace breakthrough; (2) this increasing good will toward moderate Arab regimes has not come at Israel's expense. Sympathy for Israel continues to hold strong, even while feelings about Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Jordan have become more favourable.

Secondly concerns appear to be behind the public's stronger support for Israel. Note the increasing agreement between 1976 and 1980 with the following positions offered by the Harris poll: ((1) that "the Russians are determined to see Israel wiped out" (from 46 to 55 percent); (2) that none of America's allies will feel they can trust the United States in the future if the United States does not support Israel (from 48 to 55 percent); and (3) that the United States should not pressure Israel to give back all the captured Arab territory (from 55 to 58 percent). Support for US military aid to Israel has also grown as has support for sending US troops "if it looked as though Israel were going to be overrun by the Arabs in another war."

—USICA

(To Be Concluded)

Dec. 24 – Dec. 31

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—Dinamika; LO—Lankadipa; VK—
Virakesari; ATH—Atha; SM—Silumina; SLDP—
Sri Lankadipa; JD—Janadipa; SU—Sun; DV—Davasa;
DP—Dinapathi; CM—Chinthamani; WK—Weekend;
RR—Riviresa; DK—Dinakara; EN—Eelanadu; IDPR—
Information Dept. Press Release.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 24: The Chief Justice, Mr. Neville Samarakoon will head a Board of Trustees to be set up by Trade and Shipping Minister Lalith Athulathmudali to service university scholarships to be awarded from the Mahapola Lottery now selling fast. Foreign nationals will have to pay a 500 per cent tax on the purchase of real estate in Sri Lanka under new legislation being drafted, official sources said yesterday; such persons will also be subject to all taxes in the land; this is one of the proposals under consideration to control the purchase, lease and sale by which foreign nationals obtain buildings and lands in Sri Lanka—CDN. The President, Mr. J.R. Jayewardene, who is also Minister of Higher Education, yesterday decided that university admissions will not be decided till the Supreme Court finally disposes of the cases filed. Several Beach Hotels and Tourist Hotel developers have strongly protested against the recent directive issued by the Urban Development Authority to local bodies that they should not approve construction sites within 250 yards of the sea shore in the future. The Metric system will be used in all transactions in the Postal Department with effect from January 1, 1981—CDM. Sri Lanka's police service will be revamped in the coming year; whilst the cadre will be raised by a further 2,000 men, the Defence Ministry is to set up special striking units in the divisional headquarters in provincial towns. While cholera spread to one more area in Mannar, health authorities reported 25 positive cases—SU. The Opposition Parties have made a written request to the President Mr. J. R. Jayewardene that the President should, under Section 78(8) of the Constitution, make a gazette notification regarding the decision to introduce legislation on 6th January 1981 to provide for the seating of the candidate in Parliament who will win the by-election at Kalawana—VK.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 27: The Supreme Court yesterday after hearing submissions by the Attorney General Mr. Shiva Pasupati and council for the Civil Rights Movement, Mr. S. Nadesan in regard to a Bill to amend the Constitution to provide for the member to be elected to the Kalawana seat on January 12, to sit in Parliament indicated that it would convey its decision to the President and the Speaker. One hundred

and fifty Sri Lankan delegates including the Speaker Mr. Bakkar Markar, Cabinet Ministers S. Thondaman and C. Rajadurai, Leader of the Opposition A. Amirthalingam and about 20 Tamil speaking MPs will attend the week long Fifth International Seminar on Tamil Research starting in January at Madurai, Tamil Nadu—CDN. As two more positive cholera cases were reported from Jaffna and Aguradhapura the Health Ministry yesterday alerted MOHs in the two areas to take all steps to contain the diseases. Saudi Arabia's Oil Minister Sheikh Ahmed Zaki Yamani is due to stop over in Sri Lanka this afternoon. Parliament has no right to accommodate a Member without the consent of the people. If Parliament wants to increase the number of Members it should go back to the people; the people are supreme; if you are increasing the number of Members you will necessarily affect the franchise and in order to protect the sovereignty of the people you should go back to them; these observations were made by Chief Justice Neville Samarakoon in the course of the submissions made by the Attorney General Siva Pasupathi on the third amendment to the Constitution to accommodate the elected Member for Kalawana—SU.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 28: A capital infusion of rupees 200 million in government funds into the Janatha Estate Development Board (JEDB) and the State Plantations Corporation (SPC) will be undertaken before the end of this year, authoritative sources said yesterday; the JEDB which is more in need of funds, will get Rs. 120 million while the SPC will be paid a sum of Rs. 80 million, these sources said. The Higher Education authorities are hopeful that all cases filed in connection with university admissions will end next month and they will be able to finalise admissions for the academic year 1980-81 by mid-February—SO. Drastic changes will be effected to the Customs law of the country in the new year to give teeth to the joint Indo-Sri Lankan offensive to curb the huge volume of smuggling between the two countries; according to official sources, this two-way traffic in contraband amounts to several millions of rupees annually—ST. Sheikh Ahmed Zaki Yamani, the influential Oil Minister of Saudi Arabia, arrived here yesterday for an overnight stop over en route to his country. The handing over the security of the Colombo Airport Katunayake to a civilian service will take place on January 1, next year—WK.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 29: The Bank of Dubai opening for business in January 1981 will have a new approach to development projects in Sri Lanka's rural sector, its General Manager S. Sambandam said yesterday. President J. R. Jayewardene addressing a mass rally at Devinuwara on Saturday said that the enthusiasm shown by the various branch organisations of the UNP and its youth leagues and kantha peramunas to make that rally a success demonstrated the people's unstinted support for the UNP Government; the President was addressing the people from a specially constructed dais in the playground opposite the historic Devinuwara Vishnu Devale; Devinuwara is shortly to be declared a sacred city—CDN. Teachers serving in popu-

lar areas for more than ten years will be liable for transfer; this decision has been taken by the committee which is in charge of teachers transfers in view of teachers who have been serving in a particular area or school for more than ten years—CDM. Saudi Arabia yesterday assured Sri Lanka enhanced oil supplies for the coming year; it will also send to Colombo a highpowered economic delegation to explore investment opportunities; these assurances came from the Kingdoms Oil Minister Sheikh Ahmed Zaki Yamani during talks he held with President J. R. Jayewardene at Mirissa. A special convoy of six gaily decorated vehicles displaying the big prizes of the Mahapola Lottery started on their 600 mile journey from the Ministry of Trade and Shipping on Saturday morning; the convoy will proceed on its journey for six days ending the trip in Bandarawela on January 1, 1981; the Lottery will be drawn on January 12; the mobile Lottery has been organised by the CWE which has sold 350,000 tickets so far—SU. Sri Lanka has emerged as one of Asia's most attractive investment locations in terms of low manufacturing wages that prevail here, a business intelligence survey servicing a broad international clientele has concluded—CO.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 30: President J. R. Jayewardene, the Minister in charge of the Associated Newspapers of Ceylon Ltd., on December 10, 1980 gazetted the regulations which give absolute and unfettered discretion to the Board of Directors to sell shares to employees; these regulations are in keeping with the government's general policy of making the employees owners of the business ventures in which they are employed; the Government's new policy will be implemented in the corporation sector in 1981. Large quantities of silver are being allegedly smuggled into the Middle East from India and Sri Lanka and the two countries have decided to take more effective counter-measures; this was one of the vital decisions taken at the Indo-Sri Lanka anti-smuggling conference held last week at Madurai, India and attended by a delegation from Sri Lanka—CDN. The proposed financing of the education of nearly one thousand university students by 1983 by the Mahapola Higher Education Scholarship Fund was accepted as a challenge by the Minister of Trade and Shipping, Mr. Lalith Athulathmudali if the Board of Trustees of this fund are successful in making the available financial resources a government approved charitable fund so as to exploit its potential to the fullest. Environmentalists and the general public are alarmed at the largescale destruction of forests in the Bibile area where some of the finest jungles in the island are found—CDM. President J. R. Jayewardene will make an official visit to Saudi Arabia in March next year; the visit is in response to an invitation extended early this year by Saudi Arabia's King Khalid. Officials of seven Asian countries are likely to meet in Colombo next month to finalise the broad outlines for the formation of an Asian regional grouping; a document outlining the concepts behind the proposed grouping has already been circulated to these countries—India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan and

the Maldives, Foreign Ministry sources said yesterday. Government is to initiate negotiations with several West Asian countries to fund a massive project in a bid to overcome the dearth of professionals and skilled workers—SU. A 20-year-old Sri Lankan woman has been sentenced to six months imprisonment, 70 lashes and deportation by a Shariah Court in Abu Dhabi in an adultery case; her 25 year old Indian lover received a stiffer sentence of three years imprisonment, 90 lashes and deportation—CO. The President of the Educational Services Committee Mr. V. L. Wirasingha admitted yesterday that there was an acute shortage of teachers in the whole country to teach Science and Mathematics; he also said that it would be possible to select some teachers with the required qualifications to teach these subjects shortly—VK.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 31: Sri Lanka will receive an additional Rs. 41.4 million for three ongoing projects from the United States of America; the Amendments providing for the increased funding for the three projects were signed yesterday by Mr. Donald R. Toussaint, US Ambassador and Dr. W. M. Tilakaratne Secretary, Ministry of Finance and Planning. The Gampaha Siddhayanurudha College has been selected as the nucleus for the setting up of an International University for Alternative Medicine; the Amsterdam-based organisation Medicina Alternative will spend \$ 200 million for the setting up of this institution. There will be no rationing of petrol and petroleum products for the next three months; the Petroleum Corporation now has adequate stocks to last over three months, Mr. Daham Wimalasena, Chairman of the Corporation said yesterday. The Government has decided to withdraw its security forces from the North with effect from today, as peace and security have been restored to the Peninsula, the North's Security Commander and the Army's Inspector General of Field Forces, Brigadier Henry Achukorala said yesterday—CDN. A immediate upward revision of salary for the Judiciary has been strongly recommended to the government by the Ministry of Justice—CDM. Sri Lanka's road networks will be rehabilitated shortly under a massive 25 million dollar project to be worked out by the Highways Ministry in collaboration with the World Bank—SU. The price of crude oil and sugar in international markets has exerted substantial pressure on Sri Lanka's beleaguered balance of payments during 1980, latest Central Bank economic data reveals—CO. It is reliably understood that the proposal made by the Prime Minister Mr. R. Premadasa to grant an increase of Rs. 70 all-round has been accepted by the Government and that this increase will be given to all workers employed in Government Corporations and Departments whether the Corporations run at a loss or at a profit—DP.



Confidentially

● Bankruptcy ● Inflation

IS IT NOT STRANGE that with the newspapers full of stories and advertisements about a flood of broilers for the table from one or more of the new multi-million farms in Sri Lanka, that *Tribune* should be inundated with letters and complaints from small poultry farmers who say they are going bankrupt? That elsewhere in this issue we have published a letter from a poultry farmer in Kandy? That in this column we will refer to a note sent to us from another small poultry farmer from the Ja-ela area? That this is what he said: "Did you hear the 'gem' over the SLBC on the night of Friday, January 2, which claimed that the Oils and Fats Corporation had increased animal feed production in the first ten months of 1980 by 28% compared to the corresponding period in 1979?" That "if this is true why have so many small poultry farmers put up their shutters" is the first question? That the next question is "why are parent stock producers of day old chicks finding the sale of day-old chicks a trifle difficult?" That all this was happening, he said, just when the small poultry farmers have started to mortgage what little they have to meet their bank and loan commitments and that this coincided with the time when the CWE and other government agencies had started selling the produce of one of the largest broileries in Sri Lanka? That, there is no doubt, states our reader, "that this pinnacle of financial tyroonery has all the ready liquid cash to buy out all the food ingredients, dictate terms to the CWE and thus put the small farmer out of business?" That the reader then raised the question as to why when the "Ministry dealing with poultry is at the peak of its popularity is claiming as it does that everything is going so well in the poultry world, when it is shouting from the house-tops that milk production was increasing by leaps and bounds and that when it is boasting that consumers were getting their eggs and milk at their very doorsteps at prices which defied competition, the small poultry farmer is being wiped out?" That the reader wants some government authority to investigate whether in fact (a) more animal (and poultry) feed was in fact produced in 1980 as compared to 1979; (b) whether milk production has gone up in 1980? (c) whether consumers are getting milk and eggs regularly at prices that defied competition? That this reader wants *Tribune* also to conduct investigations of its own on these matters—even though he himself would soon join the ranks of the urban educated unemployed as his attempts to be gainfully self-employed will end in total failure and bankruptcy?

IS IT NOT A FACT asks another reader from Colombo whether in the top echelons of the Administration and the High Finance, it is being whispered that inflation is already running at the rate of 65%? That every effort was being made to keep this steep Himal

ayan rise in the inflation rate a dark secret? That there were suspicions that steps had also been taken to "cook the statistics" to persuade the people as well as foreign agencies that the rate of inflation was hovering around 20%? That in spite of all these efforts, inflation like murder, will be out? That people draw their own conclusions from the fact that the Sri Lanka rupee had devalued 20% to 30% since October 1977 (after the 100% devaluation effected in August/September 1977)? That 100 Indian rupees which cost 180 Sri Lanka (SL) rupees then, now cost Rs. 220, that 100 US dollars which cost 1500 SL rupees then, now cost 1800, and 100 pounds sterling which cost 3000 SL rupees then, now cost well over 4000? That speculators were operating on the footing that the 100 Indian rupees will soon cost 250 Sri Lanka rupees, that 100 US dollars will touch 2000 SL rupees and that 100 pounds sterling will top the 5000 SL rupees mark? That the average price of fish (not seer) which was around Rs. 5 to 6 a lb. in 1977 is now around Rs. 10 a lb? The cheapest variety of fish around Rs. 4 then now fetched Rs. 7 to Rs. 10 a lb.? That an egg which cost 50 cents then now costs Rs. 1/— each? That mutton and beef had gone up very nearly double? That the Rs. 3/50 a-measure rice was now around Rs. 6/50 a measure? That average price of vegetables had moved up from Rs. 1.50 to Rs. 3.00 per lb.? That the cheapest plantains which were around —/25 cents each then had moved up to —/60 cents each? That on top of all this, the conversion to the metric system without adequate "education of the masses" and without proper supervision has added to the burdens of the consumer? That in the conversion the consumer is being cheated another 20% to 50%? That the 20 ounce (pint) of pasteurised milk in bottles at Rs. 2/00 is being sold to consumers in one litre (16 ounces) "satches" or "pouches" also for Rs. 2? That in the conversion from ounces and pounds to grammes and kilograms, consumers are being diddled by at least 20%. That the mere insistence on prices being proclaimed on notice-boards is no guarantee that the monkey business in metric conversion will be brought under control? That all these have added to the inflationary spiral—with no prospects in sight even on the distant horizon that government has contemplated any meaningful steps to check inflation? That it is not enough to put all the blame on the oil price hike—when little or nothing is being done to increase local production? That salary increases are too little and have always come too late? That the rhetoric of the government now only tends to increase the credibility gap?



DON'T

Cut That Tree

BUT

Plant Many Trees

To Increase The Island's Tree Cover

To Save Nation's Environment

Space Donated

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50 Years Of Universal Franchise

THE RIGHT TO VOTE

THEN

- Males only
- British subjects
- Over 21 years
- Able to read and write English, Sinhalese or Tamil
- Possess Income and property

NOW

- Sri Lanka citizens
- Over 18 years
- No income property or literacy qualifications

Calender Of Special Events

- | | |
|--------------------|---|
| 4th February 1981 | Commencement of year of celebrations
National Day celebrations at Anuradhapura |
| 20th June | Special regional meeting of Commonwealth
Parliamentary Association |
| 7th July | Issue of commemorative stamp |
| 16th July | Opening of Sri Lanka exhibition at
Commonwealth Institute, London |
| 20th October | Commemorative meeting; visit of
Her Majesty the Queen to Sri Lanka |
| 4th February, 1982 | Opening of new Parliament at
Sri Jayawardenepura |

In commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of Universal Franchise, the people of Sri Lanka will, throughout 1981, involve themselves in nation-building activities on as wide a basis as possible.

RELEASED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION OF THE MINISTRY OF STATE.