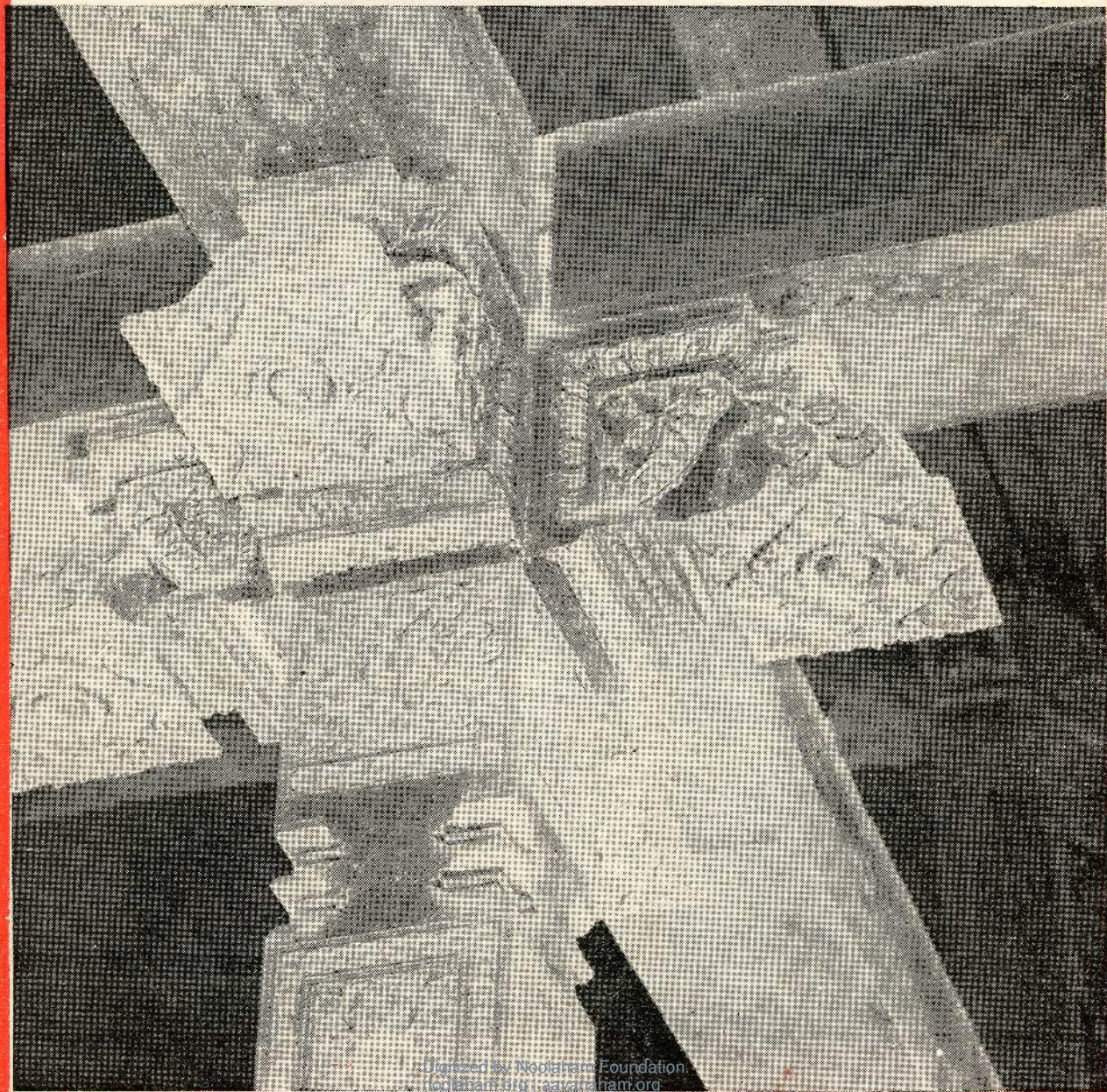


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TRIBUNE



26TH YEAR OF PUBLICATION





The Winged Bean

(Dambala - දඹල)



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Letter From The Editor

ON THE COVER this week we have a picture of an "antique" which is difficult for rich foreigners to carry away nowadays—with the growing vigilance by the Government to prevent the export of the works of art and antiques from this country. Bigger and more ancient works of great historical and cultural value, however, have been carried away over the decades to private homes and museums in Europe, America and Japan. It is not only Sri Lanka that has been robbed in this way. All territories that came under the control of European nations which had used gunpowder and now the threat of the atomic fire-power have suffered from such deprivations. In more recent times, instead of direct plunder and robbery, antiques have been spirited away through the indirect plunder effected by offering hard currencies after national currencies have been devalued through manipulative devices by countries which had plundered earlier through direct military domination. The return and restoration of such plundered works of art to their national homes has been taken up in several international fora like the UNESCO. On a national level, more governments are now taking steps to stop any further plunder of this kind especially undercover of the ground rules of the so-called export-oriented free economies now insisted upon by rich developed nations to continue the old colonial practice (under new smokescreen) of importing primary raw materials and exporting finished products with value added to enable the rich to become richer. Elsewhere in this issue we have published an article by Manel Fonseka on the attempts made in Sri Lanka to reduce and eliminate the drain of our antiques and objects of art to richer countries. With our currency devalued to the extent that it is, foreigners are able to find sellers to part with valuable objects of art "for a song" in terms of the hard currency but which appear large in Sri Lankan money. Manel Fonseka draws attention in the article to problems that those who have sought to check this antiques' drain have faced and still face. We commend this article to all our readers who are concerned with the problem, but who may not be aware of the magnitude of the difficulties in the way combating the cunning and ingenuity of those who want to cash in on the situation. More recently, statues, sculptures and paintings have been stolen from our temples—some at the point of the gun—because there are rich foreigners who are willing to pay any price for them. The Sun and the Weekend have repeatedly drawn attention to such robberies which have topped the multi-million mark even in terms of hard currency. There is no doubt that much more than what is being done now must be effectively carried out not only by government but also by every concerned Sri Lankan to eliminate the plunder of antiques and objects d'art. A great deal has already been taken especially in the last two decades and unless drastic measures are enforced soon the little still left behind will soon disappear. In the place of our valuable antiques, we will have a multitude of electronic gadgets which will become obsolete even before the money realised by the sale of antiques is further devalued and disappears in the vast ocean of consumerist extravaganza. Whilst this wholesale robbery goes on unabated, the people of this country are being lulled into a false sense of well-being by glib talk about miraculous panaceas that an export-oriented economy has opened for this country. One of such phantasmagoria conjured on the front page of the Ceylon Daily News on January 2, 1981 had proclaimed AGRICULTURAL FREE TRADE ZONES TO BE SET UP. What is even fantastic is that a special government Committee was wasting its time studying this spooky scheme which even a fool can predict will never get off the ground. The report itself reveals the inherent reasons why an Agricultural Free Trade Zone has no basis in reality. If time and effort expended on madcap schemes like An Agricultural Free Trade Zone is spent on upgrading our traditional agriculture, this country has a future. We are now chasing shadows. Soon we will be chasing mirages.

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EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

● Kalawana ● Tea

Colombo, January 13.

The results of Kalawana by-election were as expected—Sarath Muttetuwegama won by a comfortable majority of 2,403 votes. The results are as follows:—

Total number of registered voters—	28,960
Total number of votes cast	24,979
Mr. Sarath Muttetuwegama (CP)	13,419
Mr. Lionel Gunasekera (Ind.)	11,016
Mr. M. W. Jayasuriya (Ind.)	215
Mr. Ranatunge Premadasa (Ind.)	107
Mr. J. L. Abeywardena (Ind.)	67
Mr. H. D. Saranadasa (Ind.)	67
Mr. F. W. Abeynayake (Ind.)	25
Spoilt Votes	63
Majority	2,403

The results have produced one surprise: that independent candidate Lionel Gunasekera should poll as much as 11,016 votes. But those "in the know" are aware that Lionel Gunasekera was backed "unofficially" by the entire machinery of the UNP not only in the area but elsewhere also. Many UNP stalwarts in Colombo had openly told *Tribune* that Lionel Gunasekera would win because people in the area had confidence in the UNP and that they lost all faith in the Communist Party and the entire Opposition that backed him. Even after making allowance for the personal popularity of Sarath Muttetuwegama in a constituency which he had represented from 1970 to 1977, there is no doubt that Kalawana is a major defeat for the UNP and the Government.

The attempt to pretend that the UNP had kept out of the elections is so transparently thin there that it only adds to the credibility gap which has begun to envelop the government.

The registered number of voters at Kalawana at the by-election was 25,960 i.e., 1996 more than in 1977 General Election (26,964), when the voting was as follows:

Abeyratne Pilapitiya (UNP)	12,098
Sarath Muttetuwegama (CP)	10,136
S. S. Gauthamadasa (SLFP)	1,668
H. R. S. de Zoysa (Independent)	86
Majority	1,682

It must be noted that at Kalawana there was an *ad hoc* unity of all the Opposition Parties in support of the Communist Party. And though the rivals were all independents, the UNP *de facto* had supported one "independent" candidate who had declared his support for the Government without any inhibitions.

Sarath Muttetuwegama polled 13,419 odd votes—over 2500 votes more than what he and the SLFP candidate had polled in 1977. Lionel Gunasekera, who was unofficially backed by the UNP polled less than what Abeyratne Pilapitiya had scored in 1977—and this in spite of the increase of nearly 2,000 in the number of registered voters.

TRIBUNE, January 17, 1981

And now the country goes on to a Referendum which will cost the country as much as a General Election. Judging by what was spent in the 1977 General Election, this Referendum will cost at least Rs. 30 million.

X X X

In the *Confidentially* column this week, *Tribune* as drawn attention to the deteriorating situation in our major plantation industries. We have also published from CWC's *Congress News* a piece which had spotlighted some of the highlights of the shortcomings the Auditor General had found in the two state-owned plantations managed by state-run managerial Corporations.

In this connection it is necessary to place on record the editorial published by the *Congress News* entitled SINS OF SLSPC and JEDB. It reads: "The littany of lapses of the Janatha Estate Development Board and the Sri Lanka State Plantation Corporation, enumerated by the Auditor General in his report for the year 1977 and 1978, might appear shocking to the uninitiated eye. But to those of us, who are on the sidelines watching how some of the estates are being run, this is neither shocking nor surprising. On the contrary, we are amazed that the losses of these two corporations had been so low during the two years, when it should have been at least double that. Ever since these two state management agencies were set up by the state to manage plantations of Sri Lanka, the Ceylon Workers Congress has pointed out how they have been (mis) managing the economic backbone of the country. No one can say that the losses have accrued over the years due to a sharp fall in production or the prices plummeting. In spite of the fact that the plantations were mismanaged, inputs such as fertilizer and chemicals were deprived to the plantations, nature's bounty was not affected. There was no shortfall in the production of tea or rubber during these years.

"How then have the estates sustained such large losses? The Auditor General himself has given some of the reasons, like workers charged to one account being used for working in the bungalows of managers and chief clerks, non-recovery of contract deposits etc. But these are mere flea bites compared to the way in which the national asset is being frittered away for personal gains, by some unscrupulous individuals.

"Many of the managers are now large-scale cattle farmers. The cattle is maintained at the expense of the estate. Workers who should be deployed in the fields are used for cutting grass, milking cows and to keep the shed spick and span. There is another tribe of planters, who plant vegetables other than tea in their estates. Some are digging for gems, while others are digging for trouble. These are the men, who move about in sleek fleet of cars who are responsible for these losses. Time and again the CWC has been drawing the attention of the powers that be to this danger.

It was this waste and mismanagement that made the CWC to request His Excellency to take remedial measures before long. This was the reason, why His Excellency, brought the plantation industry directly under his supervision. But has this changed the attitude of the overlords in estates? We will wait for the next report of the Auditor General."

At the time of writing there is an on-going strike on the JEDB estates by all unions including the CWC which is the largest in these estates. There will be a further decrease in tea production in this quarter, but the blame cannot be entirely placed on the trade unions which no doubt often erratically in the face of managerial incompetence, inefficiency and corruption. Whither the Dharmista Government? Whither Sri Lanka?

X X X

FILM FOCUS

The Gandhi Film

While the balance of Political Power keeps swinging once again in India, all too soon after a popular mandate given at the General Election, a mini-war appears to be raging there regarding the filming of the autobiography of Mahatma Gandhi, whose life was snuffed out by a fanatic Nathuram Godse, just over three decades ago. As the shadow of Gandhi in death lengthens on to reign supreme as a father figure across Mother India daily, it is not surprising that such a film has aroused so much interest, and an unfortunate controversy. While peaceful picketing and legal action is in the air, against the Producer, Sir Richard Attenborough, the Indian Government appears to be tacitly supporting the venture, while the senior politicians of the Mahatma's life time on earth, like Sri Morarji Desai have entered the fray to discuss the pros and cons of the Production.

It is reported that steps are also under way to organise a peaceful stir against the film—which is already under way costing millions—by an action committee comprising of like minded people, including Gandhians and representatives of a Forum for Better Cinema. At a meeting of this action committee, a joint unanimous declaration of total resistance to the film has been taken. This committee felt that the film in question would definitely hurt the feelings of Indians in general and Gandhian freedom fighters in particular as the Mahatma's image would be denigrated.

A few years ago, we had the film *Nine Hours to Rama*, which centred around, with ticking suspense on the assassination of Gandhi holding the spotlight on the killer, with the Mahatma appearing briefly in key sequences only—but this did not evoke as much opposition. The present moves therefore are a pointer that the Gandhi legend is grown to such proportions since, even to the point of deifying him, something even Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru had been opposed to,

as Prime Minister.

Taking time away from the Metropolis for a short off season retreat at Madhu, I was able to delve further amidst the peace and quiet there, on some rare reading material given me by Mrs. M. Tiruchelvam, a Director of the Film Corporation snippets of which I would like to reproduce for the consumption of *Tribune* readers. Sir Richard Attenborough has stated that "Eighteen years ago, I was a prosperous actor and part producer—a comfortable existence. I had enough parts in movies and my money was well invested. Then I was handed 'Louis Fischer's' biography of Gandhi, by Motilal Kotari and I can truthfully say it changed my life. I was bowled over, and since that day, I have not thought of anything else—everything I had done since, from directing movies to rejecting acting roles, and making nearly 40 trips to India, has been to be able to make this one picture."

Some of the exciting cinematic sequences in the film, I gathered will be the famous Salt March, the burning down of the Chauri Chaura police station, the spectacle of the Dandi March, the staging in 1916 of a historic Indian National Congress convention, and surging crowds of half a million following Gandhi's funeral cortege. The authenticity of the autobiography is being preserved meticulously in every detail, with colossal sets and trained technicians hard at work—the relative expenses running to lakhs per day, and an estimated target of Rs. 18 crore.

Ben Kingsley, an English stage actor has been chosen for the principal role, and he has approached it with a sense of utmost dedication to portray the life of one, which remains unique to this day in so many ways. In his private living, Kingsley is close to a Gandhian way of contemplative life, practising Yoga daily, although he grew up in England, and has worked as a lead in major Royal Shakespearean Company Productions on stage. Discovering Gandhi has become a process of self discovery to him, and he admits, that "the more I try to understand him"—one who was also referred to contemptuously as a Naked Fakir by Sir Winston Churchill, when in London for negotiations to free India from colonial shackles—"the more I find my temper, and temperament changing together with my peace and patience. Travelling in Gujarat, was a re-discovery of my roots—my grandfather having been an Indian. Suddenly a part of myself, that had lain asleep all my life is awakening."

Since the complete dedication to this autobiography appears thus to be an intense and sincere one, I am certain we are in for a great film of one who is admired and oft-quoted widely in Sri Lanka, by members of both sides, of our National State Assembly—to prove a point and remain as much a legend in our country as in India. The ebb and tide of the opposition that is snow-balling in India right now, will I hope give way to the release of this film, and this "battle" would be watched by this column with more than ordinary interest.

INSIDE JOB (English): Veteran actor Henry Fonde.

father of both Jane Fonda, a double Oscar winner and the popular Peter Fonda, is the star turn of this Universal Production. Picture-goers of a little over two decades ago, will remember the exclusive histrionics and the rather lax drawl of this gum-chewing, gun totting cool actor, who was always quick on the draw in action films. The years have however not caught up on his style, and in this film, he roles an aging cop, who seeks an extension of service in the Department, and on being denied it, goes on to master-mind an ingenious robbery, right under the noses of the law, just to prove himself. The plot was clever, and the role fitted Fonda like a glove, but then the present generation which thrives on violence, sex and quick action in films, has turned its nose somewhat on this excellent film. Mature audiences should however relish it, as its appeal is more for their intellect, than to a generation in a hurry!

A recent National Film Corporation team that went to India, appears to have selected a good number of Tamil films, for exhibition in Sri Lanka, among which are a number of popular revivals. I sat through a couple of speckless new prints in "Paalum Palamum" and "Uttaman" recently and felt refreshed by the Shivaji Ganeshan magic—both films being perennials. The maestros touch still reigns supreme amidst the new wave artistes like Kamalahasan, Rajani Kanth, Vijayan Sudahar and others. While on the subject, watch out for Shivaji's "Imayam" which should be around soon.

James N. Benedict.



SRI LANKA CHRONICLE

Jan. 1 — Jan. 9

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

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

THURSDAY, JANUARY 1: Security-wise 1980 was the best year in the last decade, Inspector General of Police Ana Seneviratne said yesterday reviewing the work done by police last year. Mr. Seneviratne said that law and order was well-maintained in the country and terrorism was completely wiped out; serious crime—homicides, premeditated murder, armed hold-ups, burglaries, highway robberies extortion and rape—showed a marked downward trend last year, he said; there were no bank hold-ups and no killings by handbombs; political and communal violence last year

was virtually non-existent; other crime was also at low level. Health Services Director Dr. H. A. Jesudasan yesterday warned the public to refrain from going on pilgrimages until the cholera situation in the country improves—CDN. The Ministry of Education has decided to ease the area requirement of students seeking admission to schools; the decision is to include in the White Paper on Education that is to be submitted to Parliament soon that all students attending school up to grade six should be permanently resident within a one-and-a-half mile radius from the school—CDM. The joint Opposition have requested President J. R. Jayewardene to make it possible for them to participate meaningfully in the process of legislation; referring to the Kalawana by-election and the bill Government intends to introduce to Parliament, the Opposition have urged that in a matter of such importance with such far-reaching consequences, the public should be given a full and an accurate knowledge of the provision of a bill which will bring in many changes in various laws—SU. All public servants will be permitted to retire from work after the completion of 20 years of service—RV.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 2: One hundred employees became shareholders of the National Insurance Corporation yesterday morning. Twenty three more items have been brought within the scope of the Consumer Protection Act, bringing the total number of items under the Act to 302; the latest items brought under this Act by the Commissioner of Internal Trade Mr. M. Ramalingam are coconut, pappadam, beedi, beedi tobacco, cigars, pipe tobacco, mosquito coils, vacuum flasks, text books, socks, face cream, television antenna, fishing gear, nylon fishing nets, nylon thread, fishing hooks, outboard motors for boats and their spare parts electric typewriters; electric calculators, photostat machines, crash helmets and high density polythene shopping bags; there are now subjected to price marking, exhibition of price lists, quality control and prohibiting of conditional sales. A police constable was killed and another person was seriously injured during a gun battle at Galnawa, in the Anuradhapura police area, between a police party and an armed gang, on Wednesday, police said yesterday; PC Jayasundera was in the police party which was chasing a gan which had hijacked a van containing cigarettes and cash amounting to about Rs. 30,000 when the suspects are alleged to have fired at the police—CDN. Informed sources completely discount the contention in certain quarters that Sri Lanka is considering affording rest and recreation facilities for American Naval forces stationed in the Indian Ocean; this 'baseless' contentation originated following the visit to this country late last year by the Naval Commander of the American forces in the Pacific Admiral Long; it can now be revealed these sources said that Admiral Long made no such suggestion to anyone in authority in this country. Sri Lanka will hold a 136 shares valued at US 1,360,000 dollars in the proposed Common Fund for Commodities sponsored by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in Geneva—CDM. Professors and

academics from several non-aligned countries will meet here for a three-day seminar beginning January 10 to examine the current problems of the non-aligned movement; it is being organised by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Bandaranaike Centre for International Studies; delegates from Bangladesh, Cuba, Egypt, India, Pakistan, Yugoslavia and Zambia will participate, the BCIS said—SU. The armed forces will participate in shramadana work in the Mahaweli Project working sites from this year—DV. Government sources revealed yesterday that the nominated MP for Kalawana Mr. Pilapitiya would resign from his seat just before the results of the by-election for Kalawana is announced on the January 12; this would be done to resolve the constitutional crisis—JD.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 3: Waste in public corporations in the last few years was in the range of one billion rupees; Deputy Minister of Trade and Shipping M. S. Amarasiri said yesterday; the Committee on Public Corporations of which Mr. Amarasiri is a member, had found that right from the highest officer down to the smallest employees, no one cared because the corporation or the services it offered did not belong to them. The Transport Board, on New Year's day handed over the Keppitipola bus depot in Welimada to its 400 workers to run it as a going concern; the depot's 74 buses and equipment were listed in the document transferring ownership to the employees; Deputy Minister of Home Affairs and MP for Welimada Percy Samaraweera will be Chairman of the Governing Board for a few months. Indonesian Foreign Minister, Mochtar Kusumastmadja today called for the Indian Ocean, along with Southeast Asia, to be recognised as a "zone of Peace" to avoid big-power confrontation; his call came in a foreign policy review in which he said the past year's political, economic, and military events gave serious cause for concern; he said the military buildup of the super powers in the Indian Ocean and in the Pacific had increased their competition, making the UN Conference on the Indian Ocean to be held this year in Sri Lanka even more urgent. Mr. Lionel Gunasekera (Independent) contesting the Kalwana by-election said at an election meeting at Wewagama that if he was elected he would seek the co-operation of the government to work for the benefit of the electorate; he said nothing had been done by the previous regime for the public good and for the benefit of the people of Kalawana. The Associated Newspapers of Ceylon has invited its employees to apply for shares in the company; the company will sell a proportion of its shares to the employees at the par value of Rs. 10 each; shares purchased by employees cannot be transferred and will vest in the Public Trustee on termination of their employment—CDN. Several Tax concessions now being enjoyed by big hotel investors who build over 50-room hotels will be extended to those putting up tourist hotels with 25 rooms, this is in order to encourage investors to put up smaller hotels—CDM. Government is to set up a new Overseas Intelligence Service; the outlines for such a service, intended primarily for security purposes, are now

being drawn up by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; according to official sources the proposed intelligence service will be responsible for information on security of the country; its primary function will be the security of Lanka's missions abroad; this will include the screening of staff, perimeter and personnel security as well as "plugging all leaks" the sources said—SU. 57.80% believes that women should work at night; this was revealed in a survey conducted by the Women's Bureau—DV. The government has decided to construct a new railway line from Colombo to Jayawardanapura—LD. Commonwealth countries specially Britain disapproves the government's policy on the Kalawana issue; intellectuals and government MPs have started to demonstrate their opposition to the UNP government's Policy towards democracy—ATH.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 4: 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 said represented a 42.6 per cent slice of the national budget and some 58 per cent 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 faces. The Indian Minister of Finance, Mr. R. Venkatraman is scheduled to arrive here on an official visit today; during his stay here he will sign an agreement on an Indian rupees 100 million line of credit with the Minister of Finance and Planning Ronnie de Mel. Burglars who had broken in to a shop at Second Division Maradana on Tuesday night had got away with wrist watches and radios valued at over Rs. 1 lakh—SO. The Government has given the green light to a private organisation, with Indian collaboration to operate a bus service in the City and the sub-urban areas in competition with the nationalised bus service.—ST Are foreign experts based in Sri Lanka playing a constructive role in the country's development or are large numbers of them mere drones on whom millions of dollars are being spent; the question appears to be foremost in the minds of leading Cabinet Ministers and top officials as the Government continues to step up its development programmes and embark on new ones. A referendum will be held on the question accommodating the elected MP for Kalawana, President J. R. Jayewardene announced in Bandarawela last evening; speaking at the Mahapola anniversary meeting at the Teacher Training College, President Jayewardene said that this referendum would depend on the decision made by the Supreme Court with regard to the Third Amendment to the Constitution—WK. Statistics have revealed that over 1 lakh of people have undergone sterilisation but the number of people sterilized in Northern areas have decreased; the number who underwent sterilization increased after the allowance was increased from Rs. 100 to Rs. 500. The 27 year old Rice Agreement between Sri Lanka and China might come to end as there are differences between

the two countries on the price of rice; China has requested 325 dollars per ton of rice as they say the world price of rice has increased; the Ministry of Trade has turned down the request; the government is to call for world wide tenders if the agreement between the two countries is cancelled—R.R.

MONDAY, JANUARY 5: The Government Parliamentary Group meets tomorrow to discuss Kalawana—the controversial constitutional issue. Indian Finance Minister R. Venkatraman arrived here yesterday on a two-day official visit carrying with him a special message from Prime Minister Indira Gandhi to President J. R. Jayewardene. George Hector Abeygoonasekera, UNP Member of Parliament for Hanguranketa, died at a private nursing home in Colombo, yesterday after a brief illness, he was 65. Delegates from India, Yugoslavia, Cuba, Bangladesh, Egypt and Pakistan will participate in a three-day seminar on Problems of Non-alignment at the BMICH, the seminar which is sponsored by the Foreign Ministry and the Bandaranaike Centre for International Studies will be opened by Mr. A. C. S. Hameed, the Foreign Minister on January 10; Sri Lanka will be represented by Messrs Esmond Wickremasinghe, Bernard Tillekeratne, Prof. Shelton Kodikara, Dr. H. W. Thambiah, Messrs Mervyn de Silva, S. P. Amarasingam, K. Breckenridge, L. D. C. Moneratalwala, P. H. Kurukulasuriya and W. P. Wickremasinghe—CDN. The price of rice under the Rubber-Rice Pact with China for this year is still being negotiated; in terms of the pact signed last month, Sri Lanka has pledged to import 80,000 tons of rice this year; bulk of the rice imports is from Burma and the price Burma has quoted is considered high by the Government of Sri Lanka; traditionally, since the inception of the Rubber-Rice pact, China negotiates the price of rice with Burma. All plans have almost been finalised for the first official visit to the Jaffna District of Prime Minister R. Premadasa, later this month—CDM. Prime Minister R. Premadasa yesterday attacked certain government institutions which he said were mismanaged and were wasting the country's resources; addressing a meeting after declaring open the new administrative building of the Jamia Naleemia Education Institute in Beruwela the Premier said there were scores of examples where privately managed institutions, when taken over

by Government, were ruined by mismanagement. A 25 million US dollar loan will shortly be granted by USAID to Prime Minister R. Premadasa for the construction of several major housing schemes; final negotiations for this loan which will be granted by the United States Aid for International Development, are now underway between officials of the Ministry of Local Government Housing and Construction and the USAID officials. The Department of Census and Statistics has appealed to the public to refrain from holding weddings, parties or other functions on March 17, the final day of the 1981 population and housing census; some 70,000 enumerators will be sent out on that day to conduct the census—SU. The PM's plans to charge for water supplied to Colombo and the suburbs is reported to be another world bank condition; water meters will be introduced and people living in Colombo and the suburbs will be asked to pay for their water—JD. The Government has decided to introduce a new salary scheme to workers who were appointed after the present government came to power—LD.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 6: Twelve persons were killed and over fifty seriously injured in the early hours of yesterday morning when the Jaffna night mail to Colombo coming into the Kurunegala railway station rammed into the rear of the Batticaloa express which was steaming out, on its way to Colombo; the guard's van and two passenger compartments were reduced to matchwood; sleep-eyed passengers shocked into awakening found themselves trapped; men women and children were screaming their heads off in the darkness before dawn; it was 4.30 in the morning; nine were dead on the spot; there were nearly a hundred bleeding, suffering from shock and some, unable to breathe. Mr. Tarzie Vittachi said yesterday that the freedoms of the press was not the prerogative of journalists. "A journalist enjoyed no more freedom than any other citizen; the guarantee of the freedom of the press was given to the people and the press was only the means by which this freedom is exercised," he said; Mr. Vittachi the internationally reputed Sri Lankan journalist, who was one time editor of the *Ceylon Observer* was giving a talk to Lake House journalists on "Beyond the Headlines"; he said all journalists should have a correct perception of what was happening around them, instead of being blinded by a series of stereotypes; they should learn to see things in a fairly clear light instead of what he would describe as a fixed focus lens. But a correct perception of news was a must for journalists if they were to present a correct picture to their readers, he said—CDN. Professor H. A. de S. Gunasekera, former Dean of the Faculty of Arts of the University of Sri Lanka, Peradeniya died of a heart attack yesterday; he was 57 years old—CDM. The third amendment to the Constitution to accommodate the winner of the Kalawana by-election will be taken up in Parliament today but it will become law only after it is approved by the people at a Referendum. The Health Ministry rushed two of its officials on Sunday to Mannar, as reports indicated an increase in the number of positive cholera cases in the area—SU.

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

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 7: The Third Constitution Amendment Bill, which was formally moved in Parliament yesterday by Prime Minister R. Premadasa, was passed in all its stages with the requisite two-thirds majority; this amending legislation which seeks to permit the candidate elected at the Kalawana by-election next week to sit in Parliament received 134 votes against 7; the seven SLEP members voted against the bill; the TULF which participated in the debate was not present at voting time; this Bill will now have also to be approved by the people at a Referendum as determined by the Supreme Court. Peter Delpachitra driver of the Jaffna Night mail which rammed into the Batticaloa Express at the Kurunegala railway station on Monday told the Kurunegala coroner that when he applied his brakes they failed to respond; the result was the crash. At a colloquium on Information and the New World Order at the BMICH yesterday media-men discussed the prevailing global information system with its attendant imbalances and the need to effect changes so that the developing South would not be subject to the massive onslaught of information from the developed North which imposed only their own points of view. Visiting Indian Finance Minister R. Venkatraman yesterday said the relationship between India and Sri Lanka was at its best; India and Sri Lanka have absolutely no differences politically, economically or internationally, he said. Prime Minister of Singapore Lee Kuan Yew has sent messages to President J. R. Jayewardene and Prime Minister R. Premadasa thanking them for their messages of congratulations to his victory at the recent elections in Singapore; he has told them he looked forward to seeing them in Colombo on January 29—CDN. Was it a gross negligence on the part of the cabin crew of the Jaffna mail train or a technical defect of the engine; these are the aspects of the investigations that are being carried out by the Railway and the Police on the Kurunegala train tragedy—CDM. India will not be able to attend a regional official level meeting proposed to be held in Colombo at Bangladesh's instance later this month, an official spokesman said in New Delhi today; this was because its officials would be preparing for the non-aligned Foreign Minister's conference scheduled to be held here from February 9 to 12. Libya's diplomatic mission in Colombo is to be turned into a People's Bureau; according to diplomatic sources here, an official announcement is expected to be made today; the bureau will be manned by students; a group of students from Libya have arrived in Sri Lanka to attend to matters relating to this move, by the Libyan government; the Foreign Ministry however had no intimation of this move according to Protocol Chief Walter Abeysinghe—SU. The Sri Lanka Industrial Development Board is to carry out an island wide survey to find out industries that have been crippled by imports—DV. Number of government members have expressed their protest at the government group meeting yesterday to the dual seating policy to the Kalawana electorate. They are reported to have argued against keeping Mr. Piliapitiya as its nominated MP for Kalawana—ATH.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 8: Indian Finance Minister R. Venkatraman had a discussion on Tuesday with President J. R. Jayewardene on the working of the Indo-Sri Lanka agreement on the future of persons of Indian origin in this country informed sources said yesterday; President Jayewardene and Mr. Venkatraman agreed that the question of stateless persons of Indian origin in Sri Lanka should be settled as soon as possible and all impediments such as delays in the payment of gratuities and provident of dues be immediately removed and steps taken to expedite them. Mr. Venkatraman said the Indian government would welcome the speeding up of the process of repatriation as it would facilitate resettlement of the repatriates in India. Independence Day celebrations this year on February 4, will be held in Colombo and not in Anuradhapura as earlier announced. The government had taken this decision because it was not safe for about half a million people to congregate in that city when there were still reports of Cholera from Mannar. Fees for radio licences have been upped from yesterday; the new licence fee is Rs. 30 for the first set and Rs. 20 for every additional set—CDN. The Cabinet yesterday approved taking a loan from the Asian Development Board and the International Fund for Agricultural Development amounting to Rs. 531 million to upgrade the agricultural sector in the country—CDM. Two people were gunned down and three others seriously injured when a gang of youths armed with a sub-machine gun went on the rampage in Jaffna yesterday afternoon; alerted by the shots, a large crowd of villagers gathered there, and began pelting stones and hurling stocks of firewood at the gang, police said; the gangsters are then reported to have turned the sten-gun on the villagers; four men fell bleeding to the ground; two were found dead on admission to the Jaffna hospital. A pro-Mao Tsetung mob yesterday afternoon attacked the Chinese Embassy in Colombo with stones, damaging glass panes in the building—SU.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 9: Minister of Rural Industrial Development, S. Thondaman and Minister of Regional Development C. Rajadurai outlined the various measures taken by government for the welfare of the Tamil community in Sri Lanka, when they participated at the opening of a Sri Lanka stall at an exhibition in Madurai, South India, held in conjunction with the current Tamil Research Conference being held there; Dr. M. A. M. Jalaal Deen, first MP for Pottuvil said that as in Tamil Nadu, in Sri Lanka too Muslims and Tamils had together helped to develop the Tamil language; the Muslims of Sri Lanka, who had adopted Tamil as their mother tongue he said, were playing an important role along with their Tamil brethren in the development of Tamil language and culture. Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M. G. Ramachandran speaking at the fifth International Tamil Research Conference currently being held in Madurai, South India has objected to a reference to a so-called Tamil problem in Sri Lanka made by Mr. A. Amirthalingam Sri Lanka Opposition Leader in the course of his speech at the conference; Mr. Rama-

chandran has said the conference would not allow itself to be used as a platform for anyone to propagate any political ideology nor did they want to interfere in the internal affairs of any country; the Government and people of Tamil Nadu always wanted to maintain the best of relations with the Governments and people of other countries, particularly with the neighbours; if any injustice was done to the Tamils elsewhere, the people of Tamil Nadu would certainly voice their protest, but they would not interfere in the internal affairs of another country. There has been a 40 per cent cutback in production in 1980 in the five major government-owned textile mills, taking 1977 as the base year for production analysis: the marketing difficulties were largely caused, informed sources said, due to the fact that the local market is being flooded with textiles and finished garments both from the Free Trade Zone factories, outer FTZ factories which also produce for the export market and by the unprecedented import of 90 million metres of textiles by Salu Sala in 1980—CDN. Over 800,000 new voters will cast their ballots in the island-wide referendum to say 'yes' or 'no' to the Third Amendment to the Constitution which was passed in Parliament on Tuesday by a two-third majority. Two people were killed and 51 injured 15 of them seriously, when a SLCTB bus with a full complement of passengers went off the road and plunged into Pinga Oya at Katugastota at 7.30 a.m. yesterday—CDM. Nine more positive cases of

cholera were confirmed by epidemiologists yesterday. The Secretary-General of Sri Lanka's Opposition Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) A. Amirthalingam, said today that his party would "fight till the end" for a separate Tamil state in Sri Lanka; Mr. Amirthalingam told the Press Trust of India (PTI) in the southern city of Madurai that the Tamils in Sri Lanka were being neglected and nothing was being done to improve their lot; he said the rights offered to them under the new constitution were only on paper and intended to block their agitation. All exit points in the country were being rigidly guarded as Naval patrols and coastal Police stations in the North were alerted to the possibility of the gang members involved in Wednesday's double killing and half million rupee pawnshop robbery in Jaffna, slipping out of the country—SU.

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GENSCHER

Sums Up Madrid talks

Bonn, December 22,

Upon the conclusion of the first phase of the Madrid follow-up to the Helsinki Conference on Security & Cooperation in Europe, Bonn's Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher said on December 19th that the necessary political impulse was provided from the start. The West and neutral countries let there be no doubt that the principles of the Helsinki Final Act applied to all the participant countries. Helsinki's principles were not regionally restricted, and the principle of the renunciation of force must also be respected beyond Europe. Crises in the Third World should not be used for power-political advantage.

The Soviet Union was reminded at Madrid, Mr. Genscher went on, that without an end to its intervention in Afghanistan there could be no healing of the East-West relationship.

"Respect for human rights and basic freedom's," Mr. Genscher continued, "is important for political confidence-building..... People must directly profit from detente if it is to remain credible."

In this connection he referred to the "inhumane situation at the intra-German border" and said that at Madrid the Federal Republic of Germany had "emphasised that every step to make the border between the two parts of Germany more bearable would be a considerable contribution to the promotion of detente in Europe."

—FRG Bulletin.



LETTER

Sir,

DISFRANCHISEMENT

Tribune of 10th January 1981 carries on page 7 a letter from E. Seemappillai under the above caption. *Disenfranchisement*, however, is not an orthographical abomination. On page 295 of the Sixth Edition (1976) of the Concise Oxford Dictionary of current English the two words *disenfranchise* and *disfranchise* are found as vocabulary entries. Both are given equal status.

In his introduction to this latest edition of the Concise Oxford Dictionary the worthy editor, J. B. Sykes, has written: "The words, phrases and meanings given are those current in the English of the present day..... The attitude taken, however, is now essentially descriptive rather than prescriptive: that is, the dictionary seeks to record what is found to exist in the educated use of modern English."

In other words the editor of the latest C.O.D. tells us what educated people of the present day speak and use, and not what they ought to speak and use. Readers can choose between Seemappillai and Sykes.

Dr. H. D. Wallbeoff Jansz.

22, De Vos Avenue,
Colombo 4.
12th January 1981

And The Middle East-2

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".

This increased security-consciousness shows up everywhere, not just in the Middle East. Since 1974, Americans have indicated a steadily greater willingness to make troop commitments wherever US security is clearly at stake. Thus, willingness to come to the defense of America's major European allies with military force, "if any of them is attacked by the Soviet Union" increased year by year from 48 percent in 1974 to 74 percent in 1980. Similarly, the number of Americans willing to use force to defend Japan "if it is attacked by Soviet Russia or Communist China" rose from 37 to 68 percent over the same period. However, a majority of Americans in 1980 still oppose coming to the aid of South Korea if it is attacked by North Korea and Thailand if it is attacked by Vietnam—precisely the commitments that embroiled the United States in its two most recent wars. In both cases, it was not obvious to the American public that the country's vital security justified military intervention.

Feelings about the United States coming to the defense of Israel have followed a similar trend. In January 1976, 23 percent of the US public favoured sending American troops to help Israel in case of another Middle East war; a majority opposed such aid. In November 1978, the figure was just about the same (22 percent). But a year later, in December 1979, just after the seizure of the American hostages in Iran, the Gallup poll found that support for US troop aid to Israel had risen to 40 percent. In February 1980, when the Iran and Afghanistan crises were most intense, Americans were evenly divided on this question, 43 percent in favour of sending US troops to help Israel and 47 percent opposed. That turns out to be in high point. In July, the Harris poll put willingness

to send US troops to Israel at 36 percent, and by October, just before the Presidential vote, Gallup put the figure at 29 percent, with a majority once again opposed. US military aid is favoured only where a strong US security interest is perceived, and support for such aid rises and falls in line with the public's concern over national security.

At the same time, the polls have shown increased criticism of Israel's policy toward the Arabs. In 1976, Americans were split, 32-30 percent, over the view that "by refusing to come up with a plan to give back parts of the West Bank to let the Palestinians have a homeland, Israel makes peace impossible in the Middle East." In 1980, Americans agree with this position by 50-26 percent. A plurality still holds the view that Israel will work out a fair way for the Arabs in the occupied territory to rule themselves, but disagreement with this opinion has risen from 20 to 27 percent. The feeling that Israel has mistreated the Palestinian refugees has also grown slightly, from 35 percent in 1976 to 39 percent in 1980.

Many Americans feel that Prime Minister Begin's policies have been inflexible and unyielding. Fifty four percent of the American public expressed "a great deal of confidence" in President Sadat in July 1980, while the comparable figure for Prime Minister Begin was 38 percent. Americans also believe that Begin has made peace more difficult by advocating and allowing more Jewish settlements on the West Bank and by moving his office to the formerly Arab part of Jerusalem. The US public narrowly approves of threatening to withhold economic and military aid to Israel "if the government of Israel should become so unbending that the chances for peace in the Middle East grow much worse" (44 percent approve 37 percent disapprove). But if such action "meant that the Arabs would have military superiority in the case of another war," the public reverses its position and opposes the withholding of aid to punish Israel, 50 to 25 percent.

Americans are not totally unsympathetic to the Palestinians. In the 1980 Harris survey, 71 percent agreed that "the Palestinian people are now homeless and deserve their own independent state just as much as the Jews deserved a homeland after World War II". But the American public is sharply antagonistic toward the PLO and fearful that an independent Palestinian state, if dominated by the PLO would threaten Israel's security and invite radical and destabilizing influences into the area. Whereas the American public sympathised 52-12 percent with Israel over "the Arabs", the margin of support for Israel for "the Palestinians" was somewhat smaller, 47-14 percent. When the choice was between Israel and "the PLO" however, backing for Israel grew stronger, 65 percent for Israel and only six percent for the PLO.

As for the occupied territories, Americans believe that Israel's security should be a primary consideration. In 1978, only 9-10 percent of the US public felt that Israel should give back all of the occupied land, and

only 22-27 percent felt that Israel should not give any of the territory back. The majority view was that Israel should "give up all the land except what it needs to protect its security."

Now, as in the past, sympathy for Israel tends to be strongest among well educated, higher-status Americans who are most active in politics and who follow world events closely. At the same time, well-educated Americans are more likely to feel that the United States should "pay more attention to the Arabs, even if it means antagonizing Israel" and are more critical of Begin's intransigent negotiating positions. For instance, the view that Prime Minister Begin has made peace more difficult by moving his office to east Jerusalem and by advocating Jewish settlements on the West Bank increased from one third among poorly educated Americans to two-thirds among the college-educated. College-educated Americans are simultaneously sympathetic to Israel's cause while critical of Israel's policies. Their criticisms do not betoken a loss of support, nor does their sympathy for Israel imply a totally uncritical attitude.

Americans are deeply resentful of what they perceive as blackmail by oil-producing Arab countries. In 1980, as in 1976, Americans decisively rejected the view that since the United States needs Arab oil, it had "better find ways to get along with the Arabs, even if that means supporting Israel less" (rejected 65-23 percent in 1976 and 69-22 percent in 1980). Comparable majorities opposed any move to stop giving military aid to Israel if that were "the only way we could get Arab oil in enough quantity and at lower prices." Indeed, a criticism of President Carter's Middle East policy that is accepted by most Americans is that "he is allowed Arab oil pressure to influence US Middle East policy too much" (63-24 percent agreed in 1980).

By and large however, the American public approves of the way President Carter has handled the Middle East situation. The American people feel that Carter has tried to keep good relations with both the Arabs and Israel in order to work for peace (90-6 percent), that he has kept his commitment to stand by Israel (68-14 percent) and that he has been "even-handed" in his dealings with the Arab and the Israelis (49-28 percent). The Public feels that Carter has shown that "he can be tough with the Israelis when they are not co-operating or working toward peace" (47-63 percent). But when asked whether the President has "been too pro-Egypt and has pressured Israel too much," the public does not think so (59-22 percent).

Just after the November election, the Harris poll indicated that only 28 percent of the American people gave Carter a positive rating for his performance in office, one of his lowest ratings ever. Only 26 percent gave him a positive rating on foreign policy, and even fewer 13 percent, approved of his handling of the nation's economy. There was only one area where a majority of Americans gave Carter a positive rating, namely his handling of peace in the Middle East (66 percent positive). While the 1980 election results surely

indicate that Americans feel it is "time for a change" in most areas of domestic and foreign policy, the Middle East does not appear to be one of them. —USICA

Concluded

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IN THE U.S.A.

Economic Rays Of Hope

By Walter W. Heller

Professor of Economics University of Minnesota.

Dr. Heller was Chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers under Presidents Kennedy and Johnson, and has been a prominent commentator on Economic affairs ever since. The following is reprinted with permission from the *Wall Street Journal*. Copyright (C) 1980, by Dow Jones and Company, Inc.

"It's the season to be jolly. But does an economy—beset with double-digit inflation, record interest rates, a looming 60,000 million dollar Federal deficit and a grinding energy problem—give us much to be jolly about? Surprisingly, it does—well, not exactly jolly. But looking beneath the surface, one finds the US economy in spite of its grievous and pressing problems is stronger than we think. That implies a companion theme; that there are a great many things people 'know' that just aren't so. **Since it is fashionable to say that the US is economically losing ground in the world and that we are no longer number one, let me start with a few international perspectives on the US economy.**

Standard of living: The US standard of living has slipped behind that of our major competitors, right? Wrong. When exchange-rate distortions are stripped away to reveal the actual per capita flows of goods and services, the US still stands head and shoulders above the rest of the world. A painstaking study by a Wharton school team of economists led by Prof. Irving B. Kravis enables us to make this comparison. With the 1978 US living standards as a benchmark, the closest competitors among other major nations were France and Germany, at just over two-thirds of our standard, while Britain and Japan weighed in at just under three-fifths.

STILL IN FRONT. Productivity. We have fallen behind our trading partners, right? Wrong. The American worker is still the most productive in the world. If we ignore Satchel Paige's dictum and look behind us, we do indeed see others gaining on us. Twenty years ago, the French or German manufacturing worker produced half as much, the Japanese one-fourth as much, as the typical American worker. By 1979, Japanese productivity had risen to two-thirds, and the German and the French to four-fifths, of the US level. Still, the battle to boost US productivity in the eighties is to maintain rather than regain the lead.

Labour costs: Here lies the real reason we are losing our competitive edge in the world, right? Wrong.

Last month's Citibank survey showed once again that the rise in US labour costs is the slowest in the industrial world. In US dollars, average hourly compensation in manufacturing rose from 4.89 dollars to 10.16 dollars in the US, between 1978 and 1979. It rose from 2.30 dollars to 11.56 dollars in Germany, from 2.05 dollars to 9.19 dollars in France, from 1.65 dollars to 5.85 dollars in Britain, and from 1.11 dollars to 5.92 dollars in Japan. In national currencies (that is, screening out the impact of dollar depreciation), data resources studies show that, in spite of faster productivity gains abroad, unit labour costs on a dollar basis rose only 6.3 percent a year in the US from 1970 to 1979 compared with 13.4 percent in Germany, 12.5 percent in France, 11.8 percent in Britain and 15.6 percent in Japan.

Foreign trade position: Nonetheless, it is true that we are losing our competitive edge, isn't it? No. From the spring of 1977 to the spring of 1980, the volume of American exports increased one-third, considerably faster than the overall volume of world trade. In dollar terms, our merchandise exports rose from 115,000 million dollars in 1976 to an annual rate of 225,000 million dollars in the third quarter of 1980. But that's mostly agriculture, right? Wrong. Exports of manufactured goods rose from 77,000 million dollars in 1976 to an annual rate of about 140,000 million dollars in the first nine months of 1980. Clearly, our competitive position has strengthened.

The dollar: In the light of all these comparisons, why should the dollar be weak as a kitten? It's not, with our international current account in virtual balance this year in spite of huge oil imports, with funds from more turbulent parts of the world seeking safe haven in the United States, and with very high interest rates, the dollar is strong. It has risen more than ten percent against the German Mark in the last year. Even measuring it against a basket of currencies including the very strong British Pound and Japanese Yen, it has risen by three percent over the past year.

Government spending: Our Government claims so much more of our total output than in other countries that we end up with lower private consumption levels, right? Wrong. Only in Australia and Japan do governments spend a smaller percentage of gross domestic product (GDP) than the 34 per cent spent by our federal, state and local governments in this country. France weighs in at 40 percent, Germany at 42 per cent, Britain at 44 percent, the Netherlands at 51 percent. And as to that "crushing burden of taxes," only Japan among our major competitors comes in below the US figure of 29 percent of GDP. France is at 39 percent and Germany and Britain at 37 percent and the Netherlands at 46 percent.

Spending trends: But Government spending in the US has been skyrocketing in the past few years. Hasn't it. Yes and No. Transfer payments soared in the 70s. According to the Advisory Commission on inter-governmental relations, per capital government spending (adjusted for inflation) did rise to a peak of 1,605 dollars in 1978. But then it dropped to 1,380 dollars in 1979 and is dropping farther to 1,540

dollars in 1980. Isolating federal non-defence spending, the commission finds that real per capita outlays peaked in 1978, fell significantly in 1979 and are falling again in 1980. In cutting civilian spending and boosting defense outlays, the Reagan administration will be continuing rather than reversing a trend. The reversal took place two years ago.

Deficits: But nobody runs government deficits as big as ours, right? Wrong. Total government deficits have been running at just above one percent of GNP (Gross National product) in the US (1977-79), three percent in Germany and six percent in Japan. Of the seven leading industrial countries, the US has had the lowest ratio of overall government deficits to GNP.

Government debt: How can that be when Government Debt is rising faster than any other kind of debt in the US? It's not. The federal debt today is roughly three times its size in 1950, while consumer instalment debt is roughly 14 times; mortgage debt, 16 times; corporate debt 13 times; and state local debt 14 times its 1950 level. Even with the unprecedented run up of federal debt in the 1970s, corporations, consumers and home owners substantially outdistanced Uncle Sam in percentage expansion of their debt.

Federal Work force: If spending and deficit figures are right, how is it that the federal civilian work force has been climbing so steadily? It hasn't. It has shrunk from 1,987,000 in 1970 to 1,867,000 in September 1980. Under the Carter partial freeze in hiring, it has shrunk 21,000 in the past five months.

It is worth re-emphasizing the point here is not to pangloss over the painfully high inflation, Unemployment and interest rates that beset the US economy. The point, rather, is to remind ourselves that we lead from strength, not from weakness.

The soggy seventies: Yes, but look at that miserable record of the 1970s: slipping productivity advances, sliding growth rates, slowing investment and sagging real income and buying power. Right? Only partly: Much of the erosion on these fronts has a very short history, namely, the past two years when efforts to slow inflation sapped the strength of expansion in 1979 and generated a recession in 1980. Real buying power did fall. For the decade, however, the surprise is that per capita real income rose 23 percent, and real consumption 25 percent. Even after it dropped in the 1980 recession, per capital real income was running at an annual rate of 4,448 dollars in the third quarter of 1980, compared with 4,200 dollars when Mr. Carter took office. Much, though not all, of the advance in the 1970s can be treated to the 26 percent growth in the civilian labour force from 1969 to 1979. Surprisingly also, per capita output rose two percent annually in real terms from 1969 to 1979, not dramatically less than the 2.5 percent rise from 1957 to 1969. Under the heading of "Keeping up with inflation", another surprising fact: the latest department of agriculture figures show that food took roughly 15 percent

of before tax income in 1979, only slightly more than the over-14 percent level in 1970.

The ailing eighties: Roaring inflation, soaring interest rates, searing energy shortages, aging industrial capital and poor labour performance are some of the factors said to threaten us with an economic Dunkirk in the eighties. But as President-elect Reagan and the Congress tackle these tough problems, they will find that some important trends are working for them, not against them.

First and perhaps most important, demographic trends should be a plus on the economic front: Workers in the 25-44 age group—the prime age group in terms of increasing skills and experience, motivation and ambition—will increase from less than 50 million today to more than 60 million at the end of the decade. Simultaneously, the influx of inexperienced teenagers and women into the labour force will slacken. The 1980s will see only half the 26 percent increase in the labour force of the 1970s.

As capital investment steps up in the 1980s productivity should be given another boost. We were substituting labour for capital in the seventies, but we will be reversing that process in the eighties. Favourable government investment policies will reinforce that demographic thrust. More generous depreciation will surely be a part of the 1981 tax cut. Moreover, in the latter half of the eighties, the high-spending members of the post-war baby boom will be graduating into the higher saving ages.

From *Pakistan Times*
**NO PAKISTANI TROOPS
FOR SAUDI ARABIA**

Islamabad, Dec. 20,

The attention of the Government has been drawn to a news agency report on the recent visit of His Royal Highness Crown Prince Fahd Abdel Aziz to Pakistan, alleging that Pakistani troops are to be deployed in Saudi Arabia and that such deployment has some sinister connection with 'the structure of regional security being built in America' and also that this alleged step has been taken to step up Pak-Saudi co-operation aimed against Afghanistan.

The Government of Pakistan would like to reiterate that there is no military agreement whatsoever with any country, including Saudi Arabia, regarding stationing of Pakistani troops anywhere outside Pakistan's borders. The Saudi Arabian Government themselves have issued several denials on the subject. In view of these facts, the agency report in question appears to be inspired and is in line with the persistent anti-Pakistan propaganda being carried on by this particular news agency, apparently to divert world attention from the presence of foreign troops in Afghanistan and suppression of the rights of the Afghan people—APP.

Further, the genuine efforts already under way to out back economic regulations and stimulate competition and to cut the costs of social regulations will be paying off in the 1980s. Stronger competition and lower regulatory costs will provide at least some modest help in the fight against inflation.

In one battle to regain our economic momentum and subdue inflation will be long and tough. But no country can draw on greater underlying strengths than the United States in fighting that battle. The challenge to the Reagan administration and the Congress will be to marshal those strength, capitalize on them not just for private profit but for the common good, and restore faith and confidence in the American economy.

—USICA

INSIDE IRAN TODAY — 2

Personalities, Parties & Politics

By Nikhil Chakravarty

The author went to Iran in August 1980 for an on-the-spot understanding of the extraordinary developments 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. This is the second instalment in the series. Though written six months ago, these articles throw revealing light on the Iran of today.

THE ARCHITECTS OF THE ISLAMIC REVOLUTION have been claiming that although a theocracy, the new Iran is not intolerant of other religions. Imam Khomeini in an interview to foreign press last December had said: "Islam does not belong to a single tribe or a few countries or even to all Moslems. It is for the whole humanity, Islam calls all people forward. Sometimes it calls to the faithful, but its justice is for all human beings." Ayatollah Beheshti, answering a British correspondent's query about some Anglicans having been arrested, said that nobody would be kept in prison for his or her belief, but if anything incriminating was found against anybody, he or she would have to bear the consequences. At Isfahan, I visited the American Christian colony in the suburb of Juffa: they have their own Church and they have been living there for centuries.

However, in respect of the Baha'is, I noticed a degree of intolerance on the part of the Iranian authorities. The charge is often heard that the headquarters of the Baha'i sect is at Haifa in Israel; what seems to be forgotten is the fact that the founder of the sect, Baha'u'llah was exiled by the then Persian Government

together with the Ottoman Government, and kept in prison in Palestine where he passed away and eight decades later Israel was set up there; meanwhile the centre of the sect was established there in memory of its founder. I heard many charges about Baha'is being connected with the Shah's Savak: it is difficult to accept this since recent disclosures in Tehran press itself has shown that an Islamic extremist group Tablighat-i-Islami was used by the Savak to destroy the Baha'is I came across Baha'i families living in mortal fear, their children unable to go to school and quite a few were sacked of their jobs and offered to be taken back if they embrace Islam—not a very happy indicator of religious tolerance that the leaders of the Islamic Revolution claim that they have enforced in Iran today. Nor was it good politics to have expelled the only Jewish member of the Majlis as part of the anti-Zionist campaign.

The Shah with his Savak had successfully crushed all political parties and groups or corroded them. Under his regime, sixty thousand Iranians were killed for political offences, and about five lakhs put behind bars. The only spot not raided was the mosque. But even from there from the holy city of Qom, about two and half hours' bus ride from Tehran, Imam Khomeini was banished into exile in June 1964. There are 80 thousand mosques in Iran and a total strength of over two lakh clergies—maulvis, mullahs and theological students. These form the mass base and the organised network of the Islamic Republic Party, which controls the majority in the newly-elected Majlis: it has an effective strength of 140 in a house of 220.

There is no hierarchy in the Shi'ites order. An Ayatollah is not like a cardinal under the Pope: rather he resembles a guru, recognised as such by his own followers. He is expected to be well-versed in Islamic law and mastery of Islamic history and theology. There is no order of monks under Islam. An Ayatollah, a respected divine lives a normal, healthy life. Imam Khomeini is not the most learned Ayatollah: there are more learned ones than him, but he is the father of the Islamic Revolution, because he has the record of an implacable fighter against the Shah's regime and was recognised as such as by the people even when he had to spend sixteen years in exile until his triumphant return to Tehran on February 1, 1979. Imam Khomeini is above all political groupings. As an Indian observer, searching for parallels from our own country put it: he combines in him a Gandhi and Shankaracharya of Kancheepuram. Every group whether President Bani Sadr's, or the clerics of even the Communists all swear allegiance to Imam Khomeini. In fact, Bani Sadr became the President winning the election with the Imam's blessings.

In Iran's present political set-up, the Islamic Republican Party is the dominant grouping of the clerics. It is a post-revolutionary product, having been formed in February 1979. Its leader is Ayatollah Beheshti, a powerful personality. When I went to see him in his chamber in the Supreme Court of which he is the head, I could notice his striking qualities of leadership; conscious of the power of the media, he is the only Iran-

ian leader who holds a regular weekly press conference. He speaks German fluently having stayed there for five years, engaged in political activity; he speaks English slowly. Inevitably, a strong personality immersed in politics in all its aspects, he has always been the centre of controversy.

PRESIDENT BANI SADR has no party of his own. By and large he represents what may be termed the modernist opinion in the country. The strength of his following in the Majlis comes up to 30 in a house of 220. There is also a group of liberals in the Majlis numbering 12 led by Bazargan who was the Provisional Prime Minister appointed by Imam Khomeini immediately after his return from exile in February 1979. This had marked the formal shift in revolutionary power as it meant the defiant repudiation of the Government left behind by the Shah, led by Bakhtiar. But the old and tired Bazargan, though still held in esteem and is elected to the Majlis, could not manage the affairs of Government. In the Presidential election under the new Constitution, Bani Sadr with the support of the imam came to power.

As a personality, Bani Sadr gives the impression of a quiet Professor. When I met him at the tastefully decorated Presidential residence, he was working non-stop, while counting his rosary. A modern politician, good at explaining intricacies of economic problems, he did not give me the impression of a mass orator swaying millions; but he has the stamp of goodness. An intellectual who specialised in studying socio-economic problems, having spent 17 long years in France, Bani Sadr speaks French fluently and his children are still in France finishing their education. He told me about his worries—the economic crisis created by the US blockade and the problem of restoring law and order as there are armed bands prowling, helped by the enemies of the Islamic Revolution—enemies within and from outside the country. **During my stay in Tehran, I noticed that while most of the other political personalities have chosen to stay put in the proximity of the Imam—reminiscent of the style of politics in the past when it centred round the Pahlavi court—Bani Sadr is the only one who has been constantly on tour going to the interior and addressing both the people and the armed forces. As the supreme commander in chief, he has been actively directing the operations in the current war against Iraq. It is worth noting that Bani Sadr was elected President directly by the electorate, unlike the President of India.**

THERE ARE SMALLER GROUPS in the political field. The independent clergy active in the Revolutions, centring round Tehran have got a strength of 30 in the Majlis but they are regarded as the supporter of Dr. Beheshti's Islamic Republican Party. Among the religious independents, there are important personalities, among them a notable one is Hojjatislami Kermani, who has a record of having suffered torture for over ten years in Savak prison and later exiled, commands considerable stand-

ing among the clergy. Another important Majlis Deputy is Azam Talegani, daughter of the great revolutionary leader, herself a fearless crusader. She is the one who condemned stoning to death ordered by a local Islamic judge in a case of adultery—and the upshot of the protest has been that no other such case of death by stoning has taken place. Incidentally, the excesses of some of these Islamic courts particularly under Ayatollah Khalkhali have come in for severe criticism recently by President Bani Sadr and by Ayatollah Montazari, who is a very powerful theological divine, often tipped as the likely successor of Imam Khomeini. One of the figures widely known abroad is Sadeq Qotbzadeh, the Foreign Minister. He is a follower of President Bani Sadr, but has no mass base whatsoever. He has come to be known for his flamboyant anti-Moscow postures. But he is a persona-non-grata with the majority in the Majlis, where he was summoned recently to explain why he had gone to Islamabad to get involved with Pakistan's posture at the Islamic Conference. He had to put up his own defence even in regard to personal charges against him. The new Prime Minister dropped Qotbzadeh as Foreign Minister but his nominee was vetoed by the President—one of the items in the continuing constitutional deadlock.

It is the Imam's personality which holds together these disparate groups. The tug-of-war between the President and the Majlis has been going on for the last few months: this started over the selection of the new Prime Minister and has continued up to this day over the selection of the new Cabinet and the broad framework of policy. Under the new Islamic Constitution the President and the Majlis are expected to maintain mutual understanding in the spirit of Islam as President Bani Sadr told me: he said the form of Government envisaged under new Constitution is neither Presidential nor Parliamentary as per any Western model, it is Islamic.

The deadlock that persists however brings out that the major political forces are evenly balanced. Dr. Bahashti's party cannot be passed, nor can President Bani Sadr be ignored; at present, every deadlock is settled by reference to the Imam, but what after the Imam, who is in failing health, and nearing 80? The present Prime Minister Mohammad Ali Rajai is regarded as Dr. Bahashti's man, though he is formally not a member of his party. In the past, he has had a record of having been friendly to some left groups; but as Education Minister until recently, he was known for his thorough-going bid for Islamisation. The closing down of universities in the name of Islamic Cultural Revolution took place under him.

AS FOR THE LEFT, it is of little consequence at the moment as far as conventional politics is concerned. The Tudeh Party, that is the official Communist Party, ruthlessly suppressed by the Shah's regime, is active among the workers, noticeably so among the workers in the key oil industry; their critics say they are active

also in Kurdistan, and perhaps in Azerbaijan. It is a legal party with a daily paper of its own. The Tudeh Party openly swears allegiance to Imam Khomeini and his line, and seldom gets involved in the tussle between the President and the Majlis majority; but it comes out criticising Qotbzadeh whenever he launches his broadcasts against Moscow. Another Left group, *Khalq Mojahedin*, proclaims its loyalty primarily to Ayatollah Talegani who had a clear concept of a united front of all patriotic forces from the liberals to the clerics to the Left. After Talegani's death, *Khalq Mojahedin* came under attack from the Revolutionary Guards, mainly under the influence of the Islamic Republican Party; they were thrown out of their office, their paper closed down. But they seem to be active among the youth. President Bani Sadr has had some rapport with them, but it did not help them in the elections. In the extreme Left, there are the *Maoist Fedayees*, not very large, but still divided. An interesting feature of life in Tehran is that all these Left groups spread their literature on the pavements of the main roads, and put up posters. Some of them like *Khalq Mojahedin* carry on brisk sale, and engage themselves in lively debates with the passers by. However, in the national level politics, the Left, still divided, does not count for much, and journalists, politicians and academics I met in Tehran while conceding the active role of the Left in the Revolution, do not regard it as a factor in the post-revolutionary politics as it has emerged until now.

At the same time, it is to be noted that one of the immediate causes for the closing down of the Universities and all educational institutions is the growing unrest among militant students against clerical domination. Officially the ban on university functioning is imposed in the name of the Cultural Revolution, with the clergy engaged in drawing up a pucca Islamic syllabus. I could not find out how long this would take.

To Be Continued

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A VACCINE

Against "B" Hepatitis

By Collette Berthond

A FRENCH VACCINE against "B" hepatitis, developed in 1975 Professor Maupas of Tours in collaboration with the Pasteur Institute, will be put on the market in France in January 1981. Hepatitis is an infection disease for which, at present, there exists no antibiotic or mass-prevention vaccine, as is the case for polio or flu. Two viruses are the cause of this infection: the "A" virus, which comes from food or from the water in drinks contaminated by the faeces of sick persons; and the "B" virus, very different, which is transmitted by injection, blood transfusion or from one individual to another. It is to combat the latter that a vaccine has been manufactured from a fragment of virus taken from a human serum.

Nearly 200 million people in the world are "chronic carriers" of the "B" hepatitis virus: once having been in contact with this virus, they carry it but don't show any symptoms; they therefore don't know that they're carrying one of the most dangerous agents of cancer of the liver. A certain number of individuals first of all develop viral hepatitis, then a cirrhosis and, in a smaller proportion, a cancer of the liver.

The gravity of the illness varies according to the geographical zone, the socio-economic class and the ethnic group. In France, the "B" hepatitis virus affects only 0.4 % of the population, or 10,000 to 20,000 people, and only one out of 100 sufferers dies from it. As for "primary" liver cancer, two or three individuals out of 100,000 succumb to it. The figures are similar in the United States and in Britain but the situation is very different in certain other regions of the world. Very high figures for the "B" hepatitis are found in Senegal, in Mozambique, in certain zones of People's China and other parts of south-east Asia. In Taiwan, for instance, there are 50 times as many chronic carriers of the virus than in the temperate zones. And primary cancer of the liver kills 40 to 80 inhabitants out of 100,000 (young victims, aged 30 to 40).

In 80% of cases of liver cancer, a "B" hepatitis preceded it. According to research made by Prof. Maupas in Senegal, 91% of the 13-year-old children in the country have been in contact with the "B" virus of hepatitis. Vaccination is therefore the sole method for the moment of checking this heavy contamination. Since 1978, a Franco-Senegalese team has made an experiment in the Sino-Saloume region, 150 kms south-east of Dakar, in the heart of the groundnut-growing area; more than 1,000 mothers-to-be and 1,500 newborn babies were vaccinated and 95% of them reacted favourably to the vaccination. The incidence of the infection therefore fell appreciably. Since it is the very young ages which are being protected for the moment, a marked diminution of hepatic cancer will not be evident for 20 years yet. But Prof. Maupas proposes—if he is given sufficient means—to vaccinate 200,000 persons of all ages in the same region next year.

—Radio France

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OPEC OIL

The New Price

By Boris Rackov

Moscow, December 28,

Economic observers in many countries are able to guess, without hardly ever making a mistake, how much the price of oil will be upped at each succeeding conference of the Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC)—to which 13 developing countries belong—now that every OPEC conference has decided on price increases. All they do is study the inflation rates of the leading capitalist states where

the oil-producing countries get most of their imports from.

According to *The Economist* of London, inflationary currency depreciation for the current year calculated on the eve of December's OPEC conference on Bali (Indonesia) was as follows: in the USA 13 percent; Japan 8; the FRG 5; France 13; Great Britain 15 and the Netherlands 7 percent. This led to the conclusion that to restore the purchasing power of their oil incomes, which has fallen because of the inflationary price growth of Western goods, the OPEC countries would try to raise the price of oil from 5 to 15 percent. Telegrams from Bali confirm that the oil price will be 10 percent higher next year on the average. According to preliminary figures, this means an increase from 32.2 dollars to 35.4 dollars per barrel, or from 238 to 262 dollars per ton. So the OPEC countries expect to get an additional 30,000 million dollars annually to compensate for their losses due to inflation.

But judging by the press comments in the OPEC countries, things don't only rest on inflation, which in fact is being encouraged rather than restrained by the Western monopolies and governments. *L'journal* of Algeria drew attention to the fact that even given present official oil prices, many Western monopolies try to buy as much oil as possible so that they can resell it at considerably higher unofficial prices, the so-called "spot market" prices, which can reach 50 dollars per barrel. So the OPEC countries reason that if such profiteering with oil can be done behind the backs of its legitimate owners, the price of oil is still far from what it should be.

Or take another aspect! One of the reasons why the OPEC countries are raising the price of oil is to restrict demand, which will both conserve some of the oil for the future and compel the West, with its advanced technology, to rapidly develop alternative sources of energy—which would either supplement or replace oil. But very little has been done in this respect in the West during the seven years of the energy crisis, even though the necessity has been unanimously recognized by the powers that be. And the OPEC countries expect the higher oil prices would again remind the Western powers that oil is not inexhaustible and that it is high time to start developing other energy resources.

Official spokesmen for the United States and other Western countries again expressed their strong displeasure with the OPEC decision which, they say, can only spur on inflation and aggravate foreign trade problems. Statements to this tune might influence OPEC if the Western powers really were taking some steps at home to bridle the runaway inflation which is caused primarily by the arms race and the monopolists' desire or superprofits. But practically nothing is being done. To the contrary, a loud clamour is again being raised about the need to further boost military spending to the benefit of the military-industrial complex, and to the detriment of the real needs of the Western economy. And the bigger monopolies manage to

swell their superprofits in an inflationary situation as well. At the same time, in raising the price of oil, the OPEC countries must realize that this does not assist most of the other developing countries. The newly free countries also suffer from OPEC sanctions against the West for its inflation and other evils of the crisis. Quite appropriately, *Al Jomhouria* spoke about the Algerian-Venezuelan project for creating a fund of at least 20,000 million dollars within OPEC for aiding the other developing countries. Effective aid to less developed states by OPEC would help it preserve the trust of friendly countries, whose solidarity was vital to OPEC strengthening its positions in the face of neo-colonialism.

—APN

IN U.S.A.

Why The Anti-Soviet Chorus Now?

By Gennady Gerasimov

Newsweek, December 28,

An emergency session of "the Russians are coming" game is now being held in Washington. Regular sessions have taken place over many years just before Congress starts discussing the annual military budget, and *The Nation* magazine describes these "annual performances" as "a fusillade of pressleaks on some new Soviet menace blends with the blare of the brass seeking additional weapons." An emergency session on Christmas eve and its spirit of peace might initially seem strange since the president has just signed a record military budget for 1981. But on a second, and more discerning glance, the reason becomes apparent—the outgoing administration is trying to steal a march on the incoming administration in order to further restricted even at this point the possibility for flexibility in Soviet-American relations.

And another "leak" has sprung: Rowland Evans and Robert Novak write in the *Washington Post* about a top secret CIA report known as the National Intelligence Estimate covering the new year of 1981. They write that the USA's next president will probably be terrified when he reads the 350-odd pages, because its conclusion is that the strategic balance has been violated in the Soviet Union's favour. So Admiral Stansfield Turner, the CIA Director, has produced a report contradicting prior official statements by the Carter administration that, in principle, the two sides' strategic capabilities were equal. Evans and Novak say that in view of this report, strategic arms limitation becomes a "comic absurdity".

I am certain that the report was made on the "made-to-order" principle, where the boss is told the things he wants to hear rather than what is really happening. *The Nation* commented on the method: "Instead of basing policy on assessments, estimates were created to fit the policy". As an example, it cited the case of the so-called Team B chaired by Harvard Professor Richard Pipes which scared the wits out of the United

States in 1976 by its "independent" assessment of Soviet "strategic goals". The group used CIA information and the CIA was then ticked off publicly for its "complacency". Now the CIA may feel it has avenged itself, as this time it was Team B that was put to shame.

This anti-Soviet transit is diligently supplemented from all sides. Journalist Jack Anderson cites a "secret" report by the Defence Department stating that the concentration of troops and armaments in Western Europe was not adequate enough to put up a strong defence at the initial stage. *Newsweek* published a "special report" titled "Is American Strong Enough?" To appear objective the magazine states that "much of the current alarm over the state of the American defences is the product of election-year histrionics and budget-time lobbying by the Pentagon." Both events are now history, but the histrionics continue, and *Newsweek* is happy and irresponsibly contributing to it with its own made-to-measure pessimism about the state of the US armed forces.

It would not be half as bad were all this an epilogue, a spontaneous eruption of anti-Sovietism by the outgoing administration before the curtain falls. Much more dangerous is its attempt to make—with a salvo of new variations on the old theme of "the Russians are Coming" such as Admiral Turner's report—this epilogue the prologue of the incoming administration.

—APN

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ANTIQUITIES

Selling The National Heritage

By Manel Fonseka

ANTIQUE SALES AND AUCTIONS have become a regular feature of our commercial life and are a source of concern to both local art historians and all those who genuinely care about the cultural heritage of this country. It is alarming to note that among the items so blithely thrown into the market-place in recent years, there have been weapons 'from Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa times', 'Anuradhapura period' *pettagam*, 'Dambadeniya period' brassware and woodwork, Portuguese and Dutch period furniture, Chinese ceramics, ancient coins, old maps, etc., etc. Even items claimed to be 'unique' or 'almost unique' have been openly hawked and proudly advertised at these sales, their rarity value bestowing no special privilege or immunity, on the contrary, it probably guarantees their sale to a foreign buyer.

On visiting these Sales, however, one often finds that very few of the objects live up to their claims of antiquity. A fair proportion appear to be reproductions, or made-up or doctored pieces, or, at most, rather unimpressive specimens of their kind. So one's fears are generally allayed that large amounts of rare and valuable antiquities are about to find their

way into mainly foreign possession whence they will ultimately disappear overseas, by one route or another.

Nevertheless, there are always some items whose fate should cause us concern. A recent example was a calamander suite, comprising a settee and six chairs, priced at over one lakh. Unlikely to have been made in 1656, as one newspaper announced, it was still a fine piece of old Sri Lankan craftsmanship. Probably of early or mid-19th century manufacture, it was of such excellent design and condition that it could have found a place in a furniture museum anywhere in the world. To a foreign collector or museum, the value of the suite would lie primarily in its craftsmanship and condition, and only secondarily in its exotic origin. But to us, as a product of our own cabinet-makers, it would be a source of national pride and historical interest.

There are often other fine pieces of furniture and brassware, as well as general bric-a-brac, whose prices (Rs. 2,250 for a glass lamp, for example) put them beyond the reach of most local buyers and, therefore, immediately into the 'foreign market'. And this is a great pity. While such pieces may never find their way into a museum, they should remain in homes and institutions here, as part of our country's general cultural texture—and a continuing testimony to our traditional skills, design sense or common good taste.

It is particularly ironic that purely commercial and foreign-buyer-oriented events such as these sales are, are often attended with all the traditional salaams to local custom. The dignitary who opens the sale may be greeted with betel and conducted by drummers to the place of sale, where he lights the traditional lamp in the company of one of the more important European or American invitees. (On occasion, this very lamp itself is subsequently offered for sale.) This lip-service to local custom is simply a preliminary to the hawking of Sri Lankan antiquities to foreign buyers, who seem to constitute the majority of invitees to these opening ceremonies. Is this not symptomatic of the hollowness of our constant appeals to tradition, where we proclaim and uphold a 2,500-year old heritage, only to turn as much of it as possible into hard, foreign cash?

Perhaps it is too much to expect the organizers of these sales to try and keep some of their better finds in the national domain. Recently, the Director of the National Museum tried to view objects before the opening of a sale, with the intention of securing for the nation any particularly good or rare piece. But he and his assistants were not even allowed to look over the exhibition before the invasion of overseas buyers, who were honoured with the opportunity of 'first refusal'.

When antiquities suddenly appear for sale, in this manner, the Museums Department is at a disadvantage since, while it has large funds at its disposal for the express purpose of buying antiquities, like any other govern-

ment department, it is bound by regulations and financial procedures preventing it from acting with requisite promptness and freedom.

MANY OF THE ITEMS which appear in the antique shops and showrooms these days are either beyond the purse of the Sri Lankan with the taste or inclination to buy them after they have been wheedled out of the possession of Sri Lankans too poor to keep them), or do not take the fancy of that small group of Sri Lankans with plenty of money to spend. In such a situation, where private initiative is weak, the role of the National Museum is vital—to act as watchdog and conscience-keeper and make whatever purchases are felt to be of lasting value, on behalf of the nation. It is important, therefore, that when rare and precious objects come up for sale, the Museum be given an early opportunity to examine the articles and negotiate a fair price if it is interested in purchasing them.

In countries richer than our own, when private initiative is lacking, public institutions have stepped in to help secure cultural objects 'for the nation'. One such case was that of the Leonardo cartoon, in Britain. Another involved Goya's portrait of the Duke of Wellington. This had been the property of an English duke, who put it up for auction at Sotheby's, in 1961. It was bought by an American collector for \$ 140,000. An enormous controversy ensued over the loss of this masterpiece to Britain, and the collector was gracious enough to offer it back to Britain at the price he had paid for it. The National Gallery then purchased the painting with grants from a foundation and the Exchequer.

So much concern in Britain over a painting of foreign origin. Here, we are hard put to it to safeguard our own creations, let alone those we may have acquired by honest means from other civilizations. Take the case of Chinese ceramics, for instance. Centuries of trade have bequeathed us a fair stock of this precious commodity. We would be wise to keep as much of it as possible, at least until we have sorted it out, documented and studied it, and set up several good, permanent collections. But to suggest this is to invite from the dealers even more scorn than the suggestion that we stop selling our own antiquities to foreigners. One young dealer at a recent sale, when told by the writer that economic and cultural historians have much to learn from the incidence and type of Chinese pottery found in Sri Lanka, retorted: 'Okay, let the historians study them, and then let us dealers sell them to the foreigners!' This incredibly philistine attitude makes one wonder how many dealers actually understand the value of the merchandise they are handling.

UNLESS DEALERS DEVELOP SOME SENSITIVITY to public concern about their activities and begin to exercise their own regulation of the flow of antiquities, extremely stringent controls may become necessary in order to keep what still remains of our cultural heritage in this country.

It is ironic that we regularly pat ourselves on the back for our maintenance of spiritual values and non-materia-

ism, while so many aspects of our lives belie this. We scorn the materialism of the West, but it is, on fact, people from that materialistic West who recognise the intrinsic and historical value of our cultural artefacts and hasten to acquire such objects for the cultural enrichment that they bestow (the material value they put on them is but an index of how much the object itself is admired) Is it not we who are being materialistic in our readiness to sell everything and anything we have, no much how much we are impoverishing ourselves and our country, spiritually and culturally? To quote a history professor at a recent antique sale, 'We may soon be able to speak of the materialism of the East versus the spiritualism of the West.'

Five years ago, a two-day seminar on the Loss of Antiquities was held in the very same hall that houses many of these antique sales-when a valuable item of our cultural heritage has begun its long journey to foreign homes and museums. After the main speakers art lovers and patriots, from all walks of life, spoke from the floor, and what intended to be working discussion of some 20 or 30 officials and private individuals, developed into a forum for two or three hundred members of the public.

Despite the massive and vehement protests against the appropriation and sale of antiquities, the spokesman for the dealers was uncowed. With pseudo-patriotic fervour, he scoffed at those who placed a value on 18th and 19th century furniture: 'With our 2500-year old civilization, with one thousand-year old Buddha statues, who cares about a hundred-year old chair!' This rang somewhat hollow, coming from one who makes a small fortune out of selling such chairs either to people who valued them for their own sake, or to foreign dealers who resold them at even higher prices. He also argued that it was pointless restricting the export of antiquities as all the best pieces had gone, anyway (five years after, they are still turning up 'unique' pieces). This has often been said, and by worthier authorities, but, in fact, much of value can still be found in antique shops, auction rooms, private houses and official establishments, business concerns, walamvas, rural homes, etc. How much of this is destined to find its way out of the country and be lost to us forever?

In a situation like this and in a country which has comparatively recently thrown off foreign masters (who were free to extract anything of economic or cultural value from us) it is imperative that we act promptly and strongly to safeguard what remains of our cultural inheritance. Much has gone, it is true, but much still remains, and the dealers seem to be most ingenious and resourceful in replenishing their stocks (even if it is only by vandalising several old pieces to create one new old piece).

THE NATIONAL MUSEUM has an enormous job on its hands, that of registering antiquities everywhere, which it is bravely carrying out in the face of obstacles of every kind, so that at least a check may be kept on the existence and movement of articles of value. But the owners of antiquities are more likely to resent the 'scientific' enquiries of museum officials and hide

their heirlooms, fearing possible government appropriation, than they are likely to resist the financial blandishments of the dealers, even though the latter offer them comparative pittance for their treasures.

In the light of all this, the following suggestions are offered: (1) that the long-pending new legislation antiquities be speeded up and made law; (2) that valuable items available for sale, be offered first to the Museum, which should negotiate a reasonable price and finalise the transaction within a specified period of time, if it wishes to purchase; (3) that dealers be required to maintain records of specified items and provide photographs of them to the Museum/Archives, as well as notification of their sale and new ownership; (4) that the Museum/Archives develops a photographic index of various kinds of antiquities (this would be of immense value to craftsmen, artists and historians, as well as of general public interest); (5) that wide publicity be given to the laws on the export of antiquities; (6) that every antique shop and sale be required to carry a notice to the effect that antiquities may not be exported; (7) that government and other public institutions be encouraged to buy antiquities for their offices. To some extent, this is already a practice among hotels and other commercial establishments.

A final suggestion of a somewhat different nature. A considerable part of the merchandise offered for sale by antique dealers is furniture. As there is now a flourishing trade in reproduction and fake period pieces, causing great confusion in the whole antique business, and also as there is a dearth of information on this aspect of our cultural property, a follow-up to R.L. Brohier's introduction to the subject would not come amiss. There are many people here whose knowledge in this field could be pooled to provide us with a comprehensive survey of the history of furniture in our country. An illustrated handbook would be an appropriate beginning and I would urge the Museums Department to sponsor such a publication, if private initiative is lacking.

It is salutary, perhaps, to recall the words of the late R. L. Brohier who had this to say not so very long ago: 'None can deny that Dutch colonial furniture has a value in reconstructing the art and culture; the social and economic history of Ceylon in the 17th and 18th centuries. Is all this to be lost by the disappearance of the few genuine articles left to us, or by the replacement of the spurious for the genuine?'

We could reiterate his sentiments for all kinds of antiquities from every period of our history.

November, 1980.



The Finance Minister Cracks The Whip

—Secretaries As Whipping Boys—

By Veritas

"CRACKER WELCOME FOR 1981". This was the banner headline under which the *Ceylon (Evening) Observer* bade good-bye to the year 1980 and heralded the arrival of the new year 1981. The normal Wednesday Cabinet meeting which would have ordinarily fallen on Wednesday 31st December 1980 had also been postponed for the next Wednesday of 6th January 1981. The 34 odd Secretaries of the 36 Cabinet Ministries however were not spared the holiday mood of the Festive New Year season. They had all been summoned for an unusual meeting without precedence by the Minister of Finance & Planning Mr. Ronnie de Mel. Unusual because it was fixed for the morning of 1st January 1981. Unprecedented because it had never been done before. One heard of Secretaries being summoned by the President or by the Prime Minister but one has not heard of individual Ministers (and the Finance Minister is in this respect no different) summoning Secretaries of other Ministries to a Conference. Anyway, we understand that most of the Secretaries attended. The Secretary/Chairman of the J.E.D.B. and S.P.C. we are told were notable absentees. We do not know whether they were summoned at all. Many people do not regard these two individuals as Secretaries of Ministries although their two Corporations were elevated to Cabinet rank Ministries under the President himself. Many say that to earn the respect and become a Secretary one has to "be accepted by the club" that is by the other Secretaries—and that a mere Presidential appointment is not enough. This is only a point of view. We do not necessarily endorse it as correct.

Anyhow let us get back to this all important conference of Secretaries summoned by the Finance Minister on the 1st day of the New Year. No newsmen had been allowed and there was no news item in the next days papers about it. It also appears there were no "leaks" about it because no newspaper for the next few days carried any mention of this important meeting which has now become a Talking Point. (The *Migara* column in the *Weekend* of Sunday 5th January 1981 however had a reference to it). The *Sunday Observer* of 5th January also had a news item on this Conference but most of the details were not revealed.

ACCORDING TO OUR INFORMATION, the Hon. Minister of Finance and Planning had for the moment put aside his dual role and spoken more in his position as Minister of Finance. He had impressed upon all Secretaries the need for *Financial Restraint and the Need to Avoid Wasteful Expenditure*. He had spoken of the highly inflated cost of construction from houses to buildings to building to roads. It was more in the form of a lecture rather than a pep-talk. He had high-

lighted the increasing fuel bill of the country and the "galloping inflation" as he now always calls it.

In his view, he had said, nearly 50% of the annual expenditure in the National Budget was Wasteful. He had earlier felt it was about 25% wasteful expenditure but now he would say (and he could even prove it) that up to 50% was wasteful expenditure. What steps or what action were the Secretaries taking to stop the waste? He had cited the Housing Programme under the Ministry of Local Government and Housing and the construction of roads under the Ministry of Highways and the construction of anicuts (under the Ministry of Lands). We do not know why he singled out these Ministries to cite examples of wasteful expenditure. He had spoken of a housing construction that he himself had spent in his individual capacity on one of his personal estate properties. That construction he said cost not more than Rs. 15,000 while an exactly similar construction by the Housing Ministry would cost not less than Rs. 50,000. Contractors and middlemen and not the Government and the people were the only beneficiaries of this type of Programme and Budget, he said. Most Engineers and Technical staff in Government departments were playing dual roles he said. They were also the contractors, in some case working behind someone else's name or in other cases, working openly as contractors in their own names. The same item of work seems to be appearing each year in the work programme, thus clearly showing that a shoddy job of work had always been done. All in all, Mr. Ronnie de Mel told the Secretaries that in his view 50% of the work in their respective Ministries never ended up as an asset to the Government or as a benefit to the people—but were mere cases of abuse or Wasteful Expenditure.

WE ARE ALSO INFORMED that Mr. Ronnie de Mel had accused 'certain Ministries' of making bogus or unrealistic cuts in the 25% overall cut in the Budget that was imposed on every Ministry just a few days before the Budget for 1981 was presented in Parliament in November 1980. The Minister of Finance had stated that some Ministries had imposed the 25% cut on areas and programmes that were politically sensitive hoping or expecting that during the year, the Government will be compelled to allocate more money for these programmes because of their political impact or significance. As far as his Ministry was concerned, the Finance Minister said, we will oppose all Supplementary estimates.

The Finance Minister also stated that at many meetings of Cabinet he had impressed upon all Ministries the necessity for Financial Discipline and Restraint but that some of his advice had fallen on deaf ears—so to speak. He asked the Secretaries to impress upon their individual Ministers the financial position of the country and asked them not to give into political pressure. He emphasised that under the Financial Regulation (which he expected each Secretary to know fully well) that Secretaries and not their politician Ministers are responsible as Chief Accounting Officers.

He went on to the extent of saying that under the Constitution each Secretary of a Ministry could be considered a delegate of his as well as for as Financial Accountability for Voted Expenditure was concerned and stated that he would be confirming this generally accepted position by a fresh letter to each Secretary under his own signature. He had also informed the Secretaries that the Government was considering even introducing Legislation fixing financial responsibility and accountability on Secretaries and other senior public officials like Heads of Departments and Govt. Agents etc. and he reminded the Secretaries of their answerability and liability before future Presidential Commissions.

All in all, according to our information, the outcome of this exercise on New Year's day 1981 by the Finance Minister was not successful and did not have the desired result. Many Secretaries appear to have been quite surprised both by the content and tone of the Finance Minister's address. Why was not such a Conference (of all Secretaries) summoned by the President or at least in the presence of the President and perhaps also the Prime Minister? What right has the Finance Minister to summon Secretaries of other Ministries and give them a talk as to their duties and responsibilities. Each Secretary is appointed by the President and is responsible to the President and to his own Minister. It is they (and perhaps only they) who can pull up a Secretary or give him directives as to his functions.

WHAT CAN SECRETARIES DO if their own Ministers think and act differently? If a Secretary disagrees with his Minister or does not carry out his wishes, then the Exit door will light for him and NOT for his Minister. This happened in the case of Mr. Ronnie de Mel himself when his first Secretary Lal Jayawardene (son of the Mercantile School of Economics man) was unceremoniously pushed out by him. No one knows for what inactivity or refusal to carry out directives and wishes that Dr. Lal Jayawardene was kicked out. But when a difference of opinion occurs it is the Secretary that has to go out; the Minister stays on. This even happened in the case of the fair Minister Mrs. Wimala Kannagara. It is well known that she is confused and is making a mess of things but when as Minister of Shipping, Aviation and Tourism (it must have been the President's sense of humour to have given her this portfolio) she had a conflict with her Secretary, the Secretary had to resign not the Minister. In fact, two Secretaries had to go from her Ministry (Mr. Rupasinghe and Mr. Balasuriya); Mr. James Lanerolle managed to survive by ignoring her and Mr. Talagune (former Administrative Secretary of the UNP) is now surviving by doing the same with her.

Accordingly, Mr. Ronnie de Mel should have in fairness to the Secretaries, addressed their Ministers first or at least asked the Ministers also to be present when he gave this "Pep-Talk" to the Secretaries. One Minister should

not set up a Secretary against his own Minister. It is wrong for one Minister to tell a Secretary to another Minister to act independently even if his own Minister wishes him to do otherwise. If on the other hand, the Ministers do not take the advice given to them by their colleague the Finance Minister, he should take up the matter with the Chief Executive, the President. If the President is also unable to help, then the Finance Minister must take the result as a loss of confidence in him and resign and ask the President for another portfolio. But he need not shoulder such a massive burden like the proverbial Atlas shouldering the world bent on one-knee. Mr. Upali Wijewardene, we understand, is willing to do a better job than Mr. Ronnie de Mel if given the opportunity. At one stage, they even said that Mr. Lalith Athulathmudali had offered to help out Mr. Ronnie de Mel if he found the job too tiresome or too difficult.

IN CONCLUSION one wonders whose idea it was to summon this New Year Day conference of Secretaries. Did the Finance Minister dream this up himself or was it a "dead rope" given to him as "advice" by any of his officials? Whatever or whoever prompted this meeting it appears to have made no impact to create a poorer image of the Finance Minister in the minds of most Secretaries. Mr. Ronnie de Mel may be educated, intelligent, able etc. etc. but he has no charisma of warmth of personality like the President, Mr. Premadasa or Mr. Gamini Dissanayake. Mr. de Mel has a reputation of "talking down" to people whatever the audience—to show what a Pundit or know-all he is. He fights the newspapers and sues them whenever he gets a chance. He is also a drifter from the SLFP (a tie-maru man, to use an expression of Mr. Cyril Mathew about turn coat bureaucrats). In this background, the public image of Mr. de Mel whatever his accomplishments as Finance Minister—is not all that good—certainly it can be better. For a man of his image to lecture to Secretaries as to how they should function is a little presumptuous—even for a former Civil servant who could not or did not serve long enough to become a Secretary, himself.

If the lecturer can be given some advice, why not start with his own Ministry and the several institutions coming under it—including the Lotteries Board (where so many from Devinuwara electorate are employed) and ensure that there is not 50% waste in those institutions. If he can make a start and show this in his own institutions the other Ministers can be expected to take him a little more seriously.

While we are still on this New years Day sermon from the Mount, we like to express another view. Should the Minister of Finance be also the Minister of Planning? Are not these portfolios inconsistent, whatever the capability of the man. The Finance Ministry must by nature be conservative while the Planning

Ministry must be Development-oriented. Our Information is that the Deputy Prime Minister of Singapore who was in Sri Lanka recently had advised the President to separate the Planning portfolio from the Finance portfolios. We are also of the view that this should be done.

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AS OTHERS SEE US

Sri Lanka—A Taste Of Dictatorship—2

(Continued from last issue)

Meanwhile, the pressures built up by the rising cost of living and the fears of repression engendered by such pieces of legislation as the Essential Services Act have been mounting, particularly among the urban working classes organised into trade unions. Trade unions in Sri Lanka are generally affiliated to political parties and an appreciable swing to the trade unions affiliated to the ruling party takes place whenever a new government takes power. This happened in 1977 too, so much so that the Jatika Sevaka Sangamaya, affiliated to the UNP, today claims to be the largest single union. In spite of that, unions affiliated to the SLFP and the left parties have continued a powerful existence. These unions, in spite of the political differences among the various parties, are loosely joined together in the Joint Trade Union Action Committee (JTUAC) for united action at the trade union level.

In March this year, the JTUAC summoned a national conference of all the trade unions under its sway; after a two-day meeting the conference decided to agitate for an immediate wage increase of Rs. 300 per month, indexation of wages to a realistically computed cost-of-living index, an end to victimisation of workers on political grounds and a number of other demands. The demands were communicated to the government and thereafter the JTUAC held a number of meetings and generally set about the task of preparing their membership for the coming struggle.

They decided that they would first stage a day of protest on June 5. This was with the intention of mobilising their membership as well as of creating in the general public an awareness of the economic problems of the working class and its demands as well as a sense of sympathy with its actions. The day of protest was to be marked by a half-day token strike, a picketing campaign and a public rally. The government's reaction to this plan was overwhelming. A few days before, addressing the annual conference of the JSS, the President called upon the JSS to observe June 4 as a day of co-operation with the government and asked them to counter-picket. This was an open call to a confrontation. It led first to a poster war and then to tragic violence on the day itself. The trade union forces

were, in fact, galvanised into greater action by this anti-democratic act and, on the day of protest, were able to mobilise large numbers of workers on to the streets. The JSS picketers supporting the government were sadly outnumbered; as the **Weekend** of that week said; "It is worth mentioning that despite the fact that the ruling UNP trade union—the JSS—has the single largest membership of a trade union in the country, in many work places it was certainly outnumbered." The day of protest successfully called out workers not only in Colombo but also in many of the outstations; many unions of white-collar workers too participated in these demonstrations.

Faced with this enthusiastic militancy, the government and its trade union sections retaliated with violence. At several work places, demonstrating workers were set upon by a group of thugs apparently led by a government MP and in the assault, Somapala, president of the workers union of the department, was killed. The judicial inquiry into his death is not yet over, but enough evidence has been led to show the nature of this brutal assault.

Somapala was buried on June 9 in the presence of over 10,000 sad but angry workers. The government tried its best to bully the widow of this worker into a private funeral, but she stood firm and his body was taken to the burial grounds from his trade union office. The Government also tried its best to restrict the funeral procession but all these endeavours failed; the funeral procession itself turned into an angry but subdued demonstration of protest.

The reverberations of the day of protest continued, until it climaxed in a call to a general strike by the JTUAC. On July 5, one month after the day of protest, 12 workers in the Ratmalana railway workshop were interdicted from work on the basis of certain incidents connected with that day. The railway unions were incensed at this act; only in the railway had such action been taken. They tried to negotiate with the management and, meeting with obduracy, struck work on the 7th. To their demand for the reinstatement of the 12 interdicted workers, they added the demands for an immediate wage increase of Rs. 300 and for indexation of wages. The strike evoked great sympathy among other sections of the working class and by the 15th, workers at the Government Printing Press and the Government Factory came out making similar demands.

The JTUAC took up the struggle at this stage and decided to broaden its scope by calling for a general strike. The constituent unions were asked to come out, starting from July 18 and culminating in a general strike on the 21st. The JTUAC also decided to hold a public rally on July 18 to explain its course of action.

STATE OF EMERGENCY. The government reacted swiftly and brutally. It declared a State of Emergency on July 17, brought into operation the Essential Public Services Act and declared practically every organisation, whether public or private, as an essential service, proclaimed that any worker not at his work place on July 18 would be deemed to have vacated his post and would not be taken back. It banned the public meeting

sion and destroy the representative organs of the people, even if it means destroying democracy. For what is important to the present rulers is not a facade of bourgeois democracy but a link up between international and national capitals to their mutual advantage. The process of export-led growth and a linking with the world capitalist system is bringing to Sri Lanka, as it has brought to many other countries, a taste of dictatorship—*Economic and Political Weekly, Bombay, 22/1180*

concluded



GRAMA SASTRA—33

—Scribblings On Uva Villages

Sh! The SHS

by Gamiya

Let's get out of Uva a little, for a breather. Let's think of a south Asian country from which large numbers of school-boys and school-girls of private schools, due to lack of motivation, left the land little by little, to feather their own nest, to better their own prospects, to see to their own little life while thousands, nay millions of their rural less-endowed counterparts died due to ill-health. They joined the brain-drain and the elders watched them go, helplessly. All religious motivation, doctrine class, Sunday school went overboard at this onrush of getting the best out of the system and going abroad to stay there, earn and make a tidy sum. Then a world-body decided to place about 150 UNvolunteers in that country. They worked hard, and still work, for among them are Asians in large numbers: Filipinos, Filipinas, Indians, Koreans, Thais. I read of a few MD's, all good men and women, who even if they were drawn in because of a little higher salary and a little absence from home which they willingly accepted, worked very, very hard. The people of the remote and poorer areas of that country loved them, doted on them for their simple, guileless, friendliness and bedside manner.

But this was distasteful to the jealousy of the local doctors, the ones "whom fate left behind", who had even wormed their way in as SHS, or Superintendent of Health Service. They were a "good" tribe, doing their lordly best (lording it over others in most cases), but now and again there was that utter rake who was drunk from morn to dewy eve. I saw one in that country. He could not even stand straight, and he called himself a "Christian, and proud to be one." While jeeps delayed and orders were flouted he would be nursing the bottle.

It is high time, the authorities of that country (if they ever get this Review), sent him reeling home. A friend once told me that this man was found in the gutter with a pig, and the pig said: "One is known by the company he keeps," and so the pig got up and slowly walked away! The vileness in his heart brought on an intrigue produced by him and his worse half and they were instrumental in sending away a few doctors (*NV'S) from that lovely country. They left in disgust.

I got a letter recently to say that imber is still hunting those who are better than him and who get a good name and he is ruthlessly tracking down those UNV's in a high-handed manner. In the capital city, he is all spick, span, sober to the eyebrows, (he was caned in school & avoided the principal's room like the plague) but once in the countryside, he throws discretion to the winds and imbibes till the day dawns.

"Sh! The SHS is coming. He'll see us", said one. "No don't worry, he can't see in the mornings, his eyes are blurred all day but especially in the mornings. He can't stand straight"....so my friend's letter said.

We are lucky that such things do not happen in Sri Lanka! Very lucky. Perhaps if our capital city gets on the track they will not find any, or will they find any? Drunk if I know! High time the Leader of that country sent a Hi-ace van, all of a sudden to see if they are on the job or only raking shekels that come in on every peasant hysterectomy!

Let's get back to Uva. Any problem?



ANECDOTE

The Night Visitor

by Nimal Saratchandra

This incident happened nearly twenty five years ago, and every time I recall it, I feel a chill running down my spine. Then I was a youth not more than twenty four years, and being brought up in a christian atmosphere, disbelieved in "ghosts and spirits and even rebuked those who believed in these hallucinations and grandmother tales.

With the coming of the month of April, it was the custom of the rich and the affluent to rush to the hills avoiding the heat and dust of the capital. Many would go to Nuwara Eliya—and I was one of those—but with a different purpose. Those were the days when horse-racing was one of the attractions in Nuwara Eliya during the festival season in April. I was a part-time employee of the Ceylon Turf Club and we had a special bus to take us to Nuwara Eliya the night preceding every race day. Apart from the normal week-end racing, there were special racing events mid-week and we stayed in Nuwara Eliya, saving the time and money spent for the journey mid-week.

I stayed in Hawa Eliya with my friend now a Police Officer. They lived in an old Victorian-type house which had more than six big rooms. Some of them were hardly used except during the season when these rooms were cleaned and dusted for any visitors that would come. The spacious verandah with a row of wide windows opened giving a panoramic view of the town below and the Brewery. I was given one of these extra rooms that was hardly used during the rest of the year. There was a big wardrobe, an old-fashioned bed big enough for two, a small writing table, a table lamp for study and heavy blankets covered the bed.

NGUVU

Coastal Shipping & Thefts On The Estate

By Bwana Rafiki

On this particular day, I returned immediately from the races as it was drizzling. The peak of the Pedro was completely covered with mist and even the clouds were gradually gathering over the valley below. After a long conversation, punctuated with a few rounds of drinks, we had early dinner. Roasted pork, steamed cauliflower, boiled peas and grated carrots, were some of the dishes specially prepared. After dinner, wishing my friend 'Good Night', I returned to my room hoping to have a complete rest and a good night's sleep, as I travelled the whole night the day before.

It was cold inside the room but the extra woollen blankets kept me warm and comfortable. I could hear the singing of the cicadas and the sound of a streamlet flowing far below. I switched off the main light; a night lamp kept burning. Through the window I saw the darkness of the night. I may have slept for two or three hours, when I was suddenly awakened by the creaking noise of a door being opened. Through the faint light of the room, I saw someone opening the wardrobe. At first, I thought it was my friend's mother who had come to take some clothes from the wardrobe. Later, however, I observed that the door of my room was still locked. The scent of lavender filled the room. I felt I was in a funeral house. The figure I saw was that of a fair woman, a European. She wore a silken gown flowing down up to her ankles. She was looking for something inside the wardrobe, and the long, dishevelled hair dangled behind. The white silken gown gradually changed its colour until it took a black velvet form. She turned her head and stared at me; the long hairs she had, was no more. The hollow eye-sockets, the nasal cavity and the gaping mouth, made her look eerie and frightful.

I knew it was a ghost. What could I do? I had no escape and as it moved towards me with outstretched hands as if to squeeze my neck, I closed my eyes and screamed—which woke everyone in the house. Someone kept banging at the door and still shivering of fright, I opened my eyes. The ghost had vanished, the doors of the wardrobe were locked as before. I opened the door and my friend gave a sharp rap on my shoulders. I related to them what happened.

The following morning after breakfast, I was told that the house earlier belonged to a European couple who worked in one of the Government offices in town and that the couple was murdered by thieves who had heard of the money and valuable jewellery they had. The house had since been unoccupied for some time until my friend's parents had bought it cheap. They had lived peacefully with the ghosts and nothing harmful had ever happened.

However, it was the last night I spent in that house!

UP AT 4 a.m. was I to read and I left at 5 a.m. with a friend with whom I had stayed. A basin of water had been put out for me and I did not shave, but washed my face and brushed my teeth. I wanted to meet the man who had led me there the previous night and when we came to his house I sat on the floor of his verandah while my friend went on to catch his bus. When it grew light I went to the pansala which lay between the two houses but separated by some hundreds of yards from both and there I shaved and stayed awhile before returning to the place I had first left. That night elsewhere from an unexpected source I heard how ex-Czar Nicholas of Russia and his family came to be shot and exactly how it was done.

The following day I picked up a pamphlet-size magazine with an article about G.K. Chesterton by a man who knew him from the time the Chestertons had taken the trouble to visit him in hospital during World War at the suggestion of a woman with a name which at this moment I cannot recall but which I have good reason to remember, for when I read in a book that I am reading now that a man of that name was a close friend of Ronald Knox the translator of the Bible, I at once recalled that it was another of that name and calibre who owned the fishing fleet on one of whose vessels I sailed as galley boy at the age of twenty-four when we went as far as Bear Island which lies between the Arctic Circle and the North Pole. I did it solely for money and made not a penny, the sea disillusioning me quite considerably and I thought better of it and went to Oxford.

A small part of the day was spent trying to ensure an easy way that I got a pass to enter the harbour to attend the inauguration of a coastal service round this island such as I had learnt at school we once had. Soon after I returned to Ceylon in 1962, I had entered the harbour a number of times just by speaking to a sentry at the gate, just as I had done at Dublin, and found and made a practice of visiting the Indian dhows that used to and still ply between Tutuorin and Colombo using sail only and carrying cargo, until at last one day I found the going sticky at the gate. I regarded it as a sign of deterioration that I was no longer able to go in, which reminds me that Stalin once said to an English diplomat and one-time explorer in Russia that unlike in earlier days he would now require a passport to enter Siberia from China.

The gathering at the inauguration was small and very friendly. I learnt a lot, for instance that Adam's bridge cannot be crossed by steamers so that it is necessary for shipping going to Jaffna to go round by Galle; that our cargo-carrying coastal ships will be manned by a crew of seven; that it will take, as I was told by a



former naval man, two and a half days for these ships to get to Jaffna, while some one in the Shipping Corporation, but not so close to ships, said twenty-four hours. I am inclined to believe my first informant even though it seems incredible that the journey should take so long. This and Adam's bridge seems to rule out passenger traffic, which our coastal ships have obviously not been designed to carry unless passengers travel streerage and live under an awning on deck. Coming away I was caught by a very heavy shower of rain and learnt later that over two inches had fallen on the estate.

Well, I seem to have shoved **Nguvu** aside to read Evelyn Waugh's book on Ronald Knox to a finish as there were only a few pages to go. At a place in Hampshire I was told with awe that I was occupying the room that Ronald Knox had used earlier. His translation of the Bible was the first I had read from cover to cover, both Old Testament and New, and I went on to do it many times. I saw him once or twice when he was delivering one of his Conferences to the Roman Catholics undergraduates of Oxford University. Knox's translation of the Bible lies on my desk as I write this, the same copy that I took to Stanleyville in the Congo, now called Zaire, in April of 1971. Tomorrow we commemorate the dead of both wars.

Yesterday, I read the story of five sculptors who lived in Yugoslavia, or rather what is now known as Yugo-Slavia, in the time of the Roman Emperor Diocletian. They worked together and were exceedingly competent at their job, and all went well until one day they were asked to sculpture an image that was to be worshipped. They had to refuse for this would have compromised their worship of the living and true God. Diocletian tried to save them from the consequences of their refusal but he had to bow to the wishes of others and the five were executed. Hundreds of years later Thomas Moore, Bishop John Fisher of Rochester, three Carthusian priors and others were executed for refusing to compromise their consciences on Henry's divorce.

INFECTIVE POLYNEURITIS I had in November 1971. Without going into too much detail, may I say I was paralysed from my waist-line down. Yesterday was the second time I found since my illness that I had a thorough work-out in the sport that is my forte for my vest and shorts were wet with sweat. The lift that I was offered in someone's car and accepted got me home through the heavy rains that started then and persisted. I was to go out that night but by luck remembered urgent work to do with tax returns.

So I was able to hand over to our accountants the next day the income tax forms with my notes and the cheques. I bought some envelopes to send off Employees' Provident Fund "A", "B" and "H" forms but found when I got to the estate that they were too small. A tale of the greeted me on the estate. One man was found with a **vici katha** and a quarter of a hundred-weight of artificial manure in his house. Three others were found taking breadfruit and arecanut grown on the estate off the estate, and it had also been reported that two of these men and another had picked and drunk king coconuts off the trees. It is half past six

and night has fallen and I write this by the light of kerosene lamp. My cook is asleep and I have not had dinner yet.

Well, I had gone to bed for a short rest and meditation on what I was to write but was so sleepy and tired that I came back here with my mind a complete blank and the time nearly 2 a.m. This was often the case when I used to keep a diary even when I wrote pages of it. My father has written a book for private circulation among his children, grandchildren and a few friends, an autobiography, **San Michele** style, the book that was a best seller. This book, thoroughly readable, is based largely on his diaries, and a best-seller if he wanted to commercialize it. Art should be for art's sake and not for the money it gets, but I am not contradicting myself when I aver that I am not averse to a man earning his living by it.

It has taken me a little time to collect my thoughts about yesterday. Two people on the estate, one a confirmed liar and the other who was caught taking breadfruit and arecanut away from the estate, came to me with a tale against the watcher who had caught three of them doing this and also found king coconuts missing from trees, and the tale would have justified me sacking him at once. The inveterate liar overdid himself at one point, something to which I drew the watcher's attention and his, and I sent them both off to their work, the third man having come and had his say earlier. I had also to take a decision about the watcher whose post another man has filled. Was I to return him to watching or sack him or give him another job on the estate until some more light has been thrown on his case? It was the third option that I resorted to and which he accepted.

When I had finished giving out advances on both estates and made up the books, and it was not quite dark, the watcher on the home patch came to tell my factor and me that the police were at the house on the estate where the stolen goods had been found. I instructed the watcher to make sure that the police did not leave without us meeting them, and proceeded as quickly as possible to put everything on the verandah table away before going to the house with the goods had been found there. I must say that the police were as nonplussed as I as to what had really happened, in other words, whether the goods had been planted or stolen and they said as much and left on this note after summoning no less than six people to the police station at 4 p.m. the next day. This was going to leave the home part without a watcher.

Early next morning I went to a village six miles away and returned about eight o'clock to be told that during the night one of the two houses on the part of the estate the other side of the road had had both its teak doors stolen with the door posts and lintels and I saw that the walls of the house on both sides of each door had been smashed to remove the lot. I summoned a hiring car and went off to the police station with the watcher. Coming back with a policeman we did not stop but went on to pick up the two men, both employees here, whom the watcher had said he suspected. In-

spite of the heaviness of the doors that had been removed, we were as non-plussed over this case as we were about the other case. As regards the earlier case, I had found myself compelled at 3 p.m. to detain the man in whose house the goods had been found as he had refused my order to let the watter look inside his house before he left, or else surrender the keys just in case he was walking off for good with his wife and child and bags full of clothing.

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CUBA AND AFRICA — 2

In Spite Of The U.S.A.

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 AMERICAN HOSTILITY was first expressed through economic sanctions. Until 1950 the Cuban economy had been largely dependent on the sale of sugar to the US. By refusing to buy any Cuban sugar, the Americans placed the new regime in an exceptionally difficult position. Nor did the Americans hesitate to twist the arm of those who sought to have close relations with Cuba. Other Third World countries were told that they would lose US aid if they developed ties with Cuba. Multinationals based in the US were threatened with prosecution if any of their subsidiaries did business with Havana and Washington did not confine itself to economic weapons. They provided Cuban exiles with the assistance needed to launch an invasion of the island—which culminated in the disaster of the Bay of Pigs.

Worse than this, so far as Castro himself was concerned, they made eight attempts to assassinate the Cuban leader, attempts which have now been publicly documented in the report of the Senate Commission set up under the Chairmanship of Senator Church to investigate assassination attempts made by the CIA in various parts of the world. Some of the "dirty tricks" devised by the CIA were totally bizarre. In one of them Castro was to be given an incendiary cigar, which would set fire to his beard and thus destroy his image. The memory of these incidents has clearly bitten deeply into the mind of the Cuban leader, judging from the frequent references made to them in recent speeches.

Ever since 1898 the US had been Cuba's father, protector and patron and now it was the island's most bitter enemy. Cuba could not survive such hostility on its own. It needed a powerful friend and backer to whom could Castro turn but to the Soviet Union? If Castro became a convinced Marxist-Leninist between 1959 and 1961, the reason is to be found not only in the personal influence to which he was subject—both his brother Raoul and his closest friend Che Guevara, were

already convinced Marxists, and the stalwarts of the Cuban Communist Party, who had given him no assistance when he was fighting in the bush, had now become his staunchest supporters—but also in the absolute necessity to find a large enough market to absorb the island's sugar crop. The Soviet Union had a great deal else to offer—armaments vital in building up an army to ward off any American invasion, oil, automobiles, machinery for industrialisation and so on.

Thus, an alliance with the Soviet Union was almost unavoidable. However, to be an ally of the Soviet Union did not mean, as so many commentators have glibly suggested, that Cuba was nothing more than a puppet of the Kremlin, that Cuban troops could be regarded as Russia's Gurkhas, mercenaries fighting the Soviet Union's battles. The Cuban revolution—unlike the "revolutions" in Eastern Europe—owed nothing to the Soviet Union. Castro himself, as well-informed observers of the Cuban scene have pointed out, is a man of immense pride and with a highly independent nature. On numerous occasions he has followed lines of policy which conflicted with the party line followed by the Soviet Politburo. In Bolivia, for example, where Che Guevara went to foment a revolution and where he met his death, members of the local Communist Party followed the Moscow line and deeply critical of the Cuban intervention. All alliances have their uneasy moments. During the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962, the Russians caused deep indignation by withdrawing their missiles without consulting Castro. Obviously when the issue becomes so serious the Russians will call the tune, but what is astonishing is the freedom of action that Castro has enjoyed. It is also astonishing that in a few years Havana should have become one of the revolutionary capitals of the world, for Third World revolutionaries a far more congenial capital than Moscow.

DURING THE 1960s, Cuba sought other friends besides the Soviet Union. A good relationship was established with Peking, though this has turned to bitter hostility on both sides. Even Franco's Spain was wooed by the revolutionaries of Havana, a cynical act perhaps—but Cuba was in desperate straits and could not afford to be too choosy about its associates. More natural in ideological terms were the relationships established with countries in Africa. From the early date Castro associated himself with the non-aligned movement which had been launched by Nehru, Nasser and Tito, and used the platforms provided by non-aligned conference to launch withering verbal assaults on the arch-imperialist enemy in Washington. As for Latin America, Castro was clearly strongly influenced by that frightening character Che Guevara, and was anxious to do all in his power to foment revolution. This could be interpreted as a reasonable countermove to the pressure being exerted by the US government on all Latin American countries to adopt a hostile attitude towards Cuba. In fact, the record of Cuban revolutionary activities in Latin America in the 1960s is one of dismal failure.

Africa played little part in Cuban foreign policy in the 1960s but the links established in this decade were to become significant in the 1970s. Che Guevara visited Africa in 1963, met members of the MPLA on his way through Brazzaville and established contact with rebels in the Eastern Congo (now Zaire). More significant is the fact that in the 1960s the tradition of giving aid to Africa was established. By 1979 there were reckoned to be 45,000 Cubans working in Africa, 37,000 were military men, mainly in Angola and Ethiopia, the remainder civilians. Cuban aid followed certain clear lines. It took the form of men rather than money or goods for Cuba is a poor country with considerable resources of skilled manpower. Doctors can be sent to man hospitals, so long as the host country provides the buildings and the equipment. Fourteen African countries now have teams of Cuban military advisers; they act as instructors in the use of Soviet weapons and also engage in practical projects such as road building and Cuban aid has also gone to some countries in Asia, including Laos, Vietnam and Syria.

As practitioners of aid, the Cubans, like the Israelis in the 1960s have one great asset, they are prepared to live rough. In Luanda in the late 1970s there was a sharp contrast between the Cubans dossing down six to a room, and the Russian advisers who demanded air conditioned bungalows for themselves. Cubans have other advantages when compared with technical assistants from the North, whether Americans, Russians or Western Europeans. They are used to life in the tropics and they have been grappling vigorously with the problems of development in their own country. Moreover, service overseas fits in well with the Cuban career structure; overseas experience brings status both for soldiers and civilians and enhanced prospects of promotion. The Cuban revolution has obviously created a great fund of idealism, but there are clearly also practical reasons why Cubans should want to serve overseas.

Aid to Africa was not a major preoccupation in the 1960s; the last half of the decade was marked by growing economic difficulties and at one time relations with the Soviet Union seemed to be turning sour. In 1968, when Soviet tanks went into Prague, Castro was loud in his support of the Russian action. Dependent as he was on Russian goodwill, it was vitally necessary for Castro to ingratiate himself with the Kremlin, no matter how much his action might shock radicals in other parts of the world. By the early 1970s, Castro could feel himself in a more secure position. The price of sugar was going up—a vital point in a country in which sugar is almost a monoculture—the Cuban army was beginning to emerge as a much more efficient fighting force, the Russians were being more generous in their aid and the Americans, caught up in the traumas of Vietnam and Watergate, were now less adamant in their hostility. By removing some forms of economic sanctions, the Americans in fact allowed Castro a great freedom of manoeuvre.

THIS IS THE BACKGROUND to Cuba's most

dramatic act in the field of foreign policy—the intervention in Angola in 1975. However, it should be remembered that Cuba's involvement in Angola did not begin in 1975. Links with the MPLA had been established more than ten years earlier. For the Cubans there was probably no party in Africa so congenial. Both sides could draw on an Iberian cultural tradition. Both parties were Marxist-Leninists in ideology, multi-racial in their composition—mestizos were prominently represented in the MPLA—and dominated by intellectuals. From 1963 to 1973, the MPLA received a modest amount of aid from Cuba. After 1973, when the Chinese and the Americans began to give more aid to the FNLA, both Soviet and Cuban aid to the MPLA was greatly increased. In April 1975, two or three hundred Cuban military advisers came to Angola. The South Africans were not yet deeply involved in Angola but in the course of the next few months Pretoria made its first tentative moves to aid UNITA and FNLA. In August Neto, the leader of the MPLA visited Havana. Shortly afterwards 2,000 Cubans set sail for Angola. They arrived a few weeks before the South Africans launched their task force "Zulu" that was to achieve such dramatic success as it advanced swiftly on the coastal road leading towards Luanda. In desperation, the MPLA appealed to Moscow and Havana for more aid. Of the discussions that must have taken place between the two capitals we know nothing, but at the beginning of November, a week before Angola's formal independence, Castro made the momentous decision to dispatch a Cuban expeditionary force of 12,000 men. To airlift a force of this size in lumbering old Britannias across the Atlantic was at the very least a feat of dramatic audacity.

The Cuban expeditionary force arrived in Angola at a time when news of the South African incursion from the south—a movement shrouded in mystery in its early stage—was just beginning to come out. It is impossible for anyone who views the world solely from the perspective of a white South African to appreciate the intensity of the shock caused by the news of the South African incursion in many parts of Black Africa. A personal anecdote will illustrate this point. A friend was teaching at the University of Ibadan at the time. In Nigeria, race relations had always been quite relaxed, but when the newspapers came out with headlines announcing that the South Africans had invaded Angola, the atmosphere changed overnight. For the first time since he had been in the country, my friend said he was made uncomfortably aware that he had a white skin. Since November 1975, the Nigerian government has taken a very hard line on South Africa. No one with a South African stamp in his passport can now hope to enter the country. By contrast with the enormity of the South African action the Cuban riposte seemed a bold and chivalrous gesture, and its success gained for Fidel Castro a greater measure of prestige in the Third World than he had ever enjoyed before.

By involving themselves so deeply in Angola, the Cubans made it possible for the MPLA to gain an upper hand in the civil war. They also provided desperately

needed aid in the form of doctors, engineers and teachers to replace all those skilled personnel who had left the country at the time of the Portuguese collapse. No doubt many Angolans have come to resent this massive Cuban presence, no doubt some of the stories of the Cubans removing equipment from factories abandoned by their former owners are true. Nonetheless, if the Cubans had not involved themselves so deeply in Angola, it is difficult to see how the Angolans would have been better off. The civil war would have dragged on, other powers would have become involved, chaos and anarchy would have spread even more widely.

At the time of the Cuban involvement in Angola in early 1976 it was widely feared that the Cubans would start giving vigorous aid to revolutionary forces in other parts of Southern Africa. In contrast however, Cuban policy has been marked by an unexpected amount of caution. At the time of the two rebel invasions of the Shaba province of Zaire in 1977 and 1978, the Cubans were accused of having deliberately stage-managed the invasions. It is true that the rebels came from Eastern Angola and that they were in fact survivors of the gendarmerie of Moïse Tshombe's who had fled from Katanga (the old name for Shaba) after Tshombe's fall. Settled in the remote and empty lands of Eastern Angola, they had made their services available first to the Portuguese, and then to the MPLA. During the civil war they probably received some assistance from the Cubans, but by 1977 neither the MPLA nor the Cubans had any desire to become deeply involved in the morass of Zairean politics. In fact; President Neto was anxious to establish good relations with President Mobutu of Zaire despite the fact that Mobutu had been the consistent supporter of the FNLA during the civil war, and before his death in September 1979. Neto was able to accomplish this objective. Again one is reminded of the limitations that practical politics impose, for while Cuba may regard itself as the harbinger of revolution, it is basically a small poor country with limited resources and it cannot afford to provoke violent disturbances in too many different places.

Meanwhile the civil war still flickers on in Southern Angola, with UNITA maintaining a certain level of guerilla activity. Ironically, however, the Cubans, whose army glories in its guerilla origins, now find themselves engaged in counter-insurgency operations. The fact that the UNITA receives substantial aid from South Africa enables the Government in Luanda to present the movement as counter-revolutionary in character. But UNITA undoubtedly enjoys some popular support among the Ovimbundu of Southern Angola. How much longer, the Cubans must be asking themselves, are they going to have to go on fighting the MPLA's battles?

To be Concluded



NEW DELHI REPORT

Subtle Anti-India Moves

By V. D. Chopra

Mr. Morarji Desai's recent remarks that the Soviet leadership had 'instigated' him to "Teach a lesson to Pakistan" when he was the Prime Minister and this on the eve of the visit of Soviet President Brezhnev has deeper implications that what appears on the surface as far as India's foreign policy is concerned. Though his statement was attacked in the Rajya Sabha almost unanimously, what has come as a surprise in the motive of Mr. Desai, who has built for himself the image of a conservative nationalist, in choosing to make this pronouncement, at a time when India's security problems have assumed a new dimension. What he said obviously was directed to embarrass the visiting Soviet leaders and create a confusion in the minds of the people about Indo-Soviet relations. There is something more to it than meets the eye.

This is undoubtedly directed to impair Indo-Soviet ties. Seen in the context of the international situation and the developments in this region, it also becomes clear that it is the beginning of a major offensive against India's policy of non-alignment—a phenomenon which is reminiscent of the early sixties. The crude attempt to belittle Indo-Soviet friendship and subtle hints that India is not following a policy of nonalignment are not new developments. What is new is that in the past the Jana Sangh and the Swatantra Party voiced this viewpoint and now leaders like Mr. Morarji Desai have also joined the campaign.

After the Chinese aggression on India in 1962, the Indian reaction combined to launch a mass campaign of misinforming and misguiding public opinion, the primary object being to bring about a radical change in India's policy of nonalignment and thus bring it close to the West.

It will be useful to recall in this connection that the late Dr. Raghuvira, then President of the Jana Sangh, made no secret of his intention to make India a stronghold of Western militarism on par with South Korea, Turkey, Thailand or Pakistan. Dr. Raghuvira said: "India's defence industries will serve not only India but all the democracies from Africa to Philippines". In fact, the focal point of all rightwing demands at that time was to make India economically and politically dependent on the West, particularly the US, leading to an irreversible sabotage of sovereignty and national democratic institutions. The nature of the present offensive is similar to Dr. Raghuvira's plans, though in a radically different situation. This campaign, however, at this stage is subtle. Nevertheless it is acquiring fresh colour and sharpness.

Consciously or unconsciously, the Right reaction in the country through this attack on India's policy of nonalignment and its re-emergence as a leading non-aligned country has exposed itself as supporter of the standpoint of those who are engaged in maligning India and pressuring it to

change its policies. Naturally, nobody would be happier than the US, Chinese in general and the Pakistani policy makers in particular. It may be a coincidence, intriguing at that, that this offensive against India's policy of nonalignment has begun after two major developments.

It was not long ago that Foreign Minister P. V. Narasimha Rao, reiterating Nehru's concept of non-aligned said that the "scope and horizons of nonalignment" had greatly expanded over the years. From a concept of "non-involvement or non-partnership", nonalignment had now "become synonymous with real national independence". From the stage when it was mistaken as some "kind of neutrality or fence-sitting" it has assumed the "positive character" of dynamic involvement in world affairs. It is precisely this role which India is playing now. Whatever may have been other acts of omission and commission of the Congress (I) government at the Centre as far as the internal policies are concerned, even its worst critics would admit that whenever India intervened in the international affairs, it was always to regain its original position. Today most of the nonaligned countries look up to us for leadership and fresh initiatives, including a large number of the oil-producing Arab countries. This stands as a complete contrast to India's international stature when the Janata Party was in power. *This obviously does not fit into the geo-political strategy of those who believe that nonalignment "means not taking sides and maintaining some kind of rigid balance between the great powers or the power blocs"*.

Further, recently a conference of mass media experts from the US, China and Pakistan was held in Islamabad, according to reports appearing in a section of Western press. However, it is after this conference that the Pakistani media started a two-pronged attack on India. The communal situation is being blown up out of proportion and India is being projected as a "stooge" of the Soviet Union. Leaving aside these two aspects of the latest offensive, one finds that some sort of division of labour seems to have taken place among these three countries to bring about a shift in India's foreign affairs.

The "pro-American" political formations in the country have been assigned the role of driving a wedge between India and the Soviet Union by making out how India's "tilt" towards the Soviet Union is increasing its dependence on the socialist countries—a change which does not stand scrutiny of facts. On the contrary, Indo-Soviet ties have strengthened India's economic independence and to that degree its independent role in the international affairs. The "pro-Chinese" elements have stepped up their activities throughout the country, particularly in the north-eastern region. A top national leader correctly summed up recently the situation when he said that there were "some other people" sitting on the shoulders of those who are leading parochial and secessionist movements in the sensitive areas of the country. The "pro-Pakistani" elements, though handful in number, have become unusually active on the Indo-Pak border in the Kashmir valley. Though

all these facts are known, what is new is that they present an entire scenario seen as an integrated whole.

In this context, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and External Affairs Minister Narasimha Rao have rightly underlined that there is no basic contradiction between the policy of nonalignment and the pursuit of national interests. It could not be otherwise because the very purpose of choosing to follow the policy of non-alignment is to defend the country's independence and sovereignty, which in turn takes care of all its other interests. Therefore overt or covert attack on the policy of nonalignment boils down to an attempt to weaken the country's thrust to defend its independence, unity and sovereignty.

It should be understood that some of our politicians, used to a different kind of balance of forces as, for instance, existed in the sixties and seventies, are still unable to reconcile themselves to the new international realities. At a time when an adjustment of US-Soviet power relations has yet to take place and the Soviet leaders feel that US is scheming to create another encirclement of their country with the help of China, Pakistan and even Japan, they naturally are bound to have their own perception. On the other hand, with the strengthening of the liberation movements and a new upsurge of nationalism in many countries, the US policy-makers feel that their position is being challenged at every point.

In this complex situation, any attempt to encircle India and build pressures cannot be dismissed in an off-hand manner because if an encirclement of the USSR is the headache of the Soviet leaders, an attempt by the US-China-Pak axis to "contain" India cannot but pose a major problem for our country.

India undoubtedly has to work for the elimination of big power rivalry and conflicts from this region to the extent possible and to serve for regional and bilateral solutions. It has already taken initiatives in this regard as, for instance, its role in ending the Iran-Iraq war. But at the same time, it cannot close its eyes to the new threats and dangers both internal and external, which have started threatening it. Therefore, who is playing whose game in India has to be watched carefully—Patriot.

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WEST GERMAN

House Of the Future: A Fortress

The house of the future will not only have sun collectors and energy saving heat pumps; it will also be equipped like a fortress. The range of security devices now available mean that risks from the terrorist and the criminal can be mitigated. What is now offered is

total security systems, involving items from bullet-proof glass to highly complex burglar alarms. Experts at the International Security Fair in Essen reckoned that in future security systems would account for two to three per cent of the costs of building a house.

Taking DM 300,000 as the price of a house, this would mean between DM 6,000 and DM 9,000. For this the houseowner will be able to choose from a range including burglar-proof doors and windows, alarm systems and other security systems. Modern micro-electronics have revolutionised burglar alarms. There are, for example, systems which do not react to normal sounds in the house but only to the sound of a window pane being cut. Other systems sound the alarm when doors and windows are opened. Radar devices which record movements, infrared scanners which register body heat can also provide protection. At the moment, the houseowner has to go to a lot of trouble to get together all the systems he needs to give him total security. But the security industry means to remedy this and in some towns there are already shops specialising in mechanical and electronic security systems for the home.

Frankfurter Allgemeine

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A CONCRETE SUGGESTION

To Meet A People's Urgent Need

By K. Kanapathipillai

WHAT THE PEOPLE of Sri Lanka need today is food; cheap nourishing wholesome food. It is admittedly a dire necessity. Today in a rice-producing area such as the Batticaloa District and the Amparai District, rice is selling at seven rupees a measure. What a tragedy! It is a tragic-comedy; a thing that is to be bemoaned, a thing to be laughed at. A comedy of human errors; the errors of a State, much more than the blunders of an innocent people: most of whom are the true nationals of Sri Lanka—the Veddah community of Murutana. What a cynical turn of events, these people have been constrained to face! And, how can man discover the right solution?

Here, in Batticaloa, not very far from the Valaichenai—Batticaloa trunk road, forming a delta of very fertile alluvium, in close proximity to the Maduru Oya scheme, having at its vertices, the village of Vandraimoolai, Valaichenai and a settlement called Iralai-kulam, is a neglected tract crying for attention, and speedy development. It is an alluvial tract bisected by a tributary of the Mundana Aru, called the Veera-kaddu Aru and watered by it in all nature's bounty.

But the irony of the whimsical ordaining of nature is this: "Water, water, everywhere; but not a drop to drink." The Veera-kattu Aru has been so designed by nature that the configuration of the topography has been, as it were, the outcome of the meanderings

of this water-course. Water flows, and that in abundance is an unimpeded spate especially in the season of rains (Oct.-Dec.) from the south to the north—the general trend of the stream—and deploys into the Valaichenai lagoon, and water in plenty, and water unimpeded and untapped flows and goes waste when the alluvial flats on either side lie fallow. The irony of the whole situation is that either there is too much water, and the river is brimful, or that there is a mere trickle in the otherwise dry bed. And on either side there are in all about 5000 acres, partly cultivated, but most of it, about 3000 acres left fallow for want of the proper husbanding of the water resources. THE CULTIVATORS of this God-forsaken area, some of them belonging to the coastal villages of Kiran, Sithandy, Candharoomoolai and Valaichenai, others to the interior villages of Iralai-kulam and of Murutana, annually wage a relentless war with nature's forces—the flood and the drought—to wrest a few acres of this virgin soil, cultivate them against very heavy odds, and eke almost a hand to mouth precarious existence, on what may properly be designated as a semi-starvation, marginal level.

Every year they plough their lands when the first cyclonic outbursts come down in intermittent showers, now, and wait for the water level in the Veera-kattu Aru to go down, to construct an earth dam across it at a convenient point, and then they regulate the water flow and irrigate their crops. But the vagary of the weather, especially during the rainy months, is such that, more often than not, the earth dam gets washed off by sudden unexpected down-pours of rain, and the outcome of it all is, that the crops get damaged and the enthusiasm of the cultivators gets damped and stalking poverty and carking destitution take possession of not only the land but the inner-being of the people.

It will be admitted that this is a very primitive method of irrigating the crops, and it is a wonder why this anachronism should have permitted to prevail side by side with grandiose structural operations that have been set afoot elsewhere in more fortunate and favoured regions. The question is why should a helpless, voiceless and mute people be suffered to suffer in resigned silence?

And why have the Fates been permitted to wreak their vengeance on this poor dumb existence that goes by the name of humanity from the time that Sir John Kotelawela was premier till now? Ever since then and even before Sir John's historic visit to Kiranpula Kaddu, sand dams have been reared at various points on the Veera-kattu Aru and over the years they have collapsed, and over the years the people have suffered untold hardships in silence. Well, can't anything of permanent and tangible benefit be done to these people? A people struggling for marginal subsistence and a penurious and wormy existence.

The solution suggested is theirs. Several years of severe setbacks have endowed them with an im-

perious horse sense. At a point on the Veera-kattu Aru, half-way between the village of Sithandy and Iralai-kulam, there is an outcrop of gneiss rock in the bed of the river, popularly called the "Murakkai Madu Parai" where an "anicut" can be constructed at a reasonably low cost. This will help not only to bridge the river in question at this point and thus enable a road to be constructed to link up the lands on either bank of the river but also to pond up and regulate the river flow during the months of September to December and bring some 3000 more acres of the alluvial fan that lies fallow today, under the plough.

Here is a scheme that will help bring more food and provide better communication and transport facilities to an otherwise neglected area.

As it is, during the season of cultivation, the Veera-kattu Aru is very often in spate and the movement of the cultivators, their cattle, their bullock-carts and plough machines and other vehicles is completely disrupted and dislocated and here is a developmental venture on which the welfare State can focus its attention to help a semi-starved people produce a few more ears of paddy and thereby glut a wholesome appetite.

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Notice

MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Admission of Students to Polytechnical Institutes and Junior Technical Institutes for the academic year commencing in May, 1981.

Applications will be received for admission to the technical institutes under this Ministry for courses of study under the following categories:—

- (i) Higher National Diploma
- (ii) National Diploma
- (iii) National Certificate

For further particulars see Gazette of the Govt of Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka of 16.01.1981.

Ministry of Higher Education,
18, Ward Place,
Colombo 7.

C. P. Kalpage,
Secretary.

FROM THE WASHINGTON POST

Sri Lanka Suitors

By Mary Battiata

"These are only some of the friends of Sri Lanka here tonight," said W. S. Karunaratne, the ambassador of Sri Lanka. "Tomorrow, the prime minister will meet the Sri Lankan Americans."

"Yes," echoed an aide, "and there will be lots of lovely hot curries".

"No" said someone else, later "we will have finger foods. It is so difficult to eat rice at a reception."

Standing nearby, to the left of the ambassador last night, just inside a ballroom of the Sheraton Carlton Hotel, was a small man in an immaculate white tunic, the robes of which brushed the floor as he pressed the hands proffered him.

Although seemingly engrossed in the reception line—smiling warmly, shaking his head in sympathetic understanding—his eyes worked the room all the while. Ranasinghe Premadasa, politician—prime minister of the tiny Republic of Sri Lanka formerly Ceylon, once part of the British Empire.

Sri Lanka is busy courting, successfully thus far, foreign investment capital on three continents. Which is why the prime minister has come to Washington. Tonight he'll receive several hundred of the approximately 6,000 Sri Lankans in the United States, and talk of the Sri Lanka Overseas Foundation, which hopes to capitalize on the patriotism and technical expertise of the Sri Lankans in the United States for the benefit of the Republic.

"Sri Lanka means 'resplendent island,'" said Tilak Semasinghe, an embassy employee who has lived here for 20 years. "We have wonderful beaches, as you knew. But we have something else—an ancient civilization. You must come and see it now. Who can say what it will be like in 50 years." And then, in a reference to the island republic's hopes for an economic boom. "Who knows? In 50 years, it might be a parking lot."

Last night's reception, posted by the ambassador, was short and official, and very low-key. State Department officers, women in gold-trimmed saris, embassy employees, prominent Sri Lanka Americans all mingled.

"The prime minister?" whispered a woman draped in red and gold cloth, wrestling delicately with an unwieldy slice of watermelon. "The prime minister is a man of the people. He is the people", she said, gliding away.

Shortly after eight, the man of the people, weary of receiving lines, began moving purposefully toward the door. His wife followed. So did the receiving line.

So did the guests. Soundlessly Smoothly. End of the Party.

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Confidentially

Sins Of SLSPC & JEDB

WAS IT NOT INTERESTING to read a *Sunday Observer* frontpage splash on December 28, 1980 (the redoubtable Manik de Silva reporting) that: '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. The Treasury has decided to make this payment on December 21 and ensure that fiscal discipline is maintained from next year instead of delaying this payment and starting 1981 on the wrong foot. . . . Both the JEDB and the SPC are carrying overdrafts running to hundreds of millions of rupees on which crippling interest sometimes running into the penal 30 per cent rate has been paid. . . . Manik de Silva then went on to refer to the fact that: "The authorities hope that the infusion of new capital would enable both corporations which have to depend on their earnings to finance their development projects to devote the attention and capital needed to increase production. 1979 was a bad year for the plantations. . . . The authorities believe that it would be best if both institutions are given the resources to enable them to reduce their interest commitments to the banks and plough in their earnings into the estates to earn the quick returns the economy vitally needs. . . ."

That in view of everything that has happened and is happening on the plantations, knowledgeable people are of the view that the government's expectations that the plantations will do better with the infusion of additional money are mainly wishful and that the Rs. 200 million will only help to chase more shadows and create more mirages? That Manik de Silva could not resist the temptation to refer to the latest Performance Report covering the first nine months of this year of the Ministry of Plan Implementation which said that "up to now the performance of these two sectors (tea and rubber) has not been satisfactory". The report said: "during the last three years the government has done a considerable amount of work to improve the remuneration to the planter and the plantation worker, to provide better living conditions and better school facilities for their children. By bringing SPC and the JEDB directly under His Excellency, the President the Government has also seen to it that no political interference will be allowed to interfere with the management of the estates coming under these corporations. With these substantial improvements the right climate has been created for both the labour and management in the tea and rubber sectors to concentrate on increasing production. Up to now, the performance of these two sectors has not been satisfactory. It is

strongly emphasised here that these two sectors which form the backbone of the country's export earnings should get down to more hard work and produce more exportable surplus in their respective sectors."

IS IT NOT TRUE that another side of the plantations story was told by the *Congress News*, the journal of the Ceylon Workers' Congress which is the integral part of the government? That in its issue of January 1, 1981, this fortnightly had a stunner on its front page: AG'S REPORT REVEALS HEAVY LOSSES IN JEDB-SLSPC? "The Plantation Industry in Sri Lanka is suffering heavy losses every year. Unless drastic remedial measures are taken forthwith, it will be difficult to arrest this trend. This has been pointed out by the Auditor General in his report on the Sri Lanka State Plantation Corporation and Janatha Estate Development Board for the years 1976-1978. The Janatha Estates Development Board had sustained a loss of Rs. 166,109,104/- up to the end of December 31, 1978. The Sri Lanka State Plantation Corporation had up to the end of 1978 sustained a loss of Rs. 168,915,018. The Auditor General points out some of the glaring reasons for the losses that these agencies have suffered. Some of them are: (1) there are no proper inventories of assets; (2) No records of vehicle movements; (3) books have been erased and altered (4) duplication of names for workers; (5) Engagement of office sweepers for working in manager's bungalows and clerks' bungalows; (6) weeding expenses have been doubled; (7) no records have been kept of made tea, refuse tea stocks etc; (8) Non-recovery of dues from contractors; (9) No proper accounting of fertilizer inputs; (10) false figures have been submitted regarding gratuity payments for workers; (11) Coconuts which were being sold at 75 cents each at that time have been sold for 12 cents and 23 cents each while the cost of plucking of coconut was 39 cents each; (12) though no receipts have been shown regarding the funds gifted by the UNICEF an expenditure of Rs. 17,503,015 has been shown; (13) In an estate in the Nuwara Eliya District Rs. 148,000 had been fraudulently used; (14) A sum of Rs. 400,000 have been advanced to a transport contractor in the Hatton area; but no recoveries have been reflected; (15) Loans have been given to staff on probation but these loans have not been recovered when they left the employment; (16) of the 385 estates which were managed by the Janatha Estate Development Board at that time 222 estates showed losses." That the *Congress News* capped all this with an editorial "SINS OF SLSPC AND JEDB"? (Vide. EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK)

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