

TRIBUNE



Letter From The Editor

TIMES FLIES, faster than it did even two decades ago, and Christmas is once again with us. The New Year will be soon upon us. Earth time, however, moves as slowly as it did a millenium ago. Though it still takes twenty fours of earth time for the earth to turn round on its own axis and three hundred and sixty five days (plus and minus) for our planet to go round the sun on its orbit, events now crowd so fast one into another that a human is not able to keep pace with time. One can contemplate upon men, matters and time only if one had the detachment and leisure to do so, but in the contemporary era when one sensation tumbles upon another without breathing space, it is not possible to do so. It is even not possible to read all the newspapers published in a small country like Sri Lanka: or to glance at even a few of the worthwhile papers, periodicals and magazines from other countries. This is only one aspect of how Time has outdistanced man. More than anything else, political events, national disasters and world shaking discoveries keep one's mind wholly captive. Technological advances in all spheres of human activity are far too many for the comprehension of the vast majority of even the keenest intellects—man has come to accept them without question. In the ages past, when man had found events overtaking his capacity for comprehension and understanding, he retired to a monastery or an ashram to think things over away from the rush of events. But today, the monastery and ashram—except a few here and there—have lost that detachment that makes possible dedication to abstract thought which alone has produced the greatest forward strides of mankind. The science laboratory and the academician's ivory tower were hailed as the modern man's escape from the mudane and the humdrum, but even these have now been drawn into the political vortex in the same way that Religion has become subordinate to political imperatives (some may argue that it was always so). Even the Hindu ashram in India, which traditionally was lost in a deep forest or a high mountain, has now been brought with unbecoming flamboyance to the front pages of newspapers by publicity-minded 'yogis' and maharishis who have hit millionaire jackpots in the USA or Europe. The price religion has to pay from leaving the lofty towers of self-detachment is heavy, and the supreme self-assurance with which evangelistic messiahs of rationalism like Abraham Kooray lay siege to the citadels of Sai Baba and hundreds of other lesser god-men, who have emerged in the present period of upheaval and change (especially in human minds), is evidence of an intellectual ferment that seems to know no bounds. Even the Christians in Sri Lanka have thought it necessary to turn political. Christian Churches now issue strongly-worded statements about political prisoners. Recently, Christian ecclesiastics and dedicated christian laymen thought it necessary to utilise the jargon, idiom and contemporary presence of the Non-aligned Movement and Summit Conference to preach a sermon which they seem to believe is Christianity in the era of the Nonaligned. They held a seminar (the over-worked propaganda media of this decade) to postulate "christian response to the Nonaligned Movement..... on the occasion of the Fifth Summit Conference of the nonaligned Movement". In a challenging statement issued as a folder, these christians preached the Sermon of the Non-aligned (seeking to enshrine the lofty ideals of the Sermon on the Mount) under various subheadings: *the significance of the conference—a new identity and a new role: nonalignment and the reign of God—presence of the spirit, principle of non-violence, role of the poor, gospel perspectives, moral challenges to nonalignment, our personal pledge nonalignment and christian involvement—in developing countries in developed countries and response of the churches: nonalignment as leadership challenge—in nonaligned nations, in rich nations, and commitment of developed nations: to unite in a new vision conclusion. It was all very inspiring and christian. Last year, at Christmas time, we preached a Tribune homily on the futility of unnecessary "indigenisation" of the christian faith. This year we draw attention to even more futile endeavour to clothe religion in political terminology. There are misconceptions that Christianity can survive in Asia only if "indigenised" and "politicalised". These misconceptions are as erroneous as the belief that Hinduism and Buddhism must take to "hot gospelling" (Christian style) to justify themselves.*

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EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

The Tamil Question

WHILE THE COMMITTEE STAGE of the Budget debate continued its weary way in the customary manner, the most exciting political news of the day was the snowballing political gossip that a "deal" was brewing between the SLFP and the TULF. *Tribune* in its *Confidentially* column in the issue of December 11, 1976, (Vol. 21 No. 27) had drawn attention to this "gossip": that the political atmosphere in Sri Lanka was being impregnated with the *Thought* that a constitutional amendment for Tamil Rights would be a fair exchange for a constitutional amendment for the postponement of the elections for a short period, say three years.

On Monday, December 18, the *Daily Mirror* had a frontpage banner headline CONSTITUTIONAL STATUS FOR TAMIL—PRELUDE TO WIDER NORTH-SOUTH DIALOGUE. The report by the paper's Political Correspondent read as follows:

While the unanimous verdict of the Supreme Court last Friday came as a surprise to many Opposition MPs who had either predicted a different verdict or a divided opinion, lobby discussion centred more on the Attorney-General's prompt announcement in Court that he would not proceed in the case against Mr. Amirthalingam, TULF Secretary General and other Tamil leaders.

Since it was obvious that the A.G. was acting on the Government's instructions senior Opposition MPs including a party leader and a former Minister said "this is a political decision, and a carefully thought out decision, too." What does it signify? The majority view is that by dropping the charges against the TULF leaders, the Government is making the first move towards a dialogue with the Tamils. "Another North-South dialogue?" asked an MP from the Southern province. Next step, it is suggested, is the incorporation of Tamil language rights in the Constitution. These rights are based on the Tamil Language Law and the regulations which were introduced by the UNP Government. Vesting the Tamil

language with a 'constitutional status', it is felt, will go a long way to assuaging the sentiments of the aggrieved Tamil community. Almost all Sinhalese MPs I spoke to in the lobbies on Friday, (and they came from both Government and Opposition, Right, Centre and Left) agreed that the demand for a 'separate state' was not a serious move but an overstated maximal demand, in part, and a rhetorical gesture too, in order to put pressure on the Government. The serious substantive demands concern education, employment, economic projects in the north, colonisation, and measures promoting regional autonomy. But the Government's first tactic may be make a serious conciliatory move on the language front, create a climate of cordiality and then prepare the ground for a wide-ranging 'North-South' dialogue.

WHAT THIS REPORT suggests is that a substantial and influential section of the SLFP was willing to concede the incorporation of a provision in the Constitution granting the Tamil language a Constitutional "status": that this was a prelude to a dialogue on a broader basis covering all the outstanding demands of the TULF. As a gesture of the Government's

bona fides, the government took the unprecedented step of withdrawing the indictment of sedition against the four TULF leaders.

The *Daily Mirror* report revealed that the SLFP MPs felt that if a start was made on "language", then the atmosphere would be cleared for fruitful discussions on other matters, and though unsaid, it was indicated that the SLFP believed that with a constitutional amendment on "language", it would be possible to get TULF support for a postponement of the elections.

But the TULF refused to bite this "lone" carrot dangled before it. What it had always wanted was a "package" deal on all the outstanding issues (short of a separate state).

The *Daily News* of December 14, carried a statement under the headline TULF: "NO TALKS AT ALL WITH ANY PARTY

"Unless the right to self-determination of the Tamils is accepted and unless the Tamils are accepted as a nation the question of TULF talks with any party does not arise," said Mr. A. Amirthalingam, General Secretary of the TULF, when he addressed the Human Rights Day meeting at Trimmer Hall, Jaffna, on Friday, Nov 14.

COVER

There are a very large number of Christian Churches in Sri Lanka far more than one would expect in a country with a christian population of less than ten percent. The Portuguese were prolific builders of churches. The Dutch and the British were more selective and sparing in their church-building, and were not the fanatical proselytisers the Portuguese were. Christian Power, however, had dominated the government and administration of this island for 450 years, and the socio-cultural impact of christianity on the people was (and still is) much more than many are willing to admit (publicly) in the current era of Buddhist domination. Christianity of the colonial era had an overabundance of intolerance and narrow sectarianism, and this infection unfortunately now afflicts Buddhism contrary to the precepts of the Buddha who was the soul of infinite tolerance. In the multi-religious (and multi-racial and multi-linguistic) country that Sri Lanka is, it is essential that the spirit of buddha-like tolerance must once again re-assert itself to ease and remove some of the tensions that now disturb the serendipity traditionally associated with this island. The Christian Church (on the cover we have a picture of one of the many that dot out littoral belt) can do a great deal to undo the harm it had done in the colonial era when it had preached and practised rank intolerance towards all other faiths. There is no doubt that the Christian Church is now in the throes of a new Reformation, but as we have often pointed out, wearing the garb and habit of a Buddhist or a Hindu (in the outer forms of rituals or the architecture of buildings) is not the way. "Indigenisation"—always overdone—is, in our view defeatist, escapist and is liable to be misunderstood for humbug and hypocrisy.

mber (December—Ed) 10. He went on to say that there had been a lot of rumours in the country that the TULF had talks with certain parties. No talks had been held at all in recent times. The only talks the TULF had about which a certain Minister made reference was in 1973 when Mr. S. J. V. Chelvanayakam and Mr. Amirthalingam were asked to meet a Minister. At the talks when the question of self-determination of the Tamils was taken up the Minister was evasive and the talks ended, he said.

This was a direct retort to the kite-flying in the Daily Mirror about a constitutional amendment on "language". The TULF leader made it clear that mere "sops"—even on language—would not make the TULF budge: that negotiations had, to start from square one and include all the outstanding issues. It is significant he did not use the term "separate state": instead he used more acceptable terminology "self-determination" and "a nation". The minimum six-point demand of the TULF (before it launched its cry for a separate state), if granted, conceded "self-determination" to the Tamils on the footing that they constituted a distinct "nation" while leaving open the question of whether Sri Lanka was to be a federal state or a unitary state with regionally autonomous provincial (or district) Councils, or a straight forward unitary one with constitutional guarantees to minorities.

The fact that this "gossip" had gained wide currency was clear from reports filed by foreign newspaper correspondents. The Hindu December 14, published a report from its local correspondent under title **SRI LANKA MOVE ON STATUS OF TAMIL.**

According to informed political circles here, an amendment to the Sri Lanka Constitution, incorporating Tamil language rights based on the Tamil Language Law and Regulations which were introduced by the United National Party Government, is in the offing. While the unanimous verdict of the Supreme Court last Friday validating the emergency regulations came as a surprise to many of the Opposition members of Parliament, who had either predicted a different verdict or a divided opinion, lobby circles' discussions centred

more on the Attorney-General's prompt announcement in the court that he would not proceed in the case against Mr. Amirthalingam, General-Secretary of the Tamil United Liberation Front and other Tamil leaders. It is pointed out that he would not have made such a dramatic announcement unless he had specific instructions from the Government. Informed sources said that "it is a political decision and a carefully thought out decision too."

The majority view is that by dropping the charges against the Tamil leaders, the Government is making the first move towards a dialogue with Tamil leaders. It is suggested that the incorporation of the Tamil language rights in the Constitution is in the offing. Vesting Tamil language with "a Constitutional status" it is felt will go a long way in assuaging sentiments of the Tamil community. It is considered that the demand for a separate Tamil State was not a serious move but an overstated maximum demand in order to put pressure on the Government. Serious substantive demands relate to education, employment, economic projects in the North, colonisation schemes and measures for promoting regional autonomy. But the Government's first move would be to tackle the problem on the language front and thereby create a climate for north-south dialogue. Already feelers are being sent out by ruling party men and talks had already taken place at the preliminary level.—FOC.

The Hindu report is essentially a near-verbatim repetition of the Daily Mirror story.

WHILE THE UNP has not said anything about its attitude to a Constitutional amendment to ensure "Tamil Rights", it has made it clear that it would oppose any move to postpone the elections. And the UNP can be expected to use every gimmick in the bag of tricks that has made politics what it is since independence. Already, the UNP has hinted that it would use anti-Tamil chauvinism to oppose any SLFP-TULF deal to postpone the elections. The Journal (UNP) of December 17, 1976, had a front page splash **FELIX AND ILANGARATNE—WILL THEY AGREE TO A SEPARATE STATE—A REWARD TO POSTPONE ELECTIONS.**

Two Ministers—"No Seat" Ilangaratne and "No Seat" Felix Dias Bandaranaike—last week proposed to the Prime Minister again, that elections be postponed for another 3 years. Soon after the Supreme Court verdict holding the Emergency valid, was out, Mr. T. B. Ilangaratne proposed that an attempt be made to discuss with those political parties by giving them all their demands regarding language, etc. provided they supported in Parliament a proposal to extend the life of the present Parliament by 3 years, Ilangaratne thought some members of the Federal Party would be willing to make such a deal and would try to persuade the others too.

The excuse to be given for the postponement of the general election was that as the Prime Minister was Chairman of the Non-Aligned Conference till 1978, no general election should be held in Sri Lanka till her period of office was over. Minister Felix Dias Bandaranaike supported those proposals strongly.

It is interesting to note that Minister Ilangaratne is very doubtful to win a seat at the next general elections. His present seat, Kolonnawa, was won by him mainly on LSSP votes, which are no longer available to him. He cannot win Kolonnawa on the SLFP vote in it. He has no other seat. In the 1965 elections he was severely defeated in his former Kandyan electorate. Minister Felix Dias Bandaranaike as was mentioned in a previous issue of this paper, has been booted out of Dompe to find a seat for Anura Bandaranaike. His attempts to move to Nuwara Eliya in which 3-member constituency, the SLFP has one safe seat, was rebuffed.

It will be recalled that in 1957, J. R. Jayewardene led the UNP against the rather "innocuous" Bandaranaike-Chelvanayakam Pact (which conceded nothing more than a semblance of "self-determination" to the Tamils) by launching a vicious communal campaign against the Pact. The UNP campaign against the B-C Pact was communalism and racialism, at its worst, and laid the foundation for the anti-Tamil communal riots of 1958.

The UNP, then, went round the country with huge maps of Ceylon showing the country divided into two—with the bigger slice for the Tamils. The UNP raised chauvinistic slogans that B-C Pact was "surrender" to the Tamil racialists. Though, the UNP was compelled to quieten down during the Emergency following the 1958 Riots, it revived the same cry in the 1960 elections after the assassination of S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike. In this campaign, Mr. Dudley Senanayake joined Mr. J. R. Jayewardene, and made the slogans against the B-C Pact the main thrust of their election campaign.

The *Journal's* (17/12/76) headline is reminiscent of the 1957-60 slogans. Whilst the SLFP is today seeking a solution short of a "separate state", the UNP has hinted that any concession to the Tamils as a *quid pro quo* for a postponement

of the elections would be opposed with chauvinist slogans concerning a "separate state". (Is it not time that the UNP realised that even Great Britain has begun to concede self-determination to the Scots and the Welsh under the terminology of "devolution"?). The UNP has also announced that if the elections were postponed, or if no elections were announced on or before May 22, 1977, (with the "automatic" dissolution of the NSA), it would launch a "Satyakriya" campaign to overthrow the "legal" government. (The UNP does not concede that a constitutional amendment with a two-thirds majority would give legal validity to a postponement). Mr. Jayawardene has announced that he was organising Satyakriya volunteers—at least a thousand in each electorate—to be used to overthrow the Government if it continued after May 22, 1977, under whatever excuse or reason. Does it mean that the UNP will use these Satyakriya volun-

teers as "shock troops" for extra-parliamentary agitation even to subvert any compromise settlement of the Tamil problem?

Mr. Jayawardene has tried this game of "Satyagraha" and other extra-parliamentary strategies several times during his political career, and each time he has had to beat an ignominious retreat. He does not seem to have learnt any lessons from past experience. His current "Satyakriya" army is likely to his Achilles Heel through which his political opponent can bring him down.

The LSSP too is opposed to any postponement of the elections, and is likely to oppose any "deal" with the TULF which it regards as "reactionary".

The TULF itself will be chary about any agreement with the SLFP which does not have the support or "consensus" of the UNP. The Tamils have bitter memories of 1958.

SRI LANKA CHRONICLE

Nov. 30 — Dec. 4

A 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; DM—Dina; mina; LD—Lankadipa; VK—Virakesari; ATH—Aththa; SM—Silumina; SLD—Sri Lankadipa; JD—Janadina.

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 30: A Food and Nutrition Policy Planning Unit will be set up within the Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs: this unit will advise the Cabinet on food and nutritional problems—CDN. Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike, speaking at the ceremony held in connexion with the issue of first day cover and a stamp to mark the American Bicentennial celebrations said this is the first time Sri Lanka has issued a stamp to commemorate the founding of another nation and this occasion is a symbol of Sri Lanka-US friendship—CDN. A Trade delegation from the Soviet Union told a press conference yesterday that the Soviet Union was prepared to meet the oil requirements of Sri Lanka if such a request is made by the Sri Lanka Government: the delegation said it is the policy of the Soviet Union to export oil to developing nations if the latter need their requirements from the USSR—CDN. Government Doctors Trade Union Federation, a new trade union for doctors in government service, will be inaugurated this evening and a spokesman for the new union said several doctors who are dissatisfied with the present leadership of the GMOA and the AMS are expected to join the new

union—CDN. Last week a meeting of Education Ministry officials and district Educational officials was held in Colombo to discuss the take-over of nearly 800 estate schools to be brought under the Education Ministry's national educational scheme—CDN. Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike, has summoned a meeting of top Police officials for a conference to discuss the shortcomings of the police service: the IGP, DIGs and all Superintendents of Police have been summoned for this conference—CDM. Mr. T. B. Illangaratne, Minister of Trade and Minister of Public Administration and Home Affairs, told the NSA yesterday that very soon a directive will be issued to all government institutions requesting them not to press for proficiency in Sinhala as far as minor employees are concerned—VK. Education Ministry sources said yesterday that severe disciplinary action will be taken against teachers of government schools who participated in incidents that occurred after the Peradeniya shooting incident: already four teachers were interdicted—VK. The Duraiappah Murder case was postponed by the High-Court at Bar for January 31, next year, in view of applications filed by the seven accused to the Supreme Court challenging the jurisdiction of the High-Court-at-Bar appointed to hear the murder case: the case will be taken up for trial only after the applications before the Supreme Court are disposed with—VK. Ministry of Shipping has decided to establish a new state corporation by the name Trawler Corporation which will be engaged in fishing—DM. Employees of the Colombo Municipal Council will come out on a day's token strike today in support of eight demands—DM. A committee headed by Dr. M. B. Ariyapala, appointed by the Ministry of Education, to report on the delay by the Educational Publication Board to print and supply school texts has still not submitted its report: the committee was called upon to submit its report on the delay before the end of March this

year—LD. Special riot squads are now being trained by the Police which will be used to quell student unrest—JD.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 1: Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike, yesterday addressing the 24th Sessions of the International Chamber of Commerce (Commission on Asian and Pacific Affairs) at the BMICH said the private sector could not remain outside the mainstream of events and emphasised the need for new system to transact business: she further said the private sector in Asia and the Pacific has an important role in the region's growth and prosperity—CDN. Professor P. P. G. L. Siriwardene, Vice Chancellor of the University, told the Wimalaratne Commission inquiring into the incidents of the Peradeniya Campus that the President of the Peradeniya Campus, Professor P. W. Vithanage, had not kept him informed of the situation in the Campus although he was expected to do so: the one-man commission begun its inquiry yesterday at the All Ceylon Buddhist Congress Hall, Colombo—CDN. After a conference with the Mayor of Colombo, Mr. A. H. M. Fowzie, the one-day token strike to be launched by the employees of the Colombo Municipal Council was called off—CDN. The Government Doctors Trade Union Federation, a union of doctors, was inaugurated yesterday amidst jeers and catcalls by the audience: Dr. Upali Amarasuriya Medical Superintendent of Colombo South Hospital, was elected President of the new union—CDN. Mr. R. Premadasa, (First MP. Colombo Central-UNP) told the NSA that the government should decide on an early date to debate the no-confidence motion against the government over the Peradeniya incidents—CDN. Addressing police top brass Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike, instructed them to exercise greater supervision over their subordinates so that there would not be any repetition of police excesses or assaults at police stations—CDM. Mr. Felix Dias Bandaranaike, Minister of Finance and Justice, speaking in the NSA yesterday, commented on the allegations by the Opposition against the Chairman of the Bank of Ceylon, Mr. Gamani Wickramanayake, and said that he was satisfied with the Chairman's conduct as head of the Bank of Ceylon—CDM. Continuing his evidence before the Wimalaratne Commission that is inquiring into the incidents of the Peradeniya Campus the Vice Chancellor Prof. P. P. G. L. Siriwardene, said the Deputy Registrar of the Campus contacted him on phone and informed him of the situation: he further said when he contacted the President of the Campus to inquire into the situation he had told him that there is no cause for alarm and said by dawn the Police would tear gas and baton charge the students who will then disperse—VK. Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike, addressed the nation yesterday over the tree-planting campaign which she will inaugurate today opposite the BMICH: in her address she stressed the need for the campaign—VK. The Chief Priests of the Malwatte and Asgiriya Chapters agreed with the Government that the Rajakariya system should be abolished: they were of view that the system under which lands were handed over to the next generation by tradition was not consistent with the socialist policies of the government—DM. Srawasti, the MPs hotel in Colombo, will be open for MPs from today onwards: this hostel was closed for the MPs since the Non-aligned conference for which purpose it was utilised—LD.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 2: At the auspicious time of 7.41 a.m. yesterday Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike, launched the national tree-planting campaign opposite the BMICH: Cabinet Ministers planted 25 coconut trees in the premises of the BMICH at the same time to mark the occasion: school children throughout the island led by teachers participated in the campaign—CDN. Daily News quoting Finance Ministry sources said the Government has decided not to extend the liberalised scheme of Convertible Rupee Account imports beyond the end of this month: under the liberalised scheme introduced in June this year CRA holders were permitted to import a wide variety of luxury goods including items of food—CDN. Mr. R. Paskaralingam, Additional Secretary to the Ministry of Education, told the Wimalaratne Commission inquiring into the Peradeniya incidents that when the Vice Chancellor of the University contacted the President of the Peradeniya Campus and persuaded him to go on long leave in view of the students demands the President had informed the Vice Chancellor that the suggestion was not workable: Mr. R. Paskaralingam further said in his evidence that when he telephoned the Additional Registrar he was told that the staff including the President and the Additional Registrar had been trapped inside the Senate building by the students and they are unable to move out: when he contacted the President he was told that by daylight the situation would be alright and the Police would make room for them to go out of the building—CDN. Mrs. Siva Obeyesekera, Minister of Health, told the NSA yesterday that the doctors should re-think about their work-to-rule: she appealed to the doctors to give up their work-to-rule and invited them for discussions: she also said if the doctors fail to give up the work-to-rule she herself has to work-to-rule—CDN. An armed gang robbed the Kaluaggala rural bank of nearly one lakh or rupees yesterday: no arrests have so far been made—CDN. According to the Daily Mirror following a meeting of top Police brass and the Prime Minister who asked the Police to polish their image one of the biggest shake-ups in the high echelons of the Police service is in the offing: twenty Police Superintendents have been earmarked for transfers at the end of the month—CDM. Italy agreed to give Sri Lanka 4,000 tons of wheat flour as aid and an agreement to this effect was signed in Colombo yesterday—CDM. Mr. Felix Dias Bandaranaike, Minister of Justice and Finance, speaking in the NSA yesterday on the vote of Justice Ministry said government was compelled to re-arrest many Tamil youths in the northern province after the Duraappah murder: the Minister said this in the House following certain points raised by Mr. V. Dharmalingam, MP for Uduvil, on behalf on Tamil youths detained in prisons without inquiry—VK. The Co-operative Wholesale Establishment will take action to distribute large quantities of local and imported textiles at controlled prices next January and February—DM. Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike, will start her tour of the Southern province tomorrow and the silver jubilee celebration of the SLFP in the Southern province will be held tomorrow at Devinuvara—LD.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 3: A conference of judges and top officials of the Police will be held on December 18 and 19 to discuss the question of allowing criminals to go on bail: the Police have expressed the view that

one of the reasons for high incidence of crime is the release on bail of persons with criminal records—CDN. 17 SPs and 19 ASPs have been ordered to be transferred from January next year: according to the Inspector General of Police these transfers are ordered to give a new image to the Police in an effort to re-organise the police service—CDN. Mr. T. B. Illangaratne, Minister of Trade, Public Administration and Home Affairs, told a conference of the International Chamber of Commerce that co-operation and understanding between the government and business sector is vital for the progress of the country's economy—CDN. The Government Doctors Trade Union Federation, the new union of doctors, in a statement issued yesterday said it was not a rival organisation but a body formed for the benefit of all grades of doctors whether they be administrative officers, fully qualified specialists, part qualified specialists, grade medical officers or interns—CDN. Doctors of the Colombo General Hospital yesterday occupied the Class I wards of the hospital complaining of unsatisfactory living conditions in their official quarters: the joint action committee of the GMOA and the AMS initiated the doctors to occupy these wards: a spokesman for the GMOA said this action was an ultimatum to the Ministry that unless steps were taken to provide doctors with satisfactory quarters, most of them would leave the quarters and then there would be no medical officers available "on call"—CDM. According to the *Daily Mirror* the fact finding mission of the World Bank which was in the country was satisfied with the development projects undertaken by the Government and more aid is expected to flow to the country during the course of next year. Dr. R. R. Cooke, President of the GMOA, told the *Virakesari* yesterday that they would continue with the work-to-rule campaign until their demands are met by the Ministry of Health. Letters will be posted today to 4,000 students qualified to enter the University for the next academic year—VK. Several MPs have complained that the charges for the meals supplied in the Srawasti are expensive—LD. The Wimalaratne Commission appointed to inquire into the Peradeniya incidents will visit the Campus on December 7 for recording evidence there—LD. The CID is called upon by the Education Department to investigate the forged educational certificates submitted by candidates who have obtained employment in the public and private sectors: several institutions have submitted many certificates to the examinations branch for verification and found some of them to have been forged for the purpose of obtaining employment—DM. 34 Indian boats have been arrested last month by the Sri Lanka Navy for poaching in the country's territorial waters—DM. According to the *Janadina* the Sri Lanka Students Federation has decided to boycott the Wimalaratne Commission appointed to inquire into the Peradeniya incidents: the Federation has a large membership in the University and other educational institutions—JD.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 4: Prime Minister, Mrs Sirima Bandaranaike, speaking at the Devinuwara rally yesterday said certain interested people were conspiring to topple the government: speaking on the doctor's work-to-rule campaign she said this was one such ruse to topple the government: she also referred to strikes in the country and said these were to incite the masses and are aimed at making the government unpopular:

Premier made these observations at the Devinuwara rally to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the SLFP—CDN. At the request of the Ministry of Fisheries Price Controllers yesterday raided a leading establishment in the city and confiscated 800 fishing nets which will be distributed to fishermen through co-operatives—CDN. The Co-operative Department yesterday warned consumers to be careful of the ration sugar issued to them through the co-operatives: this warning to the general public came after complaints from consumers that several co-operatives were issuing damp sugar—CDM. Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike, sent a message of felicitations to Mr. Huang Hua, Foreign Minister of China, who was appointed to this post recently—CDM. Sri Lanka urged the United States to rethink its decision to veto the application of Vietnam to the United Nations General Assembly: this was conveyed to the Security Council by the leader of the Sri Lanka delegation, Mr. Neville Kanakarathne—CDN. Mrs. S. D. R. Jayaratne, Minister of Fisheries, yesterday declared open the Mirissa Fisheries Harbour built at a cost of Rs. 10 million: speaking at the ceremony the Minister said the Government is giving the fisheries industry the same importance it is giving to agriculture—CDN. Mr. C. X. Martin, MP for Jaffra, speaking in the National State Assembly yesterday requested the Government to reconsider the standardisation of marks on a language basis: he pointed out this method is unjust: Mr. Martin said standardisation is good provided it is not done on the basis of the language in which the student sits his GCE Advanced Level examination—VK. Student representatives of the Campuses of the University and Education Ministry officials will have talks on December 8 to decide on the opening date of the Campuses: Dr. Badiuddin Mahmud, Minister of Education, is expected to be present at these discussions—VK. According to the *Virakesari* the student unions affiliated to the LSSP are likely to boycott the Wimalaratne Commission appointed to inquire into the incidents of the Peradeniya Campus—VK. The Bandaranaike Centre for International Studies selected 76 students to follow diploma courses on international affairs for the next academic year—DM. According to the *Janadina* the government is continuing to import railway compartments despite the fact that coaches could be produced locally without expending much needed foreign exchange.

INTERNATIONAL DIARY

Nov. 27 - Dec. 3

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 27: The *New York Times* reported that the CIA helped the recent coup in Thailand in which military took over power: the paper said the American Central Intelligence Agency gave financial aid and organisational support to the most reactionary factions in Thailand to oust the Government. At least 4000 people are believed to be dead in the earthquake that hit the eastern part of Turkey: fresh tremors were recorded yesterday as rescue parties fought through rain and sub-zero conditions to recover

survivors: Eastern Turkey's border with Iran and Russia are said to be the worst affected areas. A Cuban weekly *Bohemia* said the American Central Intelligence Agency made 23 attempts on the life of Cuban Prime Minister, Dr. Fidel Castro in the 60s and early 70s. The Lebanon army agreed to place their artillery under the supervision of the Arab peace keeping forces of Syria: the situation in Lebanon is said to be quite after Syrian forces took up positions all over the country. Tanzanian Home Minister, Ali Mwinyi, said in Dares Salaam that four of Africa's "Frontline States" have agreed on an immediate joint defence strategy against any future aggression by the white Governments in Rhodesia and South Africa: under the pact an attack on one of them would be regarded as an attack on all: the strategy would take effect immediately without waiting for another attack, the Home Minister said. At a conference of Third World students in Ottawa it was said that if the Canadian authorities decided to increase the fees for foreign students studying in Canada at least 50,000 university students will be affected. A national referendum will be held in Spain to know whether the people approved the Government's plan for a freely elected Parliament.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 28: Soviet bloc leaders called for the speedy reconvening of the Geneva Conference on Middle East with the Palestinian Liberation Organisation taking part. India's External Affairs Minister, Mr. Y. B. Chavan, said that his country had no outstanding problems with Sri Lanka: he said that his Ministry would work in such a manner to solve all problems with their other neighbours. Robert Mugabe and Joshua Nkomo have expressed that Britain's formula for an independence date for Rhodesia is unacceptable and the former said they will try to amend the plan. At the three-day Congress of the Socialist International, Willy Brandt has been selected as President: Senegal has been accepted as the first African member. President Anwar Sadat of Egypt has invited President-elect Jimmy Carter of America to visit Cairo after the inauguration next January. The Warsaw pact nations at their meeting in Bucharest assured that they would not be the first to use nuclear weapons: they invited other nations to join them in signing a treaty not to use nuclear weapons in an effort to safeguard peace in the world.

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 29: Israeli Prime Minister, Yitshak Robin, called for a Helsinki type conference in Geneva on security and co-operation in the Middle East. The New China News Agency reported yesterday that the "gang of four" including Madame Chiang Ching had tried to incite anarchism at China's major Taching oilfield: the four were setting disruption at this oilfield, the Agency added. In a statement issued in Beirut by the Palestinian Liberation Organisation the commando movement denounced Arab moves to betray the Palestinians and affirmed its dedication for the Australia announced yesterday that it had devalued its dollar by 17½ per cent.

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 30: A Soviet laser beam knocked out two American satellites orbiting in the space and according to some American magazines the two superpowers are readying for possible space war. Mr. Sabri Jibriya, the PLO man who was to have opened

a branch of the PLO office in Washington, was asked by Washington State Department to quit America for giving false information in his application for a visa. The bribery case against former Japanese Prime Minister, Mr. Kakuei Tanaka, will begin on January 27. Reports from Santiago states that DINA, the Chilean security police, rearrested 20 of the 304 political prisoners it released last week. A population count in Moscow revealed that over 7 million people are living in the Soviet capital. British Prime Minister, James Callaghan, said in the House of Commons that he did not believe the inflation rate would decline over the coming months.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 1: A Russian Tupolev-104 jet airliner crashed near Moscow yesterday killing all 72 persons aboard. Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi addressing the Congress Party convention in India said though she loved democracy it does not mean holding elections and the press but the people's voice also should be heard: she further said elections are only an instrument of democracy. Chinese Foreign Minister Chiao Kuan is a notable absentee in public functions in Peking for the last two weeks and official explanation given is "illness". The PLO has accused some Arab regimes for working to liquidate the Palestinian cause. Chinese press continued to denounce the "gang of four" including Madame Chiang Ching, wife of former Chairman Mao Tse-tung.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 2: Egyptian President, Anwar Sadat has sent a personal message to Soviet Communist Party Chief Leonid Brezhnev that their countries should normalise relations: Mr. Sadat revealed in an interview with a correspondent that the message has been passed through Yugoslavian President Marshal Tito. Sino-Soviet frontier talks got underway in Peking under very friendly conditions. America's President-elect Jimmy Carter will meet his top advisers this week to discuss the American economy. Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto of Pakistan told a meeting in Rawalpindi that the Third World countries are very creative as any other in concepts and ideas but lack in the efficiency of translating them into business.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 3: Yesterday Angola was admitted as the 146th nation of the United Nations. Black and white delegates at the Geneva conference on the future of Rhodesia rejected British proposals for an interim government for the country. Thailand's Prime Minister, Thanin Kraivichien, announced that 13 Thai students who tried to escape from a Communist country to enter Thailand were shot dead: he did not mention the name of the country. Colonel Gadafi, President of Libya, will shortly make a visit to Russia. Kidnappers in Brussels demanded 800,000 sterling from a wealthy textile dealer for the return of his 13 year old youngest daughter. In order to satisfy the International Monetary Fund to obtain their loan of 3 billion dollars the Labour Government of Britain began a series of Cabinet meetings to produce a package of economic measures.

TOPICAL

Is U.S. Foreign Policy "Imperialist" ?

By Jerome Slater

We publish in three instalments this article by Prof. Jerome Slater which appeared in the *Political Science Quarterly*.

Jerome Slater is Professor of Political Science at the State University of New York York at Buffalo. He is the author of several books and many articles concerned with U.S. Foreign Policy, especially in relation to Latin America.

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SINCE the early 1960's, leftist critics have seen the American role as Imperialistic rather than defensive: a deliberate and generally successful effort at world domination under the pretext of "containment". The central goal of this domination is usually described in economic terms—maintaining access on favorable terms to overseas raw material, markets, and investment outlets for US private capital. Using its vast economic power, the thesis continues, the United States works to keep rest of the world conservative, capitalist and docile.

An alternate view of American postwar foreign policy prefers the characterization of "Imperial"—a term more descriptive than hostile. US policies are seen as concerned with stabilizing world order in a period when other international institutions are not capable of maintaining peace and performing other critical functions. Any great power in the present world system, argues Raymond Aron, naturally and inevitably expands its interests and commitments. And such an expansion can at times be morally and politically desirable, as Aron finds the American role in Europe during the postwar period to be.

But both the "Imperialist" and the "Imperial" designations imply that the United States has great

power, not merely unequal power; both imply the capacity to dominate or control other states, not merely to influence them; both imply an empire, not merely a sphere of influence. Are these assumptions correct? Has the actual impact of US power on the rest of the world been sufficiently expansive to justify describing it as either "Imperialistic" or "Imperial"?

DEPENDENCE THEORY. In the last decade or so, the theory of "dependence" has become the dominant theme in radical writings. In their more sophisticated versions, dependence theories hold that Third World countries have become inextricably integrated in the world capitalist system, dominated in turn by United States capitalism, as producers of raw materials and consumers of manufactured products. Because they are weak and economically undiversified, however, Third World countries are relegated to the "periphery" of the system, kept underdeveloped or impoverished by the low prices they receive for their exports, the high prices they must pay for their imports, and the onerous conditions which they are forced to accept in order to have access to foreign capital through either loans or investment.

Although dependence may be partially a consequence of the deliberate exercise of power, it is more fundamentally a function of the capitalist structure. As long as world capitalism continues in its present form, the Third World cannot escape underdevelopment, for its "surplus production" will continue to be in effect appropriated for the benefit of the advanced capitalist societies. Under capitalism, then, underdevelopment is not a transitional stage to development but a permanent condition: "economic development and underdevelopment are the opposite faces of the same coin", in the words of Andre Gunder Frank.

Why do more third world countries not rebel against this structural exploitation? because, according to the dependence theorists, although third world people as a whole suffer, the local political, business, and military elites benefit: their power, status, and wealth

are directly linked to the preservation of the existing "system", i.e., investment and production by local subsidiaries of the giant multinational corporations; military assistance programs; CIA advice, support, and financing; and so on. Without this alliance between the elites of the center and the periphery, the entire structure of indirect capitalist control over the third world would be impossible. But differently, it is this mutually symbiotic alliance that is the functional equivalent of the direct military, political, and bureaucratic control structures of the older, colonialist versions of imperialism.

ECONOMIC EXPLOITATION?

Let us examine this theory or argument, looking first at the question of whether the United States economically exploits the third world. It is important to emphasize here that if we wish to distinguish "exploitation" from mere "inequality", surely a useful distinction to maintain, the asymmetries of advantage (a) must be very great, not merely somewhat unequal, and (b) must stem from the deliberate use of power by the stronger party.

We can now proceed directly to examine the charge that the United States, as the leading contemporary neoimperialist power, economically exploits the third world. According to classic economic theory, free trade in an open international market is of mutual and equal benefit to rich and poor nations alike, because of the familiar principles of comparative advantage based on specialization and division of labor. However, in the real world international trade may not be truly open and based strictly on supply and demand, and the benefits may be unequally distributed.

Until quite recently, it was widely accepted, even by non-Marxist and non-radical economists, that in fact the terms of trade were weighted against the third world countries as a result of the deliberately or unconsciously exercised political and financial power of the industrialized world. For it was generally thought that, at least since 1940, the prices of raw materials and other commodities exported by the third world had steadily fallen relative to the price of manufactured goods

which they had no choice but to import from the industrialized world. In actual operation the international "free trade" system, it was usually conceded, had the same disadvantages as the domestic "free enterprise" system: where not all participants have equal and economic power, the rich do disproportionately better than the poor, or even, in more extreme formulations, the poor are actually further impoverished. The open-door policy or economic liberalism became, as a recent study put it, simply "the ideology of a continuing American hegemony."

In the last few years, however, the accuracy of this assessment has been called into question, as it has applied to the recent past, as well as to the present and the foreseeable future. A recent study, for example, concluded that (even excluding oil from the calculation) in the last twenty-five years the prices of raw materials exported by poor countries had risen at about the same rates as the prices of imported manufactures. Steven Krasner has gone even further, arguing that the third world countries have been the relative beneficiaries of restrictive schemes imposed by the consuming states or their multinational corporations: 'for most primary commodities,

the actual prices are higher than those that would prevail in a free market. In terms of neoclassical concepts of value, consuming states have been exploited by producing areas." As for the present and foreseeable future, there is a growing consensus that as a result of the increasing scarceness of certain key raw materials and the ability of producing states to form successful cartels, not only in oil but also in other commodities (copper, tin, bauxite, and apparently more on the way), the terms of trade will increasingly shift in favor of the third world, or at least that part of the third world fortunate enough to control major commodities or raw materials.

(To be Continued)

SATO

New Military Pact

—In South Atlantic—

By Abel Sardina

BRAZIL had just come into being as an "empire" independent of Portugal, and the Spanish American nations were newly free of their colonial rulers when the British ambassador in Buenos Aires, Lord Ponsomby, referred to the Brazilian expansionist designs on South America and Africa.

Back in 1828 Lord Ponsomby said that the Brazilians "think that once they control the entire South American coast from the Amazon to the Plata, and with contacts on the African coast, they will really be able to control England's trade with India, China, all of Eastern Asia and the Pacific."

Three years earlier, Liberator Simon Bolivar had warned that "unfortunately, Brazil borders on all our States; hence it has great facilities for waging war upon us." He added that it would be much to the liking of "all the European aristocracy were the power of the Prince of Brazil to spread until it destroyed the seed of the revolution."

Although the European aristocracy no longer has anything to do with matters, with United States interests in the forefront the time that has gone by has con-

firmed repeatedly the validity of Bolivia's warning and Brazil retains basically the same aspirations described by Lord Ponsomby.

"Brazil, as the country possessing the largest stretch of south Atlantic coast, and which is out to attain in the next 30 years an outstanding position among the big powers, will have to wield influence through its maritime power, at least throughout the South Atlantic, upon which the security of its own territory depends," wrote Brazilian Rear Admiral I.R. Freitas early in 1975 in *Hora Presente* magazine.

The issue of a possible South Atlantic military treaty to be made up of Brazil, Argentina and South Africa, in addition to the United States and probably Great Britain and France, is not new in the military and political literature of the largest South American nation, nor in the statements of its top military chiefs and the pro-regime press.

HOWEVER, the idea has taken on great currency since the end of 1975, largely because of the upsurge in the national liberation struggle in Africa, especially with the independence of the former Portuguese colonies (Angola, Mozambique, Guinea-Bissau), in regard to which the Brazilian government harbors undisguised neo-colonial intentions.

Another Brazilian Rear Admiral, Roberto Mario Monerat, declared when he became head of the fleet in January, that "maintenance of control over the pertinent seas involves keeping free the shipping routes that are of interest to our maritime trade," including the "long distance international routes especially in the South Atlantic."

A similar position was expressed at the same time by the chief of the Air Command, Lt. Brigadier (General) Delio Jardim, who declared that the "air force is always prepared for defense and alert to the development of tensions in Africa.

The security plan, which is renewed annually, could undergo modifications at any time in order to guarantee Brazilian shipping in the South Atlantic."

The pro-regime *Jornal do Brasil* also reported around the same

Trial Planting of Eggplant for Family Planning

Bogor, October 25,

The Department of Agronomy of the Institute of Agriculture, Bogor (IPB) has started trial planting of a variety of egg-plants (solanum) originating from New Zealand which contains solasidin which could be used as an ingredient for contraceptive pills. According to the trial nurseries two kinds of egg-plants, solanum lacinatum and solanum avicularis fared very well at altitudes of 800 metres above sea level. The foreign egg-plant contains 0.8 per cent solasidin. The experimental planting would be extended to 20 varieties of Indonesian egg-plants to find out which of them would be most suitable for extraction of solasidin, Project Officer Sugeng of IPB reported.

time that "guarantee of our external security through application of national resources only can be ruled out. As a security problem, the South Atlantic of necessity involves the application of the power of the United States and Western Europe."

Several days later, the *Financial Times*, published in London, wondered if Brazil should belong to, or at least maintain closer ties with, NATO, or if the present alliance should simply be transformed into an ATO (Atlantic Treaty Organization) to extend its activities to the South Atlantic.

Since the 1964 military coup, when the Brazilian armed forces overthrew the elected president, Joao Goulart, continued the *Financial Times*, in an action which they claimed represented, among other things, the defense of western, Christian civilization, there has been a marked tendency on the part of Brazilian diplomacy to seek closer ties with the western alliance.

This trend became very clear with the decision adopted at the end of the sixties to depend on Great Britain for obtaining the means to build up the Brazilian navy, and on France for aid in developing the air force, wrote the FT.

This, then, is the context of incessant diplomatic, political and military to-ing and fro-ing between Brazil, and the United States, Great Britain, and France.

In February, US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger visited Brazil, ratifying Washington support to the regime as its main partner in the region. He also dubbed Brazil an "emerging power."

KISSINGER signed an agreement with Brasilia establishing half-yearly consultations between the two governments on the chief international problems.

The agreement, which gave rise to a storm of protest in Latin America, including the official level, amounts to confirmation of the South American cop role assigned to Brazil by Washington.

Before the Kissinger visit, British Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs Ted Rowlands and then French Foreign Minister Jean Sauvagnargues, visited Brasilia.

For his part, Brazilian regime chief Ernesto Geisel visited France

and England at the end of April and dearly May.

In all these meetings, the topic of the Atlantic, South and North, and the role Brazil wishes to play in Africa, were key items on the agenda, as reflected in official releases and statements to reporters.

This was also the context of the visit to Argentina in April by Brazilian Navy Minister Admiral Geraldo Azevedo Henning, who, according to *Jornal do Brasil*, went with the objective of forging joint naval strategy in the South Atlantic.

The same assesment was made by several Buenos Aires dailies in commenting on the presence of Admiral Henning at the same time as US Admirals James Sagerholm and George Ellis, respectively the chief and outgoing chief of the US South Atlantic Command.

NOTWITHSTANDING the apparent agreement among the parties to any new military pact, or the extension of NATO's radius of action, the project is not free of difficulties.

The first obstacle is unanimous international condemnation of the South African regime, an important part of any military pact largely geared to counter the upsurge of the national liberation movement, and progressive developments in general, in Africa.

Another obstacle is the old Argentine-Brazilian differences on several aspects of the Latin American policies of each. These include Argentine protests over the Brazilian use on its own and Paraguayan soil, of the waters of continuous-course rivers that also run through Argentina.

In the third place, any new military treaty always involves international diplomatic problems, especially in a period of world detente.

However, despite the barriers, the danger of a new military pact cannot be ruled out. Perhaps the main indication in this regard is the difference in the official treatment of the issue now, as compared with 1969, when it also received considerable press space internationally.

At that time, several of the countries that appeared to be involved, including Brazil denied

at the United Nations that they had any intention of concerting such a pact.

Now, though there has been no express official confirmation that efforts are in process in that direction, neither have there been any denials.

—Prensa Latina

FOR THE RECORD

SATO

S. AFRICAN MOVE FOR SATO ALLIANCE

Washington, Nov. 29,

Feeling surrounded by hostile black nations along its land frontiers, and threatened by a constant Soviet naval presence off its coast, South Africa is reported to be interested in the formation of a South Atlantic Treaty Organisation, modelled after NATO. There have been persistent reports in the Latin American press of South African overtures to other South Atlantic nations like Brazil, Uruguay and Argentina, suggesting that since none of them singly can prove much of a match against Soviet incursions into the South Atlantic, it is in their common interest to form a united front. Since all the three Latin American countries involved have staunchly anti-communist governments, the appeal is couched in ideological as well as military terms.

But the Latin Americans themselves have not shown much interest so far in a SATO alliance probably because they fear that any such alliance with South Africa, with its abhorrent racist policies, could prove to be the kiss of death for them. Brazil which claims it has a multi-racial society has, besides been trying to cultivate ties with Angola, even though the latter has a marxist government supported by the Soviet Union and Cuba, because Brazil is interested in becoming the nominal leader of a bloc of Portuguese-speaking nations. But though Brazil has spoken out against South Africa "trampling on human rights," its Foreign Minister also acknowledged recently that the "day South Africa solves its

race problem, it will become a very important country."

Argentina and Uruguay, meanwhile, are not opposed to a SATO concept, but their problem is resources. They realise that plagued as they are by economic and political problems they can contribute very little by way of either naval firepower or money to a SATO alliance. They would, of course, be more enthusiastic if the United States were to show some interest, but this is held extremely unlikely in the existing circumstances, and given the great political risks involved. All this apparently has not quite discouraged South Africa, because it continues to hark back to the SATO project from time to time. In what is seen as yet another trial balloon, the Chief of the South African Navy, Admiral James Johnson, told a widely read Brazilian newspaper recently. "The communists are turning this area into a Soviet lake. There is nothing we can do, because we are all alone in this strategically very important region. We don't have the resources for patrolling this side of the South Atlantic alone."

—Easwar Sagar in the Hindu

MOVE TO FORM "SATO"

Mexico City, Nov. 24,

A group of Latin American countries led by Uruguay is forming SATO, a military pact in the style of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation to defend the South Atlantic. According to the Chief of Staff of Uruguayan Navy, no definite date has been fixed for the formation of the South Atlantic Treaty Organisation. Rear Admiral Hugo Marquez, however, was firm that "there is no doubt that we are going towards" the formation of SATO. Admiral Marquez said the naval forces of Argentina, Uruguay, Brazil and Chile have been called upon to join the defence pact. Admiral Marquez said on Sunday that Uruguay has officially decided to join the military pact.

Meanwhile reports appearing in the United States magazine *Naval Power* spoke of the interest shown by the US State Department on the types of "protection" to be offered in the South Atlantic. The reports said the US Defence Department has also considered the area "strategic". The magazine fur-

ther said that in the newly organised SATO South Africa will pay a decisive part.

The formation of SATO comes shortly after the recent statement by the Argentine Foreign Minister, Rear Admiral Cesar Guzzetti that creation of such a pact is significant in view of the unfolding realities in South Africa. Admiral Cesar Guzzetti has been reported as saying that there is nothing new about setting up a military pact in the South Atlantic. "The unfolding of events in South Africa may turn the matter into important medium-term problem" he said.

Official African sources have denounced the formation of SATO as aimed at supporting the racist regimes in Zimbabwe (Rhodesia) and South Africa. They have said that "it reveals the true intentions of the United States south of the Sahara".

Some newspapers in Latin America have suggested that the formation of SATO is being kept in fluid stage till the swearing in of the new US administration, of President Jimmy Carter in place of the outgoing Ford administration.

—Reuter

BUILDING A VILLAGE HOUSE—101

The Patient's Dilemma

By Herbert Keuneman

A few weeks ago, when the official (though unacknowledged-to-be-official) campaign to stir up public feeling against the GMOA/AMS doctors was at its height, the following tendentious 'news' item appeared in a product of the local press:

Sixty two per cent of the sick in Sri Lanka prefer Ayurvedic treatment according to a survey of attendance at both Government and private medical institutions carried out recently. The cost of training an ayurvedic doctor is Rs. 7,410/- A western medical student costs the state almost Rs. 61,000/- For both, the period of training is five years.

Tendentious. The plainly implied suggestion—made at a time when emotionalism rather than ration-

ality was likeliest to prevail in the forming of a judgement—is that the nation is foolishly, extravagantly, and snobbishly (as though snob value were the chief consideration) allowing itself to be cheated into spending Rs. 61,000 for a 'rata baduva' while a home-grown article 'just as good' can be had at one-eighth the price! I have yet to see a more blatant piece of special pleading, whether you use that term in its strictly legal sense or in its popular one.

Also, fallacious. As good a collection of begged questions, *suppressio veris & suggestio falsis* and, one is left with the suspicion, deliberate untruths as you will find in so small a space in many months of Sundays!

Mind you, I write as no convinced advocate of the doctors' action. I am quite convinced, as any fair-minded or even reasonably logical-and-no-more man must be, that they have their quarrel abundantly just. But whether to prosecute the quarrel by the means they have chosen is another matter. There are some professions taht by the very fact of their profession renounce the right to take any step that hinders the service they offer. A priest, for instance, cannot go on any form of strike—dignify it as he may by any name or modification—without he becomes the less a priest: he cannot withhold a sacrament because his stipend is unpaid. And the doctor is today's hierophant, a precedence which with the mystique that invests it he has been as jealous to assume as any sacerdotalist.

But this is not the point at issue. The issue is the validity of the newspaper's argument. The '62% of the sick' that are said to 'prefer' having 'ayurvedic treatment': each of the quotes probably hides a fallacy, at best, and requires to be examined. And there is the question, deliberately implied, of the relative value—that is implicit in the term 'cost'—of the two sorts of doctors involved.

The latter is a delicate question with professional practitioners of rival—and often acerbically rival—systems involved. One is tempted to ask whether any real question can subsist as between a medical system that has contrived for three thousand years or thereabouts to co-exist with such diseases as

smallpox, malaria, typhoid, tuberculosis..to name but a few..without evolving any notable antidote to them and one that has not only mastered these and a hundred others but has also established techniques, medical and surgical and prophylactic, that no medical system, certainly not scientific ayurveda, would be so reckless as to renounce. But this is dangerous ground for laymen, even political laymen! to tread.

Wisely, however, the news-paragraph apparently invites us to measure their value with a different yardstick. I suppose it is the one unquestionable contemporary canon: their comparative monetary cost! Now here I cannot but be doubtful about that odd Rs. 10/-! Seven thousand four hundred—and ten—rupees! 7,399.99 would have been so much more believable. Evidently the Ayurvedic College employs a much more meticulous method of book-keeping—to the nearest 10—than its 'western' counterpart which can manage no nearer than 1,000: 'almost Rs. 61,000' to train student. Typical, would you say, of the hit-or-miss computations that bedevil the one system as contrasted with the nice exactitudes (put nine leaves in a pot of water and heat over a small fire until reduced to three cups) of the other?

No, that isn't really fair. I have no doubt that the graduates of the Ayurvedic College have their acology and their assays and their posology and their dosology and their what not now quite as accurately standardized as by any M.B. B.S.

But the question is whether the Ayurvedic College kind of 'ayurveda' is the kind—or, anyway, the only kind—of 'ayurvedic treatment' the majority of the '62%' expressed themselves so much in favour of. The answer would depend, it seems to me, quite a lot on to whom the choice was put and quite a lot on what diseases 'the sick' were suffering from when the choice was put to them.

To begin with, it was (for purposes of a research poll) not at all a good idea to put it to 'the sick'. I suppose, but that is meant patients already in attendance at some clinic or ward in a hospital. Now, such subjects are already so to speak polarized, already at the institution of their

choice; and you don't, for preference, interview a subject whom you know to be already aligned with one choice or another if you are seeking to reveal a genuine cross-section of opinion; as I have no doubt the perpetrators of this 'survey' would like to have us believe they were seeking. If the question was put to those already lying in an ayurvedic hospital or queued-up in an ayurvedic clinic—that, surely, is what 'the sick'

implies—the surprise is not that 62% wanted to be there but that, by deduction, 38% of the poor sufferers apparently *didn't*! If the sick were not interviewed in an ayurvedic hospital or clinic but at a 'western' one, what (since they were free to choose) were they doing?

In any case, to believe that all who voted 'ayurvedic' did so not on emotional, or perhaps even on chauvinistic, grounds but from

REVOLT OF THE ECCLESIASTICS—A reply to R, Kahawita

Sir,

Your reader R. Kahawita who claims to be a *believer* has certainly proved himself one in his diatribe against the four bishops (See *Tribune*, 27 November 1976, p. 14). He has believed his own wild speculations about the Lewella Seminar which he did not attend.

Let me speak of what I saw happening (not what I *believe* to have happened) during that 10 day seminar. I was there; and I saw the genesis of the statement which has scandalized the *believer* Kahawita.

First of all, the participants were not all ecclesiastics. There were several non-priests among them. Not once did we hear of "The Marxist Manifesto of 1847" that Mr. Kahawita speaks about. Nor was the suggestion ever made that the Gospel of Christ should be clothed in a Marxist verbiage, as Mr. Kahawita *believes* to have happened. What then happened? After a structural analysis of our society, we came face to face with Sin in its 'organized dimension' and our own part in it. An honest self-examination was made by all present as to how each one stood before Christ who came to liberate us from Sin. The gospels preached to us by the eminent Indian theologian Samuel Rayan remained our main source of inspiration. What grew in this climate of prayer and study was not a political manifesto hurled *urbi et orbi*, but a resolution which the participants made with regard to their personal commitment to Christ and His Cross.

But I can understand Mr. Kahawita not perceiving the ring of the Gospel in that statement. In fact his 'scriptural' reference to the talent hidden under the bushel shows he has mixed up the parable of the talent and the simile of the light under a bushel! No, Sir, I am not going to waste my time explaining to him the Gospel basis of our statement.

Further, if Marx has said something that the Gospels also say and which the church has too long ignored, so much the worse for "believers" like Mr. Kahawita. In fact it is this red-scare of the type that Mr. Kahawita displays that made the church waste its energy fighting an ideological battle against Marxism instead of combating injustice as demanded by the Gospels.

But it is not merely the Gospels that Mr. Kahawita is mixing up. He seems to go by his own beliefs even where Marxism is concerned. When he accuses the ecclesiastics of priest-craft and exploitation of the poor through religion, does he realize that he is speaking of the "hope" that Marx is speaking about? Then what is wrong with the forty five Christians at Lewella trying to stop the Christian Community from administering this dope?

Evidently, our friend is mixing up his dope too. I mean the dope that he *believes* Marx is speaking of and the one he *believes* the four bishops have allegedly abandoned. Well.....I stop here, for, logical consistency does not seem to be *his* cup of dope!

Tulana-435/29, St. Joseph's Estate,
Nungamugoda-Kelaniya.
28/11/76

Aloysius Pieris s.j.

an informed and considered judgement between the two systems is to be really very gullible indeed. It is more than likely that when a questioned subject plumped for ayurvedic treatment (*sic.*) in giving his answer he was not thinking so much of the classical system but merely of what was non-'western' in the free-and-easy un-institutionalized atmosphere of treatment under the village *vedarala* or the homely and familiar and comprehensibly adumbrated therapy prescribed by the Maradana 'specialist' (whose speciality is simply being a Specialist *soi disant*) as an alternative to the stern and—as he sees it—arbitrary rules and discipline, the mysterious and intimidating regime of a 'western' hospital.

For such reasons, not 62% but, 100% of Ehetuwewa, for instance, would 'prefer' what they would describe as ayurvedic (i.e. non-'western') treatment but would give a scientific practitioner of the Ayurveda the screaming meemies: this treatment to include such practices as branding to relieve a chronic internal pain or smoking over a fire to cure a poisonous sting or incantation to restore a manic patient from his frenzy.. all 'ayurvedic treatment' in Ehetuwewa's book. This is folk medicine, not Ayurveda. When the unsophisticated patient says he would rather have 'ayurvedic treatment' what he says in effect is not that he would rather have ayurvedic therapy but the treatment (in the word's social rather than its medical sense) that he associates with practice familiar to him.

That, however, is only ideally, wishfully, speaking. The fact is that he recognizes quite realistically that in certain conditions he can entertain no doubt as to the sheer necessity of 'going to hospital'. No village mother any longer considers bearing her baby anywhere than in a Maternity Home. Every villager naturally struggles to avoid surgery if there is, as most *vedaralas* promise, a chance; but when surgery must be—however minor: be it the amputation of the last knuckle of a finger, the pulling of a tooth, or the mere lancing of a boil—it is not to the *vedarala* he entrusts it. Let the simplest malady, such as a go of the 'flu, take an unfamiliar turn and it is the hospital he thinks of. Chronic diseases, despite any know-

wledge of their seriousness experience may have bestowed, afford time to experiment amidst domestic comforts under the *vedarala's* affable advice in the hope, though ultimately known to be vain, that they will go away; but panic-engendering acute conditions drive the villager straight to the D.M.O.

A profusely bleeding wound always rates 'hospital' attention after the first-aid dose of *vani-val gata* (*Coscinium fenestratum*, the village anti-tetanic) has been administered, for loss of blood is the surest way to those dreaded convulsions; a deep punctured wound, on the other hand, however severely infected, may safely be left to the *vedarala's* skills. The attitudes towards these disparate emergencies sum up the attitude towards the ayurvedic/'western' controversy. If a consciousness of such a controversy exists in the villager's mind. What he seeks is the most efficacious help consonant with the least possible outrage to the patient's comfort that is available to him. He makes no decision as to the nature or status of such help. That, under stress of fear or immediate threat, he generally seeks the help of the 'western' system suggests an ultimate faith in it sufficient to override a predilection for the other.

What usually happens is that, given room for choice and not driven by panic, he begins by seeking the treatment least calculated to discommode him as a person. He goes to the *vedarala* if he can, to the *dostara mahatmaya* if he must. When he grows impatient with the one or considers himself insulted by the other he casts himself upon the alternative. How does our sociological statistician work out the proportional preference? does it not depend upon at what point in the rally he catches the poor shuttlecock? But there must be some significance, which our correspondent has missed, that in the last resort he almost invariably ends up on *ingirisi behet*. That—and no other—is the reason why so comparatively small a proportion actually die on the *vedarala's* hands!

It is my sincere belief (based upon close—and, I claim, unbiassed—observation; though not upon questionable 'statistics') that if some way could open for a perso-

between the Rs. 61,000 doctor and his patient he would the more demonstrably appear as worth his money! Unfortunately, pressed no doubt by lack of time and weight of work but also oppressed by the jealous need to preserve his artificial mystique, he tends to withdraw more and more from human involvement with his cases into a self-protective Olympian remoteness.

Maybe, although he wot it not, Work-to-Rule is healthily cutting at the foundation of this *huteur*. It is not possible to agitate, like any mortal, for better pay and working conditions and yet remain an Olympian!

IN A TEA ESTATE—14

The Pioneer

By Inna Trimmer

Brae was an estate which never really took us to its heart. We were outsiders trespassers on a domain not ours. I knew it in all its moods, when the high slopes of tea smiled under a shining sun and the valleys were deeply green to dappled shade; when the monsoon winds blew with such violence that the bushes were all but stripped of their leaves, and in the winter of the year when mist lay heavy and strangled the life force which brought "the flush" so necessary to the welfare of an estate.

Brae mocked our every endeavour, sometimes kindly but at others with an aloof antagonism. If this were so of the estate, it seemed to be more intensified in the bungalow.

Brae Bungalow, the Bg Bungalow as it was called, was well found, a most comfortable residence thanks to my husband who had a special flair for building and designing. But it was not always as I knew it. When my husband paid his first visit to view the promised land before undertaking its future destiny he was unperturbed by the trials of the journey, but he was appalled at the bungalow. He was strong and young enough to face hard work with equanimity, even with pleasure. Cleaning out

Augean Stables was his metier but when he saw the old shambles that would be his future home his heart quailed.

Over half a century of wind-swept rugged conditions had all but taken the life of what must have been once, during coffee days, a fine homestead. Few improvements had been made since then. The only protection from the elements, the weather boarding outside was rotten, draughty leaking with damp. There were hardly any walls, only these rough boards crudely put together, creaking when the monsoon winds blew, green with moss inside and out, and decorated with strange wicked-looking fungi.

That was Brae Bungalow when my husband took over. But the old Scotsman who had reigned in this lonely place as uncrowned king of 1700 acres for nearly fifty years was well satisfied with his abode.

"Mon" he said as they sat at dinner under an old kerosene oil hanging lamp, dim and sooty and smelly, "ye do not seem pleased with the full hoose."

My husband had expressed his horror at the primitive state of things—"Why have you had to suffer all this discomfort? That bathroom—" then words failed him."

The Scotsman's light grey eyes shone like steel. "What is wrong with the bathroom, pray? Is it not a place where one bathes? What other purpose would ye want it for?"

My husband realised how hopeless it was to convince this obstinate, hard-headed old man of anything he was not disposed to think. The bathroom, the only one in the room, was a horror. When he opened the door a gust of wind almost blew off the towel he carried over his arm. The ancient boards slipping with the moss and damp of ages sagged under his weight, and between the wide openings the wind whistled with icy breath. The fungi in any array of gaily coloured fans drew luxuriantly on a background of green and dank.

Where was the bath? Suddenly from a "pelee" overhead a volume of water gushed out, controlled by the servants in the kitchen. Shivering with cold my husband

stood under this strange and icy shower bringing in its flood stones and gravel that stung his body and battered on his head.

"Mon I can see you are too particular for Brae. What you want is a palace to live in. This was good enough for my wife and me these fifty years. Our children were born here and one died here. There's nae wrong with the hoose so keep new fangled ideas to yourself. The Auld Boss, auld man Barlow, he's dead now. God rest his soul, he gave me full control. Don't ye go changing anything on Brae."

Next morning they set out to inspect the estate, the old Scotsman striding ahead like a misplaced Viking, his troceners tucked in to long home-spun stockings, an anachronism from coffee days, monarch of all he surveyed.

"Mon". He suddenly stopped dead in his tracks and faced my husband. "Do you see this tea? Grand Mon. Grand. My care these many years I was gladly bury my bones here but they say I'm too old and must go. It's those young sons the Auld Man left behind. Nae! Nae! I'm strong as when I came. I have given life to this place. Don't ye go changing it. I get 5d per lb. below market price for my tea. Brae tea. Five pence below other teas. Don't ye try to change it. Ye canna change it. It is my price and they all know my brah-and. They count High Grown, Medium, Low Grown—and Brae."

Who could argue with a crank? From the height on which they stood they could see almost all the slopes of the Top Division. Heaven forfend the tea over which the old man raved. Undernourished bushes, sparsely dotted on the hillsides like cloves on a gigantic ham, or with root growth rank and wild.

Once the old Scotsman had disappeared from his house into the night, the darkness and the rain, over the hills into the leach-riden jungles where leopards and other animals roamed. How he scaled those heights who can say, but he had found a way and several hours later, about 4 o'clock in the morning he appeared in the factory of an estate on the Rattota side of the range, an apparition indeed to the teamaker.

In stentorian tones he announced, "I am Jesus Christ, d'ye hear me?"

"Ye-e-e-a" stuttered the tea-maker gazing at the stalwart old man whose longish grey hair stood out like a halo.

"Jesus Christ", said the awesome voice.

By now the tea maker had put the roll breaker between them.

Suddenly there burst in on them a female figure, distraught, bleeding from wounds all over her face and body, with streaming hair, clothes in tatters, almost nude from the effort of pushing through lantana and other brush wood, leeches clinging to her. It was the Scotsman's young daughter who having missed her father had followed in search of him close on his heels. The tea maker took one look at her. Fear took hold of him and lent speed and strength to his sagging limbs. He made a bee line for the telephone. Whirr, whirr, With violence and urgency he turned the handle of the old fashioned instrument that connected the factory with the Peria-Dorai's house.

"Sir, sir, come quickly. Jesus Christ is here."

"Who? asked a sleepy voice at the other end.

"Jesus Christ, Sir".

"What are you talking about man?", now thundered the other voice, "Who is there?"

"Jee..Jee..Mr. Briggs, Sir, Mr. Briggs, quite mad. Miss Briggs not so mad, but anyway mad."

BUILDING A VILLAGE HOUSE

Concerning Rain

— a layman's explanation to a layman's questions concerning rain —

By R. Kahawita

THIS IS ONLY AN EXPLANATION why questions concerning rain, as raised by Mr. Herbert Keuneman, arise in the agricultural life of our people living in the Dry zone—Raja Rata.

Rain is something that sets the rhythm of life of the peasants of the Dry zone. They form the bulk of our society and they contri-

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bute the most to feed our population. But we have condemned them to a life of misery, want and neglect due to arbitrary policies, regulations and rules made at the centres of administration, without understanding the problems of the peasants of the "Wanni"—a derogatory term used by the urban dwellers to describe their ultra rurality.

Their well being, their prosperity, in fact their whole life and with it the food of the stronger sections of the nation, depend on rain. These "wanni folk", unsophisticated, good natured and simple, led an orderly life of their own and regulated their life to suit the environment they lived in. This rhythm of life was disturbed by the introduction of "socialism" as developed in Sri Lanka, and now it has engulfed them, slowly breaking up their social and cultural traditions. Harmony in the Village has been disturbed and the trends are to break up family connections, revolt against parental control, go against law and order, be envious of a neighbour's progress to prosperity, and generally tales about the neighbours in the Village—in other words, spy on Village life and divide the village into political colour groups.

When the rains fail and starvation is knocking at the door, they get isolated and if any help is available, it is available only to the peasants who wear the correct political colour. This is where rain is so important to them:—*To be an independent peasant.*

Fortunately, there are a few villages in the hinterland free from infiltration of this kind of "socialism" and political philosophy. Over the countries, these simple folks have developed a social organisation based on human values and the desire to be helpful to each other in times of need. Their primary activity was and is agriculture, built around their tank and in the adjoining jungles. The survival of the village depended entirely on rain and what quantum of that rain could be stored in the tank. Thus to them, the village tank became the most and only important "Public Work", the repair, maintenance, control and distribution of its water and the management of cultivation were their economic and technical responsibility. This responsibility is

gradually being replaced by current ideas of a 'socialist' society. The village peasants had developed and practised a well tried pattern of "socialism" to suit their way of life, their culture, their religion and the environment they lived in. We are now attempting to change their way of life by what the peasant calls "aluth modakam".

The change we are attempting to effect in the life of the peasantry has given rise to some of the questions concerning rain. So let us look at their—(peasant's) problem from the beginning.

SRI LANKA'S AGRICULTURE was developed in the Dry Zone where the first immigrants settled. The Dry Zone covers the Northern, Eastern and Southern parts covering 12 million acres of the land mass. All the agricultural practices, crops, water storage and irrigation techniques were introduced by the early Indian settlers (do not be annoyed we are all Indians) who established centres of civilisation at Vijithapura, Anuradhapura, Yapahuwa, Polonnaruwa etc. before they migrated to the hill country due to force of circumstances. As the early settlers gained experience in the pattern of rainfall, dry and wet seasons, soils and soil potential in their new territory, they developed or introduced crops to suit these conditions and developed techniques of rain water storage for irrigation during the dry months. And as time went on, they established a fairly rigid cultivation programme designed to fit into two distinct rainless periods to mature the crops and for harvesting.

This gave rise to two cropping seasons—A *Maha* and a *Yala* in the Singhala occupied areas and a *Siripoham* and *Kalapoham* among the Tamil settlers. These two crop cycles and the cultural practices connected therewith, became a part and parcel of their social activities as well, the village tank became the most important focal point in the life and welfare of the—Singha Clan from India, and as time went on the settlers forgot their Indian connections and came to call themselves Sinhalese and continued to live "by the land" and established several agricultural communities around their source of sustenance—the Village tank. Thus these village folk today can speak of an agricultural and social

traditional almost going back to 400 years before the Christian era.

The conflict today is between these people, whose agricultural methods, crop rotations, cultivation seasons, soil resting or recuperating seasons, are backed by 2,500 years old traditions, while the present day experts and technocrats, whose experience is as fresh as newly baked-bread; too dogmatic and theoretical to convince the peasants that there are new methods and ways of doing what they learnt and adopted by experience, to harvest bigger and better crops. Unless this prejudice is broken through and the new techniques "mixed" with the old agricultural practices, progress in the Dry Zone will be very slow.

In dry zone agriculture, there is a lot to be learnt from the old cultivator families of the areas. They with their native instinct and keen observations of nature and natural phenomena can forecast prospects of rain fairly accurately at the beginning of each cultivation seasons, and on such forecasting predicaes their cultivation programmes. Unless the technocrats combine this "native instinct" with modern technique no appreciable progress can be made in these areas.

AS THOSE EARLY CULTIVATORS gained experience of their environment they established two definite crop cycles, a *Maha* and a *Yala* in the Singhala areas, a *Kalapoham* and a *Siripoham* in the Tamil-speaking areas. The two crop cycles were established based on the period required to mature the crops and harvesting to coincide with the "rainless periods". Accordingly a *maha* came to be started at the beginning of the wet weather and harvest to be done in February/March—the least rainfall months after the heavy *maha* rains, and a *yala* season, to be harvested in July/August. The growing season of a crop and the duration of the crop is so designed to enable the harvesting to be done in February/March or July/August according to the season; also a cropping schedule that gave them time to get the highland crops, to be sown first early in the season to get the benefit of September rains, to be followed with the preparation of the fields for *maha* paddy. The variety and age of the crops to be grown de-

pends entirely on the incidence of the maha rains. This is where their observations for weather forecasting come into play, guided by years of experience aided by their native instincts.

To fit into this agricultural programme they also fixed their leisure periods, their social and religious practices etc. The two great festival seasons to them, are the Singhala New Year which they always celebrated as Hindus and continued to do so even after they embraced Buddhism as their religion, as Buddhists the other great festival is what is now known as "the Dalada Perahera"—really a thanks giving ceremony for the good harvests of the previous season and to pray to the Gods for rains to come in September.

These two festival seasons predicted all the agricultural practices—April to celebrate the New Year with all traditional ceremonies, and August to thank God for what they harvested the previous year and pray for rain for the coming year.

With the advent of a western civilisation accompanied by their culture etc. all these have become commercialized and the significance of these practices to rural life has disappeared or forgotten. The present breed of technocrats and experts do not understand this, nor appreciate the age old traditions and customs developed over centuries of experience. This explains why the experts speak of a maha season commencing in December, yala in June and similar agricultural faux pas, and expect the peasants to change their age old pattern of life. If the experts want to show them a new way of life, the experts must accept the peasants' point of view and weave into it the experts (expertise) they wish the peasants to adopt.

The seasons are fixed by the two harvesting periods, and when to commence a maha crop or a yala crop depends on the incidence of rain and water in the tank. The duration of the crops depends on the time available to mature the crop by the harvesting season and nothing else. This is something which cannot be altered and no experienced cultivator will change it. He has developed different crops with varying maturing ages to fit into the cycle and as well as to fit into the changing rainfall pattern.

HIS ANNUAL CULTIVATION TIME-TABLE thus will be the maha season first to be followed with a *moda* and a *yala* during the low rainfall months depending on the quantity of water in the tank.

Starting from the Maha season, the Dry Zone cultivator will start clearing his high land in June and July and burn the felled jungle in July to take advantage of the high dry winds to get a good burn, then he prepares the land after he returns from the Perahera and the water cutting ceremony in August. He is now ready with his seed material to sow with the first rains of September—He wants only light showers to germinate the seed etc. This may take him to end of September. Meanwhile he is scanning the skies, directions of the wind, and other signs to give him an indication as to when the maha rains would set in. If the signs are propitious, he will get into his paddy field and start repairing the ridges, cleaning his channels etc. to collect the early rains in the fields for ploughing or hand tilling. If the prospect of rain and water storage, according to his experience are favourable, he will be ready to sow before mid October. This gives him a 4 to 4½ month age paddy to harvest in February/March. If the rains were to be late he would do what is called a "moda season"—intermediate crop—with a short term variety and risk the crop damage, if March/April rains are heavier than usual during the harvest, that is to say he stretches his harvest to March/April and he takes the risk because his intuitive experience is that if the Maha rains are late, March/April may be wet, or the crop maturing season has also moved into these two months depending on the first incidence of the Maha rains. There is no scientific explanation, one has to take it as a natural phenomenon. After the Maha sowing is over, he will be busy with his highland crops which also he begins to harvest in January/February according to the type of crops grown. The harvesting of highland crops is periodical and may take him even to April.

The Yala season, if it is wet land crops, he will start in April with the ceremonial commencement of work for the New Year. But only if there is sufficient water in the

tank. According to the availability of water he will undertake a full cultivation or what is known as a "Betama"—or community crop, if the tank water is insufficient for a full cultivation. Before the New Year festivities, he would have cleared his highland crop, got the land ready for sowing gingly or same seed to coincide with the April showers. All these crops are to be harvested by July/August. With this harvest his agricultural cycle is over, and he is ready, after the thanksgiving ceremony at the Dalada Maligawa—to start his next cropping cycle and so the peasant life moves on without a break.

To him—in the Dry Zone—the Maha cycle begins with the light inter monsoon rains. The yala cycle with the light rains in April and with whatever tank water there is in place of rain. From a hydrologist point of view, all rainfall is caused by convectional air currents which carry the moisture to the upper atmosphere to form the rains. There are variations to this. March convectional air currents are global and are caused as autumn advances towards winter in one hemisphere and spring recedes towards summer in the other hemisphere. Then the so-called "Trade Winds" develop. This is to us are the Monsoons—North East and South West. As the Trade winds "mature" we have cyclones, storms, hurricanes and other weather phenomena, depending on the rate at which the two hemispheres undergo changes in temperature according to the thermal activities in the sun. Between the changes from one Monsoon to the other, there is lot of "confusion" and clashing of clouds in the atmosphere causing thunder and lightning, movement of the wind helter-skelter accompanied by light showers and infrequently heavy rains. (Note: At the moment the rain still in a south westerly direction, though under normal pattern of rainfall the North East Monsoons should have been set in and the rains should be from the North East. Even the winds are still westerly. Under these conditions the North East Monsoons may burst in with such vigour that heavy floods is a possibility in December this year.)

Against this there are micro conventional currents caused

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entirely by local conditions and to some degree due to wind movement in the lower atmosphere. Local conditions may be heating and cooling off vast areas in a land mass. One recognisable condition is good forest cover in higher elevations which cause cooling, and moist and high temperature conditions in the lower elevations. This gives rise to convectional currents accompanied by rains, even "cloud bursts" of high intensity rainfall for short spells. Often such unexpected rain is very beneficial to save a crop but seldom useful to replenish a reservoir. From a health point of view and living conditions in the Dry Zone, micro convectional rain is desirable and for this reason a certain percentage of forest cover of the land must be maintained particularly in the higher elevations.

IN THE DRY ZONE of Sri Lanka there are several areas that should be declared "Climatic Reserves" and maintained as such. This is like crying for the moon under our present political outlook—"power at any cost"—so the rape of our National assets goes on.

Now if we look at the Dry Zone Agricultural programme, the peasants certainly depend on the inter-monsoon rains to raise a variety of field crops. If the rainfall is sparse during the sowing season, germination of seed is very good, even for dry sowing of hill paddy, many a peasant relies on the inter-monsoon rains. But to conclude a successful harvest he must have the regular monsoon rains, otherwise all is lost as experienced during the last 4/5 years. By experience the peasant knows: that unless, what he calls "Seven day" rain occurs his tank will not fill and till then he is reluctant to get actively involved in a maha padoy crop. Without this week or so of intensive rainfall many of the Dry zone reservoirs will not fill. This is really what we have experienced since 1971 maha. If the rains were to be late, as today, all the tanks in the Dry Zone may be full towards end of December or January. If the peasant is left to his native ingenuity he will go all out for an extensive Yala, preparing his fields with

the late rains and using the tank water to push his crop for harvesting in June/July. In which case he can sow a 4 to 4½ month paddy.

RAIN is a natural phenomenon ordained to occur in a cycle but with varying intensities over which we have no control. Experience is the only tool we have to forecast incidence and intensity of rainfall, even then there is no assurance that rain will follow the pattern we forecast. It is a continuing study. This I suppose, follows the natural order of things "nothing is permanent, everything is changing with time". As experienced in Sri Lanka, rainfall follows a 33/35 major cycle, that is to say 33/35 years of good rainfall and 33/35 years of comparatively low rainfall, one following the other. It also has a sub-cycle of about five years in which three years are good (from an agricultural point of view) and two years of low rainfall. So from a peasant's home economics point of view he must produce in three years what he needs for five years.

But with present land policies and the limitation placed on his cultivations he is for ever on the starvation line, and he sees no future in agriculture, so part of the family migrates in search of greener pastures. When the old people die, the tank and village are abandoned. In his hey day the dry zone peasant had all the jungle he needed for his chena cultivation and built up his food storage for the two lean years. The Government placed a ban on chena cultivation—very good—but never trained the peasant for an alternative type of cultivation nor the land to equal his production in paddy and chena crops before the land policies and controls were implemented. This is where the Government has failed and has failed miserably. Why? The five acre paddy and three acre highland unit planned by D. S. Senanayake became a political anathema to the S.L.F.P. and its communist partners. So they reduced the unit to 1½ Acs. and ½ Ac. And thus created a peasant who is ever begging for survival.

Though the country spends millions and millions annually to construct and repair irrigation works, yet before the works are completed, they are neglected and almost abandoned. Look at the present

state of national works like Gal Oya, Udawalawe, Kala-wewa and a host of other irrigation works, completed years ago but not maintained today. Without proper maintenance of irrigation channels, there is a tremendous waste of water. Neglect of channels has become the most serious impediment to proper water management. And with this, whatever rainfall the country gets, seems not enough to get through a crop. Wastage is another cause of water scarcity.

This mania to destroy what one Government did and build up yet another has been the curse and the milestone against agricultural progress of this country. If our crops fail, of course there is always the rain to blame for it, reverse the Government policies. After all we have only 13 million to feed and if the waste grains at some storage point in India or America is collected we can "feed the nation." So why bother so much to develop our agriculture. The Minister of Agriculture has spent five years of his Ministry in implementing land policies and destroying agriculture and productivity. Time has run on us to produce to feed the people. To me, these last five years have been the worst in the whole agricultural life of our people, and if we were able to survive, it was due to the charity of the Western countries.

Sofar, except for the unoccupied agricultural centre buildings, the present agricultural Ministry has nothing to show in the development of our agriculture. It is dead, not because of the points raised in "A Layman's Questions Concerning Rain", but due to the apathy and lethargy of the Agricultural Ministry. Certainly rain has a lot to do with agriculture, but we must learn how to adjust our cultivation pattern to suit the incidence of rain. This pattern of variation of rainfall we are incapable of changing, but we can change our work pattern to suit the changing weather conditions, and this is where the Agricultural Ministry did not react to the needs of the peasant. As a result the peasant is suffering since 1971.

Rains have come, the tanks are full but there is no bustling and

hurrying to get a cultivation going—except on the SLBC “down to earth programme”. So “fail the year’s monsoon and you have a serious shortage; fail the year’s convection rains and you have famine.” And death because we have killed all the initiative decision-making and enterprise of the peasants, by trying to re-socialize his own concept of “socialism” moulded on the good old saying “necessity is the mother of invention”. He has become a “communist” farm worker for whom thinking is done somewhere high and above him. Success in farming is in quick decision-making and action. For this the farmer must be independent, self-reliant and financially viable. We may conclude. Who wants a prosperous peasant? We want the votes, so keep him dangling on the starvation line and get his vote year after year by promising him an extra measure of rice at every election. This is the agricultural policy of the present ministry. The failures are covered if not for “the Questions concerning Rain.”

LETTER

Has The Church Turned “Left”?

Sir,

I confess that I was rather surprised to read in the usually well-informed *Tribune* (Nov. 13) a rather vague statement that “the Catholic Church has now sought to ride the pro-Left wave in the world by going Left itself”. (pg. 20).

May I point out that the Church’s standpoint is not always what any Catholic Tom, Dick and Harry says, or does. It is the body of the faithful from the bishops to the last member of the laity, as a whole (not individually, or as a section), that can give us the true doctrine of the Catholic Church.

This being clear, it is not hard to understand that the Church has not, and cannot, turn “left”, if by Left we mean Communism as a doctrine that denies God and is totalitarian: no synthesis is possible.

But, if by “a turn to the left” we mean that the Church is now taking a more determined stand

against the social injustices and imbalances brought about by a selfish, reckless, unbridled Capitalism,—we are agreed, we can shake hand on that score.

I would, however, hasten to add:—opposition to such a capitalism is not something new for the Catholic Church. There is only question of a greater emphasis now.

If we recall that the essence of Capitalism consists in this, that wealth is regarded as the best means for an ever more complete satisfaction of every conceivable need, and that goods are considered as things to be used and abused at one’s own sweet will, unconcerned about the claims that others or the common good may raise; if Capitalism does not consider it wrong to use goods so as to get an unlimited increase at ever diminishing cost,—it is evident that Catholicism has an innate, decided repugnance for such a system. We might trot out this or that fact to prove the opposite, this or that measure, in the course of history; but the responsibility for them lies not with Catholicism as a doctrine, but with some individual catholic, be he Pope or Sacristan (cf. A. Fanfain-Cath., Prot. & Capitalism, pg. 157).

The position of the Church is neither Communist nor Capitalist.

The pivot of the Church’s social doctrine is the supreme dignity of the human person, free and responsible.

When, against Communism, the Church upholds the right to private ownership (whatever its form, even in a Welfare State), it is because private ownership provided the person with “a wholly necessary area of independence.”

When, against excessive Capitalism, the Church reminds us that worldly goods were meant for all, and should find their way into the hands of all individuals and peoples, it is again because all human persons are equal in dignity, being children of the same Father.

In that case, is it not surprising that the Church should seem to be turning left, by struggling for their rights?

And who amongst us with a sense of justice will regret such a move?

Deniyaya.
20.11.76

C. Iannaccone, S.J.

BOOK REVIEW

Dallas: The Hell-Hole Of The World

By Jayantha Somasundaram

On November 22nd 1963 President John F. Kennedy was assassinated in Dallas, Texas. A week later an impressive commission chaired by Chief Justice Earl Warren was set up to investigate the assassination. In September 1964 they released their report, following it up with 26 volumes of supporting evidence. They claimed that Lee Harvey Oswald, acting alone, shot the President from the sixth floor of the Texas School Book Depository Building where he worked.

“To believe the Warren Commission”, writes Robert Anson in *They’ve Killed The President*, “you must believe that bullets pause in midair and make ninety-degree right-hand turns; that a poor marksman can do what experts cannot; that Newtonian laws of motion were not operating on November 22; that a man can be in two places at once; that atoms are able to change their structure; that everything in life is mere coincidence.”

From the outset a number of distinguished critics expressed scepticism about the conclusions of the Warren Report. Among them were Sir Compton Mackenzie, J.B. Priestley, Prof. Hugh Trevor-Roper, Michael Foot and Bertrand Russell.

The most devastating critic however was US Attorney Mark Lane. Lane pulled the Report apart, piece by piece, and toured the states giving lectures on it. Consequently he was the target of constant surveillance by the FBI and the Establishment, which sought to isolate and discredit him. In August 1966 he published *Rush to Judgment*, which was to remain a bestseller for six months.

Joachim Joesten, a journalist who specialised in intelligence services was another critic. The Establishment was fortunate to have a complete dossier on him, the CIA merely reproduced his Gestapo file—the Nazis had also found Herr Joesten “politically unreliable.”

Meanwhile at Cornell University Edward Epstein was preparing an analysis of the Warren Report for his Masters degree and had recourse to unpublished documents. His book, *Inquest*, is a scholarly dissection of the Warren Report.

Later in 1967 came Josiah Thompson's *Six Seconds In Dallas* which advanced a three-assassin theory built on a detailed examination of the famous Zapruder movie film of the assassination.

Alarmed by the undermining of public confidence in the Warren Report, its defenders took the floor. President Gerald Ford one of the members of the Warren Commission, replied with *Portrait of the Assassin* which will shortly be made into a movie. As early as March 1964 the Kennedy family commissioned historian William Manchester to write a book on the assassination. His moving best-seller, brilliantly written, titled *Death of a President*, was the subject of legal action on the part of its initiator, Mrs. Jacqueline Kennedy who in 1966 succeeded in getting 10,000 words deleted from it before publication.

The critics, however, continued to respond. Sylvia Meagher came up with *Accessories After the Fact*, an exhaustive work that demolishes the Warren Commission's findings point by point. In 1975 former *Time* correspondent Robert Anson published *They've Killed The President*, and Prof. Peter Dale Scott's *The Dallas Conspiracy* has still to be published.

Most critics feel that the Commission, perhaps in the interest of the Government, covered up a conspiracy that could have included either the CIA or the FBI. There is strong suspicion that Oswald was a CIA operative and even better evidence that his assassin, Jack. L. Ruby, was an FBI informer.

Instead of the lone assassin firing three bullets with incredible speed and marksmanship killing the President and wounding John Connally, the critics believe that there were at least two gunmen employed. One in front of the motorcade and one behind. This would account for the entrance-wound in Kennedy's throat and for the sound of gunfire heard by so many witnesses from out in front of the motorcade.

Finally it would be of interest, to examine the 'political climate in Dallas before, during and after the assassination. Especially in view of the Warren Commission's contention that Oswald was an un-influenced, unaided, 'lone' assassin.

"Kennedy" according to one of Dallas' leading citizens "is alliability to the free world." 700 Policemen, Firemen, Sheriffs, State Police, Texas Rangers, and FBI agents were present in Dallas, but the glitter of badges did not deter the average Dallas Citizen. "God made big people like Kennedy. And Gob made little people like me", drawled one of them. "But, Colt made the .45 to even things out!"

Dallas residents sported 'K.O. the Kennedys' car stickers. Their parlour games included quizzes like: 'Which Kennedy do you hate the most? Bobby, Jack, Teddy or Jackie?' In addition to lewd gossip there were jokes about the hot line to the Vatican that ended in a Rome sewer.

On the eve of the assassination Potestant intolerance went to its ultimate limit. A Baptist Convention was told, "one of the greatest blunders in history was the election of a Roman Catholic President". And that in future one should not vote Democrat or Republican, but Potestant.

The Dallas newspapers, owned by the big Southern businessmen branded Kennedy '50 times a fool'. 'a cunning thief', an acceptor of a '\$22,000 bribe', a follower of 'the Communist line, which is atheistic and Godless and one who would 'take a man's income tax and, without his permission spend it abroad as foreign aid in countries which deny a supreme creator'.

On Novembe 22nd a handbill was circulated in Dallas. It proclaimed that Kennedy was 'wanted for treasonous activities.' It accused him of 'turning the sovereignty of the US over to the Communist controlled UNO, betraying Cuba, encouraging racial riots, invading a Sovereign State with Federal troop appointing anti-Christians to office, who made anti-Christian rulings.'

Later that morning a smartly dressed teacher told her class that none of them would be allowed to view the motorcade of the president "If I did see him, I'd just spit in his face" she said.

The placards at the Dallas airport read: Watch Kennedy stamp out your business.' 'Kennedy' Khrushchev and (Martin Luther) King, 'Co-existence is surrender,' 'Yankee to home,' 'Kennedy the Communist Party wants you re-elected,' Help Kennedy Stamp out Democracy,' 'You're a traitor' and 'Lets Barry King John.'

As the presidential party embarked at Forth Worth airport, one of the local drivers asked Special Assistant (later PMG) Larry O'Brien: "Flying to Dallas?" And when he nodded the man said: 'That' the hell hole of the World.'

NEW YEAR

Tribune wishes its readers a happy new year and hopes that the year 1977 will bring them good cheer. 1976 was difficult. And the portents for 1977—not astrological—are not very bright or pleasant. One can only hope that in 1977 more and more people in Sri Lanka will begin to comprehend the realities and not be carried away into the euphoric fool's paradise that official propaganda (and the SLBC) seem determined to transport the good people of the country. Religion, some people have said, is the opiate of the people, used by Governments to keep a people quiescent and content. Today religion can no longer be successfully used as an opiate. It has been replaced by more sophisticated methods of mesmerisation. The official mass media is the biggest opiate of the people. Statistics hide the real truth. Polemics incite one group against another. 1977 is likely to be an election year in Sri Lanka and mass media gimmickry will obviously reach new heights. *Tribune* will endeavour to contribute its mite with the written word to help its readers to shift the chaff from the wheat, truth from untruth, and fact from fiction.

As in the past, there will be no issue of *Tribune* in the New Year weekend. The next issue will be on Saturday, January 8, 1977.

Confidentially

Beedi Again ?

IS IT NOT A FACT that a few questions in the NSA and the current outcry among beedimakers' and smokers' against the manner in which the Sri Lanka Tobacco Corporation conducts its business has aroused widespread public attention? That whilst a new General Manager is seeking to wield the new broom, it is clear that the task is too much for a single individual, especially when he is the only one who wants to clean the Augean stables? That it is not known what the findings of the Official Committee which, it was reported in the *Daily News* last year, was appointed to bring about sweeping changes? That the report and recommendations have either been forgotten or hidden as a top secret document? That as far as one can gather, except for a few bureaucratic changes in personnel (not top brass), nothing seems to have been done? That one of the matters the Government and the public must focus attention is the manner Beedi Wrapper Leaf has been imported from India? That at one time there was a hullabaloo that the Sri Lanka Government was pushing plans to grow all the beedi leaves it wanted locally and that imports would be stopped before one could say "Jack Robinson"? That this song and dance (or hue and cry) about growing beedi leaf died a natural death as many such alarms do in this country? That it must be remembered that it is more profitable—for some people—to import beedi leaves rather than have them grown in Sri Lanka? That more particulars have now been brought to the notice of *Tribune* about the import procedures which, if true, call for investigation and scrutiny? That, as in all our revelations about the beedi industry, (and as in all similar exposures) we invite the Corporation or the Ministry concerned to correct any particulars in this article which are wrong or erroneous? That we will provide greater prominence and publicity for any communication setting out correc-

tions, clarifications or explanations from the Corporation or the Ministry? That, so far, in regard to previous articles about the beedi industry, we have not been honoured by such communications? That in the absence of such rectifications, we and our readers must assume that the particulars we have set out and the questions we have posed are close enough to reality as to make corrections or amplifications unnecessary? That once again we invite the Corporation or the Ministry to tell us where our facts are wrong if we have erred or been misled? IS IT NOT ALSO A FACT that entire requirements of beedi wrapper leaf is imported from India? That the main sources of supply are the state-owned Orissa Forest Corporation and a private sector organisation called the Madras Export Corporation? That it is known that the real owner and entrepreneur of the Madras Export Corporation is a person who had earlier been a beedi merchant in Sri Lanka and who had retired to India when his TRP had expired? That he had left the country prior to the formation of the Sri Lanka Tobacco Corporation? That there are whispers that beedi leaf was also imported from "paper" (fictitious) organisations which only have a printed letter head with a convenient cover address? That anyone who is entrusted with investigations should find out whether the Corporation did actually import from a firm called Ignasimuttu & Co. with an Indian address? That if there had been such imports from such a firm, an investigator should obtain some more particulars about this firm? That it is also the belief in the beedi industry that the local agent for the Orissa State Corporation is Mr. G. A. Fernando who was for many years Sri Lanka's Deputy High Commissioner in Madras? That it is also said that the clearing, transporting (and even storing) of the imported beedi wrapper leaf has been entrusted to P. B. Umbichy and Co. Ltd? That the Corporation's offices and stores are also in premises belonging to P. B. Umbichy & Co Ltd? That if this information supplied to *Tribune* is wrong, we will be happy to publish the true particulars? That it will also be interesting to find out who does the liaison between

P. B. Umbichy and Co. and the Corporation? That it will also be interesting to find out the tie between Umbichy & Co and the Colombo North Beedi Producers Society Ltd about which this column has provided some information in recent issues? That the main store of the Corporation is at Prince of Wales Avenue in a building owned by P. B. Umbichy and Co Ltd? That another store is at Central Road? That in addition to these stores which are under the control of the Corporation all excess stocks are stored in "private stores" (such as Moulanas Stores at Keyzer Street)? That these private stores where beedi leaves are kept do not have (as far as we can gather) any of the Corporation's Security Service personnel? That it is even alleged that the Corporation's Prince of Wales store, where nearly 65% of the Corporation's wrapper leaf is stored, did not have any of the Corporation's Security men until June 1976? That in these circumstances, those involved in the beedi industry are tempted to allege that there have been pilferages and leakages especially from the "private stores" where the leaves were stored? That it also been interesting to know who are allowed reduction on account *wastage and dryage*? That it will also be interesting to have a scheduled list of the Corporation officials who have gone to India to make the purchases of beedi leaves? That it will be even more interesting to find out the "outsiders" who attended on the Corporation's buying delegations each time they went to India? That it would be also interesting to examine the beedi leaf exports from Sri Lanka to Pakistan? That it is alleged that the beedi leaf imported from India was exported to Pakistan as "Ceylon produce"? That it would be even more revealing to find out the names of those ("insiders" and "outsiders") who handled this export trade to Pakistan? That it is also alleged that Pakistani importers had complained of shortages (pilfered, it is said, in the private stores where the packing was done) and the manner in which this shortage was made good will (if the whole story is true), provide an insight to the realities of the beedi industry?



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