

# TRIBUNE

CEYLON NEWS REVIEW

50 Cts.

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## BUDGET FEVER

ALTHOUGH THE BUDGET for the coming year will be presented on Thursday, November 1, this issue of *Tribune* will go to print before that. Budget fever, similar to what had prevailed in the fifties and sixties, is not known today. Rich and leisured folk had, in the days gone by, gambled on what the budget would bring to make fortunes of varying amounts. Today, there are no demanding new rich or leisured old rich to indulge in budget speculations. Moreover, there are no goods in the shops or anywhere else for budget buying sores. Today, the picture is very different. The three budgets of the United Front have liquidated the old rich and part of the new rich: and there are no goods left for the surviving rich to gamble. People expect the worst from the Budget, though a newspaper combine, which hopes to repair its fortunes with the blessings of the Government, is talking about a sunshine budget. It is likely that the Budget will provide a goodly section of the former rich and powerful have quietly slipped. The new elite are brash, arrogant and flaunt 5 Sri and 6 Sri cars. They are mostly bureaucrats and technocrats who hang on to the coat tails and saree ends of political vips who had been thrown upon the stage by the 1970 elections. Many of the new elite are in key positions in the Administration and in the Establishment. And, all of them have small armies of hangers-on. From this new elite has surfaced the new contractor class and commission agency expert, who specialise in the art of making compradore profits and foreign exchange in the blackmarket from the nationalised and public sector undertakings of the United Front government. This new elite has recently been grumbling about the budgetary and fiscal curbs on their freedom to make money and buy goods (though they have mastered the fine art of importing 6 Sri cars). If the Budget is a sunshine one, it will no doubt mainly help this new rich who are making tax free money on gems and hotel building. A fifteen-year tax holiday for tourist hotels has transformed a section of the old rich into the new elite basking under Ministerial smiles and sunshine—an elite which claims to know all the secrets of the Government. Every era produces its elite of brahmins, and this new gems-cum-tourist caste is looking forward for a little sunshine in the new Budget. Whether their hopes will be fulfilled is yet to be seen. And the others in the country, buried in long queues for rice and bread, have no time to think about the Budget.

● ON TRIBUNE

● JUSTICE  
SIR JOHN  
CLASS-  
STRUGGLE

● INANIA

● SHAMBA

● MIDDLE EAST

● WATER CUT



# Tribunania

## ON TRIBUNE

IT IS NOT OFTEN that we in *Tribune* speak about the *Tribune*.

But we do whenever it becomes necessary to tell some one who criticises us unfairly the facts as we see them. These occasions have been few and far between, although we always get comments on what we have said by nearly every post. Sometimes we are attacked vitriolically. More often than not, we take it all in our stride. We refer in our columns only to those letters we think necessary.

We know that our readers, even if they do not always agree with our views, read what we say with thoughtful interest. But, even the most devoted and enthusiastic of our readers do not sit down and write to us how much they agree or disagree with what we have written or have published in the *Tribune*. Some readers telephone us whenever something strikes them. But for the most, our readers are a silent lot.

And that is the kind *Tribune* is written for: the thoughtful, discerning reader who ultimately shapes opinion in this country in the most unobtrusive manner. Small as we have always been (by choice) we are conscious (and justifiably so) that we have helped to fashion thinking in political circles in Ceylon over the years.

A leading paper reflecting deep-rooted conservative opinion, many years ago, placed it on record that what *Tribune* had written and fostered (between 1954 and 1957) had become the language and programme of the Government within a few years. For instance the nationalisation of foreign oil companies was suggested by *Tribune* as early as 1957 and we had written several articles to demonstrate how our economic independence could not be real without breaking the monopoly of foreign oil companies.

This was at a time when Shell and other companies spent lavishly on the election campaigns of particular political parties and particular individuals in other parties (to sustain its lobby). Not a single newspaper at that time would say anything against the foreign oil companies because of the fantastic sums handed out to the newspapers as advertisement charges. Now nationalisation has taken the form of a complete state monopoly, and any undertaking, especially in a developing country, without competition becomes a Frankenstein. So many undertakings in Ceylon today, like the CWE, the CPC, the STC and a whole host of other sole-monopoly organisations would do well to have some competition. It is one thing to eliminate foreign exploitation, but it is sometimes worse to create monsters which victimise the consuming public for the highest patriotic reasons.

We will revert to the evils of state capitalism parading as nationalised showpieces, es-

pecially to show that such undertakings take the country further away from real socialism, in the coming issues of *Tribune*, but for the present we wish to refer to a letter we received from a reader who thought it necessary to pay us a few compliments. The reader, D. J. M. Rajasekera, from a town about 25 miles away from Colombo, sent us a tribute in a letter dated 23/10/73, which we feel inclined to publish *in extenso*. This is what he said:

*"I have been a reader of your journal for the last ten years or so and I have found it to be a truly Independent and Democratic paper. I wanted to convey this impression to you but kept on postponing until I read the cover piece in the last issue (October 20, 1973) of your journal when the urge to write to you became irresistible.*

*"At a time when various political party journals and other papers calling themselves National and Independent are fanatically putting across their views and news to bolster up their various committed policies without any respect for truth or reality, an independent paper like yours which analyses various local and international issues objectively and realistically is really the need of the moment for the thinking public.*

*"The needs of the committed and the unthinking party followers are well served by their partisan journals which keep them happy and contented in their prejudices and ignorance. But the thinking and discriminating man*



who is not easily swayed by emotion is in a quandary and it is the needs of this section of the people that the Tribune should cater to.

"You, like others, no doubt may be having your own policies and ideologies but the great virtue of yours is that these have not made you blind to reality and truth. I must hasten to add that all this does not amount to an acceptance of perfection on the part of your journal. It must be said that there is enough room for improvement in your journal.

"As I feel therefore that this type of journal should reach a wider circle of our people I wish to make the following three suggestions:

"First, a powerful propaganda drive should be launched to popularise the journal because I believe that there is a large number of intelligent people who have no idea about the Tribune, far from reading it. "Second, possibilities should be explored to convert the journal to a daily publication. Or a separate paper should be published on the same lines.

"Third, and this is important, an effort should be made to publish the journal in Sinhala too.

"Though from a nonentity like myself I hope this letter will give you some encouragement to continue the good work with greater strength and courage...."

One reason why we wanted to publish this letter is because he makes three suggestions which many others re-

peatedly have made to us. That is, first, that we should make our presence felt more by increasing our circulation. Tribune has never aimed at being a mass circulating paper because its very character would be lost in the change. To get a mass circulation we need plenty of cheese cake as well as advertisements. And while cheese-cake will tend to promote the vulgar, advertisements would bring other problems especially when the advertisements come from state nationalised organisations. A certain degree of independence is possible, even with advertisements, after becoming a giant in circulation so that advertisers cannot dictate beyond a point. But if one looks around developing countries it is a common experience that when a political weekly for discerning and thoughtful readers attempts to become a mass circulating weekly, the result is either a collapse or a hotch potch of sex and sensation peddling a political line which is lost in the semi-nude pictures of a permissive society or in gimmicks to make politics attractive. In the socio-economic and political set up in Sri Lanka in which we find ourselves a weekly like Tribune can discharge its functions as a catalyst to promote thought only if it refused to fall for the temptation of being a mass circulating paper.

But even within the bounds of our objective of reaching out to a small but public opinion making segment of our society, we now face problems which can only make us sink into gloom. Newsprint and printing paper cost five

times what they did ten years ago, and double what they cost only a few months ago. In the next few weeks prices are likely to go up further. But in addition to soaring prices, owing to world shortages on the one hand and foreign exchange difficulties on the other, we are faced with a 50% cut as from October 1. We were faced and are still faced with the problem of either cutting down the number of pages

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in each issue or the print order. We have so far kept the number of pages in each issue the same as before, but we have reduced our print order to the barest minimum consistent with our pre-paid subscriptions and our regular sales through agents. We do not know what further economies in paper we will be compelled to adopt in the coming weeks and months but part of the paper we use is locally produced and we are therefore keeping our fingers crossed that we will be able to keep afloat until the world and the local crisis in paper ends.

What we have said above answers the second suggestion in the letter, that we publish a daily paper. But even if we had the opportunity of becoming a daily we would have hesitated to assume such a responsibility, not because it is onerous, but because we know that a daily rarely shapes opinion of those who make nationwide public opinion. A weekly has its functions and its potential, and *Tribune* has never wanted to be more than what it originally set out to be. A daily paper has the difficult responsibility of keeping the public informed, but a daily rarely makes opinion. Its editorials and comments are only part of the news-making information apparatus.

The third and last suggestion calls for some explanation. A journal like *Tribune* in Sinhala, and also in Tamil, will no doubt help to make opinion at different other levels. But the tradition and reading habits of Sinhala and Tamil readers is very different from

what English educated readers have been used to in this island. The English-language reader continues to get journals from abroad in a particular tradition and *Tribune* fits into that with its local variations. A translation of *Tribune* will be a flop among Sinhala and Tamil readers. But that is not to say that there is no need for political journalism of the *Tribune* style and manner in Sinhala and Tamil. This has to be developed in a new tradition. The political weeklies in Sinhala and Tamil we have had and still have are all agitational journals which combine news and comment to make propaganda for a party or a cause.

It has been stressed that the English educated do not count any more in this country: that the Sinhala and Tamil educated alone make politics in Sri Lanka today. There is no doubt that the ultimate voters are non-English-educated and that these masses are the final arbiters in our current political system. But it must be remembered that a world language like English cannot simply be "wished away". More and more of the purely Sinhala and Tamil educated are clamouring for a knowledge of English because they find themselves cut away from the mainstream of thought and knowledge in the rest of the world.

Sri Lanka must be connected to one or other of the handful of world languages, and English already has roots in this country and there is no reason why we should throw it out in favour of

some other language like French, Spanish, German or Russian. For a long time more, or for the foreseeable future, Sri Lanka cannot afford to do without English at least as a world language. There cannot be the slightest hope that Sinhala will develop in such a way that it can dispense with English for world communication. Languages which are spoken by several millions, like Hindi, will take many more decades before they can hope to attain the importance of a world language.

In these circumstances, English will always find a place in Ceylon, and the small number who know English (and thus have intellectual contact with the rest of the world), will continue to help make opinion in this country. Such English educated in Ceylon who read *Tribune* will no doubt communicate their thoughts to their brethren and fellow citizens in Sinhala and Tamil in various kinds of mass-media which are available. In the fullness of time, new traditions in political thinking will undoubtedly bring into existence counterparts of *Tribune* in Sinhala and Tamil.

But for the present, even if there are competent persons who can organise, edit and run such weeklies in Sinhala and Tamil, the shortage of paper and other difficulties are hurdles which are almost impossible to surmount.





# CEYLON: MARGINAL NOTES

BY SERENDIB

## \* Justice \* Sir John \* The Class Struggle

THE NEW JUSTICE BILL, which was adopted by the National State Assembly last week, with rare unanimity will effect a major transformation in the judicial system, of this country. The Bill was passed with only one dissenting voice, that of Mr W. Dahanayake. To achieve this bi-partisan support, the Minister of Justice, Felix R. Dias Bandaranaike, accepted a whole series of amendments put forward by the Opposition and others and he also agreed to delete three clauses which the Constitutional Court had ruled was a violation of the Constitution.

The Minister received praise from both sides of the House. However, the stormy petrel, Prins Gunsekera, MP for Habaraduwa, had to leave the Chamber because of his refusal to accept with grace the Speaker's ruling that the amendments he had sent were not received in time, and he was therefore not able to make his numerous speeches on the different amendments he had wanted to move. Anyway, his view was that the new Justice Bill laid the foundations for a police state in

which the Police were vested with extraordinary investigative and judicial powers.

It is yet too early to say what the new system of judicial administration will be like, and all we can say is that the new dispensation will make everything very different. There is no doubt, however, that our legal system needed a major overhaul. It had been devised mainly by the British in the middle of the last century, but in some matters the principles of Roman Dutch law which has continued to prevail, was allowed to intertwine itself with the English system which was introduced by the British. Minister Dias Bandaranaike has assured everybody that the new system of Justice did not violate any of the fundamental principles which are universally accepted as sacred in the administration of law and justice.

SIR JOHN KOTELAWALA, who stole the headlines for some years over twenty years ago, was suddenly shot into the local orbit of sensation-mongering headlines, by the smart Alec' journalism which

the Times group, now under its new management, seems anxious to practice. This was the time when newspaper headlines and the SLBC air waves were bursting with statements and counter statements about the UNP satyagraha scheduled for October 19. J. R. Jayewardene had declared that the satyagraha was to be a peaceful demonstration to enable people to fast, meditate and pray for rain, food and for wisdom to guide the leaders of the Government. The Prime Minister had replied that the satyagraha was really *asatyagraha* and that instead of futile demonstrations on the Galle Face Green, which might mislead sections of the masses, it would be better to toil in the fields to produce more food.

While these wordy battles preceded the governmental ban on gatherings on Galle Face Green, the Times of Ceylon in its early and late editions on the afternoon of October 19, the day of the satyagraha, had a stirring frontpage banner headline, which stretched over seven of its eight columns, which read **RALLY ROUND THE PM TO SAVE THE NATION, SAYS SIR JOHN.** The report was attributed to the "A Staff Writer". This is what the report stated.

*"This is a time of national crisis and every man and woman of this country should rally round one banner, that of the elected Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike,"* said Sir John Kotelawala, former Prime Minister in an



exclusive interview with 'The Times of Ceylon' this morning at his Kandawala residence.

"He emphasised that satyagrahas and squabbles should not interfere with the national effort that has now been launched to save the country. Political parties irrespective of their colour and creed should now join the Prime Minister in saving the nation during this hour of need. He warned that the Middle East war may at anytime flare up into a world conflagration and therefore it was all the more necessary that we as a nation should intensify our efforts to grow more food. By Satyagraha and prayers and meditation the plants will not grow. There must be sweat and toil in the fields. At this time we should not think in terms of Sinhala or Tamil, UNP or SLFP or any other political party. We should only think of the nation and its salvation, and every man and woman must do his or her duty to save the motherland in the hour of peril.

"He would never advocate the cause of mischief-makers or rumour-mongers who do not cherish the well-being of the country. All parties must, he said, act with restraint and patience and think of politics only when the crisis is over. Sri Lanka, he said, had not faced a crisis of this magnitude ever before and this is the time the nation should prove its mettle. If for 2500 years we could have survived as a nation, he said, there was absolutely no reason why we should fail at this hour. Victory could be achieved only

by giving unstinted support to the Prime Minister at this hour of need."

Only the words in italics (ours) were in quotes whilst the rest of the report seemed to be what the 'Times' Staff Writer, felt Sir John had said. The Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation, grasping at every straw in its propaganda war, flashed what the SLBC called a special message to the nation from Sir John, revealed exclusively through the *Times*, over its numerous broadcasts in all languages from the noon of October 19. This was repeated several times throughout the afternoon and evening.

*Sir John's "message" had no impact on the public. Voices from the past-voices which went into oblivion rejected by the people and by history itself—leave everybody cold, and in this instance too Sir John's words as reported by the Times left everybody cold. The SLBC had only given the Times and some of its new bosses gratuitous publicity.*

This comedy did not end there.

On the next morning, the day after the satyagraha, the *Daily Mirror* with saucy bravado front-paged the same report with the headline RALLY ROUND THE PM AND SAVE THE NATION—SIR JOHN. The *Daily News* and other Lake House publications repeated the same story, but they did not give the credit for the story to the *Times* but the SLBC which they said had "broadcast" this message to the nation. It was made to appear

as if the message was an SLBC exclusive; and, the *Times* was left out in the cold.

But the *Times* had a bigger let-down that morning, this time by Sir John himself. In an interview to the *Sun*, published on the morning of October 20, Sir John had put the *Times* and its *Staff Writer* into a real hot pickle. This is what *Sun* report by staffer Iqbal Athas stated:

"Former Prime Minister Sir John Kotelawala, yesterday called upon the Government to take the Opposition parties into its confidence and seek their cooperation for a National Government or, in the alternative, set up a "War Council" for production with Opposition representatives. At an interview he gave me at his Kandawala residence Sir John said that holding a big majority alone would not do in time of stress and starvation.

'Wielding the big stick' he added 'would be of no avail'.

"I telephoned Sir John at his residence after I heard SLBC repeatedly broadcast a statement he had made at an exclusive interview. This interview was also published in an evening newspaper yesterday. At my request Sir John asked me to come over to his bungalow at Kandawala Estate. Sir John was relaxing in the verandah when I walked in. 'Come come,' he said and asked how the satyagraha was. I told him that there were very large crowds present. 'See what these chaps have done man' he remarked referring to the SLBC broad-



cast and the Press report about the purported interview. He warned me 'now make sure you say the correct thing' and went on to dictate a statement.

"Sir John said: 'I was informed by several people that the radio and the Times of Ceylon had announced that I have given a special interview. I did nothing of the sort. Mr. Ediriweera came to see me this morning on the question of Times of Ceylon as I am also a shareholder.

'I must congratulate Mr. Ediriweera for trying to boost his paper at my expense. I am not one of those whose motto is 'vaasey paththata hoiyya'! It was not an interview that I gave Mr. Ediriweera. We had a talk round the breakfast table with others joining it. It was only a conversation that he has taken advantage of.'

"Sir John appeared reluctant to be drawn into a discussion on the economic situation. He pleaded: 'I am now leading a retired life in my 77th year and I do not want to get dragged into politics again.'

"He quickly added: 'However, I must say if there is a national crisis where we are going to have starvation and, food riots one should rally round the Prime Minister Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike. She is doing her best.'

"Referring to Mrs. Bandaranaike's efforts on the food production front Sir John said: 'She is being called upon to make difficult decisions at difficult times. I must say she has come out better than all expectations. All Sinhala people should be proud of her.'

"Sir John was, however, critical of the role of Ministers and MPs. 'To me', he said, 'it appears that Ministers and MPs are frightened to leave their homes and go about the country. They are allowing the Prime Minister to take all the risks. Now write exactly what I told you', were Sir John's last words as I left him."

Anybody who knows Sir John knew that most of the words attributed to him by the Times were not his "words". It was not his style and idiom, but the Sun statement was very much his. In the Sinhala version in the Dawasa his statement was even more characteristic of him. From his statement to the Sun it was clear that the "staff writer" in question was none other than Ediriweera, presently Managing Director of the Times group as well as the Editor-in-Chief of all Times publications. (Whether he has shed any of his jobs recently is not known, but in the newspaper world it is believed that he combines the chief managerial post with that of the chief editor's)

But the manner in which the Times thereafter attempted to wriggle out of the slimy pickle it had fallen into was even more revealing. In the Sunday Times of October 21, Times reporter Hassina Sourjah was given space on the front page with a meagre two column heading (SIR JOHN ON WHAT HE SAID & DIDN'T SAY).

This is what the report said:

"In a news story under the heading 'Rally round PM,'

'The Times of Ceylon' of October 19 carried views of Sir John Kotelawala, the former Prime Minister on the satyagraha and the present food problems.

"The Sun paper yesterday in turn carried a similar news item in which Sir John referred to the Times story. In his statement to the Sun Sir John said, 'I must say if there is a national crisis when we are going to have starvation and food riots one should rally round the Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike. She is doing her best. She is being called upon to make difficult decisions at difficult times. I must say she has come out better than all expectations. All Sinhala people should be proud of her.'

"A morning Sinhala newspaper of the same group carried its version of the interview in the following

### Generation GAP

... by a generation I mean that reaction against the fathers which seems to occur about three times in a century. It is distinguished by a set of ideas, inherited in moderated form from the madmen and outlaws of the generation before, if it is a real generation it has its own leaders and spokesmen, and it draws, into its orbit those born just before it and just after, whose ideas are less clear-cut and defiant. From "My Generation" by F. Scott Fitzgerald.



form: "A statement under the heading *Rally Round the Prime Minister* said to have been made by Sir John Kotelawala was published in an evening English paper. It was also broadcast over the SLBC. But Sir John says it is a total lie. He said: 'I did not say so. What I said was that all people must rally round to form a National Government under the leadership of J. R. Jayewardene. He added that he thought all these fellows are "half mad"'. (Munta Ara Paithiyam)

When I spoke to Sir John last morning at his residence, he emphatically denied having referred to the *Times* newsmen as 'half mad'.

"While he admitted having spoken to the *"Sun"* he denied having spoken to any newspaper men in Sinhala. He said he never speaks to newspapermen in Sinhala. Moreover, he added he did not even know the meaning of the term "Ara paithiyam". In his view the Sinhala newspaper had entirely misreported the statement he had made to the *"Sun"*. During the course of his conversation, Sir John also said that he did not want this matter pursued further. 'Forget the whole thing, man' were his parting words to me."

This was a transparently feeble effort to quibble one's way out of a difficulty. All that the *Sunday Times* reporter tried to say was that there were some differences in the idiom and style of what Sir John had told the English language *Sun* and what he had told the Sinhala *Dawasa*. It is well-known that Sir

John's Sinhala idiom usually has much more punch than his best English invective.

**But the *Times* did not attempt to answer the charge made by Sir John that Mr. Ediriweera had used an off-the-record conversation on the breakfast table to concoct a story to "boost his paper".**

**THE CLASS STRUGGLE.** There is a general belief among many left inclined political workers that the class struggle in Ceylon today is between the pro-government forces on the one hand and the anti-government forces on the other. A *Tribune* correspondent from the Up-country plantation sector has sent the paper a report on "the present turmoil in the plantations." This report will be used in due course, the delay being due to the exigencies of space, but this columnist who had an opportunity of reading the report was struck by one paragraph reflected the prevailing misunderstanding about the class struggle in Ceylon which was being over-simplified and over-generalised as being between pro-government and anti-government forces.

This is what the correspondent stated: "The background to the present turmoil in the plantations can be seen in the acute class struggle that is raging throughout the country between the pro govt. and anti govt. forces, and in the approach of the government towards the plantation owners on the one hand and its communal

approach towards the plantation workers on the other. These are contributory factors for the present turmoil. The imposition of a moratorium on the export of dividends and the land ceiling with the threat of take over of estates and the actual take over of the estates and also the ceiling on income, higher taxes coupled with the commercial bank's refusal for credit facilities have caused great disorders in the plantation sector.

**There is a great deal of confused thinking in this analysis, but that is part of the confusion which prevails in left wing circles in Sri Lanka today.**

**What the theorists who believe in this analysis of the class struggle forget is that the insurgency of 1971 would not have taken the shape it did if the class struggle in Sri Lanka is what these theorists think it is.**

But powerful sections of the UF subscribe to this view. And they do not have the slightest doubt about the correctness of their analysis. On the basis of this, they assert that the Government must merge its production war with the class struggle which is going on, and that, in this way, they could be assured of complete success.

So confident are these theorists of success that the *Nation*, in its issue of October 12, in a frontpage lead entitled **IF IT IS WAR... NO QUARTER TO THE ENEMY** went that:



"All available reports indicate a magnificent response from the people in all parts of the country to the appeal of the Prime Minister to gird up their loins and plant every inch of land with grain and subsidiary food crops. Without any doubt, it can be said that never in the history of this country have all classes of people taken to labouring on the land in this earnest and determined way. Shramadanas have mushroomed all over the country, drawing young and old, clerks and workers, women and men into clearing of shrubland, repairing of tanks and conversion of bare land into farms. The majority of these eruptions of labour activity are completely spontaneous. They testify to the vast productive potential of people newly awakened to the value of the soil on which they stand, the munificence of nature and the power of their own hands."

How far this presents a true picture of the reality is yet to be seen.

The *Nation*, however, cannot pursue any argument without having the customary (now too hackneyed to rouse anyone) fling at the UNP, and in this instance it was the grow-more-food campaign initiated by Dudley Senanayake, which was the target of attack. "Let us not mince our words. There was nothing like this energy and enthusiasm among our people during Mr. Dudley Senanayake's food drive. Dudley addressed his appeal to the rich to the big capitalist companies and the plantation owners living in Colombo. It is to them that he offered tax exemptions, vast

acres of Government land and jeeps, tractors and items of other machinery without limit while he held out card-board crowns for cultivators who actually toiled on the land. The landless and marginal owners of land were not offered badly needed land of any kind. It was the urban capitalist and company owner who was going to tell the village peasant how to perform agricultural miracles in return for fat bribes!"

After this inevitable invocatory invective against the UNP, the *Nation* went on to crow about how well the UF government had dramatised the situation as a prelude launching the production war.

"Despite all the shortcomings of propaganda, the ham-handedness and indifference of bureaucrats and a grossly exaggerated parliamentary democratic conscientiousness, this Government has succeeded in dramatising the gravity of our basic economic problem to our people in a way they can understand."

The *Nation* after referring to the shortcomings of his propaganda media of the government, the indifference of bureaucrats, and especially the "grossly exaggerated parliamentary democratic conscientiousness of ordinary people, this Government had succeeded in dramatising the gravity of our basic problems in a way our people can understand".

There is no doubt that Government propaganda has been "dramatised" (over dramatised in fact) the situation in the hope that people will fall for it and the signs

are not wanting, though not yet discernible to the *Nation*, that what will emerge from this dramatising will be a painful melodrama revolving round a tragic-comic farce and not a successful food production campaign.

But the *Nation* is undaunted. "The people have already shown that they understand it, whereas until recently they were unwilling to contemplate it. But it should not be inferred from this that the battle has been won. Far from it. Powerful forces have come together to obscure this knowledge that the people have gained, to confuse their minds and emotions and to

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appeal to their self-pity and the narrowest and meanest levels of human selfishness by harping on their present difficulties. It is foolish to refuse to see the threat that this constitutes. There can be no dialogue with these forces of reaction and service of the vested interests. There is nothing to debate with them. What is in issue is a matter of fact."

The Political Correspondent of the *Nation*, who had contributed this piece on political strategy for the current class war, then went on to detail the historical materialist factors which supported his thesis that a unilateral single-handed UF class war against all other political parties on the production war front would solve all the problems confronting the Government as well as stabilise its popularity among the people. "Never in our lives have we produced more than two thirds of our needs of rice locally. In addition we have imported all our needs of wheat and wheat-flour. Irrespective of world shortages and world price levels this cannot go on for ever. The United Front Government, therefore, has decided that we must stop imports of rice from 1974. That is fact" number one.

"Fact number two is that Government has scraped the bottom of exportable stocks of wheat and rice in the world and paid fantastic prices for what is available. There are no further stocks that can be got immediately for love of God or money. J. R. Jayewardene and the rest of

his gang lie about this situation and they know they lie. They are whipping up unrest among the people when they say they can bring rice from countries that are reluctant to give it today because they are "angry" with this Government. What kind of argument can anybody have with unconscionable liars?

"Fact number three is that the problem of producing our needs of goods within our country is part of the general economic problem of Sri Lanka. The solution to this problem demands the reorganisation of our village economy on the basis of the fullest mobilisation of the labour power that we possess in such abundance for the fullest exploitation of our resources of first, land and second local raw materials, including crops that can be grown locally where we not do not as yet do so. The UNP's pre-occupation with paddy cultivation alone, from the time of D. S. the father to Dudley the son, is completely fallacious. Even in the midst of emergence we have to tackle the village economy as a whole."

On the strength of this logic, the Political Correspondent of the *Nation* went to outline the manner in which the class war had to be carried out against the UNP and all other reactionaries. The enemy was to be given no quarter, *And that was it.*

"There can be no dialogue with the UNP on these issues. On the contrary, we have to deal firmly with the local and foreign vested interests if

we are to achieve our production targets. The predatory hordes of brokers and commission agents enriching themselves on sales of imported goods and gadgets and transfers of land and other property; the lawyers and mudalalis who made fortunes out of the insolvency of cultivators and small land owners and traders; the new mudalalis and money-lenders who fatter on the need of the peasants for tractors, lorry transport and credit of all kinds all these parasites have to be eliminated if our villages are to be rehabilitated as viable, self-reliant economic entities. The UNP, which is the political party the Colombo capitalists and the mudalalis of the outstation towns, has no place in such a programme.

"There is only one question before the United Front Government: Do we consider such a programme imperative and urgent? If we do, our job is to implement it, come what may. Doing so is no cricket match. It is war in earnest. In that war J. R. Jayewardene and his gang are the enemy. Let us not give the enemy the smallest quarter."

Influential sections in the United Front, whose views are reflected in the *Janawegaya* and the *Nation* expect the Prime Minister and her 22 units of *Political Authority* to wage this class war in this way to liquidate the UNP. This means that the Food Production War is only a smokescreen for the class war to secure the political liquidation of the leadership of rival parties not willing to submit to United Front *diktat*.



# *Inania* Of This, That and The Other

## Wiggling Towards the Truth

By INNA

Our openness to right or left is not the important thing. It is our search for the truth. I met a friend last week-end who was very much disturbed at the turning away of a great world-power from its original intent.

And he handed me a quotation which made me think:

'In its search for truth, USSR seems to have come round to it the hard way, and it seems to be saying, like the proverbial drunkard, "I'm not drunk"—so said my friend, handed me a book and walked away. He almost passed away, for he had a deathly-pale look upon his face and his moustache looked as if it had been screwed on.

I soon learnt from his final whisper that he was in trouble. He said he was seeking the truth; was thoroughly mollified, frustrated after reading this book (the one he handed me). It was *'The God that Failed'*. In it were essays by Andre Gide, Richard Wright, Arthur Koestler, professing and protesting that they found Communism rather difficult, going for what they were looking for, and that as a 'god' it had failed them.

Depends on what they were looking for!

**"The introduction of material incentives and modified profit motives into the economy of the USSR are condemned by China and Cuba as a return to capitalism but within the USSR,**

**such a phenomenon is regarded as logically impossible. The USSR is giving more aid to Czechoslovakia than to all other nations of Eastern Europe. Invading Czechoslovakia is helping to maintain their democracy. Black is white and white is black; both nations (USA and USSR) re-define their own behaviour so that it is consistent with their own image. Indeed this process of self rationalization is common to all nations; it is part of the nationalization of the truth...."**

**The USSR is moving towards a mass consumption society. this is the objective fact.. (pp. 60 81) R. Jenkins, Exploitation**

Like Jenkins' quotation above—and it's no wonder that George, my friends, both, the book and the quotation—this book is a summary of disillusionments and an ecstatic view of the agony of hope in the classless class,

and in the messianism of the proletariat.

In the book I saw an article by Arthur Koestler, the brilliant author of *Darkness at Noon* and *Yogi and the Commissar*, and others. And I read on, about his final lecture in the Palace S. Germain in Paris before an audience of non-communists and communists. Thunderous applause came from the former while stony silence and folded arms were expressed by the latter.

What brick had he dropped?

Before the meeting a Party-man had asked him to denounce the POUM as Franco's agents, and to show him the text of his script. He refused both. Then came the Koestler declaration of war: "No movement, party or person can claim the privilege of infallibility; appeasing your enemy is as foolish as persecuting your friend who pursues your own aim by a different road." Then he quoted Thomas Mann: "A harmful truth is better than a useful lie." That settled it. A few days later he had resigned from the Party.

If these men are sincere, how much we must admire them in their relentless pursuit of the truth; infallible, unshaken, unshakeable.

For News Behind  
the News

read

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regularly



SHAMBA

# On Companions

by ANATORY BUKOBA

JULY 15 - JULY 18

July 15,

When I first entertained the idea of coming here, I had in mind some friends of mine about three miles away. We had shared in common some farming experiences some years ago. I thought it could be nice to have my land cheek by jowl with theirs. However this place had some advantages, and so I came here. Now our two groups seem to be coalescing. I was able to get away for a few days because of them, and there are ways in which I think we can be of advantage to each other.

The middle of the day seems really too hot to work, and the ground is baked hard, in spite of the rain not so long ago. This place must grow vegetables all the year round, and I think these are going to require some shade. My efforts many years ago to grow vegetables round coconut trees failed. The seeds germinated, but the plants faded away after reaching a certain height. Now I am attempting more or less the same thing under different circumstances. People say vegetables need sun and I am sure they are right. Planting them in shady areas is done by us to give the young transplanted plants a chance, and to prevent seed beds being baked hard.

Companions are hard to come by. Two have been promised to

me by their families. They had not been consulted upto the time I last saw their families or spoke to them. What they feel and will do about it, I can only guess. Monkeys have invaded the place. Some of the manioc has been eaten.

July 16,

The hours between midday and dusk seem to follow each other like express buses in Ceylon; they really go quickly. For some inexplicable reason, it was six o'clock before I was able to start watering. Fortunately I had a fair idea of what really needed water, those which by their appearance do not seem to have been watered much this last week, and I did them first, cleaning out altogether the more healthy-looking young vegetable plants. The two young coconut plants got half a bucket of water each. It was quite dark when I made my last trip to the river. The spinach seems to be doing really well. Two buffaloes tied together by the neck walked right through the tomato and one of the chilli patches, but no real damage was done. They were unaccompanied by their owner or anyone else, and it is a bit of a mystery how they came to be there or rather here.

People think nothing of helping themselves to wood-apple and they walk away

good-humouredly when they are asked to go. The women are the worst poachers.

Our river is right down now. I have not seen the water so low. There will never cease to be surprises. We have always used a *nambili* to sift our rice and remove the stones in it. Today I heard of a *koraha* which is a much bigger affair, and I was asked to buy it. I was rewarded by not having a stone in my rice and curry. The *koraha* cost me Rs. 1/50.

July 17,

We had some unusual fruit today. *Avocado* pears (*alligatta pera*) and *kattu anodha* and also what I call a loose jacket - orange (*jamanarang*). The last two were from the fair, the first I brought here from Colombo. It would be difficult to say which I liked best; they were all very good. The *jamanarang* is the only orange I consider really worth eating. The skin is easy to remove and this one was really juicy and sweet, *Kattu Anodha* might be what we call custard apple, or a large version of it. *Avocado* pear is eaten either with jaggery or sugar. Some of our fruits grow in the tropical parts of Australia; in the Northern part of Queensland, as I have learned from our people who have come back here on holiday and I found it strange to hear the names of our exotic fruit in their lives, in connection with Australia.

Well, I was late again with the watering. I did a little in the morning to make up for last evening, but I am afraid that some of the plants are dying



because of inadequate watering. Some of our neighbours, as I have said, have grown some exotic American fruit very successfully, and I saw some of them today. One is called squash, and it looks like a fat, yellow flying-saucer; that, anyway is one version of it, for there seem to be several, all going by the same name. The next problem is going to be how to cook it. Perhaps, someone from the American Embassy might help.

July 18,

This morning I was able to do some watering to make up for last evening. I kept at it for a while and when I had to stop, the sun came out a few minutes later, as if to say, yes you would have had to stop anyway. It is too hot for the plants. This evening was a disappointment, there was no one here to relieve me in the house while I did watering.

Yesterday, I read in an old copy of *Time* magazine, that the famous *kibbutz* is not only a farming venture but also an industrial one. The workers receive no wages, which is not to say they receive no rewards. What makes a place a *kibbutz* is its situation, I would say. In respect of all I have said, this *Shamba* could very well be a *kibbutz* but there the semblance ends, for I am determined not to have government financial and material aid, which the *kibbutz* does. My reason for this is that it would have a stultifying effect on the people here, that they would do even less than they do now. I have seen it happen before elsewhere. Why governm-

ent help is alright at the *kibbutz* I would say, is the attitude of the Israeli or Jew. It was the same kind of spirit that helped them whack the Arabs in two wars. I think that spirit is lacking here because we have a different philosophy or perhaps a different heritage. We are more like the Italians, with an ancient heritage that makes us see right through modern enthusiasms. The Jew has just such an ancient heritage, but with a different tradition.

He always had his back to the wall; and a caged lion is dangerous. Looking round this *Shamba* this evening, I saw what a little there was left to be cleared, and how yet I was no near finishing it. The end can be seen in all directions, like the points of a compass, all except in one direction, that of the road, which has been finished, not all along the road I mean, but opposite the house. I would dearly like to get it done, but I must wait for suitable companions, not so much to do it, but to give me the backing or moral or physical support I would need in so many ways. He would be the sort of man who would leave me free to get on with the job. There is a preliminary to be done first, what has been cleared, and not yet gathered, to be piled in heaps. It is all a mass of thorns, and a mess.

The two who had started the lavatory, did quite a good job. Perhaps I should have given them more encouragement, instead of leaving them to do it while I got on with clearing. It was bad generalship. The oblong hole is quite

deep, but it ought to be deeper yet.

Monkeys were here today, on the wood-apple trees and even among the vegetables-fortunately, no damage. They nearly caught me napping.

It is a wonder how I lived at all here. My present companions are close neighbours. It was they who helped me put up the house when I first built it, and before it was enlarged I did not really call them this time.

They came in on their own and glad was I to have them, but I see it suits them to be with me just now, and I do not think their heart or their mind is really there. If it had been, I think they would have seen to it that I got the watering done this evening instead of leaving me high and dry with regard to it.

### Bangkok's other name

What geographical name is the longest in the world? In an earlier issue we wrote about a Welsh railway station called *Llanfairpwllgwyngyll*. But there are longer names, it seems. There is a hill in New Zealand, for instance, whose name consists of 85 letters. And the rarely used official name of Bangkok is *Krungtepmahana*... 159 letters all told.

*New Times*



ON BRIBERY

## For Better For Worse, I Declare ....

By Canax

SINCE he hadn't picked on me yet, I guessed he was keeping the big fish for later, but when I discovered some big fish declaring for all they were worth, I rushed over to this friend who helps me fiddle my tax returns quarter after quarter and asked for aid. He heard me out, then said with studied casualness, "Just be."

His lack of concern upset me somewhat. Despite my pressing him he wouldn't let on any more than to say that, in his view, what I had to offer was not quite what the Bribery Commissioner was after.

For what it is worth, though, I have decided to come clean before I'm asked to. When I told my wife of my intention, and how my friend had discouraged me from jumping the gun, she intuitively figured out the reason.

"He wants you to just be because he feels you are in the clear," she explained.

"But what about my assets?" I demanded.

"Happy is the head that hasn't any," she said philosophically, even if her philosophy, like everyone else's, is neither here nor there.

"You mean I'm a man of no consequence?"

"Off hand I'd say you don't have much, and if you count me out, I'd say you don't have anything," she said.

"Then what do I have?"

"Liabilities," said my wife cheerfully.

I have never known her to be so refreshingly candid about herself.

I HAD decided to declare, however, and in my system of decision-making there is no provision for retreat, tactical or otherwise. So if I hadn't any assets to declare, that was just too bad—for the Commissioner, I mean—for I would press ahead and declare my liabilities instead. It can happen to anybody and, from what I can see, it does.

I therefore got down to the task of getting it all on paper.

The way I understand it, one first classifies the items under two broad headings, like Movable and Immovable property, and then proceed to work one's way down until one gets to, as in my case, that pair of nylon socks with the lovely, expressive holes where the big toes should be, and are.

Now that's where I come up against my first hurdle. The socks themselves are no problem, of course, for they clearly fall into the Movable category, but the holes they boast of do not; they've stayed put over the big toes ever since they first made their appearance.

I know what you're thinking. If you're thinking that holes in socks are not liabilities, then words have truly lost their meaning. Everything has its place, I remember father telling me as a kid, but he never brought me up in the knowledge that the place for holes is in socks.

My socks, however, is the least of my worries. Where, I keep wondering, do I put down my wife? Since we are all agreed she's a liability, we then come to the next hurdle.

The way she gawks about she sure qualifies to go straight into Movable, but if experience is not to be lightly forgotten, she's an even more formidable candidate for the other classification; once she makes up her mind on anything, that's it, and she simply will not budge. (I guess I'm in Immovable, too.)

So you can see the pickle I find myself in. I am willing to declare, waiting to declare, even wanting to declare, and yet I'm hopelessly foxed trying to figure out if some of my liabilities are Movable or otherwise.

PUTTING the tricky items aside for the moment I decided to tackle the easy ones first. There was that house of ours which seemed simple enough. It was, as far as I could tell, immovable though on first glance it looks impregnable as well. How it came to us was what the Commissioner would be interested to know, and my wife has always proved an unfailingly fruitful source for such useless information.



"Where did the house come from"? I asked her.

"It didn't come from anywhere," my wife replied. "It was here all along." Only she could possibly have known a thing like that.

"Really," I said, trying hard not to sound too surprised. "For how long?"

"Oh," she said, pensively looking up as if for inspiration, and obviously getting it, "it's been here for ages."

The Commissioner wouldn't, I supposed, accept that as an adequate answer, so I looked up my book on Ceylon history hoping, at least, to pin down the period. I was initially encouraged to find mention of the Sigiriya Rock Fortress, so I naturally assumed our house couldn't be too far behind. But no, not a word. There were words and words, of course, but not one wasted on our house.

"Would you describe it as early Dutch!" I asked in desperation.

"If you're asking me," she said, "I'd say it's a white elephant."

That looked promising, as clues go, so I did another quick check. "There's no such period." I finally informed her, snapping shut the book. The disappointment showed in my voice.

"Does it have to be in history?"

"Not necessarily," I said. "Why do you ask?"

"I was beginning to wonder" she said, sounding uneasy. "Sri Lanka has enough ruins

as tourist attractions without you adding our house to the list."

WITH that I decided not to waste any more time on the house. I put down the first thing that came to mind, which was that my wife brought the house along as dowry, ages ago. That's what I call being imaginative, even if it makes me seem ancient, too.

"Well," I sighed with relief, "what other property do we have?"

"You want to tell the truth?"

"Of course," I snapped indignantly.

"Then the answer is nothing."

I felt furious, and I felt ashamed, but wasn't sure which I felt more, furious or ashamed. What would the Commissioner think of us? As paupers, perhaps, which was as close to the truth as he could get. My wife could tell I was unhappy.

"Why don't you put down the Taprobane?" she suggested helpfully.

"But we don't own it," I whined.

"Yes, but if one home isn't enough, I thought you might mention the one you consider home away from home."

I left the rest of the column blank, and hoped the Commissioner wouldn't think too badly of us. I next got on to clothes confident we could salvage our self-respect at least there and proudly flaunt the fortune we must have dumped in it over the years. My wife seemed eager to help in the rescue operation, but

all she could think of was 40 drip-dry shirts, a dozen expensive slacks, five made-to-measure suits and half a dozen pairs of shoes. All mine.

"The real money is in your clothes," I reminded her.

"In a dozen sarees?" she demanded beligerently.

"Twelve sarees!" I cried in pain. "How much did you pay?"

"Nothing."

"All from admirers, huh?"

"No, only one."

"He has my sympathy," I said gravely.

"Sympathise with yourself, then," she countered.

"I never gave you any saree," I growled.

"Fifteen years is a long time to remember, I suppose."

"We weren't married then," I cried pointedly.

"It seemed too good to be true even then," she sighed.

## SADAT

He (Sadat) has always had a strong streak of the unpredictable in his make-up, and the sudden switch to throwing bridge-heads across the Canal and pouring men and tanks across them in defiance of Israeli air power demonstrates the desperation with which the President must have come to view a Middle East settlement after six years of frustration and stalemate —*The Financial Times, London*



I DECIDED to switch to her jewellery. "What's the value?" I enquired.

"I put it at 10,000 rupees, but I got only 3,000 from the pawnbroker," she said. So, against jewellery, I noted 20,000. Women can't stop themselves under-valuing the things they hold dear.

"Those sarees you mentioned—how much are they worth?"

"I don't know," she said. "I haven't pawned them yet". My own instant valuation was 10,000 for sarees, fifty of them, which is what I put down on paper. Against furniture I put down 5,000, not counting the chairs with three legs pretending to have four and which could fool you too until you actually sat in one of them, when the pretence crumbles to the floor along with yourself.

By now the list of liabilities looked impressive. I took it over to my friend, who gave it the once over. "It's good," he said at least, "but not good enough."

I started to protest, but he shook his head with authority, so I stopped. "What the Commissioner really wants to know is, haven't you made anything on the side?" he asked.

"I don't know about sides," I shouted, losing my temper and enjoying being rid of it, "it's tough enough trying to make anything out front."

My friend says it's not half as difficult on the side. Only he doesn't know which. It could be Right, it could be Left or both.

## SOVIET VIEW

### On The Side Of The Arabs

Moscow, October 20,

Fierce battles are going on in the Middle East. The Arab armies demonstrate not only staunchness and courage but also higher military and tactical mastership. Foreign observers all to a man are amazed at the "surprise" given by the Arabs and emphasise the high combat spirit of the Syrian and Egyptian soldiers, their confidence in their own strength. Much is also being said today that the Syrian and Egyptian troops have successfully mastered Soviet arms. Israeli Premier Golda Meir was not the only one who explained big Israeli losses by the increased might of the Arab armies in the training of which Soviet specialists took part and by the quality of the Soviet arms. Military observers point out that first-class military equipment used by Egypt and Syria accounts to a considerable extent for these countries' successes at the fronts of military operations.

Cooperation with the Soviet Union played an important part in creating the economic potential and strengthening the defensive capacity of the Arab states which are resisting Israeli aggression. Its particular importance in these hard days of trials is quite understandable. Last week the Ambassadors of the Arab countries accredited to Moscow expressed deep gratitude to the Soviet Union

for its "invaluable all round help and support." The Soviet Union will continue to act in the same way. This was stated during the talks in Moscow with President Houari Boumedienne of Algeria. As the official communique says "the sides have confirmed their determination to help in every way the liberation of all Israeli-occupied Arab territories."

The Soviet public firmly supports its Government's Middle East policy. The Arab's struggle for the liberation of the occupied lands enjoys understanding and wide support in the Soviet Union. The position of the Soviet Government is popular not only inside the country but is also shared by socialist and developing states. The latest meeting by the UN Security Council showed that Asian and African countries, just as the Soviet Union, are definitely against such a settlement of the conflict which would impose on the Arabs the continuation of Israeli occupation. The USSR directly states that its sympathies are on the side of the victims of aggression fighting for their natural rights. Only by turning back the lands seized in 1967 it is possible to prevent in the future new conflicts in the Middle East.

—D. Andreyev, APN



## U.S. VIEWPOINT

## On The Re-supply of Arms to Israel

Washington, Oct. 17,

"This turns out to be a massive (Soviet) airlift," said State Department spokesman, Robert J. McCloskey, last week in carefully chosen words, "It would tend to put a new face on the situation." The implication of his remark on October 10 was clear when viewed in the context of the long-standing U. S. policy that the arms inventory in the Middle East should not be tipped in favour of either side to the dispute. When Mr. McCloskey spoke, the new Arab - Israeli war was four days old. Reports were increasing of a mounting number of Soviet AN-12 and AN-22 transport planes airlifting war material to Syria and Egypt.

For more than 20 years successive American Administrations have sought to prevent an uncontrolled arms build up in the Middle East that would unsettle the military balance. Over the years in its contacts with Soviet officials, the United States had urged Moscow to also use restraint in arms dealings with Arab States in the conviction that joint action to limit arms shipment would enhance prospects of peace. President Nixon's Administration continued this established policy of maintaining a military balance in the Middle East.

In addition to its on-going military supply relationship with Israel to meet the long-term needs for modernization and maintaining the capacity of Israel's armed forces, America also furnished military assistance to certain Arab countries. The aim was to help those Arab states, including Jordan, modernize their military forces and enhance their ability to meet threats to their security.

President Nixon said many times, however, that while an arms balance alone "cannot bring peace. The search for a negotiated settlement must continue."

And so Washington watched and waited after war broke out on October 6—the fourth in 25 years between Arabs and Israelis—to see if the Soviet airlift would be restrained. Behind the scenes and then in public at an October 12 news conference, the new U.S. Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger, appealed for restraint. He was in constant contact with the Soviet Ambassador in Washington while President Nixon exchanged messages with Soviet Communist Party General Secretary Leonid Brezhnev.

The U. S. effort was two-fold: to damp down arms shipments that would unsettle a balance of military hard-

ware and to find a means that would end hostilities in such a way that a durable, just peace could be negotiated for all the parties—including the Palestinians. Dr. Kissinger made an important point in his news conference that should not go unnoticed:

"I can only emphasize once again the great importance for restraint by all of those countries who have it in their capacity to bring about an escalation and an expansion of hostilities, and the expectation of the United States that all countries that have a capacity to influence events influence them on the side of restraint."

He added: "the basic principles that governed our policies (toward the Middle East) throughout this Administration remain constant." One of those basic principles is the maintenance of the military balance. Therefore, it should have come as no surprise in any quarter that when the Soviet arms shipments continued unrestrained and reached massive proportions, Washington started a resupply effort to Israel on October 14.

By then, the Middle East crisis had entered its second week. And in the savage fighting on the Sinai and Syrian fronts the Arabs were employing sophisticated new Soviet-built weapons that had never before been used in combat. These included the highly accurate SA-6 Missile and the Huge T-62 main battle tank.

When State Department spokesman McCloskey anno-



anced on October 15 that the U. S. resupply program to Israel was underway, he invoked two aspects of American policy. He said: "We watched and waited over this situation for several days, pursuing the objective of achieving a diplomatic arrangement that would bring an end to the fighting. We have begun some arms shipments to Israel. To an appreciable extent, it is designed to prevent this massive airlift by the Soviets from unsettling the military balance in the area."

Almost at the same moment, President Nixon was impressing on a White House audience the fact that the "policy of the United States is that of a peacemaker."

"We stand," Mr. Nixon said, "for the right of every nation in the Middle East to maintain its independence and security. We want this fighting to end. We want the fighting to end on a basis where we can build a lasting peace."

President Nixon's statement thus brought into focus the broad underlying American attitude that while Israel's independence must be maintained, so should that of every state in the Middle East.

Secretary Kissinger has pledged a U. S. diplomatic effort to "bring about an end to hostilities in a manner that contributes to long-term peace in the area."

\* \* \*

## CHINA'S VIEW

# ON THE ARAB-ISRAELI WAR

Peking October 15, the "Peoples Daily" carries an editorial today entitled "the Arab Peoples' cause against aggression is invincible". The editorial reads:

The armed forces and people of Egypt, Syria and Palestine have scored inspiring successes in their valiant battle against the Israeli aggressors since October 6. The national flag of Egypt is once again flying over part of the territory on the east bank of the Suez Canal which has been occupied for more than six years. The armed forces and people of Syria have inflicted heavy losses on enemy troops on the Golan Heights while Palestinian guerillas have mounted attacks on the enemy in every direction. The successes they have won have broken the stalemate of "no war, no peace" brought about in the Middle East by the two super powers in their own interests and have greatly boosted the morale of the Arab and Palestinian people. The Chinese people express great admiration for the indomitable fighting spirit of the armed forces and people of Egypt, Syria and Palestine and congratulate them warmly on their feats of war.

The Arab and Palestinian people are a heroic people and the struggle for the recovery of lost territory and the restoration of national rights they have long persevered in is a just one. A just

cause is bound to win. They suffered a temporary setback in the fight against aggression in June 1967 not because of the "might" of Israel but because Egypt and other Arab countries were bound hand and foot. As pointed out by some Arab leaders it was, the result of an "international conspiracy" hatched by the superpowers. In disregard of the obstruction and opposition of the superpowers, the armed forces and people of Egypt, Syria and Palestine have now risen resolutely and advanced courageously. This vividly manifests the new awakening of the people of the Arab countries and Palestine and demonstrates the mighty strength of a just cause....

"The super powers lost no time in reproaching and hindering the struggle of the Egyptian, Syrian and Palestinian peoples for hitting back at the aggressors. One super power raised the outcry that "relaxation" is "faced with a dangerous development of events." The other superpower demanded that the Egyptian and Syrian troops return to the positions they held before they struck back at the Israeli aggressors. Everybody knows that it is not the Arab and Palestinian people but the Israeli Zionist aggression supported and connived at by the two superpowers that has brought about a dangerous development of events in the Middle East.

—Hsinhua



## INTERNATIONAL-AFFAIRS

BY ARIEL

### ❁ Ceasefire in the Middle East

### ❁ Why China Abstained?

AT CERTAIN MOMENTS it looked as if the Cease-Fire resolution sponsored by the USA and the USSR, and unanimously adopted by the Security Council (with China abstaining), would be a ceasefire that never was. The first resolution was accepted by Egypt and Israel, but was rejected by Iraq and the Palestinian Commandos. Syria was silent at first and though Jordan had accepted the cease-fire, its troops were under Syrian command. Fighting had continued even after the first ceasefire call, especially on the Suez front where the Israelis had endeavoured to stabilise the bridgehead they had on the west bank of the Canal on Egyptian territory. In fact, it now transpires that Israel had captured more of Egyptian territory than the Egyptians had captured in the Sinai.

Then came the second ceasefire resolution asking the parties to withdraw to the *stay-where-you-were* lines as at the time of the first resolution. This resolution was immediately accepted again by Egypt and Israel, but this time by Syria also. Iraq refused to accept the ceasefire and Gaddafi attacked the ceasefire as an "imperialist conspiracy." At this stage, Egypt wanted the USA and the USSR to send mili-

tary contingents to enforce the ceasefire. The USA declined to do this, but when there were some whispers that the USSR might send such a military unit, President Nixon in the midst of the gravest crisis he had faced over the Watergate put the US forces including its nuclear units "on the alert." His excuse was that this was necessary because Russia had been on the verge of sending its troops to the Middle East "to enforce the ceasefire."

However, a group of non-aligned nations in the Security Council moved a resolution calling for the creation of a UN Peace-keeping Force in which the forces of all the Big Powers, especially the permanent members of the Security Council, were to be excluded. This resolution was unanimously adopted. In the meantime, Russia had declared that it had no intentions of sending any troops to the Middle East to enforce the ceasefire. Nixon thereafter called off the alert—he said he received assurances from Brezhnev on the hot line that Russia had no intentions of sending troops to the Middle East.

Moscow strongly criticised Washington for over-reacting to the sympathetic response Russia had shown to Egypt's complaints about ceasefire

violations by Israel. The USSR, however, has sent a number of observers to see how the ceasefire was being put into operation. Egypt has also asked the USA to send similar observers, but whether the USA will do so is uncertain.

In the meantime, the first contingents of the UN peace-keeping force arrived in the fighting zone. One unit had difficulties in entering the town of Suez which has been encircled by the Israelis surrounding the Egyptian Third Army. But at the time of writing, these difficulties were being removed and an uneasy kind of ceasefire seems to have been established in the area. From a *stay-where-you-are* ceasefire implementation of the UN Security Council Resolution 242 (which was not accepted by Syria) and from that to a "just and settled peace" is a long long way, and how that goal is to be reached is difficult to envisage.

IT IS NOTEWORTHY that China took a lone and solitary position in the UN Security Council on the ceasefire in the Middle East—a position very different from that taken even by third world non-aligned countries. China did not use its veto but abstained from the voting to mark its disapproval of the ceasefire. The speech made by the Chinese delegate Chia Kuan-hua sets out very clearly China's position on the Middle East crisis. The following extracts from the *Hsinhua* report outlines China's stand on this question: "This morning, the President of the



Security Council informed the Chinese delegation that an urgent meeting of the Security Council would be held to discuss the so-called violation of cease-fire in the Middle East. After we arrived at the conference hall, the Chinese delegation was told that there would be no Security Council meeting and that the United States and the Soviet Union would reach an agreement, which would then be transmitted through consensus to the Security Council for implementation. The Chinese delegation firmly opposes such a malicious practice of using the U.N. Security Council as a tool to be juggled with by the two superpowers at will. In our opinion, this is also an utter disrespect for the other states members of the Security Council. The Chinese delegation cannot tolerate such a practice. We have something to say. We believe that the other States members of the Security Council, also have something to say from the bottom of their hearts. Now the Chinese delegation would like to state once again our views on the Middle East situation and on the manipulation of the Security Council by the two superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union:

The Chinese thesis that the major problems of the world today stem from the geopolitical ambitions of the USA and the USSR is well known, but what is significant is that the Chinese assert that the USA and USSR secretly collude with each to divide the world in spheres of influence between themselves and thus

maintain an infamous hegemony. Though this is the Chinese thesis, actual realities do not seem to bear out this charge of secret collusion.

An uneasy truce, based on mutual deterrence arising from nuclear power, has only recently been made less tension-packed because of the Nixon - Brezhnev detente, but people in third world countries will find it difficult to believe that America and Russia are in secret collusion to run the affairs of the world.

And, from this China has derived the thesis about the Middle East war which is set out in Chia Kua-huan's own words thus: "the sacred fight against aggression and for the recovery of occupied territories waged by the armymen and people of Egypt, Syria and Palestine has broken through the situation of "no war, no peace" deliberately created by the two superpowers in the Middle East for their respective interests, exploded the myth about the "invincibility" of Israel and demonstrated the strong fighting will of the Arab and Palestinian people, who have been greatly encouraged. At the same time, many Arab countries have successively sent out their troops to the front of war against aggression and fought shoulder to shoulder with the armymen and people of Egypt, Syria and Palestine. Many other Arab countries and people are giving active support and assistance by various means to this war against aggression, demonstra-

ting the unprecedented militant unity of the Arab countries in their common fight against the enemy. The facts prove that the Arab and Palestinian people are heroic people and that the struggle they have been waging since October 6 is perfectly just. The United Nations and all justice—upholding and peace-loving countries and people of the world are duty bound to give the most active support and assistance to it, and no one has any right to engage in obstructions and sabotage...."

The Chinese thesis is simple and straight forward. The Arabs have a just cause to wage war against Israel until they recover all "lost lands". This war should have been started a long time ago, but super-powers had manoeuvred to have a "no war, no peace" stalemate in the Middle East which helped Israel to stabilise her position in territories she had conquered. And now, when the Arabs had become united and launched a war against the Israeli Zionists, and before the objective of defeating aggression was achieved for the purpose of recovering lost territory, the super-powers had imposed a cease-fire, thus defusing sabotaging a heroic war against aggression.

China also took this opportunity to "expose" the two super powers in the light of her understanding of big power politics as played by the USA and the USSR. China sought to explain the arming of Israel by the USA and the Arabs by the USSR



as part of a secret plan to keep both sides happy and armed within limits.

This theory does not seem to fit realities, and if China believed that both superpowers were in an evil conspiracy, China should shun both with equal vehemence. But she wages a vitriolic cold war against Russia but has an over increasingly pleasant detente with the USA. This is what Kuan-hua said "However we have to point out with indignation here that the two superpowers have played a most inglorious role throughout the incident. It is known to all that the dangerous development of events in the Middle East is caused not by the Arab and Palestinian people but by the Israeli Zionist aggression and provocations with the support and connivance of the two superpowers. After Israel unleashed the recent new provocations, the two superpowers have successively supplied arms to the belligerent parties. Here it must be pointed out that in supplying arms to the Arab countries, the purpose of the Soviet Union is by no means to give true support to them in resisting Israeli provocations but to control the development of the Middle East situation so that it will not go beyond the limits it has agreed with the other superpower...."

Ambassador Chia-Kuan hua stated very clearly that China felt that the ceasefire sponsored by the USA and the USSR was a fraud drawn up in terms as evasive as resolution 242. And he goes on to explain why China did

not vote against it—it would have meant a veto. The non-superpower members of the Security Council, especially representatives of non-aligned third world countries were also in favour of the ceasefire and China could not ignore this. Egypt and some of the Arab countries were also in favour of the ceasefire and China had therefore abstained.

This is what the Chinese representative said: "All people with a discerning eye will see clearly that so-called Draft Resolution is even more ambiguous than resolution 242, and is a scrap of paper, a fraud which can solve no problems. Basically speaking, the Chinese delegation was not in favour of this so-called draft resolution. However, it was only after taking into consideration the desire of certain countries concerned that Chinese delegation refrained from voting against it and did not participate in the voting...."

ON THIS OCCASION, China did not find any other country to join her in abstaining in the Security Council. The two super-power thesis may sometimes attract countries which have something to complain about either against the USA or the USSR, but the thesis of secret collusion on every single matter of international significance does not carry conviction.

This thesis is only China's trump in her propaganda and ideological war against the USSR on the one hand and also the USA on the other. The approach to each

of the countries is different, but China seems to think it can kill two birds with the same stone of accusing both of secret collusion.

While China carries on this war against the two superpowers, and the USSR in particular, those who have their own understanding of China claim that this high moralistic posturing by China (upholding international jus-

### Atonement

That the fighting broke out on the Jewish Day of Atonement has a significance beyond the Hitlerian cynicism of choosing that particular time for the offensive. Those who died or who will die until the shooting stops are the human atonement for crimes and follies, for aspirations that take no account of cost, for the flight from reason that makes war. There is a better way and neither Israelis nor Arabs have sought hard enough to find it. At this moment, the Arabs seem to bear the chief weight of the latest sin, but unless both meet their real responsibilities, unless they can give genuine meaning to "Shalom" and "Salaam", war will continue to defile the land that is holy for so many and the atonement will go from death to death.

(International Harrold Tribune, Paris)



tie and fairplay) say that this is only an attempt to sidetrack difficult domestic strains and stresses which confront the ruling hierarchy.

China watchers may be a "despised" lot, but newspapers and students of politics in countries which permit a free press have to depend on such watchers to find information (from gossip, from inferences by studying the controlled press, from visitors, from publications and the like) about countries behind the Iron Curtain in Eastern Europe and behind the Bamboo Curtain in Asia. Mistakes are inevitable, but recent events have shown that information furnished by such watchers have not gone far wrong. Much about the Soviet Union is known only through such information, and so also about China. Where society is not open and where the press is controlled, peeping through the chinks in the curtain becomes inevitable.

In the case of China, these watchers had more or less hit the nail on the head where the Lin Piao affair was concerned. The official Chinese version on his death came unofficially from Wilfred Burchett, two years after (and this version was published in the *Tribune*). But reader interest can be maintained by newspapers and magazines only by referring to information which becomes available from all sources. **This is not to denigrate a great country, but is only a reflection of the difficulties of getting information.**

All China watchers are agreed that, like in any other country, various trends and personalities contend for power in China as in any other country. As we have indicated in this column in some earlier issues, there are three groups which have emerged into the forefront, in China, the "leftists", the pragmatists and the military. The *Far Eastern Economic Review* in a recent issue analysed the power structure after China's Tenth Party Congress. The leadership which has been placed in power by the Congress was analysed in tables on the basis of age, background, area and the like. The resulting conclusions make interesting reading. Other articles show that in addition to contending personalities and groups there are contradictions on a wide range of questions like economic policy, birth control, curbs on activities of people, the quantum of salaries, priorities in different fields of industry, the priorities in capital investments, the attitude to the USA and USSR, aid to third world countries and a host of similar questions. It would be unrealistic to think that differences do not exist about these matters, just as much as acute competition in regard to jobs and appointment in the Government machine.

As in every other country in the world, the alignments as between the three main contending forces keeps changing all the time. The *Economist* and other journals have noted that the election of "leftist" ex-red guard Wang

Hung-wen had strengthened the Shanghai group which has been challenging Chou's supremacy for some time. It must be remembered that the Tenth Congress had laid down that China's leadership must consist of the old, middle aged and young cadres. With Wang Hung-wen the leftists have had a big boost, but the military group is still very strongly represented in the power apex, although the number of military men was reduced from 12 elected at the 9th Congress to the Politbureau of the CC to 7 at the 10th Congress. But observers have noted that top-ranking military men like Chen Hsi Lian, Hsui Shi Yu and Li Te Sheng have shown an inclination to co-operate with the Shanghai group. It is suggested that the military is not likely to forgive Chou En-lai for removing Lin Piao.

Many observers still detect hangovers of separatism, Liu Shao-chism and Lin Piaoism in various parts of China, and though these may not become major trends, they are likely to provide scapegoats to the hierarchy to explain failure to achieve immediate objectives.

About the time of the Tenth Congress, certain periodicals said to be controlled by Mrs. Mao and the Shanghai group had launched an attack on intellectuals and other leaders personified by Chou Enlai, and many had wondered whether Chou would become a casualty after the Tenth Congress with pressure from the leftists and some military



men. But with the scare about an invasion (Russian) from the North and awe-inspiring propoganda about the machinations of two super-powers, Chous' supremacy is being maintained, although the controversy about material incentives for labour and the re-establishment of the old systems of examinations in Higher Education Institutions continues to rage furiously.

Other observers have raised the question whether China will after the Tenth Congress extend material and concrete help to anti-imperialist struggles in a way that will satisfy third world countries. This is something to be seen. But theoretically, China believes in the thesis of a "tremendous shock" to induce revolutions and progress in under-developed and developing countries. This will lead to clashes and tensions within each country as well as in any given

area, but it is doubtful whether third world countries will accept this thesis because most developing countries want a tension-free peace in order to develop their economic life.

**These are trends which observers from many countries, who have no particular hostility to China or have no axe to grind in the clash between China and the super-powers, have recently noted. If China were an open society with a reasonably free press to reflect it, commentators need not fall back on China watchers. This is not to wish that China should return to capitalism, but this is only to say that mankind's thirst for information and knowledge about all that is happening on earth transcended temporary curtains which are erected around some countries.**

The open society and the free press in the USA is something about which the Americans are proud although the world is watching the dirty linen about the White House (Watergate, Agnew, Cox and a whole lot of other scandals) being washed not only in the columns of the newspapers but also on the TV screen.

Such comparisons between the communist world and the capitalist world are not meant to be malicious or odious, but are statements of facts from which certain inferences are inevitable. It is one thing to say why communist countries must have societies which are not open with controlled press and information media (because of encirclement by capitalists etc) but the time has come when many feel that communist countries are now stronger enough to open their borders to a searching inspection by the world press.

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# IS IT TRUE?

## Sherlock Holmes

### \* COLOMBO'S WATER SHORTAGE?

IS IT TRUE that the continuing water-cut in the city of Colombo, in spite of torrential rains during the last three weeks, has made many to ask searching questions? That it is known that heavy rain has fallen in the catchment area of the two reservoirs supplying water to Colombo? That the repeated statements by Municipal authorities that the level in these reservoirs had not risen sufficiently is no longer accepted as gospel even by those inclined to believe such official proclamations? That not very long the suggestion that the water-cut was directly due to the failure of one or more pumping stations was hotly denied by the authorities? That it was stated that though these pumping stations needed some repairs the water-cut was not due to the negligence in not maintaining these pumping stations? That it is not known whether these pumping stations are now in working order? That it would be surprising if they had not been repaired and brought up to scratch already?

That spill-levels in the reservoirs and pumping stations

apart, *Sherlock Holmes* has heard whispers from high places that Colombo would suffer a chronic water shortage for many years to come because of the additional water which now has to be supplied to the many five-star and other tourist hotels which have come up in the city and its environs? That when these hotels were planned and built no consideration was paid to the available maxima of water from our reservoirs? That tourist hotels need plenty of water not only to maintain the cleanliness required by tourists but also for all other purposes? That with more hotels springing up like mushrooms in the city, Colombo's two reservoirs cannot cope the demand? That it is the ordinary citizen in the city who will suffer by this? That with priorities being given to everything tourist, the day is not far off when the citizens of Colombo will have to endure a permanent water cut? That it will be years before a new reservoir to augment the city supply can be built? That until then—it may be doomsday before another reservoir is built—

the citizen must suffer in patience to enable the government to earn tourist hard currency? That sooner or later the question will be asked whether this kind of tourism is worth it? That in the alternative the question will be asked whether the planners who chalked out our tourist drive should not be taken to task for criminal negligence in not providing for additional water when the new hotels were approved?

That Government must do a great deal of quick thinking immediately about this problem? A chronic water shortage will mean endemic disease which can easily break out into epidemics? That if the health of the premier city and capital of Sri Lanka suffers thus, all the tourist hard currency earned by the tourist drive will be spent in fighting the epidemics which will break out in the city from time to time? That many citizens are already contemplating digging Abyssinian type bore-wells for domestic purposes in their gardens? That those who do not have gardens plan to sink them in their kitchens or bathrooms? That the Housing Ministry would do well to insist that all new houses should sink such wells for domestic use? That hand-operated wells will not cost very much? That such water can be purified without difficulty? That the water shortage in Colombo will be only another way in which the local citizen will subsidise the tourist drive?