

# TRIBUNE

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## GANEMULLA

Not so very long ago "the people of Attanagalla" were acclaimed as national heroes because they took the law into their own hands to thwart a legitimate political demonstration by the UNP (though foolishly and incorrectly described as a "satyagraha" by its sponsors). It was even argued that the "people of Attanagalla" had only exercised their constitutional "right of self defence". And then, on Thursday, December 20, a little over two weeks after Attanagalla, "the people of Ganemulla" staged a "sit in" blocking the railway track for the greater part of the day—until they were dispersed by the Police with tear gas. It is admitted that this demonstration was *not* organised by the "reactionary" UNP. All that had happened was that "the people of Ganemulla", following the example of "the people of Attanagalla", had taken the law into their own hands—because office trains were running late in spite of the governmental order that late comers to offices would be punished. It can be argued that "the people of Ganemulla" had only exercised their democratic right of self defence against the callous negligence and apathy of the railway authorities, and in the spirit of Attanagalla they were totally unmindful of the total disorganisation they had caused on the northern line disrupting the right of travel, without let or hindrance, (which is also a democratic birthright), of other citizens of Sri Lanka. The government had not called "the people of Ganemulla" heroic fighters against the "dangerously reactionary", stupid and inefficient railway authorities. *Tribune* had warned the government that the support extended to "the people of Attanagalla" to take the law into their hands would lead to situations where law and order would be subverted all over the island, and that parochial interests would seek to obtrude upon national interests and thereby accentuate fissiparous tendencies. Ganemulla is a warning which the Government must take seriously.



# Tribunania

- \* Christmas
- \* Ravi Shankar
- \* Lafir

CHRISTMAS was celebrated on a low key this year and it will not be incorrect to say that people are approaching the New Year with a sense of fear and foreboding. This feeling, it must be admitted, is universal throughout the world, with the oil crisis and the global shortages of food. But, in Sri Lanka, there are many things which make the feeling of dismal uncertainty much worse than in many other countries. The grand tamasha over Ravi Shankar and the roof-top drumbeating for billiards champion Lafir cannot provide the necessary escapism to make people forget the grim realities which overtook them in 1973 and the grimmer realities which threaten them in 1974.

There is good reason for many to think that the Government has lost its sense of values in regard to both the Ravi Shankar show and the reception extended to Lafir. Ravi Shankar is, no doubt, a great sitar player, and he has been to Ceylon, at least on three previous occasions. He had attained great fame in the USA before his previous visits to Ceylon and he has not added any new laurels to his musical fame to elevate this *Times of Ceylon* sponsored visit last

week, into a virtual state visit on a semi-political level. He was met at the airport by Protocol, taken through the VIP lounge, and was taken about with the honours accorded only to official state guests. His first show at the BMICH was Rs. 100 to Rs. 25 a seat affair for the *nouveau riche* of the United Front era and the high and mighty of the regime who were the invitees of the *Times*. A second show at the BMICH was for the poorer *nouveau riche* with seats which cost a little less. The *Times of Ceylon* is legitimately entitled to invite any world renowned musician and put up as big a tamasha as it can, but what ordinary people would like to know is why the Government should give it a political blessing. Does it mean that the Government, caught up in the frustration of food shortages and other economic difficulties, was tempted into thinking that Ravi Shankar could make people forget that off-ration rice now cost over Rs. 4 in most parts of Sri Lanka and that in some parts the price was over Rs. 6 to Rs. 7 a measure—in spite of the fact that an extra half measure was being given in 13 districts in December, and that all 22 districts would get the extra half measure in January. Or, was it an endorsement for the shameless kow-towing the *Times* group now pretends to do before government policies?

Those who are interested in sitar music will recall that Ravi Shankar has paid three previous visits to the island and on those occasions the sponsors had charged rea-

sonable rates and Ravi Shankar was not turned into a political dignitary. One question that any thinking person will ask is how much foreign exchange, if any, had been allowed by the Government for this Ravi Shankar show. And why any foreign exchange, if any, should have been allowed at all is a crucial question—with our foreign exchange position being what it is? It is difficult to imagine that this visit could have been organised without foreign exchange for travel and fees, and if the Government has allowed foreign exchange it will only have itself to blame if public confidence in governmental wisdom is further undermined. Or, was the trip organised on the convertible rupee of UF's gem capitalism?

Marie Antoinette has gone down to history because she had told the hungry masses of Paris to eat cake if no bread was available. In Sri Lanka, the Government seems to want people to forget hunger by reading about Ravi Shankar's "greatest show on earth" in the *Times* publications. In Sri Lanka, we also tend to puff this tiny, infinitesimally small island into a big world entity, and it is in this spirit of braggadocio that the *Times* had felt brave enough to describe the first Ravi Shankar show as "the greatest show on earth."

Lafir has undoubtedly done much more for Sri Lanka than Ravi Shankar can ever hope to do, but the four-Minister reception accorded to the billiards' champion at the airport can only be explained partly by the political favouri-



tism now being extended by the Government to the Muslim community and partly to cock-eyed sense of values which has undermined the government's equilibrium. For a small Island like Ceylon, a world champion, even in amateur billiards, is something to crow about. But, billiards is not a popular game in this country. In fact there are many millions in Sri Lanka who do not know what billiards is and how it is played. Although Premier S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike enjoyed a good game of billiards, it was regarded by many to be part of the brown sahib hangover in him. The giants of the "cultural revolution", which followed the 1956 electoral victory, took special care to destroy the clubs and big homes where billiards was played on special tables. Billiards was condemned as rich man's game—a bourgeois pastime of the idle and the leisured. Only a few billiard tables survived the cultural holocaust intended to destroy brown sahibry—and these were relegated to in the poorer clubs of suburbia and gambling clubs in the towns. All credit to Lafir for emerging into world class from this sordid surrounding into which Sri Lanka's socio-cultural revolution had banished billiards.

IT IS historical irony and poetic-justice tainted retribution which made four stalwart Ministers of the United Front, which has always prided itself in destroying the brown sahibry associated with billiards, to rush post-haste to the airport to greet Lafir on his return. Later, he was

received by the Prime Minister and the President. Does this mean that billiards will regain high respectability? Does it mean that games like billiards, associated with the bourgeois west, will be now enthroned a "progressive" game of the "democratic masses" of this country? Will the Muslim Minister of Education make billiards a compulsory game in our schools—at least among Muslims students — to nurture more world champions? Internationally, billiards is not a universally popular game. The ordinary masses cannot afford to play this game. It is a game for the idle and the leisured—mainly from the richer classes.

*There is no doubt that the fact that the pugnaciously virulent, radically socialist, Sri Lanka should produce a world champion in a degenerate bourgeois game will become one of the biggest jokes in the international arena: that it was only a game, which the United Front has done everything to efface from the island, should bring the country its first world champion.*

*Is this a hint to the United Front that the very things they have sought destroy as bourgeois and reactionary will come to their rescue to bring a little whiff of fame and prestige so badly needed by this economically beleaguered country?*

Tribune has no intention to belittle Lafir's personal triumph. In fact, what we seek to point out is that his performance is all the more creditable because the government and the social milieu

in which he had to develop his skill did everything possible to denigrate the game in which he has excelled. Tribune has always opposed the witch-hunting mania of the lopsided extremism of the post-1956 ruling hierarchy which sought to destroy everything it thought was part of the

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*brown sahib* culture. In the ensuing socio-cultural stampede, which savoured more of jingo chauvinism than anything else, nearly everything that was good from the colonial era was attacked together with what was bad.

The English language, for instance, was discarded and even destroyed with even greater gusto than games like billiards, but today the self-same demagogues, who wanted English eradicated root and branch—because they believed that Sinhala could replace English for national and international purposes—are demanding that English should be taught in every village school. In the rush to destroy all vestiges of colonialism, the priorities got mixed, and a great deal of the bad was overlooked and these have now proliferated into new evils with a socialist flavouring. It will, no doubt, be some time before the dust settles and there is a fresh re-appraisal of what is good and bad, and that thereafter billiards and other pastimes which were wrongly regarded as the trappings of brown sahibs are rehabilitated.

CHRISTMAS has also now been downgraded and the Buddhist New Year has been upgraded. In the past, from about December 20 to about the end of the first week of January, it was all fun and games in this land of *lotus-eaters*. This was a by-product of imperialism when life was more leisurely—and poverty among the masses was taken as part of life about which little could be done.

Christmas and New Year was a time for charitable acts towards poorer relations and poorer people, but the more fortunate had a jolly good time at dances and parties with liquor, gifts, greeting cards' toys, balloons, Santa Claus—and all the rest of the paraphernalia which western commercialism has developed to make good profits out of the festive season.

We in Ceylon blindly imitated everything than was done in affluent UK or the USA, and nearly everybody spent what they could ill afford to keep up with the Joneses. The religious aspect of Christmas probably interested only a small handful of the religious minded Christians.

All this has gone and nobody should regret it, but what is regrettable is that a sustained effort is now being made by the local brown bourgeoisie to make a new Christmas of the Sinhala New Year as well as the Vesak—greeting cards fireworks, balloons, gifts, and the like—to make good profits. But what is even worse is that there is virtual shut down of work during the New Year holidays as well as during the Vesak holidays.

To make matters worse Christmas in regard to productive effort work during the season is also at less than half throttle because old habits die hard and the spirit of international merriment seeps through to Sri Lanka also. The top star hotels all have balls and dances quite contrary to the spirit of United Front austerity and current Buddhist ideology.

Although Christmas has been officially downgraded there is no doubt that it is still the most popular universal folk festival in Ceylon. Nearly everyone takes in part in it in one way or another. Everybody who does a "service", in the public as well as the private sector, is out with a *Christmas box* list.

But what is Christmas? Christians and their clergy men, who take themselves and their religion seriously, resent the commercialisation which has overtaken Christmas. They assert that it is the birthday of Jesus Christ. But there is no historical evidence that Jesus was born on December 25—nobody really knows the year or the place of birth of that remarkable personality known as Jesus.

IN REALITY, the festival which is now known as Christmas has pagan origins and was taken over by Christianity like so many other customs and beliefs of the countries through which this religion has spread. It is well to remember that it was not until the fourth century that Christmas was recognised as a Christian observance. But, why December 25? The answer is simple. Ancient agricultural communities were deeply concerned with the decline or increase of the power of the sun. Thus, in the northern hemisphere, appeals were made to the Gods, in December, to bring back the sun; and, there was rejoicing when the sun did begin to return from the Tropic of Capricorn sometime after December 21,



ushering thereafter the Spring and the Summer.

In his work *The Golden Bough—A Study in Magic and Religion*, J. G. Frazer wrote that the festival of Christmas seems to have been borrowed by the Church directly from its heathen rival, the cult of the old Persian deity Mithra. "In the Julian calendar the twenty fifth day of December was reckoned the winter solstice, and it was regarded as the Nativity of the Sun, because the day begins to lengthen and the power of the sun to increase from that turning point of the year." Frazer goes on: "The ritual of the nativity, as it appears to have been celebrated in Syria and Egypt, was remarkable. The celebrants retired into certain inner shrines, from which at midnight they issued with a loud cry, 'The Virgin has brought forth! The Light is waxing!' The Egyptians even represented the new born sun by the image of an infant which on his birthday, the winter solstice, they brought forth and exhibited to his worshippers—"

The festival of the "unconquered sun" in ancient Rome followed the Saturnalia, which took place from December 17 to 19. The Nordic peoples of Europe held big festivities about this time. For example, the word "yule" is derived from the Norse word "juul" which denoted pagan observances of the shortest day. The "Christmas Story" as we know it is made up of many ingredients, including the ancient pagan festivals, the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, Northern European, pagan

customs, and modern rank commercialism.

Many Christmas customs are derived from several sources. The custom of kissing under the mistletoe is a remnant of ancient fertility rites. The Christmas tree itself is probably derived from North European cults of tree worship. And the figure of Father Christmas is a blend of many beliefs. The Roman God Saturn, whose festival came in mid-winter, was a Santa Claus type personage connected with fertility rites. Among certain North European tribes there was a legend of a mysterious visitor on the shortest day. The Lapps, for example, believed in a giant who rode around on a goat just before that time. Christian tradition, no doubt, contributed to the Father Christmas image with St. Nicholas—said to have been an Asian bishop of the fourth century who was reputed to be remarkably kind-hearted and who was depicted as distributing gifts to children dressed in bishop's vestments. In some European countries, St. Nicholas was supposed to have performed his acts of kindness on his feast day of December 6.

But it was the commercial advertising of the late nineteenth and the early twentieth century which created the modern Santa—the benign, bearded, and red-cloaked old man with a sleigh, reindeer and a bag of gifts. An American commercial artist named Thomas Nast, who died in 1902, is credited with the drawings which produced the current stereotype. And the

saintly Santa with a religious image has now been superseded in the fifties, sixties and the seventies with many new Santa types. Permissive sex-oriented magazines have created a philandering sex-loving playboy Santa who distributed sex and love to lonesome pin-up style females and neglected wives whilst he went around with his bagful of gifts on the cold winter nights before Christmas.

Modern additions to this near-universal folk festival include the Christmas annual bonus, paid holidays and other fringe payments. And these bonuses are paid, no doubt, for the buying and selling of Christmas Junk which is a multi-billion dollar business in this mad, mad consumer-society world of ours.

But what the oil squeeze and the energy crisis will do to all this is yet to be seen. Already the Christmas of 1973 has been depicted as a cold black Christmas with dimmed lights and low thermostats—instead of the customary white Christmas with plenty of snow where there was merrymaking before warm fires and a blaze of lights.

*It is customary to wish everybody well during this festive season and hope that everything will be hunky-dory in the coming year. Tribune does this with a heavy heart, for at the end of 1973 everything is bleak, and the prospects for 1974 are bleaker still, in spite of the 200,000 tons of rice from China, with 40,000 tons as an outright gift.*





## CHRONICLE

## Dec. 15 – Dec. 23

*A Diary of Events in Sri Lanka and the World compiled from English-language dailies published in Colombo.*

**SATURDAY, DECEMBER 15:** The paddy production target for the forthcoming Maha season has been reduced by 25 percent: Ministry of Agriculture and Lands now forecasts a yield of 44 million bushels: this is 15 million bushels less than the original estimate. The Ministry of Trade has announced that bread will be issued on ration cards to the residents in Colombo from next week. Drug manufacturers have been given three months time to implement the Government's decision to market drugs by their generic name. Dr. N. M. Perera, Minister of Finance, has said that economic forces are outside the control of Sri Lanka. Sri Lanka's M. J. M. Lafir won his last match in the World Amateur Billiards championship concluded in Bombay yesterday: he remains as the only unbeaten player in the tournament. President Sadat of Egypt and Dr. Henry Kissinger agreed that the first problem to be tackled by the West Asia peace conference must be the disengagement of forces.

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 16:** A cyclone hit the north of Sri Lanka yesterday and has left behind a trail of devastation. The world oil crisis has affected the country's synthetic industries. Mr. Anura Bandaranaike, son of the Prime Minister, leaves for Rumania today to participate in the World Democratic Youth Conference. World famous Indian sitarist, Pandit Ravi Shankar, will arrive in the island on December 20. Over ten thousand examiners will begin marking the G.C.E. (OL) answer scripts shortly after the examination ends on December 21: this year, the results are expected to be out in two months time. U.S. Secretary of State, Dr. Henry Kissinger, is scheduled to arrive in Israel today: meanwhile, the Israeli Government is closely studying reports of Dr. Kissinger's visit to Cairo. The Middle East peace conference will get underway in Geneva next week.

**MONDAY, DECEMBER 17:** The UNP, under his leadership, is not thinking of toppling the Government either by violent or non-violent means, said Mr. J. R. Jayewardene at a meeting held in Srikotha during the weekend. It is likely that bread rationing will be extended to provinces too. It is estimated nearly 150 families are rendered homeless by the cyclone which hit the northern province last week. Seven pro-Government trade unions have condemned the strike action the Ceylon Worker's Congress proposed to launch in the plantation sector, beginning tomorrow: in a lengthy broadcast last night by the SLBC the Government warned that certain forces are trying to disrupt the plantation industry by creating a labour unrest. A positive case of cholera has been detected in Grandpass in the Colombo north area. Egypt blamed Israel for the delay in the Middle East peace conference. Fresh clashes are reported in the Golan heights between Israel and Syrian forces. The Soviet Union backed by an all time record grain harvest of 222,500,000 tons, has embarked on a great reorganisation of farming.

**TUESDAY, DECEMBER 18:** Mr. Pieter Keuneman, Minister of Housing and Construction, said in the National State Assembly yesterday that he is prepared to work jointly with the private sector to solve the housing problem though he has no "love" for the private sector. The joint opposition intends launching another Satyagraha campaign in Anuradhapura on January 8— on Duruthu Poya day. The World Bank team presently in Sri Lanka is reported to be impressed by the measures adopted by the Government to accelerate the pace of economic development. Times of India, a leading English language daily will not appear on Mondays: the management attributed the reason for the serious newsprint shortage in India. Israel agreed to attend the Geneva peace conference beginning on Monday. Arab commandos held a West German Lufthansa Jet and its occupants hostage at Athens airport for the release of two Palestinians Guerrillas held by Greek authorities.

**WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 19:** According to the findings made by the External Resources Division of the Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs, the stringent economic mea-



asures introduced by the Government in October this year, will not help to conserve foreign exchange for the country in the new year. An estimated 600,000 plantation workers came out on strike yesterday demanding adequate food and monthly wages. A team of IMF officials are due to arrive in the island next month to consider Sri Lanka's claim for another stand-by of 24.5 million Special Drawing Rights. The 38th anniversary meeting of the LSSP was held at the New Town Hall yesterday: addressing the meeting held in connection with the celebrations, the Minister of Finance, Dr. N. M. Perera, said that a revolution like the one that took place in Russia or China was not necessary in Sri Lanka to achieve socialism. Arab Guerillas who hijacked a West German Lufthansa aircraft were arrested and twelve hostages were released.

**THURSDAY, DECEMBER 20:** The Ceylon Estate Employees Federation claimed that the strike in the plantation sector did not make the work on the estates standstill, while Mr. Thondaman, President of the CWC, said that the strike was a success. The Opposition yesterday criticised the Government for not providing adequate supplies of newsprint to the *Sun-Davasa* group of newspapers. The entire opposition walked out of the NSA when the Third Reading of the Budget was taken up yesterday. Two consignments of rice totalling 16,003 tons arrived in Colombo harbour yesterday. China has had a record harvest of grain this year, according to the New China News Agency. Both Israel and Egypt confirmed that they would be present for the Peace Talks starting in Geneva tomorrow. Grave economic situation in Britain postponed the visit of Premier Heath to China. King Hussein of Jordan arrived in Damascus yesterday: reports indicate that this was an unexpected visit.

**FRIDAY, DECEMBER 21:** About 7,500 angry commuters performed Satyagraha on the rail track near Ganemulla yesterday: this was in protest against regular train delays: as a result of this Satyagraha train services along the main line was disrupted. The strike on the plantations continued without any sign of a settlement. Pandit Ravi Shankar, world famous

Indian Sitarist, arrived in the island yesterday. Three faculties of the Peradeniya Campus, University of Sri Lanka will commence lectures for new students on January 7. A grand welcome is being organised for Sri Lanka's world amateur billiard champion, M. J. M. Lafir, who arrives in the island tomorrow. The Middle East Peace Conference gets underway in Geneva today. The Spanish Prime Minister and Vice President, Admiral Luis Carrero Blanco, was killed by an explosion.

**SATURDAY, DECEMBER 22:** The district quota system of admissions to the Universities which comes into operation from January next year will not apply to Muslim students. Colombo Municipality has started a vast immunisation campaign following a positive case of cholera in Mattakkuliya. The opposition has given notice of a motion to remove the IGP from office following the Attanagalla incident. The CWC would decide on Monday whether the 5-day old strike in the plantation sector should be continued. UN, USSR, US, Egypt and Jordan addressed the opening sessions of the Middle East conference which got under way in Geneva yesterday: Israel was scheduled to address the conference in the afternoon.

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 23:** M. J. M. Lafir, Sri Lanka's world Billiard champ, was accorded a red-carpet welcome at the Bandaranaike International Airport yesterday: several ministers and VIPs were present at the airport to receive Lafir: he is scheduled to meet the Prime Minister this morning. According to the Observer, the Prime Minister will shortly appoint a high-powered committee to examine all aspects of the proposed Indo-Sri Lanka Power link. The Health Department is formulating a series of proposals to bring an end to the brain drain of doctors from Sri Lanka. The first phase of the Middle East peace conference ended with an agreement that a special military group start work immediately on the disengagement of forces along the Suez Canal.





IN SRI LANKA

# LSSP IS 38

By Lankaputra

18th December 1973 marked the 38th birthday of the LSSP. In a country where the mortality rate of political parties is fairly high, this is no mean achievement. And the LSSP has many achievements to its credit which not even its worst political foes can deny.

As is well-known, the LSSP is the oldest existing political party in Sri Lanka today. There were other political organisations (not strictly political parties, as we know them today) like the Ceylon National Congress when the LSSP was formed in 1925. But now they are no more. Strictly speaking the LSSP was the first political party ever formed here. And it introduced changes into our political life that has revolutionised the course of the Island's development.

It was the LSSP that first brought the masses on to the political arena and gave them a new sense of pride and strength in their own abilities to influence developments according to their desires and interests. To those who remember the 1930's when the workers in the cities, the downtrodden masses in the countryside and all the humble and the lowly everywhere lived in constant fear of those who ruled their destinies, the 'revolution' made by the LSSP (and later the CP) at least in this sphere needs no further elaboration.

Before the birth of the LSSP, those who were acclaimed as the country's patriots thought in terms of "Dominion Status" and such other concepts which they hoped to win by persuading the British Government of the justice of their cause, their own moderation and their loyalty to the ideals that animated the rulers of the British Empire then in

the heyday of its power. It was the LSSP that first raised the slogan of national independence (as opposed to Dominion Status) and popularised it among the masses as an object to be attained through head-on clash with the power and might of British imperialism.

IN FIGHTING for this object as well as for the betterment of the conditions of estate workers the LSSP leaders drew upon themselves the fury of the planter raj in the up-country areas succeeded in getting the British Government to invoke the draconian powers they had during the war to clap them into jail. Dr. N. M. Perera, Dr. Colvin R. de Silva, Philip Gunawardena and a host of lesser known LSSP'ers became the latest to add their names to the country's long catalogue of martyrs and heroes of the peoples' cause.

The part that the LSSP once played in forging amity

between the different communities here should also not be forgotten. The party celebrated its 20th anniversary in 1955 by daring the might and fury of the language chauvinists and racialists, standing up bravely for what it thought was the right solution to the language problem—the adoption of both Sinhala and Tamil as the official languages here with parity of status throughout the land.

Till recent times the consistency of the LSSP in sticking to its cherished principles as well as the integrity and political honesty of its leaders and the spirit of devotion and self-sacrifice of its rank-and-file were matters that were taken for granted here in Sri Lanka by friend and foe alike.

But it cannot be denied either that, under the guise of consistency, the LSSP has been adopting at times extremely inflexible and doctrinaire positions which made it miss the bus on more than one occasion. This has been attributed to the LSSP's attachment to the pure principles of Marxism-Leninism. But it can more truly be said to be due to the party's inability to take into consideration the realities of the local situation, overestimation of its own strength and contempt for others which made enemies of potential allies in the struggle for common ends until their ignominious defeat at the March 1960 elections made them turn a complete somersault on all their political strategies and tactics.

In 1947 after the general election to the first Parlia-



ment under the Soulbury constitution, the LSSP could well have prevented D. S. Senanayake from forming the first Government if it had taken the lead in issuing the call for an alternative government on a minimum programme. The Left in general, and the LSSP in particular, could have played a leading part in such a government and the fate of the country might have been different if the LSSP had adopted such a flexible course without in any way jettisoning its principles. But that was not to be, thanks to squabbles between the Left parties and LSSP intransigence.

AFTER THE landslide victory of the MEP in 1956, the LSSP went all out against the Bandaranaike Government without giving it any quarter on the theory of "Our Turn Next". If they had adopted a more reasonable approach, perhaps the LSSP would have got the chance of their lifetime when the Right-wing moved against the Left within the Government ranks in 1959. In fact, such a tacit appeal for help from the LSSP was made by a leading member of the Government close to Mr. Bandaranaike himself. But that was contemptuously rejected by the all-knowing political pundits of the LSSP.

When at last unity among the Left parties was achieved after the signing of the United Left Front agreement in 1963, the foundation was laid for the Left to play a leading part guiding the destinies of the country. Both the UNP and SLFP realised the dangers to their own future posed

by the creation of the ULF and Mrs. Bandaranaike, in particular, played her cards most skilfully.

But, without taking into account the new balance of strength created by the formation of the ULF and using the trump cards in its hands to strike the best bargain, the LSSP rushed to swallow the carrots dangled before them, in the rush breaking up the ULF. The bitterness felt by the younger idealists in the LSSP was reflected in a sentence in a polemical pamphlet entitled *Politics of Coalition*: "Three decades of sweat and toil and what have you to show? Three senior and two junior scavengers of the bourgeois state!"

To commemorate the 38th anniversary of the LSSP, Dr. Colvin R. de Silva has written an article in the *Observer* of 20th December where he has stated: "The United Front of the SLFP - LSSP - CP has proved in life to have been the correct solution of the problem that faced not only the LSSP but also the progressive masses as a whole in Sri Lanka in the postwar period." It is on this very question of the United Front, perhaps, that the LSSP has made the most serious mistakes and continues to do so today as a constituent member of the SLFP-LSSP-CP alliance.

FOR WELL OVER 25 YEARS, the LSSP stood uncompromising against any alliance with any other party, fighting a brave but hopeless fight on a go-it-alone policy for a "Samasamaja Government" or

"LSSP Government". Though it changed its main slogan later to that of an "Anti capitalist government" to accommodate other Left parties too, it was utterly unrepentant as far as the SLFP was concerned, dubbing it as another capitalist party no different from the UNP. In fact, it was no less a person than Dr. de Silva himself, perhaps the foremost theoretician of the LSSP, who characterised the SLFP as "the alternative party of the Ceylon capitalist class, nurtured and maintained by the capitalist class itself to hold the leftward-moving masses within capitalism's

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Mango is the richest source of carotene with 2,743 micrograms in 100 grams of the edible fruit. The carotene determines the quantum of available vitamin A. The vitamin A content of mango however varies with varieties. *Alphonso* tops the list with 100.1 international units per gramme of the pulp. Following it are *Raspuri* (78.8), *Dusehri* (55.5), *Kalepad* (55.1), *Neelam* (39.4), *Mulgoa* (17.1), *Rumani* (17.1) and *Desi* varieties (12.0). A south Indian variety *Padiri* is reported to approach *Alphonso* in this quality but the record for vitamin A content of 259.4 I.U. has been established with the *Mankurud* mango from Goa.



general framework, if and when the capitalist UNP Government is defeated or overthrown."

Most of the LSSP's diatribes against the local CP centred against the latter's policy *vis-a-vis* the SLFP, branding it as class collaborationism, treachery to the workers' cause, the "Popular Front line of Stalinism" etc.

The logic of hard facts proved stronger than that of abstruse LSSP theoreticians and their debacle in the March 1960 elections in particular brought them down to earth with a bang. After that, since the facts did not fit their theories they have been busy tailoring their theories to fit the facts, though still swearing by the old shibboleths of 19th century Marxism and early 20th century Trotskyism.

To begin with, they discovered that the SLFP was not another capitalist party after all but a party of the radical petty-bourgeoisie which can be made use of

to make deep inroads into the capitalist economic infrastructure. Then again, they ate their own words to enter into a united front with the SLFP and CP. And though at least one LSSP leader boasted that he would never accept Cabinet office in anything except a Samasamaja Government, he, together with two of his party colleagues, now sit comfortably in the Cabinet of Mrs. Bandaranaike.

The tragedy of the LSSP today is that from one extreme attitude towards the SLFP it has now gone on to another. From the most vehement opposition and the most bitter denunciation of the SLFP it has today all but lost its own identity, merging itself not only in the United Front but also in what is known as the "Establishment". Is it any wonder that the LSSP has lost the respect and admiration it once commanded from friend and foe alike, when its leading members now at the head of state corporations resort to the worst

practices prevalent under UNP or SLFP rule?

This is probably because the LSSP came to accept the classic communist tactic of the united front largely through empiricism after their traumatic experiences in March 1960. They have not mastered, as the Communists everywhere obviously have, the theoretical foundations on which this policy is based, a policy first formulated by the Communist International under the leadership of Georgi Dimitrov in the 1930's (ridiculed by the LSSP as "Popular Frontism") and developed in the postwar period by the Communist Parties in Eastern Europe and in China under the most complicated and complex situations.

That is why the LSSP from one extreme position of all-out war against the SLFP has today, under the guise of being a faithful partner in a United Front, turned a complete somersault to the extent of appearing to be more SLFP than the SLFP itself.



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THE MIDDLE EAST

# What the U.S. Can And Cannot Do

by Barry Brown

Washington Dec. 11,

The United States has played such a prominent role in the movement toward peace in the Middle East that some people may suppose that American policy is the controlling factor in the situation. That is by no means the case, as Secretary of State Henry Kissinger indicated in his latest news conference.

The familiar American view that a durable peace must be achieved by the Arabs and the Israelis themselves, that it cannot be imposed from without, was implicit in Dr. Kissinger's announcement that it is "extremely probable that the (Middle East) conference will begin on December 18 in Geneva." Of that Conference, "dealing first with issues of a military nature and then turning to the overall settlement," he said again that "the United States... will use its influence to bring about such a settlement."

The exercise of influence, however, has its limitations. When he was asked to discuss one of the most difficult issues likely to arise early in the projected Geneva Conference—the role of the Palestinians—the Secretary of State would say only that "this would best be settled

by the parties." He made the point even more clearly when he was asked to compare his experience in the Vietnam negotiations a year ago with his dealings with the Arabs and Israelis, replying: "in Vietnam we were one of the principal parties and our actions could directly control major decisions. In the Middle East, this is not the case."

Finally but most significantly, the rule the United States has played and hopes to play in bringing about peace in the Middle East was suggested in Dr. Kissinger's comment

on the question of guarantees. His fundamental point again was that "the issue of guarantees can be faced in detail only after a settlement has been reached."

The basis for the settlement to be sought is Resolution 242 adopted by the U.N. Security Council in 1967. It calls, on the one hand, for "the withdrawal of Israeli forces from territories occupied in the recent (1967) conflict", And on the other, for "acknowledgement of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of every state in the area, and their right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries, free from threats or acts of force," Only the Arabs and the Israelis, by compromise between themselves, can strike the balance between these requirements of a Middle East Peace.

## UN PANELS' CALL TO WALDHEIM ON INDIAN OCEAN

United Nations Nov. 25,

A United Nations panel has requested the Secretary General, Dr. Kurt Waldheim, to prepare a factual statement on the naval deployments in the Indian Ocean by the great powers. The request made on Nov. 23 was contained in a resolution on the 1971 declaration of the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace. It was passed by the General Assembly's Political Committee by a vote of 77-0 with 29 abstentions. The measure calls on Dr. Waldheim to prepare "with the assistance of qualified experts and competent bodies" a factual statement of the great powers' military presence in the Ocean "in all its aspects". It also asks that the statement be submitted at an early date possibly by next March. Under the 1971 declaration the Assembly proclaimed the vast area "within limits to be determined... for all time as a zone of peace" and urged the great powers to halt military escalation there and remove military bases and nuclear weapons.



## IN HUNGARY

## How Work Norms Are Fixed

By Janus Aesai

FOR SEVERAL WEEKS now the Hungarian cinemas have been showing the Italian director, Elio Petri's film: "The Working Class Enters Paradise" with great success. The audience watches in astonishment as the film's protagonist becomes practically a machine himself, meeting the ever higher norms with lightning-fast movements until he finally drives himself into an accident. He actually does harm to his colleagues too because the plant managers raise requirements in the workshop constantly higher, precisely on the basis of his output, as the most outstanding worker.

The Hungarian viewer's astonishment is natural: such frequent and arbitrary increases in the norms are unknown in our country. Besides, the requirements are much lower and the "production line moves more slowly" than in the capitalist countries, not only because of any technical differences, since this is also the case for the large number of machines we have imported from the capitalist countries. This claim is borne out by the comparisons made by Hungarians who have visited other countries and by experts from the West who have visited Hungary.

"Work norms must be set in such a way that the worker or group workers with average capacities, having quali-

fications for the job concerned, physiologically suited and with adequate experience can fulfil them while respecting the technical, hygiene and safety regulations and meeting the quality and profitability requirements." This is the way in which the labour code defines the general requirements and it is on this basis that experts in the personnel departments of individual factories, plants and farms set the local norms, after thorough preliminary studies and taking into consideration the characteristics of the machines, the given conditions and countless objective and subjective factors.

What does this mean more precisely? When the norm is being set it is never based on the output of the most outstanding workers, but always on that of those whose age, physical abilities and experience can be considered average.

TIME AND MOTION studies have been made of the different work processes, giving the time required for each phase of the job, such as bending down, placing the piece to be worked into the machine, etc. This is the basis for the norm but, naturally there will be differences in requirements if the machine is hard to operate, the job in hand is a difficult one or if the operation requires special at-

tention; it also depends on the illumination and noise level in the workshop, on whether there is any dust hazard, overcrowding, etc. The norm which has been established on the basis of all these factors is "tested" for six months and is only introduced on a permanent basis if it has proved successful and all workers have achieved optimum results with it.

Another feature that we should perhaps particularly stress, for it is a reason why our norms are "laxer", insofar as in Hungary special attention is given to the worker's individual needs (he needs to stretch occasionally, to rest a little with fatigue taken into consideration, etc.) and these are incorporated in the norm. Thus, if it is calculated that a part takes 50 minutes to make, this includes 2 or 3 minutes rest for the worker.

After the norms have been set in this way they are approved by the enterprise's technical director and the secretary of the enterprise trade union committee and then all workers concerned are informed in writing.

ALL THE ASPECTS of the enterprise norm regulations—the requirements in the different jobs and workshops and for the various machines, the rules for co-operation between the economic managers and the trade union organs, etc.—are stipulated in the enterprise's five-year collective agreement. Thus, every worker knows precisely what is expected of him



and how much wages he is to receive for the given quantity of work.

Naturally, the work norms are not valid forever since old machines are replaced by new ones with a higher output, manufacturing technology is constantly being advanced and the workers gain new qualifications. They have to be changed from time to time in step with the factory's technical level and the workers' improved qualifications. In such cases, the workers concerned must be informed in writing of the reason for the change and the question must be discussed with the workers at a production meeting, workshop or group meeting.

OUR READERS many also ask whether workers' earnings drop when the norms are altered. We must admit that this danger does exist because it is not possible to switch over to a new system smoothly and produce more, especially at the beginning, even if the machines are better. But the aim of the enterprises is not to economize on wages, but to increase productivity, reveal reserves and develop the optimum factory and work organization. For this reason, the possibility of a drop in wages is usually eliminated by raising the basic norm-wages. It also happens sometimes that, as a result of a change in technology, the earlier norm becomes difficult to fulfil and it is reduced to suit the new circumstances so that the worker's earnings do not drop under the new conditions.

Thus, the factory managers strive to develop a norm system which is advantageous to both the enterprise as a whole and to the individual workers as well. However, this does not lessen the responsibility of the enterprise trade union leaders; they must be constantly on guard to ensure that norms disadvantageous for the workers are not introduced and they must check whether the economic-manager respect the conclusions stipulated in the collective agreement and approved by the trade union.

In most factories a norm complaints book hangs on the wall in the workshops: if a worker suffers an injustice he writes it in the book—although of course, he can present his complaint verbally to the foreman or the trade union steward—and the economic managers must study the matter and redress the wrong within 8 days.

THE LABOUR CODE provides the enterprise trade union organs with the possibility of imposing a veto if they consider that measures taken by the economic managers are against the workers' interests or are not in conformity with the agreements signed in the collective agreement. The trade unions generally use their right of veto only after "peaceful" consultations have failed to produce results. In such cases the new norm cannot be introduced until the higher bodies have studied the dispute and handed down a decision.

This veto right was used in recent years in a metal-

lurgical enterprise where the economic managers wanted to introduce a norm which would have meant a drop of 15.6% in workers' earnings. The enterprise trade union committee used its right of veto. The higher bodies concluded that the action of the committee was justified and declared the management's measure invalid thus ruling in the worker's favour.



### Use of Water

Water stored behind a dam cannot be efficiently used (or sometimes not at all) without land levelling and shaping the construction of field channels, land reform and consolidation (to ensure tenurial security, fair rents, and viable units of cultivation), the provision of credit and inputs, drainage, soil and water conservation (including the lining of canals) in certain areas, the conjunctive use of surface and ground water, the provision of power, adequate agricultural extension services, appropriate cropping patterns, improved water management, appropriate R & D, marketing and processing facilities, better storage, by product utilisation and the rest. The whole area of land-water - farm development for a multi-disciplinary, inter departmental approach of which there is not yet enough evidence.

*The Hindustan Times*



## MORE OIL

**Russia Steps Up Oil Production**

Moscow Dec. 3.

The USSR Central Statistical Board has reported that more than 311 million tons of oil were extracted in the Soviet Union over the nine months of this year, a six per cent increase over the same period last year. Now that many countries begin to experience a shortage of oil, in the face of an imminent energy crisis, the Soviet Union is dynamically developing the extraction of this mineral. Areas promising from the viewpoint of prospecting for oil—and gas-bearing basins occupy half of the entire territory of the USSR (more than 11 million sq. km). Oil is extracted in 10 of the total of 15 constituent Republics of the Union; From the Carpathians in the West to Sakhalin Island in the East, from the sand deserts of Central Asia in the South to the areas lying beyond the polar circle in the North.

A programme for the most rational use of geological natural resources is being consistently implemented in the USSR. It consists of two parts: the stepped-up development of new highly-productive oil and gas deposits and the simultaneous expansion of oil production in areas where the working of oil fields has long been organised.

The Tatar and Bashkir oil fields are now the most powerful among the oil-bearing areas. Tataria (an autonomous

republic in the Volga area) is to produce this year more than 103 million tons of fuel, i.e., more than any other oil producing area in the USSR. Since the time when 30 years ago the first well in Tataria yielded the first tons of commercial oil, 1,225 million tons of oil have been extracted there. The first commercial oil in Bashkiria (an autonomous republic in the Southern Urals area) was obtained more than 40 years ago. However, prospecting for fuel continues. Since the beginning of the current five-year plan period (1971) seven new liquid fuel deposits have been discovered in Bashkiria. This year, the Bashkir oil fields are to produce 40,600,000 tons of oil.

A total of 424 million tons of liquid fuel are expected to be produced at the oil fields in the Soviet Union in 1973. Thus, the increase on the last year will amount to 30 million tons. Still another major step will be taken towards fulfilling the assignment of the 9th five-year plan period—to increase oil production in the USSR to 430-500 million tons by the end of the period (1975). But by that time it will be the richest oil fields of West Siberia, where oil production will equal a quarter of the USSR's total output, that will account for two-thirds of the increase in oil extraction throughout the USSR.

Parallel with the increased oil production, the export of oil has also been growing. Via the Druzhba (Friendship) oil pipeline laid through the joint efforts of the Soviet Union, Poland, the GDR, Czechoslovakia and Hungary, these partners of the USSR in the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA) have received more than 200 million tons of liquid fuel in a 10-year period (from its putting into commission till the end of 1972). In 1975, the volume of oil deliveries to the socialist countries via the Druzhba pipeline will equal approximately 50 million tons.

**Ground water**

The development of water resources borne on scanty rain or ground water is a technique still in the formative and investigatory stage. Unless research in this line is supported and pushed through with the requisite vigour and expedition, the future of dry farming will be as bleak as its past. As for equalising riparian benefits all over the country, much depends on how soon and in what manner a national water grid comes in to being. Water hunger in the south and west of the country being what it is, every effort should be made to link the adjacent river systems, viewing the link in its proper perspective as forming part of a future national grid.



# INANIA

Of This, That and The Other

## OPERATION OPIUM

By INNA

It was not Karl Marx who first said that *Religion is the Opium of the People*. True he said in his "Contribution to a Critique of Philosophy": that religion "is the groan of the creature loaded down with misery, the soul of a heartless world, just as it is the spirit of an epoch without spirit. It is the opium of the People"

It was first found however, in a 1594 text issued by *Christians!* It is in the *Satire Menippe* or the *Virtue of the Catholicon of Spain*, in cashier 18-19 of the *Nouveau Commerce*, in this form:

"But the catholic religion is the drink that infatuates us and drugs us to sleep, like an opiate well-sugared, which serves as a narcotic to deaden our limbs"

Its authors were Canon Pierre Le Roy, Jean Passerat (poet-professor), Florent Chrestien, the prevost Nicolas Rapin and the lawyer Pierre Pithou—a motley crew of people who (through Marx) has given to posterity a mouthful and to christians, even of today, a resisting line of meditation! (see pp 43-47 of *Les Religions*, de Xavier de Chalendar, *Les Religions*, Centurion, Paris, 1972)

Take a look around in the city, from the slums of Dematagoda area, the cardboard box-homes, to the shanties of the approach-road to the Big River, or take a peek at the cheek-by-jowl "homes" in Mutwal when some ser-

vice is going on in a large edifice, of any religion, where sleek cars carrying the 1973 men with their 1973 wives in their 1973 attire assemble and then put the two together to the background music of Asangraha, Maitreya, "I was a stranger and you took me in"; or "see to the widow and the oppressed, of believers of Allah" and you'll see that Karl Marx *has given* you and me food for thought, and we hope, action.

Give a dog a bad name and hang him-so goes the saying. How many people get a smattering of some subject, or plunge into hear-say, hook, line and sinker and then come out with the ingenious saying: "I knew he, or it, would be like this". No stopping to deepen one's knowledge; no truck with the saying: 'A little learning is a dangerous thing, drink deep or taste not of the Pierian spring', and so headlong they plunge and lop-off a few reputations and necks (but their own) in the process.

Marx has often suffered this fate at the hands of catholics. Marx spoke of the Christian

religion and not of the Christian *faith*. It is on this necessary distinction that all efforts at reconciling Christianity with Marxism rest. In fact Marx denounced the 'religious illusion' opposing it to the 'establishing of the truth of *this world*', and isn't a good part of the relevant section of the now-famous document of Vatican Two, on the Church in the World, dedicated to an insistence, precisely, on *this world*.

Christian *faith* had it in her always to go on ahead; christian *religion* loaded down the people with drug-like torpor. I've heard many say, unworthily, that Novenas are bad, that devotions are bad, but perhaps they themselves do not know that it is not the religious framework that is bad, but the use made of the 'novena' or whatever it is called.

If it really drugs the people and keeps them away from hope, then it is bad; if they orient themselves towards a future bristling with dynamism and faith, it is good, excellent. Marx said truthfully that there is an element of real distress and a double element of protestation and expression in so-called religion. It must be said, that christian faith, real christian faith seems to have more.





WORDS, WORDS, WORDS !

## Do I Mean What I Say?

by Canax

TAKING LEAVE is a well-loved, almost a national pastime with us. It can be authorised, or otherwise. But, as any working man will tell you, there is hardly any fun in taking authorised leave from one's work place, which is doubtless why the majority choose otherwise.

There is also another category of leave called Medical. The law allows us 21 days a year for that, and it's the unfortunate man who falls sick and is thereby forced to avail himself of that entitlement. The ones fortunate enough to be in the pink, however, get sick at the very thought of having to say goodbye to three weeks.

It does seem a waste of good leave by any reckoning and, having thought about it a lot, we decided long ago to rid the country of such unnecessary waste.

So we now fall sick anyhow, but mostly on paper, since that is neither as painful nor as expensive an exercise as the real thing. The paper costs only a buck or two and can be had just for the asking from your nearest, and friendly, ayurvedic physician.

Having a healthy work force can result in a colossal waste of valuable Medical Leave every year, but thanks to the wholehearted co-operation of the working classes in the country we undoubtedly hold

the world record for the least wastage on that score. It's a record we had long before our brilliant Lafir brought home the other one for billiards.

TALKING ABOUT taking leave, a teacher of English recently sent in his application requesting leave, and made news in the process. What exposed him to the harsh and vulgar gaze was not the act itself but the reason he gave for making the request.

Since everything has to have a reason, asking for leave needs one too. And as his reason he put down, "sick of wife".

No man in his right senses, let alone a teacher of English, can give a reason like that and hope to get away with it. The man's boss of sorts, a highup in local education, threw his request and his reason before the public not as an illustration of the lack of dedication in the teaching profession but as an example of the (limited) knowledge of English of many recently appointed teachers. What the teacher wanted to say, at least in the official view, was that he was requesting leave because his wife was sick. Could be, could well be.

Teacher's wives, I understand from the family G.P., are no more immune to sick-

ness than other people's wives. Husbands who are teachers' on the other hand, are also as susceptible as most other males to get sick of their wives. The affliction can be temporary, or it can be permanent.

But don't get me wrong. There may be no law decreeing that men *must* get sick of their wives, but there isn't any law to say they *mustn't*, either. If there is such a law governing teachers, I'm afraid I haven't heard of it. (And thank heaven I'm no teacher)

As far as I can gather, no evidence was provided at the time the case was made public to support the official view that the teacher's wife was, in fact, sick, or even to disprove the teacher's position that he was, as he said, sick of his wife.

In the absence of such proof it is less a question of giving the teacher the benefit of the doubt and more one of taking his word for it. For if indeed he was sick of his wife, I doubt if anyone can come up with a better way of saying so. He said only "sick of wife", but we have to presume he was referring to his and not somebody else's.

The trouble, I think, is that we have rushed to judgement. Why was it that no thought was given to the possibility that the teacher said sick of wife, and meant precisely that? I think I know why.

IT HAS SOMETHING to do with the education we've had all these years. Politicians



keep saying that, in the name of education, whole generations have been given a good brain-wash by our English masters; that our former rulers all but put out the patriotic fire in our people's hearts, or wherever it is such fires burn in us Ceylonese; and, finally, that they used education to instil a colonial mentality. Only politicians could, and would, know about such things. They all got the works, educationally speaking, but somehow emerged unscathed, and with their brains unwashed.

All I know is that the so-called education we got in our time effectively incapacitated the majority of us from telling it like it is or, as the popular saying has it, from calling a spade a spade.

The allegedly civilizing influence of western-oriented education made us say, for instance, that we were "put out" with a friend when, in bloody fact, we were nothing short of hopping mad at him. The problem, put another way, is that we have over the years forgotten what it is to say what we mean, or mean what we say. We have got it all mixed up (as indeed we were expected to?) Listen to any politician and you'll know what I mean.

That English teacher was, therefore, clearly, a victim of our unfortunate conditioning. He has, to my mind, got himself out of the groove but, unfortunately, we haven't. Certainly not his boss, at any rate.

Thanks perhaps to our much publicised educational

reforms, that teacher seems to have made the grade. I have not the slightest doubt he was telling it like it really is, but instead of holding him up as a worthy example for the rest of the country to see and emulate the poor bloke is derided and made to look a fool who doesn't even know his English. He sure deserves better than that.

I ask you, how many of us, though roundly sick of our wives, would ever pluck up enough courage to say it in so many words? That teacher, I tell you, is a pioneer in local Men's Lib.

I HAPPENED to mention this to a female social worker and she gave me a fascinating bit of news. Seems she has come across umpteen wives who are downright sick of their husbands but carry on regardless, and without a murmur, because they have a remarkable fondness for something called "peace in the home". She didn't know what that was and I didn't enlighten her, either. What you don't know can't hurt you, I always say, and that goes for social workers too.

Men, as far as I know, display no such curious hang-ups, and I told her so. Experience has taught men that home is just about the last place to look for peace, I said. One may find it round a Paris table, I added, but one had to be an American or a North Vietnamese to come up trumps even there. She said she hadn't been to Paris, so we let the matter drop there.

I even recalled how I overheard one Inebriated guy tell

his bottle pal over their fifth for the road that he'd never found peace in his home. "But I'm sometimes scared I'll find it, anyway", he had said, "and then I won't know what to do with it."

She listened to the story and asked, with concern, "What would he do if he found it?"

"Present it to his wife," I said, "since he has no use for it himself." She considered that an excellent and thoughtful idea.

Her own view was that in nine cases out of ten the women stayed mum not because they loved peace in the home but because they had no place else to go, but felt that that was better left unsaid. That, in case you haven't twigged on, is another glorious instance of not telling it like it really is.

A legal luminary I spoke to was of the view that poking fun at the teacher was the unkindest cut of all. He probably meant every word, the man said, and there were only three of those. Sick of wife. Precise and to the point, if not exactly short and sweet.

It seemed a most welcome development from the socio-legal point of view, I was told, for if the teacher's example could be popularised and men encouraged to take leave every time they got sick of their wives, it would sharply reduce the resort to violence for one thing, and ease the pressure on our divorce and maintenance courts for another. The legal eagle didn't understand how



SHAMBA

## NOT MAKING HEADWAY

by ANATORY BUKOBA

September 26,

It looks as if I am to be allowed a second start. The last surviving cadju plant has started to wilt, although the spinach and the solitary passion fruit tree were doing all right. My sole papaw tree is growing again. What murunga is left is well established, but small, and the surviving plantain trees are only awaiting the rains. There is one white temple flower cutting left. Someone has joined me. All his efforts today went into cooking. He dropped in and asked to be allowed to make some tea. He made an excellent lunch of jute green gram and salt, which was all we had. The coconut oil bottle which had had two dead mice in it, and at least two live ones he washed and said would be all right, but I think I wisely swapped it for another; one dead mouse, almost fossilized, came out of it today. My friend also did the coursed household chores. I did the more delicate ones, and I had a stream of visitors.

it worked, or if it worked at all, but felt it had possibilities and was worth a closer study.

A leading employer, on hearing that, could only say, "It'll catch on with the boys, I'm afraid. My only worry is, can the MRI discover a vaccine before the epidemic hits industry?"

All the two of us did not do between us, was sweep. He says he is a man of many parts. I hope I have the wherewithal to put this to the proof.

Anyway, I have moved all my things back again, although I myself have had never moved out. It was just that for security's sake. I could not leave anything, I really wanted, here unattended. The ball, a rubber one which survived so many of my absences, was the last to go, as I noticed just now. I wonder who took it. I was so tired, I slept after dinner, and awoke and got up to write this, but before doing so (I wish I could remember the correct nautical term for what I actually did) I stowed everything away as of old, so that any casual blunderer into this house, or even by design, will not see much lying around with which to walk away. I think it might be around 2 a.m. now.

September 27,

Up late and I missed all the bells that ring out from across the river. It was string hoppers for breakfast, and the *sambol* that is always packed up with them. After the usual delays, I set to work. At last I cleared the thorny mess that had defied me for so long, and I shall at last be able, now, to resume clearing onwards from

there, now that this long-standing obstruction is out of the way. Most of it went into two heaps, and a third I was able to set fire to in spite of the drizzle; the heat from the blaze was terrific and fire scorched me standing some distance away.

All the coconut shells with earth in them were turned out, nothing in them was there to save. Some of them were refilled with earth and, after seeds, orange and cotton, tress were planted in them, they were placed in a group nearer the house than they were before, in shade, and there they ought to be safe from monkeys.

A wonderful sight I saw today. Going from the house to the place where I bathe, I thought I saw a pony ahead of me on the path, which is one much frequented by people. It had its back to me and was moving away down the path. Then, momentarily I thought it was a donkey because of its colour. Then I saw its antlers. It was a fine buck, as tall as me, moving leisurely, unalarmed and I was careful not to alarm it, in case it turned round and charged. In true jungle, I would have had no such fear, here the place was too cramped. Just before the foot path begins to descend fairly steeply to the river, the beast turned right, whereas the path went left; never a sound had I heard. Astonished no little was I that such a large animal should be in such a place near the middle of the day, and moving not resting, in a place well high surrounded by human habita-



tion or land cleared on a path well frequented by people, though, not at that time. Eight months have I been here, and this is the first time I have seen a deer of any kind—and this not in captivity.

September 28,

If I thought I had dealt with the thorns yesterday, I was wrong. For I almost literally had a bellyfull of them today. They rent my shirt, belaboured me everywhere, had me across a naked tummy. In this last place I got off without a scratch, or a billy, which is not even sunburnt, might have had some rare sceptic wounds by tomorrow. I took a

toss backwards, after tripping over a root for the umpteenth time, and I was very thankful after finally coming to rest and seeing the number of pointed, short and narrow tree stumps that slid successively between my feet, that I had not come to rest on any of them, or I should surely have been impaled. Thankful I was indeed that I came through that toss safely. One of the two largest heaps that I made burnt to a cinder this evening after my fifth attempt at setting it alight with old cadjan.

The last cadju plant is no more. I would not like to say how it went because I really do not know. I shall have to look at it, or what

is left of it, in better light tomorrow. This leaves only the passion fruit plant.

Clearing is something that I like, I thinned out some thorn trees that I had left earlier by the present entrance to the land. I work slowly, observing everything. When we had no vegetables or dry fish for lunch today, I stoutly said we would do without, to save me on extra journey and the time I would have clearing—and we had a plain sambol instead with our rice.

Some papaw seeds have gone down in a nursery in our flower bed, where they are sure to get some water. I spared time for a social visit. I think our village and the surrounding countryside must be about the fastest developing place in Ceylon toady inspite of poor old me!

September 29,

It seems I have only to gain one friend to lose another. I came back from a visit, one which included a blacksmith living miles away, to find that the front of the house had been taken down, and the sound of wood being cut betrayed my companion's presence. It had rained heavily in the morning, and the porch as its want leaked water everywhere. My companion was valiently cutting wood with a knife without a handle, to repair the leaking front "room", now just a lean-to as a few readers may remember. I decided to restore the porch or front room to its original shape, and so it was done. What a difference it makes, and

### NEW PESTICIDE 100 TIMES AS ACTIVE AS DDT

London, December 6,

A new and highly effective pesticide that avoids many of the problems associated with the DDT and other highly persistent types has been developed at the Agricultural Research Council's Rothamsted Experimental Station at Harpenden, southern England. The new compound is estimated to be up to 100 times as active against insects as DDT and 30 times as effective as dieldrin. It is related to naturally occurring pyrethrum but, unlike earlier synthesised derivatives of the natural insecticide, does not rapidly break down under the action of light and air. This means that it may extend the role of synthetic pyrethrins, all of which have a very low toxicity to animals, to such tropical and sub-tropical control problems as malarial mosquitoes and black fly—the insect that carries "river blindness." The breakdown pathways of the new compound—code-named NRDC 143—have not been examined in detail, but research scientists at Rothamsted insist that it is most unlikely that unforeseen and unwanted environmental effects will emerge during trials. One important aspect of the development—apart from the compound's medium-range stability—is that its chemical structure is less complicated than earlier synthetic pyrethrins.



what a handsome house it looks now. It is even better than it was before, I think. The root comes low on the side where the rain comes from now, where the road is, which is to the North East, although the monsoon has not really set in yet. On the other side, it does not come so low, so that anyone resting on the bed in the porch does not have to get up to look out over the property. So this room also serves as a *palla*, a watch-hut at ground level, for some *pallas* are built in trees or on stilts. The blacksmith, two of them wanted three times as much to make a copy of a long-handled knife I have, Rs. 22/- for what I paid only Rs. 7/- but good as their work is, their price is beyond me now.

Within the rice in price of sugar, I shall try to cut it cut now. I bought my first condensed milk, since the last price rice some months ago, this evening to eat with some sago I had bought earlier. Jaggery I thought would be too expensive, and sugar just cannot be had. Bread has nearly doubled in price, and so I shall buy no more of that. I have never bothered with this rice ration, so its halving will hardly affect me, I hope. We did without a coconut for our night's rice and curry. The curry was rather dry without it.

September 30,

It must be true that God feeds us. To start with, there were no string-hoppers to be had. For some strange reason it had something to do with yesterday's

price hike, I was told, *Rock Buns* had gone up to forty cents. This was unconscionable and I said so, and promptly went off to the next village, where I got the *rock buns* for thirty cents from people who appeared to me to be not so mercenary minded, and there I got some string hoppers, too. For lunch there was no rice to be had anywhere, nor in the next village. Somehow I got some I thanked my lucky star.

With bread nearly twice its price, and some of it, I should think, underweight, just how are people going to manage? They say the price of rice will go up by tomorrow, from Rs. 2/00 to Rs. 3/00 a measure. If we find it difficult here, how will the poor manage in Colombo?

October 1,

It was a bit of mixed clearing I did here today, both old and new, I tidied up some parts that had grown again, gathered what had been cut before, and extended the area cleared. I was among thorns again, creeper like affairs ten foot long, throwing out branches. As they were leaning into the way I was coming, it was not easy to get at them, or even round them. I broke through the thorns in one direction, but I found, when I had finished, there were many more on the other 'fronts'. I used my long handled knife which I think gives me more protection from thorns than a *katha* would, in spite of the *katha's* longer shaft. Another big heap went up in flames. This time it needed only "one match", as

it were. In fifteen seconds it was a roaring furnace, and I thought if, when being burnt at the stake, the fire acted as quickly as this, it could not possibly hurt; although the initial shock of the flames would kill you, or rather, the overpowering heat.

Two *wattaka* or pumpkin seeds have germinated in an attic. I had not been aware they had been sowed and thought they were weeds. Although the spinach is green they have had their leaves well eaten on most of the plants, especially those that were cuttings.

### An Outstanding Elephant

Coimbatore, Nov, 25. A 51-year-old elephant christened I.G. (Inspector-General) in the Varangliar camp in the Anamalais has lived up to the reputation suggested by his name. Mr. Ponnuswamy District Forest Officer, told a party of pressmen who visited the camp that I.G. was the best trainer and had rendered "invaluable service" to the Department since he was captured in 1934. Weighing five-and-half tonnes and measuring about 263 cm. in height, I.G. is the most efficient lifter of timber in the camp of 14 elephants, the DFO said. I.G., who gets a monthly remuneration of Rs. 1,000 which is spent on his food and medicines is due to retire in 1976 on a pension of Rs. 500 after a meritorious record of service.



# Charivaria

✱ Sri Lanka ✱ Armistice ✱ Pandora  
✱ Slogans ✱ Ghost ?

CEYLON. This is still a country of so many parts, and, can a man generalise when writing about it? Jaffna, the East Coast, the South, and the Hills, what can a man know about them whose beat, say is from Anuradhapura to Colombo? What of this man I met in a bus whose home was in Puttalam but worked in Jaffna, a Tamil, who doesn't know a word of Sinhalese or English, but who appeared to be as fine a type of Ceylonese lad as one to hope to meet anywhere? Then there was the Malay I met under similar circumstances, but whom I had known before, who as I knew for a fact, speaks nothing but Malay at home; he is not unusual for there was many more like him speaking this unwritten language here in Ceylon.

There are the Kaffirs disappearing fast as they were merging with the Sinhalese; there was and is small colony of them at Kalaoya, and connected with those at Puttalam. Portuguese is still spoken by the older folk, as it is by many others who are out of true Portuguese descent.

Many Sinhalese positively admire the Tamils, and they have a much higher opinion of them than they have of their own race; but here and there you also find a few bigots. The other day I came

across a group of Sinhalese, mostly youths but a few older men scattered among them, who had come to the jungle to start doing agriculture; they had been sent, they said, by the son of a certain well-known politician. There were no formalities. They were just to choose a spot and start clearing, but what was remarkable about these people was that, though they had obtained a loan, or had been promised one for their general expenses, they had nevertheless, brought money from their own houses, each one of them, for their running expenses, that is, their own daily upkeep.

FIRST WORLD WAR. The Armistice was signed on November 11th, and the dead of that war used to be commemorated at 11 a.m. on that day. The ceremony which consists of a parade, a service and the laying of wreaths, and, perhaps, the most impressive part of it all is the two minute silence. If I am not mistaken, representatives of the "enemy", diplomats or of the Axis powers are invited, too, and that all religious denominations, Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim and the various Christian denominations, are represented in the service.

My own father took part in the battle of High Wood,

on the Somme, in 1915. His battalion was at full strength—nearly a thousand men, when it went into that battle. High Wood was taken but lost in a counter attack six hours later, and by the end of the day there were only ninety-six survivors in the battalion, of which my father was one, or I would not be here to write this. My father was wounded in the counter attack. I served in the same regiment towards the end of the second world war.

The trenches were open, and nobody could be on duty for twenty four-hour stretches. The back of the trenches were the dug-outs, these were cozy and had a fire in them. After a week to ten days in the front line the troops were sent back for a rest, and after about two months, they gradually moved up again. Meals used to be sent up at night, soup carried in big tureens and eaten with biscuits.

My father was also at Ypres, and he was wounded again at Cambrai. At Ypres, the mud was so bad, many people drowned in it. World War Two was fought on different lines, with not so many casualties.

PANDORA'S BOX. There is great confusion about education and literary among people who ought to know better. Some of the most educated men the world has known were not literate, but they had prodigious memories, without which they would not have been educated. Literacy has to a large extent destroyed our memories, bred it out of us over a large



number of generations. The myths and the fairy stories and ancient stories are handed down, stories in which are to be found profound truths. Take the case of the story of Prometheus and Pandora. I will not repeat the story here it was handed down to us by the Greek poet, Hesiod.

The story of Prometheus brought home to me the importance of fire. Our ability to make fire, and what we have done with it has largely distinguished us from animals. The train and the car has depended on forms of fire and so has the aeroplane and the rocket. We depend on fire to cook our food, and as far as I can make out, it is only the Masai tribesman who does without it, or does he?

Pandora's box was a punishment inflicted on mankind in revenge for the gift of fire it had received from Prometheus, who had stolen it from the Greek Gods. The box contained evils of every kind, and it was from the box that evils came into the world, evils such as jealousy envy and hate. Pandora was a very beautiful woman who just wanted to open the box to see what was inside, and that was the undoing of all Prometheus's work, but the box also contained Hope!

Said Shakespeare:

*True hope is swift, and flies with swallow's wings; Kings it makes Gods, and meaner creatures Kings.*

SLOGANS. *Grow More Food! Socialism! Progressive Forces! What You Will!*

There is a little verse.

*Our little systems have their day;*

*They have their day and cease to be,*

*They are but broken lights of Thee.*

*And, Thou, oh Lord, art more than they.*

This appears in Jean Lang's book. *A Book About Myths*, a book written and completed on the eve of the First World War by R. Chesterton who held that the only stories worth reading were fairy stories.

GHOST? That truth in life may seem an odd thing to write, when we are living in a complex world when we do not seem to understand much of what is going on, a little ghost story may not seem amiss here. The last war was still on; the windits had made their second expedition into Burma. I think and Wingate, their leader, was dead. I had dozed off in a South Indian train, a real bone-shaker when it came to starting off from stations, and I was secure in the knowledge that I was alone in the compartment and is my half of the carriage, I awoke to find a man in uniform sitting opposite.

He continued to sit there when I got up to switch on the light. There was a sort of twilight, and in seconds it would be dark. I knew at once, when I saw him, that he was no ordinary man, and that I was seeing a ghost. When I switched on the light he disappeared. At the first station we came to, I switched

off the light to look for a radical explanation of what I had seen, some material cause.

It was then that I noticed that the seat opposite was studded to keep the padding of the upholstery in place, but the studs were not close enough to each other to suggest the pattern of a man.

CHRISTMAS. There are many sayings like, *Give The Devil His Due*, and, *Truth Is Indivisible*, or, *Truth Is One*, which taken together mean that even if Truth was to come out of the Devil's Mouth, it remains Truth although we have it on good authority that the Devil was always a liar; which is another way of saying that nothing is so bad that there is some good in it, and to go to the other extreme, no one is so good but there is some sin in him; and this refers to human beings only, because one sin was sufficient to turn an angel into a devil, which happened in the case of the Devils; so that we know that in the angels there is no sin, nor ever was, which was only the case in two human beings, Christ and His Mother Mary, and Christ was God.

Which brings one to the first thought from which all this started, namely, that this Government, which we have in Ceylon today, has done much good, and that I say it has done almost in spite of itself. Certainly, the UNP did not do as much.

*To Be Continued*



POLLUTION**Garbage, Waste And Water**

By Jepharis

I HAVE taken these two aspects of planetary pollution together because it is impossible to write on the one without touching upon the other. In fact, Garbage and Waste-Product Pollution LEADS TO and is a DIRECT CAUSE OF Water Pollution.

While travelling to Mulleiriyawa the other day I noticed one of the city of Colombo's vast refuse dumps just outside M. C. limits at Kolonnawa. No doubt this is one of the outlets for the refuse collected from garbage cans in city homes by municipal lorries; and like our tyre dumps, a possible base for a land-reclamation project of the future on the lines of the Sugathadara Stadium, the Wanathamulla Oval (a converted marsh), the Moors Cricket Ground (reclaimed from the Beira Lake.) and Mr. Premadasa's Housing Scheme in Maligawatte.

HOWEVER not all of the refuse from city bungalows, gardens, kitchens and lavatories reaches these municipal dumps. Much of it, particularly from kitchen sinks, baths, wash-basins and lavatory commodes finds its way via our underground sewerage systems to canals, rivers, and finally the sea: or even direct to the sea.

The Kirillapone-Wellawatte canal, for instance, which 50 years ago, in an era which knew no such industrial en-

terprise as the Wellawatte Spinning & Weaving Mills, was a favourite site (near the Kirillapone bridge) for baptisms by immersion of pioneer Seventh Day Adventists of Lanka: is now so saturated by pollution caused by shanty dwellers overcrowding its banks, as well as so infested by salvinia, glyricidia and other weeds, and also running quite dry in the now more-frequent drought weather; as to make it totally forbidding even to the hardy urchins who inhabit its bordering shanties.

Perhaps 20, even 10 years ago, they might have dared to take an intrepid dip in its dirty water. Half a century ago, however, they would have used this self-same canal for bathing and washing clothes, to say nothing of frolicking in.

The water from this and other canals, such as the Dehiwala Canal, and the Norris Canal, as well as from the spill-over of the Beira Lake, and from drains leading down to our beaches; have even polluted certain stretches of Colombo's sea-shore. Of course this pollution of the sea-water from sources landward has been reinforced by pollution of the coastline from sources seaward, as for instance, the coal-dust and the oil from steamers, trawlers and fishing vessels around the Colombo Harbour with

the dirt, driftwood and other substances lapped-up by the backwash upon the shore; which has made the Fisheries Harbour, Mutwal (the home of the Fishtails Aquatic Club) for example, a quite unsuitable beach for sea-bathing, on account of the oily taste in the water, and the danger of eye infections and other sicknesses.

OWING to the increase in the population, our inland rivers and streams, too, are becoming increasingly more and more polluted than in the past, particularly where they flow through towns.

Above certain levels of altitude, however - perhaps 4,000 ft, perhaps 6,000 depending on the incidence of habitation, clear streams and pure drinking water can still be found as I can well remember on Dr. Hayman of Gurutalawa's hikes from the Uva Basin upto the Hortons some 20 years ago.

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the News

read

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# IS IT TRUE?

## Sherlock Holmes

### Muslims and University Education

IS IT TRUE that the government decision, made public through the *Daily News*, last Saturday, 22/12/73, to exempt Muslim students from the district quota system for university entrance will tend to further accentuate disintegrationist and fissiparous tendencies in this country? That it is a well known fact that the *standardisation* subterfuge, introduced by Minister Badudin Mahmud, in regard to university entrance selections were mainly devised to help muslim students to obtain an unfair advantage over other students? That when protests about this method had begun to mount a Committee of Experts were set up by the Minister to regularise this *standardisation* device under high falutin' terminology? That what the Committee had recommended was basically discriminatory against merit and sought to base selections on communal and religious grounds? That this report of the Committee to formalise and legalise the discrimination practised by the Ministry of Education had stirred a hornet's nest even within the United Front, and the Government, therefore, decided to base selections on a *district basis*"—That this decision, though against the

best interests of the nation— If the government was interested in national integration and national unity—allayed fears in certain quarters? That after this decision was made known there has come the decision to exempt Muslim students from the district quotas rule for a further period of three years? That for the last four years Muslim students had enjoyed favoured treatment which has been discriminatory against other sections of the community? That if the Muslims had a claim for special treatment, then, an even stronger case can be made out in favour of depressed class communities in the Jaffna area and several low caste communities in the Sinhalese areas?

That what is not realised is that the way to uplift backward Muslim community students is not by extending political favouritism to them but by providing facilities which will enable them to compete on equal terms with others? That this seems to have been the method adopted in the case of low-caste backward communities, but the muslims have been differently treated? That the *standardisation* devised to

help Muslims during the last four years and also the other acts of political favouritism extended to the Muslim community have done immense harm to the body politic of this country? That *firstly* people have been compelled to think along communal lines? That *secondly* the discrimination operated through the *standardisation* subterfuge has been one of the major factors for the unprecedented brain drain from this country—parents want to give a fair chance to their children to obtain education without being discriminated against? That *thirdly* such discriminatory selections have brought down university standards and the products of our universities after the *standardisation* are of such low calibre that they are of little use to the country? That the money expended by the State on university education is today plain simple waste—and has been only to satisfy narrow sectional interests? That some of the best brains on the teaching staff of our universities have sought jobs abroad? That they state quite frankly that the discrimination and favouritism practised openly has driven them out of the motherland? That no worthwhile research has either been undertaken or completed in our universities in Sri Lanka? That the situation has become worse after discriminatory *standardisation* was politically imposed by the Government? That this country is already a cultural desert? That thinking persons are reluctant to contemplate upon the future?