

TRIBUNE

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GRAIN SELF-SUFFICIENCY

Two countries, which ran short of grain in late 1972 and early 1973, and which had to import large quantities of wheat and other cereals last year, have, it is reported, attained grain self-sufficiency with the autumn harvests they have just concluded. The Soviet Union has claimed that it has collected the biggest grain harvest in the country's entire history. The weather had not been entirely favourable, nevertheless a total of 222.5 million tons of grain had been collected, whereas in 1972 it had been only 168 million tons (as compared to the 1970 record of 186.8 million tons). Nearly half this grain yield is used to feed animals and poultry. China, too, in spite of adverse weather conditions in several areas, has claimed that it has reaped a record overall harvest which has not only made the country self-sufficient in grain for its 800 million people but has also provided an exportable surplus. The total grain output is said to have "topped the 1971's 250 million tons and the increase over last year was above the rate of growth since liberation." The Chinese peasants did not wait for the government to bring water to their doorstep—as our spoon-fed peasants demand—but in certain districts "14,600 hectares were irrigated with water carried by shoulder-pole". In some districts, the drought had persisted for over 17 months, but nevertheless, with hard work, record harvests had been collected. All this has a lesson for Sri Lanka. It has been *Tribune's* view that the natural adversities which have afflicted this country during the last four years, and more particularly in 1972, were not such as to disrupt the attainment of self-sufficiency in grain with the current Maha, but man-made obstacles, bureaucratic redtape and doctrinaire political rigidities had undermined agricultural production in this country. Even with better weather in 1974, grain self-sufficiency will continue to be a distant dream if the Government is not able to devise methods: to induce (not compel) men, women and children in Sri Lanka to work harder, (carry water on their backs if necessary); to eradicate bureaucratism root and branch; and to replace rigid doctrinaire formalism with flexible pragmatic utilitarianism.

Tribunania

* Rice From China

* What It Means

IN THE MIDST of the encircling gloom, as the poet has said, Sri Lanka has been blessed with a silver lining for 1974 in the form of 200,000 tons of rice from China to help this island bridge its grain deficit which had threatened to escalate in 1974. The 200,000 tons from China will enable the Government to maintain the half measure ration throughout the year—and this meant 300,000 tons. Depending on the Maha and the Yala, the Government will be also able to issue the additional half a measure a week for most part of next year.

This assured supply of 200,000 tons from China will also enable the Government to concentrate on food production without being side tracked by pressing demands to find rice week to week through panic measures which have a depressing effect on production.

China, which is now an adept at subtle diplomacy, has chosen the best possible time to make available this rice and has thereby taken vast strides in improving its image in Sri Lanka. The editorial in the *Ceylon Daily News* on December 28, 1973, entitled CHINA'S GENEROUS GIFT reflected not only governmental thinking but also what a large number of ordinary people feel. We

cannot do better than quote this editorial in extenso: "It was really very welcome news that Trade Minister, Mr. T. B. Illangarante, brought on Christmas Day when he returned home from Peking after negotiating the 1974 protocol under the Rubber Rice barter agreement. China's outright gift of 40,000 tons of rice is about the best thing that has happened to Sri Lanka for a very long time. It comes at a time when Sri Lanka like so many other developing countries, trapped in the vice-like grip of rising prices of essential imports, near stagnant prices for her primary products, insufficient capital resources and mass unemployment, is making a desperate effort to put its economy in order without relying on outside help. Sri Lanka has decided to put her house in order even if it means doing without the 25 million SDRs stand-by from IMF. This means tough economic measures and sacrifices from the masses. As Finance Minister, Dr. N. M. Perera, said while presenting the budget in November 'Produce or perish must be the slogan of our times.'

"China's gift is in appreciation of the courageous leadership of Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike in spearheading the food drive to make Sri Lanka self-sufficient in foodstuffs and self-reliant in economic development. The gift is estimated at Rs. 100 million. But to the country going through an acute shortage of food particularly rice, her staple food, the gift is worth many hundred millions more. There is a world

shortage of rice. There is no rice in the world for love or money, Plantation Industries Minister said recently when drastic cuts had to be made in the food rations in October.

"China has also made other generous concessions in the protocol signed in Peking. She will supply a further 160,000 tons of which 30,000 tons will be paid for by Sri Lanka from the trade balance lying to her credit. The balance 130,000 tons will be paid for in rubber about 40 to 50,000 tons. Rubber has regained its bounce and the price is showing signs of rising further. It is expected to move to around £350 to £400 a ton. China will buy our rubber at the world market price and will continue to pay the premium for quality sheet rubber together with the handling charge of seven and a quarter cents per pound.

"The rice price has hit a new high in the world market and is reportedly £160 a ton now. There are however indications that the price would decline when exporting countries open their markets in the coming months. This point made by the Sri Lanka delegation was graciously accepted by the Chinese who agreed to sell rice at the price China would pay Burma under the 1974 protocol the two countries are expected to sign soon. China will not ask one red cent more than what she would have to pay Burma. These are generous terms.

"China has been a very generous giver of aid to Sri

Lanka for several years now. She gave Sri Lanka a soft loan and helped her restore the second measure in May 1970. China also gave a Rs. 150 million loan in free exchange in 1971 after the insurgency. The marble and glass Bandaranaike Memorial International Conference Hall built by her technicians at a cost of Rs. 35 million as an outright gift is a shining example of the friendship between the two countries. More recently she announced she would supply Sri Lanka with a large number of tractors for the food drive. In fact China's contributions to help Sri Lanka put her economy on an even keel give the lie direct to the government critics' charge that Sri Lanka has no friends abroad to help her in time of need. Sri Lanka's policy of non-alignment has brought her many friends from both the western and eastern blocs."

THERE IS no doubt that Sri Lanka has been especially favoured by China in trade as well as in economic assistance. And it is also a matter of record that China has not in return, covertly demanded any political concessions, so far. Those who assert that all aid is politically - motivated, from whatever source it comes, say that China has long range projections especially in regard to countries in Asia. It will not be out of place to make a brief reference to the way in which China, in the period of Kissingerian *detente*, deals with countries in Europe on the one hand, and in Asia, on the other. The Chinese, it is clear, realise

that politics like nature require time to produce tangible fruit, and the Chinese have shown that they are prepared to bide their time. But since Nixon's visit to China, there has been a sweeping transformation in Chinese policies towards the outside world. Earlier, especially during the Cultural Revolution which was dominated by the ill-fated Lin Piao, Peking had sought to expand its influence through "people's wars" and the activities of "insurgents". China has now undoubtedly reversed this policy and the categorical and unequivocal condemnation of the "insurgents" in Ceylon by Chou En-lai in April 1971 marked a major departure from earlier Chinese policies.

Though the *detente* with the USA has opened new vistas for China in Europe and the West, and though many seem to think that China has shifted her main interest to Europe because of the noticeably voiceferous diplomatic activity she conducts in the West, discerning observers insist that China takes the most concrete, purposeful and far-reaching measures to enhance her prestige first in Southeast and South Asia, and only after that in the Middle East, in Africa, in Latin America and finally in the industrially advanced countries of western Europe.

After Nixon's visit, China has become the biggest "it", the latest "done thing"—in the USA and Europe. This has led, among other things, to a scramble for the Chinese market, and European countries which had established

diplomatic relations with China even before the Nixon visit, had tried to steal a march over American competitors who were still disadvantageously placed owing to the absence of US-China diplomatic relations.

CHASING the undoubtedly vast Chinese market, Euro-

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pean statesmen from practically every ECM country—Presidents, Prime Ministers and Ministers—have flocked to Peking. All of them wanted to improve their balance of payments positions by exporting to this seemingly huge, but yet undeveloped, Chinese market. But though China received these European leaders with courtesy, China has been in no hurry to import from these countries. The Italians, for instance had spent billions of lire to stage a big and top class exhibition in Peking, but little trade has resulted from this vast Italian expenditure—which had included an expensive demonstration of their industrial capabilities. The Italian press has not hidden the disappointment felt in official circles in Rome. Two Belgian delegations had visited China, but these visits too had not brought orders for Belgium. A Belgian paper had commented that China was astute in her trade dealings “and its market will only open slowly and cautiously and that at present the Chinese will buy nothing but specialised equipment.”

Greece too had made a vigorous effort to sell its products in China, and the French paper *Le Monde* commenting on this stated: “From the purely trading point of view the prospects for the exchange of commodities remain limited. As regards the Chinese market, gigantic as it may be, is not well suited for Greek products.” The French, who have got on much better with the Chinese than most European countries, know that the Chinese

cannot be so easily mesmerised by European overtures. The paper *Le Soir* had this to say: “The Chinese have established a reputation as people who know what they want when they choose the best price for what they buy.

“Their discussions go on until the other side is worn out and end with an agreement which is more often than not favourable for the Chinese.”

It must be said that China has treated Sri Lanka very differently from the way she has treated European countries, and this is probably the experience of countries in this region like Pakistan and Nepal. But there is one European country which has already begun to do good business with China, and that is Britain, which has already among other things sold China 20 Trident planes worth about 196 million US dollars. The West German paper *Die Welt*, seeking to analyse the reasons why Britain was able to steal a march over other European countries, stated recently that Britain “has the most sober assessment of the intention of Soviet policy and compared with all other West European countries pursues the most consistent and firm attitudes towards Moscow,” and went on to suggest that this had enabled Britain to speak a language the Chinese understood and thereby were able to do good business. Furthermore, Britain is still a major force and power in South-east and South Asia, and it is to China's advantage to main-

tain increasingly good relations with Britain

It will be recalled, in this connection, that the British Foreign Minister, even after his visit to Moscow in late November 1973, had made a special point of attacking Russian diplomacy and the US-USSR detente at the NATO ministerial summit in Brussels in December 12 last. Sir Alec had warned Britain's NATO allies that the detente between the USA and the USSR was dangerous to the very existence of West European countries, and that though Russia was playing it soft now it would use its big stick (which was growing bigger everyday) when the time was opportune. Already, said Sir Alec, Russian policies in the Middle East had undermined West European well-being — no doubt by the decision the Arab countries had made to cut oil supplies. Sir Alec felt that these Arab countries would never have dared to launch the oil squeeze but for the military strength of the Soviet Union and its detente with the USA.

After Sir Alec's outburst, the French Foreign Minister Jobert had crossed swords with Kissinger during the latter's mid-December 1973 visit to Europe, when had told the superstar diplomat from Washington that the US-USSR detente had downgraded the West European countries, neutralised their political influence, and limited the possibilities of their developing nuclear capabilities. The French Foreign Minister was particularly bitter about the US-USSR agreement about the

prevention of nuclear war. What Sir Alec and Mr. Jobert have now ventured to say, publicly for the first time, is exactly what Chinese leaders have been saying for a long time about Russia, about the Warsaw Powers and NATO. China had warned all West European countries of the dangers of the US-USSR detente and China had characterised the NATO alliance as a defensive instrument against the Warsaw bloc. And now, Britain and France have echoed the same view—though in different idiom and from a different angle.

IF THIS GROWING FEAR for Soviet strength, is spread in western Europe it will naturally make these countries lean more and more heavily on the United States for military support. This emphasis on things military will naturally to undermine the immediate prospects for peace in Europe, and it would seem that politicians like Sir Alec and Mr. Jobert seem to agree with the Chinese thesis that the Soviet sponsored European Security Scheme was a Trojan Horse gift from the Russians to West Europe. A scheme of collective security in Europe would be tantamount to a recognition by all West European countries that Russia and its allies have no aggressive designs on their neighbours. Such recognition will run counter to the Chinese thesis that Russian "social imperialism" was in essence aggressive and that Russia was seeking to push its aggressive intentions through the "collusion and competition of the two great

powers". China maintains that she is threatened from "the North" and she is endeavouring to spread this fear of Russia in all parts in the world, and more especially in western Europe. It is suggested by many observers that the Chinese hullabaloo about the threat from Russia, even after the United States has begun to accept Russia's *bona fides* in regard to her current peaceful intentions, stemmed from the imperatives of the domestic situation which required the bogey of an external threat to keep 800 million people on their toes.

It is in the perspectives of a background of this kind that one must view the latest Protocol signed between China and Sri Lanka under the fifth of the Five-Year China - Sri Lanka Rice and Rubber Agreement. Ceylon must obtain supplies of rice at any price, and problem was to get firm contractual undertakings for supplies. A large number of other countries were also in the market for rice—and some of these countries like Singapore and Malaysia can pay hard currency on the spot for the rice at world market prices which has topped £ 160 per metric ton (in 1973, Sri Lanka had got rice from China around £52/53 a ton). The fact that China had agreed to supply 200,000 tons of rice in 1974 has come as a great relief to the Government and people of Sri Lanka.

THE PRICES of the commodities to be exchanged under the 1974 Agreement have not been determined. China has

agreed to fix the price of rice at the price she gets the price from Burma.

China has a substantial entrepot barter trade with Burma and practically all the rice China has supplied Ceylon over the years, under the pact, had come from Burma.

No news has yet become available about the current harvest in Burma but earlier prognostications had not been optimistic, although Burma will get enough to fulfil her export commitments under the various bilateral trade agreements Burma has in force. Weather and nature have not been very kind to Burma during the last two or three years and her agriculture has suffered.

But more disturbing than the weather have been the

Minister Fails to Lure Clerk

Gonda (U.P.), Dec. 25,

The honesty of a Collectorate court clerk here in refusing a bribe saved him his job yesterday. A poorly-dressed villager discreetly offered the clerk a bribe of Rs. 5 for an urgent copy of a document. The clerk eyed the crumpled currency note, turned his head and waved away the villager. The villager was none other than the State Revenue Minister Mr. Swami Prasad Singh, who sometimes makes surprise visits to revenue offices in the State.

disruptorist activities of insurgent armed groups in the eastern area of Burma. Reports indicate that their activities had been stepped up in the last three months of 1973. These groups have their camps on the Sino-Burmese border and also on the border with Thailand, and this facilitates the smuggling of arms and ammunition.

Burmese authorities assert that these insurgents are helped by a "foreign country" but political imperatives prevent them from naming names.

It is significant that this activation of insurgent activity comes on the eve and during the national referendum of the new Constitution of Burma. Rice is Burma's main export and it is fortunate that insurgent activity is far removed from the Irrawaddy delta where most of the rice is grown. There is a great deal of speculation among foreign observers as to the "foreign country" which supports these insurgents. Peking has denied that it has any hand in it, and Peking's official supporters say that Maoist logic implicit in the ideology of the Burmese insurgents is an indigenous home brew which had grown out of contradictions inherent in Burmese society.

If Ceylon had bought rice directly from Burma, as she has sometimes done, she has to pay cash, and hard currency at that. And Burma has little or no use for the commodities Ceylon exports, and Burma is in as great a need for foreign exchange as Ceylon does. What all this

amounts to is that, without China's entrepot trading, this kind of import and export business in South and South-east Asia would be virtually impossible. Suggestions have been made that a system of regional co-operation could replace this kind of entrepot trade under the aegis of a big power, but the countries of South Asia have not even taken the first step to organise effective regional co-operation. The ASEAN in Southeast Asia has already taken many steps, however falteringly, in the direction of regional co-operation.

China is today Ceylon's second biggest trading partner. With the new protocol, the trade will become more diversified, and with Ceylon importing semi-sophisticated equipment like four-wheel tractors, there is every possibility of China overtaking Britain to become number one partner. No sooner China is able to organise entrepot trading for Ceylon tea, and especially after Sri Lanka is able to diversify her tea industry by manufacturing green tea, as she is planning to do, then Britain will be pushed to second place without much difficulty.

All this will have major economic and even political implications for Sri Lanka and this region, but it must be recognised that China will achieve this important position *vis a vis* Ceylon through clever trading over the last 20 years - by supplying this country with goods like rice which were difficult to obtain in exchange

for goods like rubber—the international demand for which had been slipping until very recently.



Water Management

Crop planning has to be based on the anticipated availability of water in each season and release of water coordinated with drainage some to ensure the optimum soil moisture. At present crop planning is left to farmers in some States and in some others to the Agriculture Department which is responsible for supplying and promoting fertilizers and high-yielding seeds. The Irrigation Department maintains the irrigation drainage channels and releases water. Often there is no coordination between the two departments and neither can be fully responsible for crop failures. These defects can perhaps be remedied when the Command Area Development Authorities, proposed by the Planning Commission are formed. Constituted as public limited companies, these would be in charge of water management, crop selection, inputs, marketing and agrarian credit.

— The Statesman

CHRONICLE

Dec. 24 – Dec. 27

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

MONDAY, DECEMBER 24: Mr. T. B. Illangarante, Minister of Foreign and Internal Trade, returns to the island tomorrow after the signing of the Sino-Sri Lanka Trade Pact for 1974: according to Government circles the trade negotiations is a success. All persons in the city of Colombo have been advised by the Ministry of Health to take a shot of anti-cholera vaccine in view of fresh outbreaks of cholera: yesterday two more cholera cases were detected at Grandpass and Sedawatte. The Government Medical Officers' Association has shown concern over interference by politicians in the activities of doctors. The Communist Party of Sri Lanka has issued a statement on the tug-or-war between the Government and the organisers over the holding of the World Conference of Tamil Studies in Jaffna. The six major oil-producing nations in the Gulf Area agreed to more than double the price of oil they export from the start of the year. U.S. Secretary of State, Dr Henry Kissinger, reported to Mr. Nixon the proceedings of the first round of talks of the Middle East Peace Conference now being held in Geneva.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 25: The Minister of Plantation Industries and Constitution, Dr. Colvin R. de Silva, assured the plantation unions that the Government is considering the demand by the unions for a monthly wage to estate workers: the President of the Democratic Workers' Congress, Mr. A. A. Aziz, said yesterday that the DWC is calling out a token strike from December 27 to 29 in support of a monthly wage for estate employees. A number of cholera carriers have been detected by health authorities in Colombo North area. Over 200 commuters squatted on the rail track at Ulapone yesterday as a protest against habitual late arrival of trains. A Faculty

of Christian Civilisation and Studies in one of the campuses of the University of Sri Lanka will be established in 1974: Dr. Badjudin Mahmud, Minister of Education, has assured this to a delegation of Catholic Board of Education. The CID bared a major cheque fraud involving millions of rupees by certain officials of the State Timber Corporation. News of Gulf oil increases has affected the already chill economic outlook of Japan. 22 opposition members of the Indian Parliament were arrested yesterday as they tried to dig up a time capsule buried by the Government at a seventeenth century fort which they claim gives a distorted picture of Indian history.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 26: No English papers were published in Colombo today owing to Christmas holidays.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 27: China will supply Sri Lanka's entire import requirements of rice—200,000 tons—during 1974: of this quantity, 40,000 tons of rice will be an outright gift valued at Rs. 100 million with no conditions attached: the Minister of Foreign and Internal Trade, Mr. T. B. Illangarante, who returned to the island yesterday from China said that the trade mission was a success and China appreciates the leadership of the Prime Minister. According to copra trade circles in Sri Lanka the market has risen to an unprecedented new high of 740 pounds a ton: strong European buying is attributed as the reason. The total number of positive cases of cholera in Colombo has risen to seven now. More than 15,000 surplus houses will be vested in the Commissioner of National Housing by January 14, 1974. According to Government sources lorries found transporting illicit timber will be confiscated. Top French officials said that they could neither confirm nor deny reports that Saudi Arabia has signed an agreement to supply crude oil in return for arms and ammunitions. The Soviet Union's latest manned spaceship, Soyuz-13 returned to the earth yesterday. Pressure for another defacto devaluation of the Yen is continuing unabated on the Tokyo Foreign Exchange Market.



IN SRI LANKA

1973 IN RETROSPECT

By Lankaputra

1973 was proclaimed "Production Year" by Premier Mrs. Sirmavo Bandaranaike who stressed in the course of several major speeches she made at the beginning of the year that the choice was to produce more or perish.

How far the nation has succeeded in making her laudable aims succeed it is not yet possible to say. When the final figures are available, it may be that we can say that though "Production Year" was not the success we hope for, still we manage to make a breakthrough of a kind in the production sphere. More than that, perhaps we also succeeded in ending the customary lethargy of the people at large who are apt to take the 'good life' for granted and expect all the bonanzas they have hitherto got from successive governments from free food and free education to subsidies and what have you.

1973 may or may not have been Production Year. But it was certainly Austerity Year, what with food scarcities the world over and their prices soaring to astronomical heights. Dollar devaluations, floating currencies etc. etc. all helped to put up the prices of all our essential commodities so that even before the annual Budget was

presented by the Finance Minister in the National State Assembly, the Government was forced to resort to Gazette notifications to slash the rice ration and raise the prices of bread, flour and sugar.

Towards the end of the year, bread queues were the order of the day as the common man was forced to line up for hours on end to purchase a loaf of bread, and sometimes go back empty-handed. The situation somewhat eased when the Janata Committees took over the distribution of bread from errant bakers who saw in the situation another opportunity to make a fat buck. Every cloud, they say, has a silver lining. The silver lining for Sri Lanka came in the form of assistance from China who has very generously decided to give us 40,000 tons of rice free of charge in addition to the 200,000 tons given under the annual rice rubber agreement. To what extent this will ease the food situation in the country remains to be seen.

1973 opened with a constitutional crisis when Mr. speaker ruled against the Government on certain points raised by the Opposition pertaining to the legality of the Constitutional Court. This led to a minor crisis inside the Government Party Group. But

in the end it was resolved and the stage was set for the take over of the Lake House group of newspapers.

The take over of Lake House announced on May Day and given legal effect shortly afterwards coupled with the Press Council set up earlier in the year effected a kind of revolution in journalism in Sri Lanka.

The broadbasing of the company, of course, ended once and for all the rights and privileges of the members of the Wijewardene family who have been the king-makers behind the scenes for years. But the take-over also raised justification fears in various quarters that this measure, together with the Press Council, might create a government monopoly of the press in place of the Wijewardene monopoly and end the freedom of the press as we have known it in Sri Lanka all these years.

The UNP started their ill-advised boycott campaign against the Lake House newspapers under the new management. This campaign fizzled out for the simple reason that there were few outside the UNP to mourn the passing away of a family combine that had grossly abused their powers to help one particular political party to come to and remain in power.

But as the year advanced there was also a noticeable fall in the circulation of the Lake House newspapers. This had nothing to do with the UNP's boycott campaign, only the hard-core UNP'ers refusing to buy these news-

papers at the height of the campaign. The reason for the later decline lies perhaps in the conviction of many impartial, independent minded readers too that these newspapers had become publicity agents for the government in power.

Sinhalese and Tamil New Year in 1973 was made a gloomy one with the untimely death of former Prime Minister Dudley Senanayake. The late Mr. Senanayake was one who was held in very high esteem by many outside the ranks of his own party. That was why his funeral proved to be such an immense one attended by thousands upon thousands of the ordinary people waiting for long hours in queues to pay their last respect to a lost leader.

At the by election that followed in Dedigama, the late Mr. Senanayake's nephew succeeded in retaining the seat for the UNP by an increased majority, though the SLFP candidate himself increased his poll over the 1970 figure.

But what proved a landslide victory for the UNP was the by-election at Colombo North following the death of former Minister Sugathadasa. Here the UNP romped home with a 17,000 vote majority, the highest at any by election since 1947. The austerity measures introduced by the United Front Government on the eve of the Budget perhaps had a lot to do with this runaway victory for the UNP.

The big news inside the ranks of the SLFP-LSSP-CP United Front was the crisis

created by the rift in the CP. Ever since their 8th Congress, the CP had been split right down the middle with rival factions led by Dr. Wickremasinghe and Keuneman respectively holding separate conferences of their youth leagues and women's organisations and even marching in separate formations in the United Front May Day procession.

The final break came when the Wickremasinghe wing was summoned for a "confrontation meeting" by the Prime Minister and later told that they could not be considered as members of the UF any more. Keuneman immediately convened a meeting of his own followers to pledge continued allegiance to the United Front and the political decisions of the 8th Congress and to ensure his own continuance as a Minister in the UF Cabinet.

Since then the split in the CP has been complete with the Keuneman group setting up a separate party headquarters and press too in Maligakande. To all intents and purposes, they have been accepted as the Communist Party by their SLFP and LSSP parties to ensure the continuance of the United Front.

Inside the UNP, J. R. Jayewardene assumed leadership of the party after the death of Dudley Senanayake and at once began to give the party a new look and a new direction. As we have already noted, his first attempt to appear before the masses as UNP leader through his campaign to boycott Lake House

newspapers proved a flop. But luck came his way with the austerity measures announced by the Government in October.

Mr. Jayewardene immediately started his satyagraha campaign to get for the people "food, rain and justice". His first forays in Colombo and Kandy were successes in a quiet way, judged by the crowds that flocked to follow him to sit down on the public roads. But the latest satyagraha at Attanagalle ran into trouble.

Thinking that the UNP was trying to beard the lion in his own den, SLFP'ers resorted to counter-action barricading the roads and preventing the UNP cohorts entering what they considered was their own exclusive territory.

The UNP's appeal to the Police to clear the roads went unheeded, giving rise to grave apprehensions on the part of many regarding the security of law and order in the Island and to doubts concerning the inviolability of the fundamental rights enshrined in the constitution.

The year ended with the LSSP celebrating their 38th anniversary and the UNP holding their annual sessions at which they have promised a new constitution if they come to power.



THE MIDDLE EAST

Terrorism and International Law

by BARRY BROWN

Washington, Dec. 21,

If the Government of Kuwait will not take steps to assure appropriate punishment for the five hijackers in its custody, perhaps it will become possible to conclude that the very extent of the latest horror has finally begun to drive home some essential truths—that it is always dangerous to use terrorism for political purposes; that the more mindless the acts of terrorism become, the more likely they are to damage the very causes they profess to serve; and that governments which condone political terrorism weaken the whole fabric of international society, and thereby ultimately diminish their own security.

In one very specific and tragically graphic way, the danger of giving free rein to pure fanaticism was demonstrated when four high officials of the Moroccan Government turned out to have been among the 30 persons killed in the bombing of the Pan Am Airliner. Criminals who act in utter disregard of the safety of innocent bystanders are obviously quite capable of doing in their own sympathizers as well.

But in a more abstract sense also, the self-defeating nature of political terrorism can be seen in the concern of several Arab spokesmen

about the effect the Rome murders may have on their position at the Middle East Peace Conference. They evidently assume that the Palestinians staged their latest outrage on the eve of the meeting in Geneva in order to make the point that no peace can endure that does not take account of Palestinian interests. The other Arabs, while committed to achieving justice for the refugees, do not want to see their efforts to serve their own interests tarnished by association with the hideous tactics of the guerrillas.

Responsible Arab leaders also understand that the most extreme demands of the Palestinians call for nothing less than disestablishment of the State of Israel—and the Israelis cannot be expected to negotiate their own suicide. The Arabs could indicate their acceptance of that fundamental promise by underlining their verbal condemnation of the latest killings with effective support for moves to bring the killers to justice, either through prosecution or extradition.

Speaking for the United States at the conclusion of the United Nations General Assembly, Ambassador W. Tapley Bennett put the point in even broader context, when he said: "...revulsion and disapproval are not enough.

The world awaits forthright efforts by this world organization to find means of safeguarding the innocent. To the shame of us all, we have failed to find common ground which would enable us to take adequate measures to prevent these offences against mankind."

Ambassador Bennett was referring particularly to the General Assembly's rejection of an American proposal to convene an international conference on terrorism. The Arab states led the opposition to that suggestion and to the draft convention the United States submitted for discussion at the proposed conference. Ultimately, however, bringing international outlaws under effective sanctions of international law will surely prove the only constructive way to deal with a situation that threatens the personal safety of everyone who travels and undermines the security of every element of international society.

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TRIBUNE, January 5, 1974

DELHI POLITICAL LETTER

Foundation for Longterm Indo - Soviet Cooperation

by K. RANGASWAMY

At the conclusion of the Soviet Communist Party Chief, Leonid Brezhnev's visit to this country both sides felt greatly satisfied with the outcome of the Delhi talks. It was not a debate where points scored could be listed. Whether the talks between Mrs. Indira Gandhi and L. I. Brezhnev were successful or not depended on what each side was hoping to achieve. The talks have to be assessed not only from the point of view of what has actually resulted but also from the angle of whether they furthered the objective of both sides to strengthen Indo-Soviet relations.

The Soviet leader's primary interest appeared to be to explain his country's basic foreign policy and to secure India's understanding and appreciation of it. The maintenance of close and friendly relations with India is a corner stone of Soviet policy as explained by Brezhnev. These friendly relations began long before Brezhnev occupied his present position as he himself has said. Any misunderstanding on the basis of inadequate knowledge of each other's policy and thinking must be removed at the earliest opportunity. When the Brezhnev Nixon detente was announced, Mrs.

Gandhi, speaking in Ottawa, expressed the hope that the detente would not hurt the interests of the small and medium countries in the world. What Mrs. Gandhi said found support among many developing countries. The Soviet leaders were not happy with Mrs. Gandhi's assessment though they did not react in formal manner.

Brezhnev took the opportunity of his meetings with Mrs. Gandhi to explain to her the Soviet thinking on detente with the US. One may assume that Brezhnev's views on the subject, as outlined in his address to the members of the Indian Parliament, were elaborated in greater detail in his talks with Mrs. Gandhi. He told the parliamentarians that "the Soviet Union is fully determined to go further along the charted path of detente and peaceful cooperation". In President Nixon the Soviet leaders found a leader who is equally determined to establish peaceful co-existence irrespective of ideological considerations. But the Soviet leaders realised at the same time that powerful forces existed in the US which were against this detente. Who knows who would succeed Nixon and what policy he would pursue?

The Soviet Union is however carefully watching how the detente will be translated in to action by the US. The agreements provided for greater economic cooperation between US and the Soviet Union and for the most favoured nation treatment for Soviet Union.

These are yet to be implemented. Even as the Soviet Union lent personal support to Nixon, the Soviet leaders did not fail to note how internal compulsions forced Nixon to embark on the dangerous move of alerting his armed forces throughout the world. The Soviet Union is obviously proceeding warily but still in the hope that Nixon, despite his weakening position on account of the Watergate revelations, would stick to his part of the agreement. Mrs. Gandhi, after listening to Brezhnev went so far as to say, as was stated in the joint declaration, that she "welcomed the detente between the USSR and the US as a step towards relaxation of tensions in the world." Many more steps however remain to be taken so that the "detente can and must give real practical benefits to all countries, big and small, develop and developig. In other words Mrs. Gandhi agreed that the detente is worth a trial.

Although nowhere has it been mentioned that China figured in the Delhi talks it would be unnatural if the two leaders did not touch on the subject, be it ever so briefly. China is yet to normalise with India and the USSR.

Ever since the days of Hindi-Chini Bhai-Bhai and subsequently too, India has not been in a position to assess Chinese thinking. The Soviet Union has been endeavouring in the last several years to normalise relations with China but with little success. If Brezhnev could give an idea, learning from the Soviet Union's own relations with China in the past as to how the Chinese functioned and conducted business it would certainly be worth listening to. It has never been the Chinese practice to react to overtures of friendship or cooperation promptly and the tendency has always been to remain silent for long periods in order to force more concessions in their favour. If the Chinese could not think of improving relations with the Soviet Union which has rendered so much help to build up Chinese industrially and otherwise why should they think of improving relations with India except on their own terms?

The Soviet Union would certainly welcome India normalising relations with China but not by capitulating on principles or offering extravagant concessions. Mrs. Gandhi is of course the last person to yield to pressures. The Indian assessment, which coincides with that of the Soviet Union, is that China is not keen on improving relations with India and that there is nothing further that India can do to evoke China's response. In the 1965 Indo-Pakistan conflict China gave an 'ultimatum' to India while she did nothing in 1971 Pakistan war. It is not difficult to guess why

China chose to remain silent in 1971. Or, could it be that China appreciated India's stand on the Bangladesh issue and so kept quiet?

The Soviet Union is interested in furthering the scheme of Asian Collective Security Brezhnev dealt with the subject in some detail in his address to the Indian parliamentarians though it did not figure much in his talks with Mrs. Gandhi. Brezhnev made the concrete suggestion before the parliamentarians that "It seems opportune to hold a thorough and comprehensive discussion of the idea of collective security in Asia which would help trace a common approach acceptable to all States concerned, to the problems of peace and security in the continent. In a word, we are calling for an active, broad and constructive discussion which would help to bring about a deep understanding of the urgent tasks. The opportunity has arrived and the present situation in Asia has created adequate prerequisites". Obviously the Soviet Union proposes to take the initiative. But the question of calling a conference of Asian countries is bound to take time and meanwhile India has agreed that the first step in this direction would be "mutually beneficial cooperation among the States and the strengthening of peace and stability in Asia through common efforts by all the States". If closer cooperation in the economic and other fields could be established among the Asian countries the time would then come for

considering security and related problems. This is perhaps the reasoning behind the omission of the term 'security' in the joint declaration and turning the emphasis on 'stability and cooperation' to begin with.

Brezhnev's visit to India came at a time when India is busy finalising its Fifth Plan. India was naturally interested in exploring the extent of assistance which could be expected from the Soviet Union to attain the plan objectives. Secondly, India was keen that the trade arrangement between the two countries should be put on a long term basis so that detente or developments did not create complications. The Soviet Union has generously agreed to cooperate in the expansion of the Bhilai steel plant to produce seven million tons and of the Pokhara steel plant to 10 million tons, in the construction of the Mathura oil refinery with a capacity of six million tons and in the development of industrial cooperation in the fields of nonferrous metallurgy and other industries. The Soviet Union has agreed to extend credits for all the projects.

The trade agreement, now concluded, is for a period of 15 years and shall be continued unless terminated by six months notice by either side. It is difficult to foresee which side would propose termination of the agreement and so it would continue in force for a long time. Discussion on a deep sea fishing agreement is inconclusive. Although the protocol attached to the

agreement on trade and economic cooperation has not been released, it lays down the procedure for implementing the agreement. A great deal would depend on how India proceeded to get the agreement implemented. This would require a determined person to conduct the negotiations and a person who would have access without difficulty to the top leadership in the Soviet Union. It would be erroneous to assume that everything would automatically flow to India from the Soviet Union by reason of the agreement India must energetically pursue the matter to carry the Soviet leadership with it at every stage.

A criticism often levelled against Mrs. Gandhi is that

she has allowed India to become a camp follower of the Soviet Union. The reasons why India should maintain good relations with the Soviet Union are familiar and far too many to need repetition. But it must be asked why India should spurn the Soviet Union's friendship. Has India anything to offer to the Soviet Union except the prestige of having a big non-aligned country in Asia as a friend? Even so it must be maintained that India has differed from the Soviet Union in several issues. On the issue of detente between the USSR and the US, Mrs. Gandhi has not completely changed her thinking even after appreciating Brezhnev's exposition. Speaking at a

banquet she gave in honour of the Czechoslovak Communist Party Chief, Dr. Gustav Husak, a few days after Mrs. Gandhi again said that "detente should not be restricted to any region or continent but extend to the entire family of nations. The fear that natural resources are being far depleted and that weaker nations may not get their share could easily arouse desperation leading to conflict. We feel therefore that in order to achieve lasting peace and stability it is necessary to undertake earnest efforts to reduce poverty and disparities within countries and amongst them". To hold and express independent views is one thing.

BULL CALF FROM THE DEEP FREEZE

A healthy Hereford bull calf born in England on June 7 after being kept in suspended animation in deep freeze as an embryo, is regarded by scientists as living proof of a technique which could be of great value to livestock breeders. The scientists at the Agricultural Research Council (ARC) unit of Reproductive Physiology and Bio-chemistry in Cambridge had taken fertilised eggs from a Hereford nine months ago and slowly frozen the eggs to -196°C . Six days later, the eggs were thawed and two were transferred to the uterus of a host mother, a Friesian Hereford Cross. Only one of the eggs developed. According to the ARC, the technique is a long way from commercial application, but it could eventually prove to be of great value. By using this technique valuable livestock could be transported easily as frozen fertilised eggs from one part of the world to another and stocks of fertilised eggs of exceptionally good parents could be kept for use long after the parent animals were dead. The ability to store frozen embryos would also overcome the danger of losing valuable genetic factors in breeds at the moment not of commercial interest and therefore likely to become extinct. Although the calf was born normal, the ARC said it was too early to say whether the technique was likely to cause genetic change.

—B.I.S.

But to dissent for the sake of dissenting to proclaim one's independence would only result in losing friends who have stood the test of time. Another point has been brought out in the joint declaration itself. The Soviet Union attached great significance to the conclusion of the agreement with the US on the prevention of nuclear war "which not only meets the interests of the peoples of the USSR and the US but also serves the cause of strengthening universal peace".

But Mrs. Gandhi, while welcoming the agreement and appreciating Brezhnev's efforts expressed the hope that "this relaxation will also spread to other areas of the world and bring an end to the nuclear arms race which is a threat to mankind." Nuclear war could be ended not by the agreement alone

but by destroying the nuclear stockpile.

On the question of Asian collective security too India has moved forward with caution. But it would be erroneous to suggest that this caution is born out of the anxiety to restore normal relations with China. Why should India give up the friendship of the Soviet Union and improve relations with China? It is difficult to comprehend why India's good relations with the Soviet Union prohibit the establishment of good relations with other countries. Dr. Kissinger reacted well to the Indo-Soviet talks when he said that the Delhi agreements would not hurt American interests. Dr. Kissinger also announced that he would be visiting India early next year. New Delhi is obviously pleased with the American reaction produced by the Indo-Soviet talks in Delhi.

On the Indian Ocean being a peace zone an attempt has been made to discover differences between India and the Soviet Union. The joint declaration said that a fair solution must be found by discussion among all the parties concerned. The position now taken by the USSR is an advance on its earlier abstention for voting when the issue was considered by UN General Assembly. Does India want the Soviet navy to withdraw from the Indian Ocean unilaterally? Of course not. India can understand that nuclear vessels in the Indian Ocean can easily find targets in the Soviet Union and China but not in the western hemisphere. The problem is

primarily for the two super powers to sort out.

There have been critics who said that the Soviet Union has kept its options open in regard to its relations with Pakistan. But the reference to Pakistan and Bangladesh in the joint declaration came at the initiative of the Soviet side. Both sides have called for the admission of Bangladesh into the United Nations and asked Pakistan to recognise Bangladesh.

As defence ministers and officials did not participate in the talks it can be assumed that India's defence requirements were not discussed. The Soviet Union has always been ready to meet India's requirements. It is now for India to decide what defence strategy should be

evolved in the light of the development of new weaponry in the world and work out its total needs. Buying piecemeal would not serve any useful purpose.

Brezhnev returned home happy with his visit to India. He has found in Mrs. Gandhi a leader of understanding and ability. Personal relations between them have been strengthened. A measure of the importance attached by the Soviet Union to friendship with India is the participation in the Delhi talks of three out of 15 members of the politbureau of the Central Committee of the CPSU, the other two besides Brezhnev being Gromyko and Kunaev. (Foreign News & Features).



MOTHER IN LAW HOLDS THE KEY

New Delhi, Dec. 26,

If family planning is to succeed in the rural areas it is important that older women—the mothers-in-law—were first motivated to accept the small family norm, according to Dr. D. P. Chowdhury, Director (Public Cooperation) Department of Community Health New Delhi. In the gerontocratic social structure of the village, it is still the "authority of the mother-in-law that determines the number of children the daughter-in-law should have" and "the son or daughter-in-law dare not listen to the family planning worker against the verdict of the mother" he pointed out in a paper on "Population growth in the rural areas". The paper was presented at the international conference on population growth and human development organised here recently by the Indian Social Institute under United Nations auspices. Dr. Chowdhury suggested that as part of family planning programmes, these women should be encouraged to become members of "mahila mandals" and through these mandals be educated in population programmes and made to participate in campaigns. The older people could provide the leadership for spreading family planning in the village he said.

INANIA *Of This, That and The Other*

Private Property And Land Reform

By INNA

It is, by and large, an interesting programme of work to follow the trend of thought of some of those persons called Popes, the vast phalanx of (almost all) sincere men, and look into some of the most forthright and apposite statements they have made about social questions, especially within the last several decades.

Let's take the question of private property, and see a slow but steady climb:

"The right to private property, even of productive goods also derives from man's nature... however it is opportune to point out that there is a social duty essentially inherent in the right to private property" (April 1963, Pope John, Pacem in T.)

Four years later:

"The world is given to all, not only to the rich. Private property does not constitute for anyone an absolute and unconditioned right. No one is justified in keeping for his exclusive use what he does not need, when others lack necessities... If certain landed estates impede the general prosperity because they are extensive, unused or poorly used, or because they bring hardship to peoples, or are detrimental to the interests of the country, the common good sometimes demands their expropriation..." (26th March 1967, Pope Paul VI, Develop. People)

THE LAND REFORM LAW of 1972 is a great step in the

right direction, but one wonders if the rural rich *mudalalis*, who on occasion can look decrepit and poor (like an undertaker trying to look sad at an 8,000 Rupee funeral) are really affected by this Law. What about the landowners, shopkeepers and moneylenders?

In the long run, will those who do not have land really get help? I met a group of sincere, eager youngsters who were more than willing to give away their so-called white-collar for no-collars, (not even brown ones) and get down to the land. Their efforts at getting some land despite the promises, made the Tintin collection a set of Montessori books, and this in full 1973!!!

Is there any assurance from Land Reform Act that more fertilizer, more seed, more loans, more know-how, more Japanese tractors (costing about one-fourth the price of the larger tractor, according to Rene Dumont, French agronomist) will come the way of the new farmers?

It is not the content of the Law that may be failing, but

the way in which it will be applied. It is not so much the matter then, as the manner which is in question. Bureaucratic red-tape can tie some in knots, as those few young men found out to their utter dismay. On the other hand, it can bring in a more egalitarian society. Or will it strengthen capitalism?

We hope that the alienation and distribution of land will be so done in practice as to ensure man's true dignity.

We know that Earth, Air, Fire and Water are free, absolutely free as they came from Nature. It is man's inhumanity to man that has let ownership of it a self-aggrandising affair. That Fire isn't free, my friend Pandita will tell you, for he bought 12 boxes of sealed (sealed, mind you!) matches, only to find that each box had its full quota of burnt, used matches!

That Earth is not free is easy to see; Water we have polluted; Oxygen we sell, after heavily polluting the air with our blast-ed furnaces!

For News Behind
the News

read

TRIBUNE

regularly

TRIBUNE, January 5, 1974

TOURISTS UNLIMITED

Oh Come (Back) All Ye Faithful

by Canax

I HAVE only myself to blame, I suppose. I don't need to be reminded that it pays to advertise, only I never realised it would pay anything like 100,000 dollars, which is what the Ceylon Tourist Board has agreed to cough out to the Economist Intelligence Unit of Britain for doing what I have done long ago but kept quiet about.

If I can bring myself to blame the Board for anything it is that 100,000 dollars should change hands in payment for what, at best, is only a 64,000-dollar question, which is: What attracts people to Lanka's shores?

But I won't push that too hard, considering the inflation all around us. May be even 64,000-dollar questions don't go at that price any more. Of course damn fool questions will still fetch only damn fool answers which, I think, has been the going rate for such queries all along, inflation notwithstanding.

A leading economist from Peradeniya tells me, however, that we should consider ourselves exceptionally fortunate we got stung for only a hundred grand for asking what we did.

According to the same source there is no need to worry about how much the project is costing since we are not paying for it, anyway. The United Nations Development Program is reportedly picking up the bill, for all 100,000 dollars of it.

A FRIEND suggests I should consider myself lucky I didn't get the assignment after all. He seems to know as much

about me as I do, or thinks he does. He thinks I can only count up to a hundred; the truth is I'm scared to venture beyond ten and have never encountered the need to break that self-imposed arithmetical barrier. I'm actually operating well below that level most of the time.

So come to think of it a hundred thou would surely push me dangerously out of my depth. Even supposing I did the impossible, it would probably take me a month of Sundays to count that much money, working my way through in lots of tens, and I doubt if I'm up to that sort of exertion all of a sudden.

The *Economist Intelligence Unit*, I understand, will from now until April '74 carry out what has been called a 'Visitor Motivation Survey' to provide the answer, or answers, to our question. That is precisely what I did myself, only I did it right here whereas the EIU plans to

do it in our principal tourist markets such as America, Britain, France, Germany, Japan and Australia.

It is not for me to tell the EIU how to carry out such high-cost surveys or where to conduct them, for that matter. But I can't help feeling that by dropping Lanka from the list of places to be probed the Unit will miss out on much of significance.

I'm willing to wager anything, for instance—yes, even a 100,000 dollars—that the EIU will never come up with anything as important as this:

I was out at Katunayake doing my own thing, or a Visitor Motivation Survey as the *Economist* would have it, when I spotted a group which looked promising. What I mean is, it looked affluent as any true visitor-group should. I singled out the one who looked not only affluent but also the leader and buttonholed him for a quick interview.

Seems they were all members of an Inter-Parliamentary delegation, and I was sure he spoke for the group when he said, with feeling, "Oh, it's wonderful to be back in Lanka."

THE REMARK looked even more promising than he did. The first-time visitor is invariably a waste of time for the type of survey I had in mind, for the responses are based entirely on expectation and not experience. It is always a case of looking forward to having a wonderful time, and there is nothing concrete, or wonderful, about that.

But this particular visitor's remark clearly indicated he was an old friend of Lanka. I could think of a hundred-and-one questions to ply him with, but I started with only one.

"Do you really mean that, sir, or are you saying that to be polite?"

"Do I really mean what?", he asked.

"That it's wonderful to be back."

"Why, don't I sound as if I do?"

"I didn't mean that, sir," I said quickly and decided on the spur of the moment to play it differently. "You obviously are fascinated with Sri Lanka," I suggested.

"Indeed I am, I am."

"Would you mind telling me just what fascinates you here?"

"Well, this is god's own country," he replied, drawing deeply on a Durhill filter-tip, "and so are the people."

"Apart from the Almighty's interest in this place and its people, would you care to elaborate on your own?"

"Is this for publication?" he asked eagerly.

"Yes, sort of."

"In that case I will say this much...I've travelled all over the world and seen the best there is and the worst there is, and".

"I get what you mean, sir," I interrupted.

"You can certainly quote me on this if you like," he went on, "but there isn't another place like Sri Lanka."

"You mean there's only one Sri Lanka in the whole wide world?"

He thought for a minute and said, "As far as I could see, yes".

"That's an extraordinary bit of luck," I agreed. "Tell me, sir, when were you here last, and do you notice any change?"

"To take your second question first, no, the country is the same old beautiful place and I gather the only thing that's changed is the weather, which is indeed a welcome change. Now for your first question, I was here about two months ago."

"Oh, as recently as that!" I exclaimed. "You obviously have left your heart behind with us."

HE TOOK me aside gently by the arm. "You're the best straight-faced joker I've come across," he whispered in my ear. "I don't know anything about my heart being here, but my damned electorate is here, and so is my wife. But for heaven's sake don't quote me on that."

Now this will be of immense statistical significance to our Tourist Board, Regular visitors like him are, or should be, considered far more valuable than the once-in-a-lifetime tourist who's here this year and gone forever thereafter. Having your own doubling up as visitors is a fail-safe bet for they have to come home to roost. Not all the 100,000 dollars will help the EIU come up with a trump like this.

The Economist is also unlikely to trip across another important point if its survey is confined only to Lanka's principal tourist markets while leaving Lanka itself out in the cold. And that point is, what attracts Ceylonese to Lanka?

This is a unique phenomenon that no other country can boast of. When, for instance, the British decide to up and out to Down Under or wherever, that's it, and there's no truning back; they're finished with Britain and don't mind saying so.

When Ceylonese pack up for pastures new, they too mutter dark threats about never setting eyes again on this blessed place. But one year out, at most, and there is a marked mellowing in their feelings for the old country. And since they never quite get round to the irrevocable step of cutting the umbilical cord that is their citizenship, getting back to mother Lanka for a nostalgic look seems the most natural thing in the world. If that looks more like the return of the prodigal, loving mother that Lanka is, she never rubs it in. Mothers, I guess, are always like that.

Based on this, I'd say that the best way of increasing our tourist inflow would be to implement a carefully planned campaign of exporting Ceylonese not merely to Britain, as we seem to be largely doing at the moment, but to every corner of the globe. Supposing we push out 5,000 of our countrymen this year, that's 5,000 up on our tourist figures next year, or the year after at the latest.

IN CASE the Tourist Board is interested to know what attracts most Ceylonese to Sri Lanka, I'll reveal what

I picked up. Said one such Ceylonese: "Katte sambol and egg-hoppers!" He began to salivate at the very thought.

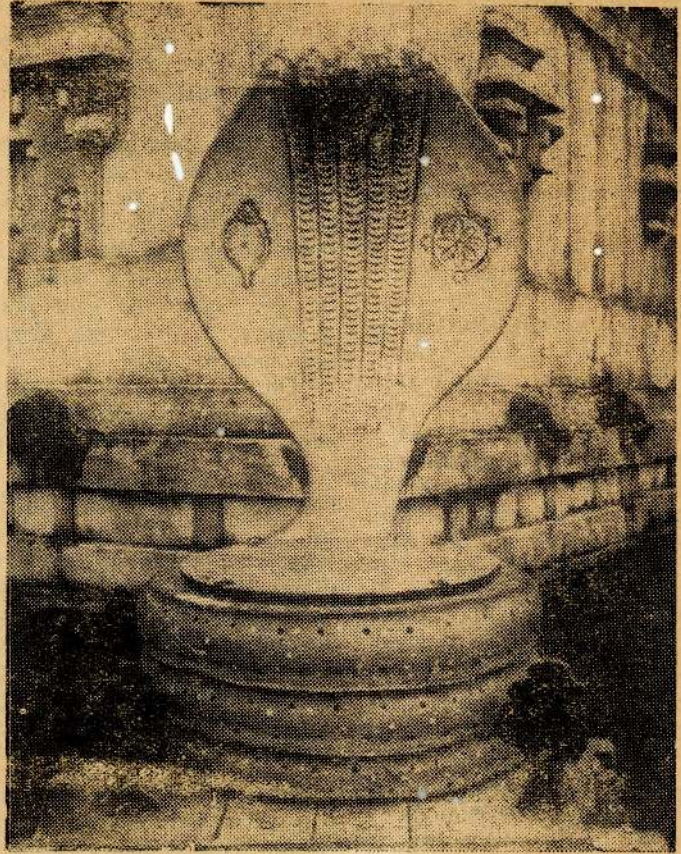
Other visitors no doubt have other reasons for coming here. FEECs seem to be very popular with most. "It's money for jam," said one foreigner, "and, boy, a little goes a long way!"

The pattern of our tourist inflow also suggests there may be another good reason for them flocking here when they do. With the terrible winters they had out there year after year, said one, they were lucky to get out alive. And just about anywhere was better than home. So I think those 100,000 dollars would be better spent dissuading Europe from effecting any improvements in their weather.

I conclude from all this that we shouldn't be wasting our time and money improving the natural beauty this country boasts of in order to attract more people to our shores. For instance, we have enough hill country to keep visitors *oh-ing* and *ah-ing* for decades to come.

But worse than trying to build additional mountains would be any attempt to move the ones we already have just so a few people can enjoy our scenic beauty while staying put in Colombo. Even this business of indulging our guests can be taken too far if we don't watch it.

True, we are diverting the mighty Mahaweli, but I have it on the highest authority that that is no tourist gimmick. It's good to know.



PUTHUR

Nagathambiran

— Temple of The Sacred Cobra —

by R. C. Thavarajah

Superintendent of Police, Vavuniya Division

The pulsating throb of the drums, the resonant peal of the Temple Bells, the vibrating music of the Kavaddi Dance filled the air mingled with the persistent cries of the trade stall vendors selling their wares.

That was Festival Time at the Nagathambiran Temple "Pongal" ceremony. In sharp contrast to the cacophonous din, the jostling crowds of thousands, the hamlet of Puthur reposed peacefully nestled in the verdant green fields and sylvan glades as I visited the place in the early hours of a Friday morning.

STRANGE STORY. Puthur, deriving its origin from the two Tamil words "Puthu" meaning "New" and "Oor" meaning village or town sprouted into prominence in the heart of thick jungle and a strange fascinating story was narrated to me by the Chief Trustee, Arumugam Vallipuram. According to him, well-nigh 200 years ago, in the tiny village of Puliya Pokkani, which is about 35 miles away from Vavuniya, a very devout Hindu Mother gave birth to a baby girl and a baby cobra. The mother nursed the babies with loving and tender care and, with the passage of time, they both grew up as her two children bound together by strong filial love. The presence of the cobra in the house attracted other members of the same clan and the house was teeming with them.

One day, the mother in a fit of temper drove the child cobra away with a broom stick. Driven by the pangs of grief and disappointment, it sought shelter in a solitary Palu Tree in the jungle. Strangely enough, neither the mother nor the daughter, after latter herself married, had any issues after the departure of the cobra. Arumugam's grandfather Kumara was a very pious man.

A few days later, in a vision, he received the message "I have sought refuge here. Look after me and I will bless and protect you." The venerable man succeeded in locating the Palu Tree in the jungle and quickly built a small temple of modest means to venerate the sacred cobra. The humble

structure has now "blossomed" forth into the present imposing edifice hallowed by the thousands who throng during Festival time.

Vallipuram, thinks that the sacred cobra, in the course of time, had propagated the species. A nostalgic smile brightened up Vallipuram's benign bronze face which strangely does not bear the furrows of time or care despite the four score years of a well spent life. As I watched him, the sun light seemed to have dropped a perpetual "Diadem" on his silvery hair. He recalled the rollicking times he had playing as a young boy with the many cobras, most friendly and perfectly innocuous playmates who used to crawl all over the place in their home.

They all had their favourite dish of milk and fruits served generously to them by Vallipuram's parents. "Truth sits upon the lips of dying men..." To this significant pronouncement of Robert Browning, I would add, that having met Vallipuram, aged men who read the scriptures fervently and avidly, who in the winter of their lives await the Great Call, can never descend to falsehood. I have no reason to doubt Vallipuram's story and, so today, the temple attracts so many devotees who, out of deep sense of gratitude fulfil various vows for favours granted and make their votive offerings.

EFFICACIOUS CURE. The earth dug from the side of the temple well which is a

source of perennial supply of water even during the severest drought mixed with the "theertham" water is an efficacious cure for victims stung by even the most venomous snakes. Arumugam Vallipuram was very emphatic that not a single patient who received this treatment died as a result of snake bite poisoning. The sacred cobra born of that Hindu Mother's womb is said to be still alive and sometimes makes its appearances to some of the privileged and fortunate devotees.

Its permanent abode is the Palu Tree which itself is an aboreal wonder. Although the hollow of its trunk extends from the base right up to the bifurcation of the branches it has stood like a solid sentinel for many years withstanding many a storm. Even the last cyclone which ravaged the North did not damage or destroy it.

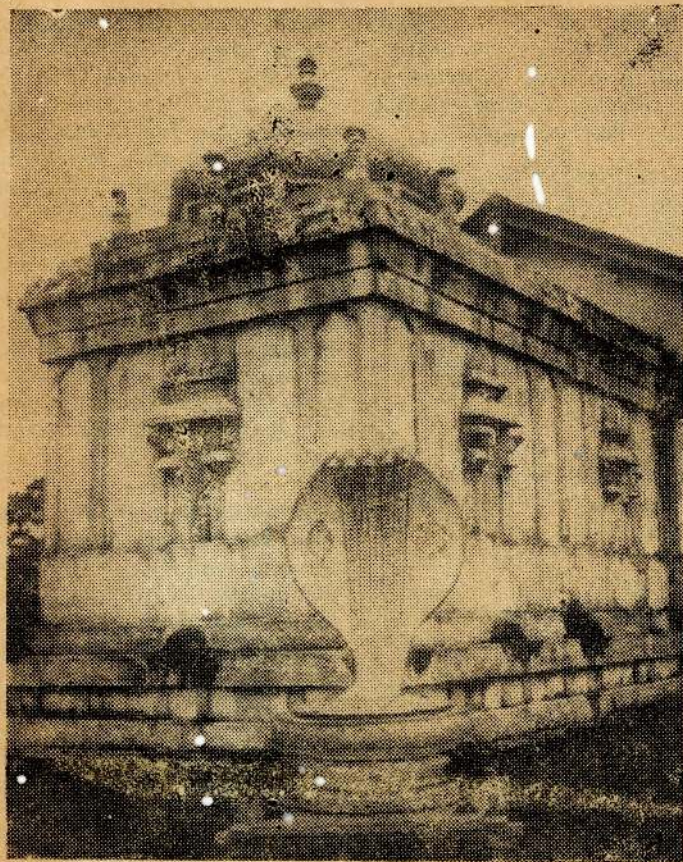
MYTH OR MIRACLE? Is all this a Fable, Myth or Miracle? A non-believer may most superciliously laugh at what he may call "Summer Moonshine or Midsummer madness." Ridicule, they say, "is the first and the last argument of fools." Others, who relentlessly insist on the certitude of empirical actuality may laboriously propound some scientific proof that all this which lacks adequate evidence is mere superstition. It was Prof. Henry who said "The person who thinks there can be any REAL conflict between SCIENCE and RELIGION must be either very young in Science or very ignorant of Religion."

Laws—a thing which can never be demonstrated.”

RELIGIOUS VIEWS. Mrs. Ratna Navaratnam, Former Director of Education, Northern Division in her inestimable book entitled “KARTIKEYA the Hindu Testament of Wisdom”, which is a lasting contribution to Religious Literature for its erudition and research, has explained the Hindu concept of Serpent Worship. She says: “The image of the five headed serpent is found under trees invariably in the outer porches of the Hindu Temples. The serpent worship in the temples was an ancient custom. PERACIRIYAR explains in his commentary to MEIPATTIYAL of Tholkappiam, the meaning of the word “ANANKU” indicating eighteen kinds of minor deities. NAGAR or serpent is one of them.

There is a popular belief that Muruga manifests himself in the form of serpents to exhibit His Grace to his devotees. Paripadal refers to a fearful sight of a five-headed serpent and its tender, young one which frightened the young devotees at the temple of Thi-uparankuntram. It is interesting to note that this fearful sight was later discovered to be a water flower nestling in the hill-pool. Any how, the imaginary fear suggests the existence of belief in a five headed serpent in the abodes of MURUGA”.

HISTORY SERPENT WORSHIP. B. N. GOKHALE in a very interesting article in the Bhavan's Journal on Serpent Worship refers to the Naga-



A view of Nagathambiran Temple

Some of us who are not tutored in the marvels and mysteries of Science may consider it unethical to bludgeon the strong, unflinching and unquestioning FAITH of simple people unspoiled by the sophistry of learning and Logic by imposing “superior discursive reasoning”. It has been said that “Errors of Deep Faith are better than the best thoughts of Unbelief”, and it was Prophet Mohamed who said that the philosopher who has not realised his metaphysics is “Just

an Ass bearing a load of books.”

The Human mind by its nature regards anything OUTSIDE a commonly accepted framework of RATIONALITY as IMPOSSIBLE and rejects it. Speaking for myself, I hold with Tryon Edwards who wrote “SCIENCE has sometimes been said to be opposed to FAITH and Inconsistent with it—but all science, in fact, rests on a basis of Faith, for it assumes the permanence and uniformity of Natural

panchami Festival. According to him, on the day of the Festival Hindus perform some form of serpent worship which was at one time widely prevalent in almost all parts of India and also in the West before the spread of Christianity. He also refers to a book entitled "Tree and Serpent Worship" prepared by James Fergusson on the authority of the Secretary of State-in-Council in London in November, 1868. He writes "the learned author has principally dealt with the subject on the basis of sculptures of the Buddhists Topes at Sanchi and Amravati, but in his introduction he has also touched upon the existence and nature of snake worship in the West at some time or other". Raosaheb Mandlik referred in his paper to Mahabharata also but expressed the opinion that the solemn sacrifice named Nara-

yan Nagabali was sanctioned by Vedic ritual, and the Altaireya Brahmana explained and exemplified the Rig Veda of which it is a compliment by referring to the chanting of the Sarpa Mantra, the earth itself being regarded as the Queen of Serpents, a queen of all that moves (sarpat).

In Christopher Isherwood's translation of the Bagvat Gita Sri Krishna revealed his divine manifestation "I am Vasuki, God of snakes.... I am Ananda by the Holy Serpent". Dr. Paranavithana has stated that the representation of a Nagini (Cobra Queen) with Multi-hooded head dress standing on a lotus pedestal holding a Purnaghata (pot of plenty) in one hand and a flowering branch in the other is unique. Nardadeval Wijesekera in his brilliant book early Sinhalese Sculptures says "in early Buddhist Lore Nagas are frequently portra-

yed as attendants or guardians of the Buddha, which explains why they usually appear on the guard stones of the Buddhist monuments of Ceylon." Dr. S. R. Kottegoda in his recent article in the Times Annual says—"Naga Gal or Cobra Stones are found in ancient sluices and are symbolic of the snake kings and represent the sacred guardian of waters."

I left Puthur that evening with a feeling of envy for the inhabitants of the tiny hamlet—poor but happy in the natural wealth of contentment seeking solace in the quietude of the "cool, sequestered vale far from the madding crowd—ignoble strife skirted by the jungles where the wild elephants roam. They are happy in that refreshingly healthy isolation and confident NAGATHAMBIAN protects them from all harm. Their frugal meal has been earned with the sweat of honest labour.

They are the real sons of the soil who receive the real increase of the seed thrown into the ground in a kind of continual miracle wrought by the hand of God in their favour as a reward for their innocent lives and their virtuous industry. As dusk fell, casting a mantle of silence wafting you to a pleasantly remedial serenity, I seemed to have established a lasting rapport with the villagers who, like their patriarch Arumugam Vallipuram believe that "FAITH makes a life a discipline of goodness, creates new hopes when those of the world vanish, throws over the decays of life, the most gorgeous lights, and awakens LIFE—even in DEATH."

RECESSION FEARS HIT COMMODITY & SHARE MARKETS

Falls in commodity prices on world markets indicate that the Arab oil cuts could hit developing nations where it hurts most—their foreign currency earnings, dealers said yesterday. Copper, lead and tin declined last week as speculators began shedding some of their holdings. The dealers said these moves were prompted by possible recession in the industrialised world and a possible lack of slipping. The International Wheat Council has warned that lack of oil is making ships idle. Lack of transport could seriously disrupt wheat movements, the Council said. Prices on European stock markets continued to slide amid fears that the growing oil shortage will cause worldwide economic depression. "There is not a buyer in sight," said one broker in London, where the Financial Times share index, already at a 21 year low slipped further. Share prices were sharply down in Milan (Italy), Zurich (Switzerland), Frankfurt (West Germany) and Amsterdam (Holland).

STANDARDISATION

— Admission to University on a district basis —

"At the very mention of the word admission on a district basis everyone know that this is a veiled form of taking in students in proportion to population on ethnic and language, basis. This is repugnant to the very principle for which the United Front Government stands and repugnant to the fundamental principle of socialism."

Thus noted Mr. V. Satchithanandam, advocate and formerly lecturer of the University, at a special meeting convened by the Parents Teachers Council, Colombo, on 20th December to discuss "Standardisation for University Admission."

"In the standardisation that took place since 1970, you take the mean marks and assign 50 marks to that mean and convert all the marks in that proportion. Thereby the order of the merits of the candidates is not changed. But there is standardisation between subjects, which is very salutary. The Ministry of Education has done this very well by even applying the method of standard deviation. But there is a fundamental error in stating that the admission to University will be on district basis. In one district itself we find vast difference between one school and another, and between one area and another. So weightage should be given

to backward areas as was recommended in Robin's Commission. This could be done by standardising every school from which candidates are presented to the Entrance Examination. This is easily done by taking a random sample from each school and by applying usual corrections. This method will be very accurate.

"At the very mention of the word admission on a district basis everyone knows that this is a veiled form of taking in students in proportion to population on ethnic and language basis. This is repugnant to the very principle for which the United Front Government stands and also repugnant to the fundamental principle of socialism. A so-called expediency that was resorted to in 1970 to meet a political situation has now been raised to the pinnacle of principle educational policy. The solution to this is for all who believes in justice and socialist society to raise a united protest against this injustice. Such measures, as are contemplated by the Ministry of Education, will only strengthen the reactionary forces both among the Tamils and Sinhalese and will do lasting harm to the march towards socialism.

"This form of standardisation on regional basis which finally boils down to selection on ethnic and linguistic

basis is unique to Sri Lanka. Even in India when certain places in university selection were reserved for 'scheduled castes', it was done to make up for the backwardness of the members of the 'scheduled castes'. Various methods of standardisation are resorted to in other countries, but nowhere in the world could you find a parallel to this methods of sandardisation on

Highest Price Rise in Japan

Tokyo, Dec. 25,

Japan has suffered the worst from the rapid rise in consumer prices among the 10 advanced countries including the United States and Western Europe during the past 10 years according to a survey conducted by the Economic Planning Agency here. It shows that Japan's consumer price index last October was the highest with 186.5 (1963 equals 100) followed by the Netherlands with 176 and Britain with 175.5. The United States followed next with 147.7, while West Germany recorded the lowest consumer price increase with 144.4. The average price increase among the 10 nations during the period under review was 4.4 per cent. However, the figure for Japan was 5.4 percent, although Holland was slightly ahead of Japan with 5.6 percent.

—K.V. Narain in Hindu

regional basis, which is in effect on a racial basis.

"The Tamils must realise that they will not stand to gain. To fight as Tamils would make it worse. They must remember that this conflict is not an antagonistic conflict but a non-antagonistic conflict. An antagonistic conflict is one where there is no common interest between the two groups, as for instance the capitalistic class and working class. In a non-antagonistic conflict there is a common interest between the two sides as for instance, workers and peasants, where they have a common interest to abolish capitalism and bring about socialism. Therefore any conflict of this nature between the Sinhalese and Tamil masses is a non antagonistic conflict. They have to be solved by negotiations

without resorting to any divisive steps," he further added.

The President of the Parents Teachers Council, Proctor Mr. T. Duraisingham, J. U.M., while thanking the Guest speaker approached the problem from another angle. He pointed out that the discontent and dissatisfaction over admission to Universities is mainly caused by lack of employment opportunities. He reminded the audience the situation in the 1920s when the Labour movement was built up by the late Mr. A. E. Goonesinghe on a united basis where workers of all races actively participated.

But with the depression of the early 1930s and the lack of employment opportunities that unity was lost and Goonesinghe turned to communal politics.

Later in the early 1940s during the 2nd World War, because of the special situation of Ceylon, there were plenty of employment opportunities and communalism died down. Because Goonesinghe had taken up to communal politics and later due to full employment opportunities, communalism died down, Goonesinghe could not stage a come back and the then emerging left forces were able to build up their Trade Unions on communal unity.

This shows that full employment opportunities is the solution for all communal conflicts. However, this could only be achieved under a socialist form of society.

After deliberating on this subject the Council decided to hold a further discussion meeting.

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IS IT TRUE?

Sherlock Holmes

* OIL IN KACHCHATIVU ?

IS IT NOT TRUE that many eye-brows were raised in scepticism when Deputy Minister Ratne Deshapriya Senanayake announced in the National State Assembly on December 11 that "Sri Lanka engineers" had reported the discovery of oil deposits in Kachchativu—the tiny island in the Palk straits whose ownership is in dispute between India and Ceylon? Whist making this announcement during the course of the committee stage of the Budget Debate this highly volatile Deputy Minister for Planning and Economic Affairs had proclaimed that ways and means should be found to exploit the resources? That this Deputy Minister, who is fond of exaggeration and hyperbole, had also proclaimed that the oil deposits discovered in Mannar by Soviet scientists would be sufficient to meet 75% of Sri Lanka's requirements? That many in Sri Lanka think that the Deshapriya claims have to be taken with a big pinch of salt?

IS IT ALSO NOT TRUE that if any investigations were carried out on Kachchativu, it must have been done with the greatest secrecy without the people on either on the northern shores of Sri Lanka or the southern shores of South

India from knowing anything about it? That Sherlock Holmes has made the most searching inquiries along the Northern coast of Sri Lanka, from fishermen, from navy men and customs' men who patrol the area to find out whether any "Sri Lanka engineers" had prospected for oil in Kachchativu? That the only answer Sherlock Holmes received was that they knew nothing about it, that they had seen nothing happening when they passed by Kachchativu, that if anything was done it was done by invisible men using invisible equipment?

IS IT FURTHER NOT TRUE that Sri Lanka "engineers," as such, do not know how to prospect for oil? That there are specially-trained technicians and scientists who use highly sensitive equipment to discover oil deposits? That off-shore prospecting, which was essential in the case of Kachchativu, required even more sophisticated equipment? That such equipment cannot be hidden inside of a cloak or a raincoat? That when the French teams and the Soviet teams prospecting for oil along the Northern coasts it was something which everybody in the area knew about? That the dynamite

blasts as borings were made could be heard for miles around? That in the case of the Deshapriya claim about Kachchativu it is suggested that only divine revelation, if one believed in it, could have given the "Sri Lanka engineers" in question such vital information? That in this event, the engineers should be produced before Dr. Abraham Kovoor to give him an opportunity of testing their veracity—about the power of the supernatural to impart such mundane knowledge to these engineers?

IS IT NOT A FACT that this questionable Deshapriya statement can lead to a serious misunderstanding with neighbouring India? That if the statement made by a responsible member of the Government is a fact, which can be substantiated and proved, it is one thing? That, it is a totally different matter, if the boast was only to jump the gun in the dispute between the two countries for the ownership of the island? That, further, those who know something about the oil drilling in the Mannar area have assured Sherlock Holmes that no estimates have yet been made of the oil available in the area? That the drilling now in progress will only show whether there are commercially exploitable quantities of oil in the oil well now being sunk? That if this particular point did not yield sufficient exploitable oil, then new borings have to be made before the first really successful deposit is struck? That Deshapriya's fairy tales will do Sri Lanka more harm than good?