

TRIBUNE

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OIL CRISIS: THE LESSON

OPTIMISTS in this country, who had thought that the Arab oil-producing countries would supply Sri Lanka with crude oil on terms and prices far more favourable than what they were extorting from Western countries which had supported Israel, received a rude shock last week when the Government was compelled to push up the prices of all petroleum products to heights unimaginable a few months ago: super petrol, Rs. 12.50 a gallon; ordinary petrol, Rs. 12.00; diesel, Rs. 4.80; kerosene, Rs. 3.60, and so on. There is nothing the Government could have done about it. Minister Subasinghe, who had toured the Middle Eastern Arab oil producing countries must, no doubt, have reminded the Arab leaders that Sri Lanka had suffered serious economic handicaps by cutting off diplomatic relations with Israel for the cause of the Arabs, but this does not seem to have made any impression upon the rich oil sheiks. The pro-Arab organisations in Sri Lanka are now making frantic appeals to the Arab League to treat Sri Lanka as a friendly country and not to treat her in the same way as they treated pro-Israeli countries: But these appeals will fall on deaf ears. The oil rich, money mad, Arab and Iranian oil monarchs are no longer fighting Israel: they are fighting the rest of the world, especially the undeveloped world without oil and energy sources—to squeeze the last ounce of profit while the going is good. The Shah of Iran now dreams of a new world empire, similar to the one carved out by the ancient Persian Emperor Darius, through the deft use of oil. What it amounts to is this: this new Islamic aggressive invasion of the world with the Koran in one hand and Oil in the other. Gaddafi, Feisal and the Shah preach the virtues of brotherhood whilst denying the Brotherhood of Nations the oil which makes things go—so that the oil producers will rule the world. *But this will never be.* Other sources of energy will soon be found. Mankind will also change its ways of living—as they should—giving up obsession for materialism and unlimited growth to enable man to live attuned to a healthy nature without polluting his environment.

Tribunania

✱ Prospects For 1974

WE HAD REPEATEDLY warned our readers that the year 1974 was likely to be more difficult in Sri Lanka than the year 1973. This was not based on astrological calculations but on a realistic appraisal of the situation that was developing in Sri Lanka in the complicated context and under the devastating impact of the visible and invisible confrontations prevalent in the world and in this country today taken in conjunction with the explosive banks to which the world has been pushed by the Arab Israeli war of October 1973. The whole edifice of detente labouriously built up by Nixon and Kissinger, Brandt and Brezhnev, Mao and Chou, Bhutto and Mrs. Gandhi and several others has been thrown into the melting pot by the Middle East conflagration. The spirit of the detente has so far prevented or at least postponed a global military, possibly nuclear Armageddon but an economic maelstrom with far-reaching socio-political implications has been let loose upon the world.

The Arabs and the Iranians have become conscious, if not obsessed with Oil Power and through deft and immensely clever use of embargoes, cutbacks and price hikes have brought the rest of the capitalist world, with the ex-

ception of a few countries, to crawl in supplication before the oil sheikhs, temporarily at any rate. The economy of the capitalist world has been shattered, and it will take some time for the oil consuming countries in the capitalist world to take effective counter measures to checkmate what can undoubtedly be described as economic aggression by the Arab Iranian oil bloc. Western Europe, industrially developed and economically advanced, is today in shambles. Oil cutbacks and price hikes have made vast industrial empires to totter. Britain and France have already begun to desert their EEC partners and are negotiating special agreements with Arab countries, especially Libya and Saudi Arabia, to barter sophisticated military equipment for long term supplies of crude oil. No western nation, before this, would have dreamt of supplying this kind of technologically advanced military hardware to non-European, recently subject, countries like Libya or feudalistically backward company (Aramco) states like Saudi Arabia. Libya and Saudi Arabia will soon possess some of the finest and most modern military equipment from Britain and France, just as Iran has got similar supplies mainly from the USA in exchange for oil. In earlier times, only the more obsolete military equipment was traded in for oil or any other primary product from underdeveloped countries. Today the Arabs and the Iranians can get anything and everything they want in exchange for oil.

The socialist bloc of countries have for the moment, at any rate, been insulated from the oil crisis because Russia produces enough for her present needs and for some of her allies. China produces adequate quantities for her needs. By controlling consumption, especially by limiting the number of private cars on the roads, socialist countries can keep consumption to the quantities they produce or get but all these socialist countries, if they wish to expand more rapidly, need more energy, which in the context of the current technological standardisation means oil. It is said that at the present rate of development, Russia too will need to import oil in a few years. But a controlled economy can tailor its consumption to production or availability, but in the capitalist world it is a free for all fight on the basis of the survival of the fittest.

The Arab-Iranian oil bloc have a great deal of justification for what they have done. They argue that even oil producing countries had supplied crude oil relatively cheaply, the multi-national oil companies based on western Europe and the USA had doubled and quadrupled the price to consuming countries thus making immense profits which staggered the imagination. These companies had been safeguarded and protected by the armies and navies of the capitalist nations. This was not all, argue the Arabs. They point out that individual countries, which imported the oil, levied heavy customs duties to earn even revenue.

And the consumer in each country paid high prices because of the profits made by the oil companies and the customs duties imposed by individual governments. Even where the import and refining of oil had been nationalised the profits made by the state organisations was so high that they could not complain about "exploitative greed" by the oil producers. The oil producing countries, rightly demand that the profit grabbing activities of the multinational companies should be broken, brought under control and their profits reduced.

At the same time they demand, that governments should reduce their customs levies because it was not right to make revenue out of Arab oil which was sold at low prices. The *Aththa* last week brought home this aspect of the problem to its readers. At the "high price" of \$ 15 a barrel of crude, the oil cost Ceylon only Rs. 2.75 a gallon. The current Fees was Rs. 1.78 a gallon and the refining charges were only 50 cents a gallon at the very most. All this added up made the cost of every gallon, including Fees just Rs. 5.03, but the customer was charged Rs. 12.50 a gallon. The difference was no doubt the profit made by the state owned Ceylon Petroleum Corporation. The figures for the profit on kerosene and diesel were not available, but even if the current selling prices were less than the cost, the total profits of the CPC was high enough to make anybody's mouth water.

This aspect of the matter has not been paid adequate attention, but this is something which must be tackled by the capitalist world if a satisfactory solution is to be found for the question of oil. But there is another aspect which is distressing, the plight of the Third World countries which are underdeveloped and which had hoped to effect major economic break-throughs with planned economic development—capitalist, mixed or socialist. Whilst certain industrialised nations are able to exchange oil for military equipment, Third World countries which had hoped to attain western style economic affluence through the use of oil as energy have been struck down in a way they cannot recover for a long time—unless oil producers come down on their prices, or the fabulously rich private oil companies and state corporations are compelled to absorb the price increases, and be satisfied with lesser profits.

In the coming weeks *Tribune* will examine the different aspects of the global oil crisis just as much as it will devote particular attention to the new situation which has arisen in Sri Lanka as a result of the actions of the oil producing countries. The economic impact of the world oil crisis will have most disastrous consequences on agriculture, and any sensible government will seriously consider the banning of all slaughter of cattle, cows, bulls and buffaloes. Without tractors and oil, the only source of energy immediately

available to Sri Lanka is bull and buffalo power to keep the wheels of agriculture going.

In the meantime, there has been a great deal of excitement with stories of coups and counter coups in the capital city of Colombo whilst a great deal of tension has arisen in the northern city of Jaffna by the unfortunate incidents on the last date of the IATR conference last week. These matters too will be examined in coming issues of *Tribune*.

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CHRONICLE

Jan. 4 - 8

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

FRIDAY, JANUARY 4: From next week the Customs will keep a tab on Ceylonese enjoying free travel facilities on airlines, to prevent smuggling of luxuries and semi-luxuries from Singapore: no Ceylonese enjoying free travel facilities will be entitled to bring anything more than Rs. 250 worth of goods from Singapore per year: anything over and above Rs. 250 will be confiscated. A mass meeting of the Maha Sangha will be held at the Bandaranaike International Conference Memorial Hall on January 12 in support of the production war launched by the Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike. The International Tamil Research Conference got underway at the Weerasingham Hall, Jaffna yesterday: leading Tamil politicians and about ten foreign delegates attended the conference. The CJC (Exchange Frauds) meets at 10.00 am. today to deliver verdict on the first case heard by the Commission. According to the Daily News, it is likely that the SLFP will not field a candidate to contest the Mannar by-election. Mr. J. R. Jayewardene and several other opposition MPs met the President, Mr. William Gopallawa, to apprise him of the 'unconstitutional actions' of the Government at Attanagalla on the day of the UNP Satyagraha. The American Internal Revenue Service is re-examining President Nixon's tax returns. The Egyptian Foreign Minister, Ismail Fahmy is to fly to Moscow for urgent talks with Soviet leaders.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 5: Six of the eight suspects charged in the first case came up before the CJC (Exchange Frauds) were yesterday found guilty: One was freed: the 6th suspect, S. A. Abdul Hameed, was not present throughout the hearing and the Commission directed the CID to look for him: the Commission meets again on January 28 and

30 to deliver reasons and to pass sentences on those who were found guilty. The Government yesterday banned the Satyagraha planned by the opposition on January 8 at Anuradhapura: a communique issued by the Government listed several reasons for banning this Satyagraha. Sri Lanka will be seriously affected by a further hike in freight rates this year proposed by many of the major shipping lines. Thousands of people attended the second day as the International Tamil Conference continued at Jaffna yesterday. The Mayor of Dehiwela-Mount Lavinia died yesterday. Sri Lanka is negotiating with India and West Germany for the purpose of setting up a multi-million rupees fertilizer factory in Sri Lanka. U.S. Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger, said that he saw good prospects for an agreement between Egypt and Israel on separation of their forces in the Suez region.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 6: New emergency regulations empowering the Secretary to the Ministry of Defence and Foreign Affairs to ban public demonstrations which may cause a disturbance of public order, hamper the government's food production drive, interfere with the free movement or assembly of any section of the public or cause any disturbance to persons engaged in the observance or practice of their religion were gazetted on Saturday under the Public Security Ordinance: on an order by the Prime Minister, these regulations will have effect in the Anuradhapura administrative district from January 7 to 9. The undergraduates union has urged the Government to grant bigger loans in view of the rising cost of books and board and lodging. Chinese Prime Minister, Chou En-lai disclosed that China's oil production last year reached 50 million tons, much bigger than an estimate by western experts.

MONDAY, JANUARY 7: According to a spokesman of the Ministry of Health, cholera in the city and suburbs is well under control: no positive case of cholera has been reported after December 27 from any part of the country. The UNP group in the Colombo Municipal Council will meet on Wednesday to select its nominees for the office of Mayor and Deputy Mayor. Indian aviation authorities

had now permitted Air Ceylon to extend flights to South India to meet the gap created by the suspension of flights to Colombo by Indian Airlines. An alleged fraud in the insurance business believed to run into several lakhs of rupees is being investigated by the Bribery Commissioner's Department and the CID. The Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike, yesterday expressed satisfaction about progress made during the production year which was launched by her on January 8 last year. The Arab nations would run the risk of having force used against them if they utilised the power of the oil embargo to cripple the larger mass of the industrialised world, Secretary of Defence James Schlesinger announced.

into the April Insurrection will resume sitting tomorrow: these sittings will be the first for this year. Mr. Anura Bandaranaike, Chief Organizer SLFP Youth League, will visit Jaffna this week: this visit is described as a good will mission to forge Sinhalese Tamil unity. Sri Lanka is expected to earn Rs. 3,000 million foreign exchange through its exports both traditional and non-traditional during the current year. The Flying Squad of the CWE has been put into top gear to flush out hidden stocks of synthetic textiles, sarees and shirts in the possession of traders throughout the country. President Anwar Sadat of Egypt has asked one of his deputy premiers, Economic Minister, Abdel Aziz Hegazy, to work with him in planning Egypt's development and selecting the men who will carry it out. Israeli and Egyptian officials continued talks on how to remove their military forces along the Suez canal. Leading industrialists have warned that unemployment in Britain could reach 3 million by next month.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 8: Opposition Leader Mr. J. R. Jayewardene and a few other members of the Opposition engaged in religious observances yesterday at Anuradhapura. The Criminal Justice Commission Inquiring

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POLITICS AND RELIGION

by
LANKAPUTRA

Tribune has been opposed to the Satyagraha campaigns that have been launched by the UNP on the ground that in the absence of alternative suggestions for the solution of the problems confronting Sri Lanka today they are futile stunts that will do their organisers little good. There is also another aspect to these satyagraha to which we referred to in our last issue—namely the subtle combination of politics and religion which will do both untold damage.

The Government banned the satyagraha planned at Anuradhapura for Durūthu Poya day. Yet Messrs. J. R. Jayewardene, R. Premadasa and W. Dahanayake performed some religious rites at the sacred city that day together with thousands of other Buddhists. What then was the necessity for the UNP to announce this so-called satyagraha campaign with a fanfare or trumpets if the intention of its organisers was a purely religious affair?

Even the staunchest supporters of the UNP would not deny that what was sought to be done as a religious act was a political performance. Why does the UNP seek to intrude religion into its politics? Surely, they could be better advised to keep their politics at a political level without trying to give it a religious sanctity.

Unfortunately, it is not the UNP alone that is guilty of mixing politics with religion. All political parties must share this blame. And if they make an agonising re-appraisal of the whole affair, they should resolve to say "Religion is religion, and politics is politics, and never the twain shall meet."

Religion was first used in the service of politics way back in the 1930's when the LSSP was formed. Without seeking to meet the propaganda of the newly formed LSSP on a political level, the leaders of that time—Sir Baron Jayatilaka and D. S. Senanayake—brought in religion to halt the advance of the new party and make it out that this was primarily an anti religious movement.

This continued right up till 1947 when the elections to the first Parliament of Ceylon took place. The UNP flooded the country with posters depicting murdered monks and burning temples with the slogan "Save Religion from the Flames of Marxism."

A bonanza came in the way of the UNP when the Catholic Church too joined in the fray. Acting on the infamous encyclical of the late Pope Pius XII well known for his partiality to fascism, the local Catholic Church threatened to excommunicate anyone voting Left—an act for which

they were to pay a heavy price some years later.

The story of how the UNP sought to exploit religion for political gain in 1956 is related in *Three Prime Ministers of Ceylon* by J. L. Fernando, former Political Correspondent of the *Daily News*. It appears that Sir Oliver Goonetilleke advised Sir John Kotelawela to dissolve Parliament and promise the people that the UNP would celebrate the Buddha Jayanti in a fitting manner if re-elected to power. But Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike beat the UNP that time at their own game.

But, nothing daunted, J. R. Jayewardene, then as now in the Opposition, tried to abuse religion for their own partisan politics when he set out in the famous March to Kandy to protest at the Dalada Maligawa against Mr. Bandaranaike's Tamil Language (Special Provisions) Act. That ended in the Dalada Maligawa being stoned. Such is the fate that awaits places of religious significance when they are made use of for political purposes.

When Mrs. Bandaranaike took over the assisted denominational schools soon after she was elected to power in 1960, then too, without opposing the move on educational or political grounds, interested parties sought to create religious dissension over the issue. The UNP in particular, appearing as a great defender of the Catholic Church, pledged to return them their schools if they came back to power again.

The great majority of Catholics voted UNP in 1965 in

the fervent belief that the UNP would redeem that pledge, that was given in writing to Cardinal Cooray on the eve of the by-elections to the predominantly Catholic constituencies of Negombo and Nattandiya in 1967. It was a bitterly disappointed Cardinal who released this correspondence to the press later, providing an object lesson for all of what happens when religion is prostituted for political ends.

It was not only the UNP, as we have said, that is to blame for this crime of mixing politics and religion. The SLFP and the Left parties too have their share of the blame. For example, soon after the formation of the SLFP-LSSP Coalition Government in 1964, the Government found itself in some trouble over the Press Bill that was designed to take over Lake House.

Since it could not introduce the same Bill again in the same session, Parliament was prorogued and a new session convened. The Throne Speech on that occasion contained only two pledges—one to introduce the Press Bill again, and the other to give due place to Buddhism as the religion of the majority.

This attempt to bolster up a difficult situation by resorting to religion did not help the SLFP-LSSP Coalition at all. On the contrary, it was to prove their undoing, for this time it was the UNP that beat them at the game.

Mobilising a whole array of Buddhist priests (some of them questionable characters who were later found by a Special Commission to have accep-

ted bribes ranging from Rs. 10 000 to Rs. 30 000) the UNP first launched a campaign against Dr. N. M. Perera's proposal to permit toddy-tapping to swell Government funds. This they did by making people believe that it was a measure directed against Buddhism.

Then these same monks were used openly for the UNP's 1965 election campaign, as a result of which they were once again elected to power.

Eleven years ago, when the Ngo Dinh Diem regime in South Vietnam indulged in a brutal campaign of massacre of Buddhists in that country, the parties opposed to the UNP had this party on the defensive, capitalising on the South Vietnam events in their political campaign against the UNP. On that occasion, the UNP's organ *Siyarata* carried an editorial entitled "Religion cum Politics" wherein it was said:

"We are determined that the noble teaching of the Thathagatha should in no manner be made a smokescreen by any person or any organisation for political propaganda and political activity."

In that same issue of the *Siyarata*, the late Mr. Dudley Senanayake was reported to have said that he thought it unfair to take religion into politics.

Opinions may differ on whether the late Mr. Senanayake followed his own advice or not. But those who sing his praises today would do well to take his good advice to heart.

The UNP, and not only the UNP, would do religion a great favour if they keep their politics at a political level without mixing it with religion and doing both untold harm.

Shocking Figures

A recent survey of drug addiction in Britain made by a London firm yielded what the news papers describe as "shocking results." They show that every other young man and woman under thirty in Central London is either a confirmed addict or has tried various drugs just for the experience. There are 657,000 people in Britain who have used LSD, one of the strongest drugs, and 500,000 who take soporifics containing narcotics. Police have found cannabis, heroin and other drugs even in the homes of prominent politicians and artists, the survey reveals.

Colour Bar

An Indian doctor assisting at an operation in a Capetown hospital had to leave the operating theatre when a white nurse objected to his presence. Although the patient was already under anaesthesia, the operation was delayed until the white doctor arrived. Under South African law no coloured person can hold a position that would give him authority over whites. Even in the operating theatre.

BACKGROUND

THE NEW COMET

— what it portends —

By JEPHARIS

*"Twinkle, twinkle, little comet,
How I wonder why you cometh?
Up above the sky so bright,
Like a lantern in the night"*

A BRAND NEW COMET for Christmas and the New Year! Such is the Comet Kohoutek or "Star of Bethlehem" comet or "The Comet of the Century" which is still hardly visible to the naked eye as a faint speck just above the south—eastern horizon immediately before sunrise, or grazing the north—western horizon at sunset. However, at the present time, it is the collective telescopic target of all astronomers, all over the world, whether amateur or professional. It is expected to gather more interest as it grows brighter.

And it is expected to grow brighter, so that it can be seen with the naked eye, after it swings round the sun and begins its homeward journey to the celestial field on the outskirts of the solar system from which most comets originate. Moving on a parabolic, rather than a circular orbit round the sun, unlike the planets, its gaseous 'tail' or 'train' or in some cases 'fan' extending for many millions of miles, is blown out BEHIND it on its inward journey, "bringing its tail behind it," and BEFORE it on its outward journey, "with its tail going on before it," always pointing away from

the sun, whose solar radiation produces it.

Comet Kohoutek, named after Count Kohoutek, its discoverer, can be classified as a non-recurring comet, as it is expected to return, if ever only after some 50,000 years of wandering through outer space, unlike the celebrated Halley's Comet, the most notable example of a recurring comet, which, moving on a elliptic orbit, returns every 74-79, generally 75-77, years, depending on how far the gravitational pull of Jupiter and the sister planets have deviated its course during its solar journey, and the Leonids (a shower of meteors, or fragments of a comet), which return to earth every 33 years, its last six recorded appearances being in 1800, 1833, 1866, 1899, 1932 and 1965.

What Seventh-Day Adventists believe to be the night of the falling stars in North America (November 13, 1833)—one of the last signs in the heavens, to match those upon the earth, before the Second coming of Jesus—might well have been a highly exaggerated display of shooting stars or Leonids. I have just been reading a chapter from "The Marvels & Mysteries of Science

(by Ellison Hawks, F.R.A.S.) which confirms that this was indeed the case, and that moreover, November 13 is a date on which the earth annually crosses the path of a shower of meteorites. The Leonids ALSO appearing on this date would have produced a fantastic unsurpassed combined display of celestial fireworks.

THIS BOOK also explains that the head of a comet is composed of nebulous, gaseous substances, such as characterised the planets in their early, formative stages, before they cooled, solidified and, began supporting various forms of life: and that Stellar Comets move in a parabolic orbit from the depths of outer space, swerve round the sun, and swing back into the depths of outer space, never to return; while Solar Comets move in an elliptic orbit within the confines of the Solar System, and return at regular intervals.

In 1682, Edmund Halley (1665-1742), the British Astronomer Royal, plotted together the incidences of a similar comet which had appeared at regular intervals of about three quarters of a century previously, declared it to be one and the same comet, and confidentially predicted its return in 1758, even though he knew he would never live to see it. It came to be known as Halley's comet, the most famous of all comets, and always, whether by accident or by Providential Design, seemed to coincide with the most portentous events here on earth.

Appearing in 6 B.C. (and there being a doubt as to the exact year of Jesus' birth) there is a theory that the "star" which the three wise men (were they kings or philosophers?) followed from the East, "travelling far over field and fountain, moor and mountain", was none other than Halley's Comet, and that it was poised above the fields of Bethlehem on that cold, starry night of our dear Saviour's birth. Of course, there are other, more popular theories that "the star was a Divine Light or Angelic Radiance, a supernatural manifestation, a supernova or exploding star, a conjunction of two or more planets of the solar system (there WAS such a conjunction just at this time), or even an UFO (Unidentified Flying Object, e.g. a martian spaceship). But how could men from an alien planet have known about the birth of Jesus?

In A.D. 69, Halley's Comet was the harbinger of the sacking of Jerusalem by the Romans within a year. In the year 451 the comet was seen about the time of the Battle of Chalons at which Attila the Hun was defeated by the Roman general Aetius. In April 1066 it presided at the battle ground of Hastings in Sussex and witnessed the slaying of Harold the Saxon, King of England by William the Conqueror, a bloodstained event which marked the beginning of the Norman Dynasty in Britain. Its appearances on this occasion has been immortalised in the celebrated Bayeux Tapestry worked by Queen Matilda and depicting events of the time.

In 1377 it was associated with the notorious Black Death, bubonic plague) which decimated nearly half the population of Europe: and hovered over Constantinople in 1452 with a brightness far outshining the moon as that city fell to the all-conquering Turks to signal the foundation of the great Ottoman Empire which was to last nearly half a millenium, or 500 years; until the restoration of Modern Turkey in recent times by Kemal Ataturk and his late lamented comrade in arms Ismet Inonu, a former President, Prime Minister and Foreign Minister who died in Ankara recently aged 89. When Guy Fawkes lit up the British House of Parliament on November 5, 1605 there was Halley's Comet keeping him company by lighting up the night sky! "Remember, remember, the fifth of November, gunpowder, treason and plot."

IT WAS spotted by Palitzsch, an amateur astronomer, actually a small farmer, near Dresden, Germany on Christmas night, 1758, heralding the Seven—Years War between the British and the French for the United States of America. In 1835 it appeared with the birth of Mark Twain a couple of years before Queen Victoria embarked on her glorious 64-year reign and on its last somewhat vague, appearance in 1910, both Mark Twain and Victoria's son Edward VII breathed their last, war clouds were gathering over Europe, and the greatest global conflict in the history of the world upto that time was only four years distant.

On May 6, 1910, by a strange coincidence, it hung brightly at its zenith over London at the moment the British Sovereign passed away. "When beggars die no comets are seen. The heavens themselves blaze forth the death of princes"—Shakespeare.

One might recall a spectacular comet which graced the Galle Face horizon early in 1948, just before Gandhi was shot and Ceylon regained her Independence.

A Fishy Tale for The Gourmet

Some of the ugliest inhabitants of the sea could end up on Britain's dinner tables as tasty fish dishes. Ministry of Agriculture researchers have carried out experimental fishing between 300 and 600 fathoms deep 250 miles off the coast of Scotland and next month will show samples of their catches in Hull and Fleetwood, two of England's largest fishing ports. In a five-day spell they caught 30 tons of about 20 deepwater varieties—a good haul. At best they are fish unprepossessing, the Ministry conceded, and most are down right horrible to look at, but the flesh of many of them is good to eat. If the industry takes the bait and goes into deepwater fishing a substantial increase could be made to the 660,000 tons landed at British fishing ports last year.

Have comets ever collided with the earth? Well, at least large meteorites have. Just for the record a meteor is a fragment of a comet produced by the latter splitting, while a meteorite is a fragment of a meteor. The surface of the earth's satellite is pock marked with craters caused by meteoric bombardment; but in the case of the earth itself, the friction with the atmosphere which encases it has resulted in most meteorites burning themselves out ere they reach the earth's surface, except for the very largest (meteors) which have sometimes penetrated this

protective veneer and crashed headling into the earth.

There is a crater in Arizona, U.S.A. caused by a pre-historic meteoric collision; while in recent times the meteor which laid low a vast, inhabited tract of coniferous forest extending over several square miles in Northern Siberia on June 30, 1908, is the most notable instance of an alien heavenly body colliding with the earth.

A Merciful Providence had ordained that this meteor should crash into an uninhabited region of the earth's surface, or one shudders at

the thought of the catastrophe that would have occurred if it had crashed into a densely populated region. Some of us will recall that in 1938 there was a fear that the visiting planet Adonis would collide with the earth, falling which it would become a second moon; and the spate of earthquakes which its gravitational pull caused. Remember the tremors that were felt in Colombo on the night of May 22, 1938?

At this point may I quote the Observer Magazine of Sunday, December 30th, 1973: "The astral body called comet is also a member of the solar system. It carries obnoxious gases and when it approaches closer to earth the atmosphere of the earth is polluted. This gives rise to epidemics, failure of crops, depressed feelings, etc."

The appearance this Advent season, Christmas tide, and at the turn of the year, of the "Comet of the Century", is another sure sign in the heavens, to match those fast-fulfilling on earth, that the fiery destruction of the world "and all the works therein" at the Second coming of the long-awaited Messiah, Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour, is fast approaching. This culminatory event in the old earth's history may well occur before Halley's Comet next scheduled appearance in 1986.

THE BUS COMES TO YOU

'Dial-a-Ride' is a completely new and practical public transport system pioneered in Britain by Ford. It offers genuine door-to-door travel at reasonable cost, to supplement public transport and taxi services. After making a simple telephone call to the Dial-a-Ride office a request is processed by a control centre which instantly radios one of the 17 seater buses already on the road. Within minutes a bus arrives to pick up the passenger to take him or her to a precise destination. The bus driver is kept informed of his pick-up points either through a computer linked teletypewriter mounted alongside the steering wheel, or by radio telephone. Calls may be made from ordinary telephones or from special Dial-a-Ride call boxes.

One use of Dial-a-Ride could be to provide a service in which buses run to one principal destination and then go on to provide trips between that and any point within the surrounding area. Such a system could be centred on a railway station, an important local shopping centre, large hospital or recreation centre. The service would also be suitable in a 'new town' or large village which requires a form of bus service to major transfer points; another may be to take passengers from one point to another within a defined area where the population is widely scattered. Dial-a-Ride schemes are already operating in the United States and on the Continent and nine will be operating in Britain by the end of 1973. Ford of Britain has so far approved two specialist buses for this type of service.



INANIA *Of This, That and The Other*

FIF has done it!

By INNA

WHO DOES not like a story, especially if it is a true story, like the "Strangler of Rillington Place". Except, of course that this kind of Strangler is not limited to Rillington, but is All Over The Place!

Comic if it weren't so tragic. Let's call him FIF. FIF went to a christian seminary, oh! many many years ago and remembered less of seminary life and still less of christianity when he left. He once went to a dirtier place, pitied a young man, whisked him away, lured him would be the word, to fresh woods and pastures new, if you know what I mean.

Fif's factory was superb in a lovely country area, not too far away. Fif had done this before: whisked away not a few working boys, and may be, girls, and then offered them fabulous sums. paid them for three months very carefully, got them to sign papers, blank papers, mind you, and then filed in what he wanted, filled in according to his greed. Within eight months he had threatened our lowly friend—who had had a fairly good job at the time of the whisking away with dismissal; then changed tactic and asked for a deposit of a four-figure sum, knowing full well that it was impossible, unjust and asinine, unless dictated by overwhelming greed and selfishness.

AFTER HIS trek to the city our friend Nax, (shall we call him) is back, very subdued, very saddened at this brand of christianity, and adding what I always knew and believed, that it is not that Christ has failed, but christians have failed Christ (Couldn't this be said of every religion and religious founder?)

Where are the hawk eyed, eagle eyed Inspectors of Labour? Where is the conscience of man, trained and brought up in a four-religion strong country? Is not this type of person dangerous to mankind if they are allowed to go scot-free?

Fif is not a lonely person. Fif is legion, hydra headed in his capitalist, tentacular greed. Communists might ask for redress. Why not christians? Is it because this lowly worker is a Buddhist, or is it plain lethargy?

AND THERE ARE some christians, leaders and all, who, on hearing the bare unadorned word 'Communist', stiffen; their hair on end, they even sign themselves with the sign, bow and whisper a prayer. But, BISHOP Helder Camara, of the Holy Roman and Catholic Church said this clearly, categorically:

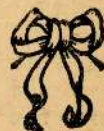
"Take care, christians, my brothers. Beware of Invoking

the fear of Communism as an excuse for avoiding a change in structures which confine million of the sons of men in a sub-human condition. It is not honest to say that to tamper with the structures is certain to lead to a plunge into Godless communism. We who love justice and know that without it there can be no true and lasting peace must rise up against all oppressions, all enslavement whether it comes from East or West, Communism or Capitalism" (Helder Camara, *Peace with a purpose*, n 3, p 19)

"Praise the lord and pass the ammunition" said a wartime music-hall ditty. Quite relevant, my dear George, today too.

THE NATION that produces Multi-National Stranglers have their relatives not only at Rillington Place, and they can do cold blooded murder while sending large sums for relief to higher christian leaders. But Vietnam showed that the game is up for them. They will have no tiff at all with Fif and his tribe. Just dialogue, no diatribe. That should suit them all well enough.

But Doomsday is not far away. The Comet is a reminder, say some.



SHAMBA

HARD WORK: BUT CAN SHAMBA SURVIVE?

by ANATORY BUKOBA

October 9,

The stalks of the spinach are firmly rooted in the soil, but all the leaves on them have been eaten, my companion, says by squirrels. When a young plant has to shed its leaves, which it might do for a number of reasons, it is a mistake, I think, to go on watering it and the stalk will probably go rotter if you do. That is how I think I lost the cadju and the vines. Losing leaves in a sort of going into winter quarters, and a plant should be allowed to do this, without having to undergo much fussing.

This acre is a four sided figure, a parallelogram. Three corners were pointed out to me, and the important one was marked. The fourth corner was in an impenetrable piece of ground, and about a month ago I remembered I had a compass which would show me the exact location of this point. This week I remembered to fetch this compass from Colombo, and I used it yesterday. The effect was to act as a sort of filip to get this acre cleared quickly, as I saw my boundaries clearly for the first time and realised how little clearing there was still to be done. So I set to work as soon as we had tea, and I broke my fine looking

knife, which I bought for Rs 7/-; it was made of cast iron.

October 10,

A young black smith repaired both my knives and he sharpened them too. He looked sixteen but he said he was older. He had as his occasional assistant, when he needed one, a boy of about ten years. There was another of about five, who, when the various tools or implements were not in use, worked the bellows with one hand and performed many of the jobs that would fall to a blacksmith, with the other. Both my knives were repaired together, more or less simultaneously. The fire had been cold, as it was brought from elsewhere, and charcoal was added; the bellows did not take long to get that kindled. The lion shafts of both the knives were heated and lengthened out with a hammer. The blades, the cutting edge, of each knife was heated and hammered. An iron ring belonging to one knife was missing, so that was made out of a piece of flat iron. The cutting edge of each knife was trimmed with a hammer and chisel, hammered and tempered in water. The handle for the knife which has lost its old handle, which had split, was cut from a piece of circular wood and a red

hot nail was driven through the middle. This hole was to take the iron shaft of the knife. The handles were fixed on. The cutting edges were filed. Lastly, a washer was fixed on to the pointed end of the shaft of each knife to hold the handle firmly on. That was more or less what the young blacksmith did. He was on his own, there was not one older man to tell him what to do. In about three hours the job was done, and the cost was Rs 5/- for the lot. Money-to-hand was the time for a feast. One five year old inquired of the ten year old if soca was what he, the five year old, wanted, and this young blacksmith, or fledgling blacksmith I should say, accompanied me to the shop to buy it. There was a great lesson to be learned from all this, and I shall forebear from pointing it out, for my experience is that you can only teach a man what he knows already, and has learnt in the orbit of his own experience.

October 11,

Before breakfast I was out with the long knife, cutting long dried grass, thorns and rubbish on the high land which is above the river. A house used to stand there, and all that is left of it now are some bricks, building stone, and large concrete or cement slabs that used to form the floor. I was clearing at the far end, and as usual I left a few plants and shrubs. It was mid day, I am afraid, before I realized it was *poya*. Someone gave me the news about the result of the

Colombo North by-elections; at least I was given it yesterday, but I still have not seen a newspaper on the subject. It seems that the People's government received a set-back, but I feel sure, the government thinks the people will rally and not let their government down, their own government, as no other government ever has been! No news on the Arab-Israel war for days. That is how we live. We are hardly interested in even parochial news. We have had some dates to eat and we are having a second shot at having their seeds germinate. Growing vegetables is not my forte, I am inclined to leave this to other people. I collect seeds, but I am not much good at sowing them either. Trees interest me more and cattle. This is the tail end of the dry season, and the short grass that we had has disappeared completely, and there is just bare earth to be seen where it grew.

A sketch of our house was done by a local school master in about half an hour, but my companion says fifteen minutes. All I can see inaccurate about it is the actual space where my bed is; the bed is not to be seen at all. The verandah can be seen as the *palla* that it is, affording an open view in nearly every direction. The kitchen is on the right at the back. The third bed is to the front of this, but the cadjan wall obscures it. The big bucket can be seen in front of this wall and drawn to size. The dried up tomato plants can be seen near the bucket.

October 12,

This morning I continued to clear the back of the place where the old building once stood. I trimmed some trees or, rather, a group of them by removing some of them. We have some vegetables growing again, my companion set out three luffa plants from the receptacle in which they had been growing. A little *mungatta* has sprung up in a coconut shell. A cotton tree seed has germinated. The passion fruit is doing well; the spinach has been reduced to their bare stems; they have been too far away and out of sight for one to keep an eye on. The two papaw

trees are showing new leaves. The teak sapling is not yet dead, and there is hope for the *lawulu*.

We have constructed a new *massa* table in place of the rather rickety one that stood in our bedroom. This table will hold more than the other would. Mice are around; They boldly eat the bait fixed to the rat trap and are too light to set the spring off, so small are the mice, but they make a noise out of all proportion to their size.

The river is very low. There is one deep pool, more than six feet, into which I dive off an island. I am in

ALTERNATIVE ENERGY SOURCES

As the oil squeeze tightens a frantic search for alternative sources to Arab oil is on. The alternative sources are:

SHALE ROCK—An American oil company claims to have developed a "revolutionary" process to extract oil from shale rock, until now hopelessly expensive. Trial production is expected to commence within five years. The oil in shale put together.

HYDROGEN—Plans are afoot in the USA and Britain to develop prototype engines using hydrogen as fuel. The gas will be extracted from sea water. Sir George Porter, British physicist, claims that it is as easy to use as petrol.

NUCLEAR FUSION—Scientists are continuously working on trying to achieve controlled nuclear fusion—the process which powers the stars—but the results are as yet disappointing.

SOLAR ENERGY—Efforts are being made to solve the problem of storage of solar energy. This is the main stumbling block to its utilisation beyond domestic heating. Some new ideas like using certain chemicals to store heat are being tried in Britain.

GEOTHERMAL POWER—Using the heat inside the earth is a possibility in certain limited areas for local purposes. California is believed, to have large amounts of hot water and steam at shallow depths.

the Puttalam district. Right opposite me is the Anurachapura District, and between us, but to a side, where is the 'island' from which I dive, is the Kullnegala District. So where the three districts meet.

October 13,

More clearing today, and this time it was the turn of a thicket of thorns besides the road not far from the footpath to the house, but the actual thicket I hardly touched. I reduced the little group of them that stand nearer the path to one tree. This thorn tree has a fine red and white flower at the right season, and it grows in some profusion giving the tree a nice appearance. The local people cannot see the point of preserving such a thorn at all. At the moment the tail end of the dry season this kind of thorn tree sports not a single leaf. There are a number of wood apple trees, medium sized around the spot where I was clearing, and they gave me the impression that these *dimbul* trees, to give them another name, at a certain stage of their growth throw out a branch, which runs along the ground and takes root. I removed some of these branches. I left standing a very young *kohomba* sapling, almost delicately slender, with an attractively shaped leaf rather like that of the *vel pennala* vine; it grows, I am told into a large tree, and it is used as a medicine and gives *kohomba* oil. Yesterday, I saw a woman carefully picking wood apple leaves from a cut branch by the road

side; she told me that the leaves and pieces of bark from the same tree are ground in a mortar and administered as a drink with milk to stop itching. The *dimbul* or *divul* tree, to give it a third name, exudes a gum from its bark, which, when it's made soft makes a very good gum for sticking paper together.

The Cultivation Officer, who has to send a report in on our agricultural activities, thinks I will not have my annual permit renewed, as I have still not cleared my acre, and with the imminent onset of the rains he says he does not see how I shall be able to do much more clearing. He says if I have not been able to do it in the eight months I have had, what will I be able to do in the remaining four? We shall see and I suppose what will be, will be, wherever that saying comes from, I think it comes in a song, whatever the origin of the phrase.

October 14,

It rained this evening, and a snake appeared on the cadjan wall just above my bed, and because of this my companion has given me notice of his intention to leave after I got back from Colombo tomorrow; so I wonder where I shall be. The house is well stocked with food I have been working fairly regularly every day, since he joined me a fortnight ago, and his going will be a great loss, and it may well be the end of this Shamba. Thieves will break in and steal what I leave in the house, just as they did before. He says he will stay

here until I return tomorrow night, and I am leaving all with him.

The house was leaning to a side, and as I have seen two buildings collapse before, I was rather glad today when we put in a new post to hold the central beam, and we buried the post deep, I found a new way down to the river and I cleared it at once. There is grass at the bottom of this new roadway, and it is really not safe to walk on in case one gets bitten by a snake. I have heard of a boy, a lad I know, being bitten by a snake in his own home while he was sleeping, and he died in a few hours, that very night, in fact; but I think snakes in grass are more dangerous. I feel much safer in a house when it comes to snakes, even though I have had some brushes with Snakes in houses.

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SEX. SEX, SEX

The Things Our Women Do For Other Men!

by CANAX

WE HAVEN'T declared war on little Sweden yet and I understand we are not likely to because we as a nation believe, even when it comes to wars, in always doing the right thing, which is picking on another our own size. (We're still looking and when we do find another as small as ourselves, boy, will there be fireworks!) For the moment, though, the Government has on our behalf done the next best thing in putting the CID's Special Branch on the trail to gather intelligence of strategic value for our next move, or perhaps the one after that. The flagrant and war-like provocation has been officially described as a new Swedish enterprise—trafficking in Sri Lanka women.

There is a strong body of opinion in this country which feels that our women are Sri Lanka's greatest asset after tea and gems, but before rubber and coconut. They certainly look after themselves, which is something one can't say for any of the others.

This school of thought maintains we shouldn't take it lying down, but what else can we do? No one has as yet a useful alternative to offer since most of the militants have thus far failed in their attempts to take things lying up. Gravity apparently

seems to bring them down every time. But that doesn't stop them from shouting that we shouldn't allow the Swedes, or anybody else, to do this to us.

There is another school which looks at the Swedish move strictly in terms of our economic emancipation and independence. It's one more trade war to be fought and won if freedom is to have any real meaning for the mass of our people.

Seems the Swedish enterprise is fundamentally at variance with current national policy. "Trafficking in Sri Lanka women is too vital a field of trading activity to be left entirely in the hands of foreigners, and nothing short of total Ceylonisation will do," said a spokesman of our Export Council. The thinking appears to be that letting the Swedes have a monopoly in marketing our women would inevitably result in us being led up the fiscal garden path, and our women being led up the common or garden path.

WHAT HAPPENS to our women is not half as important, though, as what happens to us as a nation. We get short-changed in terms of foreign exchange which right now is not only unthinkable but also unbearable,

whereas the women may only have to accept a fate worse than death, and that is hardly worth making a noise about since it violates nothing more than the U.N. Charter, if at all.

On seeing the newspaper story, a friend of mine had palpitation. His wife couldn't figure out the cause, and he couldn't very well tell her. But he could tell me, and did.

He startled me to begin with by asking, "Who wishes to have a woman who is a virgin...?"

"Since when have you gone into this business?"

He shook his head. "I was only reading from the Swedish ad. Hear me out... 'who would not dream of arguing with her husband, who has never smoked, never been out dancing and who has no higher wish than to be 'my obedient servant'. She exists, this woman, in Ceylon....." He got the palpitation again and had to stop reading.

"The Swedes are probably the only suckers left in the whole world," I said soothingly.

"What about us?" my friend cried shaking all over.

My friend had been so incensed by the discovery he promptly took the lead in forming an association of Sri Lanka men, all married and some much-married, with the sole objective of, as he put it, obtaining justice with retrospective effect. He held out a long list of names to prove the swelling membership.

SOME OF the members were hoping to stretch justice as far back as 40 years. A couple of them, to judge by how long they'd been married, were so clearly over the hill, I wondered of what earthly use justice could be to them at this late stage. Hope springs eternal, I suppose. Or maybe the servant problem was more acute than I imagined.

One of the first things my friend had done as Founder-President of the Association was to shoot off a telegram to Bjorn Sjorgen, the young Swede who's shown just how enterprising his countrymen can be when it comes to sex. The cable read: "Sjorgen! Sjorgen! Where have you been all my life?"

That was quite simply a cry from the heart, my friend explained. Looked that way the plaintive wail does seem to say all that needs to be said.

My friend invited me to join, too, but I declined saying I'd have to ask my wife first. I don't know anything about her being my obedient servant, but she certainly set herself up as my chief unpaid counsel and adviser. But before I asked, I showed her the story.

"What do you want to join for?" she asked.

"For fun," I said with honesty.

"Well, let's see", she said, picking up the paper. "What did you marry me for?"

"How the hell do I know?"

"There must be a reason," she insisted.

"The only one I can think of is that Mom and Dad wanted me to stop fooling around."

"Where and when did I come into the picture?"

"You know parents," I said. "They kept saying 'High time we settled our son...' to everybody they met, and finally a family friend brought up your name and..."

"Did they tell you I was a virgin?"

"No, not in so many words," I admitted.

"What did they say, then?"

"I remember them saying you were a well brought up girl."

"Did they make out that I wouldn't dream of arguing with you?"

"Yes, but how was I to know it was only during the honeymoon?"

"What's wrong with that?" she demanded.

"Nobody told me honeymoons don't last forever."

"To get on to the next question, have I ever smoked?"

"No, but you're smouldering all the time."

"Answer to the point," she snapped. "Have I ever been cut dancing?"

THIS WAS ridiculous. "Is it my fault you keep tripping over your own feet?" I shouted.

"One last question," she announced, "and I want you to take your time answering it. Am I your obedient servant?"

"Do you look like one?" I counted. "You certainly don't sound like one."

"All that is beside the point," she said. "Do I act like one?"

"You know I never could afford the luxury of servants," I said.

"With me around, darling you don't need any," she concluded, and I agree with her.

So it looks as if I don't stand to gain much by joining my friend's Association. As a parting shot my wife said, "Those Swedes may not know this, but virgins are not made, they're born. Besides, what's so great about virginity? Here today, and gone tomorrow."

I think I know exactly what she means.

When I brought up the subject with my grandfather, hoping for some real good advice, all he said was, "Let the Swedes have our women if they want to, son." He thought for a while and added, "They deserve all they get."

The Drug Hard Core

The hard core of drug addicts in the Federal Republic of Germany is constituted by some 40,000 young people aged between 12 and 25 years, a government representative recently stated in the Bundestag. Last year the West German government allocated 27.3 million marks to combat narcomania.

KAZI

❁ DAS CAPITAL

The Swahili word *Kazi* means work. It can also mean business or employment, I would have preferred to call this column, work, study, and play, but *Kazi* is nice and short.

DAS KAPITAL, as it is popularly known, or just *Capital*, may have been published in four volumes, but it is just the first two I have before me now. Of these only the first one was published while Karl Marx was still alive. His *Communist Manifesto* appeared as early as 1848, Volume 1 of *Das Kapital* came out in 1867. Volume 2 appeared after his death, and Friederick Engels had a large part in it, arranged and edited as it was from Marx's notes. Volume 1, I have just completed reading. Professor G. D. H. Cole, a famous Socialist of an earlier time, whom I once saw lecturing at Oxford, wrote an Introduction to the book I have with me, and he says that most of what Marx had to say on *Capital* is contained in this first volume. From my own reading, aided by what Cole has to say, I would say that Marx's original teaching is his teaching on what he calls Surplus Value: that capital is created by what the worker makes over and above his subsistence, that which falls to the owner after the workers have been paid their subsistence. Its value usually vastly exceeds the payroll of what is paid out in wages. Of

❁ OPERA

much more interest to me in *Capital* was Marx's description of the working conditions of the worker, gleaned from official reports, such as those of inspectors of factories. He virtually wrote his book, the British Museum where these reports were available. It makes a good, if incomplete, social history of the British working class. England and Scotland were their countries, but how abominably treated were they. Except where they were actually slaughtered, I do not think people in the colonies could ever have had such a raw deal as the working class in Britain.

GILBERT AND SULLIVAN'S—THE PIRATES OF PENZANCE, presented by the Colombo Singers, must have almost gone unnoticed last year, as I think these shows usually are, except among the small coterie that attends them, and yet, these shows are life, without which, perhaps, life would be very dull indeed.

The Colombo Singers came into existence in 1931, and this is the second time they have done the *pirates of Penzance* since 1940. I do not think Moscow, New York or London could have put up an amateur show to match the voices of our singers in this opera this year, or its production. Christine Perera took her high notes, perhaps

better than any professional singer would have done; the part singing by the whole chorus was about as perfect as any singing of this kind could be.

This year might have been an exceptional year, but it came as no surprise to those who have seen such shows as *Rosemarie* and the *Mikado* put up by this group in recent years in Colombo. I saw *Rosemarie* after I had also seen it done by a professional group from London in Dublin and I have, or rather had, no doubt, which of the two I preferred. I was reminded of the late Arthur Vanlangenburg's other shows, such as the one he put on once, Christmas in the Torrington flats by the Thimbrigosyaya Road, in what used to be a gravel pit and the other show he did with the Ceylon Army at that Exhibition on the Racecourse in 1964.

The articulation by the singers this year was about as good as it can even be in an opera, and that some of them were perfect; every word could be heard and the accent was English, as English should be spoken. My opinion is that the *Pirates of Penzance*, as it was done this year, was a little too perfect in all its points: that it lacks that freshness that causes wonder from seeing a show that is done by amateurs, locals in a show, that is both good and bad in places. Although it seems cruel to say it, too high a performance from start to finish, can become a little boring. The orchestra, too, conducted by Lt. D. P. Dunu-

watte, put on a sterling performance.

MEAT SHORTAGE. There is a meat shortage in the offing we are told, in the world. The prairies and the Australian bush have raised great herds of cattle and sheep; so did South America. Ceylon is a small island, but I think the conditions are here for raising prime beef cattle.

The expert tends to confuse beef and dairy cattle. He is trained to think in terms of milk herds. The difference between beef and dairy breeds is this, that in the beef herds, the cow only has enough milk to suckle her calf. In the dairy herd, she has more milk than her calf could possibly drink. It goes without saying that the beef breeds do not need such good grazing as the dairy and even in, or rather between the beef breeds the forms of grazing vary considerably. Herds such as West Highland and Galloway can manage on very poor grazing, and yet the cattle give good beef. Other beef breeds such as the Hereford and the Aberdeen Angus needs more bush grazing to sustain their huge bulk.

Then there are the dual purpose herds, such as Ked Poll, they have surplus milk for sale, but their bullocks make good beef animals. Our Ceylon cattle, those that have not been crossed with imported breeds, the sort that you find in the dry zone from Kekliawa to Vavuniya, are a sort of dual purpose animals both poor in milk and poor in beef. They should be cross-

-ed with Sussex and Galloway bulls, and the Sussex crossed progeny should be grazed on our talawas, and the Galloway cross in the patras. Water is going to be the problem. They will have to drink some water everyday, and in the long dry season this is going to pose almost insuperable problems. Mana and Illuk grass are not going to be easy to eat. Although grazing improver with eating or to put it in another way, that grass

improves when it is adequately grazed. I think an effort will have to be made to improve the grazing by some resowing done, care for all to avoid the slow business of improving it over a number of years by grazing. I do not think manuring need be done at all, nor do I think it would be advisable to start that racket, but it would be better to break up the lumps of cowdung so as to let the grass grow more evenly.

WITCH DOCTOR

According to ancient tradition, African witch doctors have the power to "summon" rainfall, winds and droughts to "unravel" crimes, to "cure" sickness. True, many of these "miracles" are figments of the imagination of fellow tribesmen and travellers. However, among the medicine men there are some who draw on the accumulated wealth of centuries of popular experience, are well acquainted with the curative properties of medicinal herbs, are versed in surgery and hypnosis. As a matter of fact Africans have been trail blazers in some areas of medicine. For example, they were the first to discover that mosquitoes are carriers of malaria, and the first to cure relapsing fever caused by the spirillum tick. Chaulmoogra oil, used in the treatment of leprosy and discovered in Europe only this century, was known long ago to the African witch doctor.

Snake bites, too, interested the medicine men centuries before science discovered curative serums. If you look closely at the feet of Ghana porters, who not infrequently meet with poisonous snakes in the forests, you will see cross-shaped scars between the big and second toes of both feet—the marks of inoculations made by witch doctors every few years. Medicine men of the Alur tribe in the upper reaches of the Nile treat nervous ailments by burying the sufferer for some time up to his neck in an anthill. Another old African remedy is bee venom. Live bees have long since been used to treat chronic rheumatism. Of course most of the witch doctors and shamans are illiterate men, and their "treatment" often does more harm than good. But one should not forget how great is the role of auto suggestion, in the case of the ignorant folk accustomed to rely on the art of the witch doctor. In recent times, along with the development of modern medicine, centres for the study of traditional methods of curing illness have been established in many African countries.

B. Asoyan

Gay Lothario

The Stockton (California) court recently granted Mrs. Fegion a decree in the divorce suit she brought against her husband Solomon after 28 years of married life. It was the old story. "He spends all his money on other women," Mrs. Fegion told the judge. Solomon Fegion is 103 years old and his wife is three younger.

Bicycle Boom

Frequent traffic jams in the cities of Western Europe are causing more and more people to switch to bicycles. In Belgium, for instance, close to three million people or about one-third of the total population, ride bicycles, according to *Journal d'Europe*. There is a project to build special bicycle roads between the leading cities of Belgium. And in France, Switzerland and West Germany the network of bicycle hire stations is being expanded.

Business Is Business

In the dozen forms Belgian businessman Daniel Verwaecke was asked to fill in by different government and municipal departments, he gave his occupation as: "Making masks for bank robbers." The joke passed unnoticed. Only the Statistical Bureau sent him the usual inquiry: "Do you grant a discount to wholesale dealers?"

OIL AND JAPAN

NOT BY BREAD ALONE

By Dr. Savithri Visvanathan

THE OIL SQUEEZE instituted by the oil producing Arab countries has revealed the Achilles' heel of Japan once again. It was not many years ago (during World War II) when there was a common saying that "one drop of oil is equal to one drop of blood". It is common knowledge that Japan does not have her own internal supplies which could keep her alive when supplies from outside are cut off. Therefore, the panic which is created when the tap regulating the flow from outside is closed or only allowed to flow in a trickle can be very well imagined. Again, the sense of insecurity this kind of a situation creates is also natural.

Japan's economy has grown on the strength of imported oil. The petro-chemical complexes are considered to be the shining symbols of Japan's economic development. These were constructed on the promise that oil was readily available in huge quantities as imports. It is true that of late Japan is not able to wait for increased oil production by the oil producing countries on their own initiative but has launched a policy of huge investments in these areas to "develop and import". However, the saying "consumption is virtue" which swept Japan since 1955 is true in the case of oil also.

Oil as a source of energy was found to be cheap and

the sky has been the limit as far as oil imports are concerned. Between 1960 and 1970 oil imports increased 7.5 times. In 1972, Japan's bill on crude oil imports amounted to about \$ 4,500 million. This also reflects the phenomenal growth of the petro-chemical industry, which registered a 31 per cent increase even in 1970, although Japan's petro-chemical industry started only in 1957, ten years later than the European countries and America.

The improved products which this industry has been able to turn out taking advantage of the economies of scale and advanced technology, e. g. plastics, polythen, etc. brought forth a new consumer boom. This is jokingly referred to as the new 'petroleum civilisation', Japan depends on petroleum for nearly 80 per cent of her electric power requirements,

EVEN WHILE the present squeeze has only resulted in a reduction of 16 per cent of her total flow of supplies and the Government has announced only a 10 per cent cut in power requirements and oil supplies, the effect is very far reaching. The shock is transferred to all industries like steel, metals, paper, chemicals etc. Production schedules have to be cut down bringing up the cost, resulting in a steep rise in the general price levels in the country.

The oil crisis has brought a new situation in the Japanese industrial world. So far, the various companies had been competing with each other and using all their ingenuity only for pushing the sales of their products. The flow of resources was taken for granted. But now the race will be on in respect of this also. Hence it can be forecast that the small and medium scale industries, which do not have the staying power to face this race and the resulting rise in prices, will have to close down their establishments. Already, it is reported that there are many closures of such establishments in the construction industry on account of lack of raw materials.

Japan is, therefore, facing the greatest economic crisis since the end of World War II. The ruling party which is already the target of criticism for the growing inflation, increasing pollution, etc., has a difficult task convincing the people about the need for dras-

tically cutting down even their basic comforts, e.g. heating their houses in this cold winter. The Government has ruefully admitted their failure in taking the necessary diplomatic measures to prevent such a situation. With the elections for the House of Councillors scheduled for June next year, the ruling Liberal Democratic Party is trying hard not to lose their public support.

THE PRECIPITATION of the oil crisis could, however, be said to be an eye opener for Japan. She can no longer close her eyes to the fact that the indiscriminate expansion of her industries resulting in an insatiable thirst for oil is steadily destroying men and nature. Her economic development seems to have been aimed at the increase of her GNP rather than the welfare of her people. The Japanese people had already been wondering whether they drove themselves to work so hard only to deprive themselves even

of pure air and clean water. Premier Tanaka's plans for restructuring the Japanese archipelago by shifting the industries from the crowded industrial belts into the interior regions, were criticised as diffusing pollution all over Japan. The people demanded a re-orientation of the Government's industrial policy so that the destruction of nature and pollution of the atmosphere was not allowed any further. The oil crisis might be said to have given this issue a further sense of urgency.

The oil crisis has clearly shown Japan that the purely commercial principle of competitive prices based on her advanced technology alone would not gain her acceptance and favourable treatment in the international community. Again the steep increases in her GNP and the piling up of foreign exchange reserves with most of the developing nations had lulled her into a false sense of security.



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Japan felt that it was the resource supplying nations which would suffer more if they stop supplies to their best customer. This was reflected in her diplomatic relations as well. She attached greater significance to her relations with the Big Powers. Relations with resource giving nations were mainly treated on a commercial basis. Hence, Japan had not been interested over the issues and tensions affecting these nations. She had generally taken the attitude supporting the policies of the USA. Even the steps taken by Nixon of making a significant change in USA's China policy completely ignoring Japan, had not sufficiently shaken her up and made her exercise individual judgement on various international issues.

IT IS the oil crisis which has made Japan realise that just standing close to the United States and being a silent spectator to a conflict would not always guarantee her national interest. Rather this might affect her more adversely. However, her new policy supporting the Arab stand only after the oil squeeze has raised doubts whether she is leaning towards the Arabs or leaning towards oil. The Japanese reply to this is that they are asking for vacation of Israeli aggression based on the peace principles of their Constitution as well as their policy of cooperation in the efforts of the United Nations to bring peace in conflict areas.

It is hoped that hereafter Japan would be able to con-

vince the world through her independent postures that she is concerned about the justice of the issue rather than her own self-interest, which might be involved in that issue.

Japan has not been able to gain much sympathy from the developing nations in her hour of need. All the developed nations have been more anxious about setting their own resource problems. In fact, Japan will have to face a stiff competition from them in her exploration for oil in any new areas, as can be already seen in the case of Burma. The Tyumen oil project in Siberia is still a distant dream. The annual supply of about 7.5 million tons of LNG from Indonesia starting from 1977 is proposed to be used for thermal power stations in Kyushu. But Japan has to take positive steps to modify the anti Japanese sentiment smouldering in Indonesia.

The Japanese people already realise that their attempts to become an economic power has made them "economic animals" in the outside world, while it has made them just cogs in the wheels of their industries. They are now demanding not quantity but 'quality' in life. Therefore, it is difficult to use their present discontent to rally them as a force against the outside world as in the 1940s.

The oil crisis has proved to Japan that she could build her strength not as a solitary individual unit, but by integrating her development efforts with the other resource-rich nations in the Asian region. The Asian nations also expect Japan to play a more

responsible role than just being a rich commercial partner.

WITCHCRAFT?

There are about 40,000 witches and wizards in Britain today. Recently, an unusual auction was held in Glasgow to dispose of some of their paraphernalia. When the auctioneer brought his hammer down with the second "going," he suddenly let out a yell and fell through the floor. On the following day newspapers quipped that supernatural beings apparently do not like to see their belongings auctioned off.

THE REASONS

The open-air concerts which had been one of the attractions in London's Hyde Park every summer were recently suspended. There were two reasons for the decision, the Minister for Housing and Construction explained. In the first place police details invariably had to be dispatched to the Park to keep order at pop concerts, and secondly, the youth attending the concerts left too much litter behind. After one performance by the Rolling Stones, for instance, 4 tons of refuse had to be carted away.

UNITED STATES

SHALE OIL

now profitable to mine
and refine

Washington.

Recent price increases of oil and products on international markets have made shale oil profitable to mine and refine in the United States. "The oil shale in the Green River area is much greater than the oil in the entire Middle East," Dr. W. N. Peach of the University of Oklahoma points out in a study published by a Congressional Committee on December 17, 1973.

"An output of two million barrels a day should be available within four or five years" from U.S. oil shale land, Dr. Peach says. (One barrel contains 159 litres) This is 10 percent of the present U.S. consumption of about 20 million barrels of oil daily. Another authority, engineer John Hutchins, told another Congressional Committee that U.S. shale oil output could rise to three million barrels a day or more within about 10 years.

Oil Shale lands will be leased by the U.S. Government beginning January 8 in a major effort to make the nation less dependent on overseas supplies of petroleum. Secretary of the Interior, Rogers Morton said, "The leasing program I have approved will encourage oil shale development and allow us to learn whether our 600,000 million barrel shale oil reserves can be developed at acceptable economic and environmental costs."

Six large separate tracts of oil shale land in the Rocky mountains will be leased at the rate of one per month for commercial oil production, through June 4. Two tracts lie in each of the States of Colorado, Utah and Wyoming.

Dr. Charles Prien of the University of Denver testified in November before the House Interior Committee that the Green River formation contains more than 3,000 000 million barrels of oil. Most of the usable U.S. oil shale lies in this Green River area where the three States come together.

The Department of the Interior calculated in late 1972 that shale oil could then be produced at about four dollars a barrel, compared with prices then of domestic oil of about 3.25 dollars a barrel.

A National Petroleum Council Committee wrote in 1973: "the 'price' level at which initial syncrude (synthetic crude oil production) becomes economically attractive depends upon the desired rate of return on the investment in light of the risks involved."

At a 10 percent rate of return, shale oil could be produced for 3.90 dollars a barrel. At a 20 percent rate the price would have to be 6.35 dollars, and so on.

Time Magazine in December estimated that shale oil could be produced for about six dollars a barrel, "or about as much as that of newly found U.S. oil." (In late December) new U.S. oil was selling for between nine and ten dollars a barrel, and the cost of imported oil had

already climbed well above six dollars a barrel.

At about six dollars a barrel, shale oil producers could afford not only to mine and process the shale, but also to re-vegetate the area and keep the air comparatively clean. As technology improved, costs would presumably be lowered—unless inflation kept them rising.

Three mining methods can be used to recover oil from shale open pit, underground room and pillars, and in situ. In all processes, the shale is broken into small pieces and heated to obtain Kerogen, which is similar to crude oil. All three methods are scheduled to be tried on a large scale in the leased Green River areas.

In situ processing is done by drilling a central well into the shale, surrounded by four or five offset wells. Explosives are used to fracture the shale between wells, and the shale is ignited beneath the ground, causing the Kerogen to become liquid. This oil is then pumped up from the peripheral wells.

The oil shale corporation (Tosco) developed an above-ground retorting method of obtaining oil. Finely crushed shale is fed into a retort where it is heated by mixing with hot ceramic balls. Shale oil vapors are distilled off, removed and condensed.

This Tosco process proved technically successful from October 1971 to May 1972 in a Colorado retort which processed 66,000 tons of shale a day. Since 1969, the firm has also spent more than 2.5 million dollars on its environmental program.

Continental drift a clue to oil reserves

THE technology of oil and mineral exploration has taken a new dimension with the astounding discovery that the continents are drifting and the ocean floor is spreading. Apart from locating oil, the bizarre dancing of the crustal plates may provide a natural solution to the burgeoning problem of a waste disposal,

On the basis of continental drift, scientists predict that gas or oil can be found under Labrador sea, in Newfoundland shelf, northern Greenland, Canadian arctic islands, northwestern Australia and in the south and south west Pacific.

As the continents drift, the size of the oceans change, scientists say. In fact, the fossil and magnetic record of the ocean bottom have made geologists conclude that the Atlantic is widening, the Pacific and the Mediterranean are shrinking, the Red Sea is opening up and the Alps and Himalayas are growing.

And 50 million years from now, geologists say, central America will disappear, Australia would have moved 2,000 miles north and Africa would have split into two by a new sea now in the making just below the Red Sea.

THE SCENARIO which smacks of science fiction is predicted by experts of "plate tectonics" who say the earth's crust is not continuous, but a mosaic of some 20 "plates", 48 to 160-km thick

which envelop the mantle like a jigsaw puzzle.

Moving like the pieces on a spherical chessboard these plates rub and slide against each other with stupendous force. At times when plates collide head on in mid-ocean, one plate rides over the other and the plate below plunges into the great "sea trenches" and is swallowed by the earth.

These sea trenches are the ideal place for dumping world's garbage increasing waste from nuclear plants, scientists say.

As the colliding plates open up like a giant alligator's mouth, the garbage containers will be gobbled up and consumed by the earth's flaming interior, it is said. Experts say the continents drift because new sea floor is being continuously generated along fissures, called "ridges", which run for thousands of kilometres through the major ocean basins.

THROUGH these rifts the stuff of the earth's interior wells up to form new crust whose outwards spreading motion pushes the older crusts from place to place in the ever changing mosaic known as "global tectonics".

Based on the analysis of a sample of mud, geologists claim the Red Sea bottom is so unbelievably rich in iron, lead, cobalt, zinc, gold and silver that a 10 m thick layer in one 125-km pocket is said

to be worth 2.5 billion dollars. Because the Red Sea is known to be sitting on the valley of an actively spreading ridge, geologists advise treasure hunters to look for gold along similar oceanridge valleys elsewhere on earth.

THIS NEW clue to discovery of minerals is likely to trigger a spate of ocean expeditions from enterprising nations, and influence the makeup of international agreements like the law of the seas. In view of the energy crisis, the most important application of continental drift is said to stem from its ability to predict new reserves of oil and gas on land as well as in the oceans.

Because oil and gas tend to form from sediments laid down at river deltas, geologists say it will be possible to predict new reserves by simply finding out where these deltas were about 20 million years ago. Sea floor spreading was confirmed primarily by scientists of the drilling ship "Glo-Mar Challenger" who had analyzed bottom samples of the Indian and Atlantic Oceans from a number of locations and determined the age of the floor by dating fossil remains.



IS IT TRUE?

Sherlock Holmes

THE FOURTH ESTATE

IS IT TRUE that the *Eelana du*, the Tamil daily, published in Jaffna, has undergone a fresh transformation? That after many years a new group had taken over for a time, a few months ago? That this group was evidently enamoured of a Third Force among the Tamils to by-pass the TUF on the one hand and the Kumarasuri-led SLFP-UF Tamils on the other? That there was a danger that the *Eelana du*, which had maintained itself as a non partisan newspaper from its inception, was being converted into becoming an organ for an ambitious group of neo politicians? That before it was too late *Eelana du* seems to have been rescued and once again it seems to be an on even keel as a national Tamil newspaper? That it is not clear as to who has brought the paper back to the straight and narrow path but it is a good thing it has happened?

IS IT NOT TRUE that the *Times of Ceylon* has created new precedents which run counter to all ethics of journalism? That in reporting legal cases it was an unwritten rule

throughout the democratic world that the respective position of the contending parties is reflected in reporting any legal case or dispute? That no plaint is published without the answer? That proceedings are reported so that readers get both sides of the story? That even if the newspaper was a party to a case this same practice was observed? That the *Times* with cocksure recklessness has abandoned all these imperatives of news reporting? That in reporting the legal tussle, in which the owners of the *Times* are now engaged in, only the case of one side has been consistently reported? That a restraining order of the Supreme Court was flashed across the front pages of all *Times*' publications without the relevant order of the District Court being published? That this kind of reporting did not make sense to the readers? That, further, the appeal to the Supreme Court was again flashed on the front page without the order of the Court against which the appeal was being

filed being published? That readers are still in a daze as to what it all means? That apart from being unfair to the District Court, the *Times* was totally unmindful of the rights of the parties in whose favour the District Judge had held? That the *Times* seem intent of making a jury of its readership on issues which are before the Courts? That it will be surprising if a complaint is not lodged before the Press Council about this matter?

IS IT NOT A FACT that there are also other breaches of journalistic etiquette of which the *Times* has been guilty of in recent times? That it is another unwritten rule of the newspaper code that news pictures of editors, directors and proprietors of newspapers do not appear in their news columns? That for some time now readers of *Times* publications have been having their fill of pictures of current *Times*' notables—always on the front page? That it is hard to believe that there were no other newsworthy items of photographic interest in Sri Lanka other than the doings of the editors and directors of the *Times*? That whilst this matter is not something which the Press Council need take cognisance of, it is something which the Fourth Estate in Sri Lanka has to worry about?