

TRIBUNE

CEYLON NEWS REVIEW

Cts. 75

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OIL AT MANNAR?

On February 7, 1974, the Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike, at the auspicious time of 9.25 a.m., pressed the button which set the drill working on the first test site at Pesalai in the Mannar area in Sri Lanka's quest for oil. Two other test sites have also been readied at points between Mannar and Talaimannar. If the present boring at Pesalai proves successful, it will mean an extraordinary stroke of luck for Sri Lanka. One does not strike oil, in quantities commercially exploitable, at every test site, because on an average it has been found, in the history of oil prospecting that, it is only one out of three or four test sites that proves to be a gusher—in spite of all the latest and most modern technology in seismic surveying for oil deposits. We can only keep our fingers crossed and hope for the best that the first site at Pesalai will prove to be winner. Otherwise, we have to go on from site to site until we are able to tap the rich deposits which are believed to be to lie along the Northern coast of the island.

The drilling for oil comes at a time there is a desperate urgency to ensure adequate stocks of oil at reasonable prices. The selling price of oil by the exporting countries has increased in a significant manner, though it has not gone as high as the \$ 15—\$ 17 per barrel which the *Ceylon Daily News* (of 8.1.74) said was the price that Sri Lanka would have to pay for immediate shipments of oil. This panic story was no doubt useful to cushion the fantastically high prices fixed by the Ceylon Petroleum Corporation for its products on 9.1.74. It is well to remember that the existing stocks of our oil were purchased at \$ 4.50 a barrel and that with the latest OPEC increases, with its price standstill until April 1974, Sri Lanka can buy all the oil she wants at prices between \$ 8.20 to \$ 8.30 a barrel. One rigged auction in Iran had fetched \$ 17 a barrel, but the posted prices in the Gulf have never gone above \$ 11.65—posted prices have so far not touched \$ 12, or \$ 15, or \$ 17 as stated by some daily papers in Sri Lanka which have rushed to provide a smokescreen for unconscionable price increases of petroleum products in this country. The present prices fixed by the Corporation seem to be worked out on the basis of a price which is about \$ 15 a barrel, but these price hikes have done immense damage to the economy. Nobody will grumble about the price increase of petrol, although the increase cannot be justified on rational grounds, but the increase in the price of kerosene (essential for water pumps) and diesel (for agricultural machinery and transport) have struck a fatal blow at agricultural production in this country. The Petroleum Corporation will continue to make its super profits and the Government will collect its high levies through duties and the BTT, but the cost of paddy, vegetables and other foodstuffs will shoot up, as is already evident, to heights ordinary people cannot afford.

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Tribunania

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IT IS YET TOO EARLY to say what the impact of the price increase of every copy of *Tribune* will be. We anticipate a drop in the causal and street sales for a start. New subscriptions may be slow in coming in, and readers with marginal incomes may be slow to pay for renewals. Each copy we print and distribute will undoubtedly be read by more and more people. If, on an average, five people had read a copy in the past, the number will increase to seven or eight people in the immediate future.

As we had explained in the last issue, we had no alternative but to increase the price of each copy. We will probably, at the initial stages, sell less and therefore print less, but until we find our bearings in the post-oil crisis era, we could not go on as before. But, as time goes on, we are confident that the reading public will realise that in *Tribune* they get more value in reading material—informative, analytical and interpretative—than in comparable newsmagazines, or newspapers.

We are no substitute for a daily newspaper, but as a weekly review of national and international affairs we endeavour to keep our readers abreast of events. We pride ourselves in being Sri Lanka's only non-party, non-partisan, independent political newsmagazine at the moment, ready to call a spade a spade on the basis of objective analysis—(objective as far as humanly possible, but there are always pitfalls)—and interpretative comment. We are always willing to admit a mistake, and there is no doubt we have made many mistakes, but these mistakes were honestly made and whenever brought to our notice they have always been corrected.

We have not yet brought ourselves to pay *pooja* to the high priests of advertising in the public or private sectors, to obtain

our share of advertisements, but we are certain that the day will come when *Tribune* will no longer be denied what is her due in this matter. Everybody who matters in Sri Lanka who reads the *Tribune* willingly concedes that a paper like ours fulfils a distinct need, and with the new revival in the study of the English language in this island the time will surely come when papers like the *Tribune*—the more the merrier—will be able to flourish and expand much more than at present. The health and vitality of the Fourth Estate in any country is a true index of a nation's political maturity and economic stability.

WE LOOK FORWARD IN THE NOT TOO DISTANT FUTURE to a Sri Lanka which will be very different from what the country is today when she will be self-sufficient in food and self-reliantly generate the resources to ensure steady economic advance, *but in the meantime* we are enveloped in a grave crisis of immense magnitude particularly in the matter of growing our own food. *If we manage to grow, all or nearly all the food we now import, and also all the food people require in adequate quantities, we will reach the break-through point for genuine economic growth and advancement. Industry, tourism, the export of non-traditional commodities and even the export of traditional primary products will not take us far, unless we grow enough not only to stop the import of foodstuffs we can easily grow here completely, but also grow enough to satisfy the entire food requirements of the people.*

Geographically, geologically and climatically, this island can easily grow all the food its people require—and more, enough to export. We have all the manpower we require. And, although we have been speaking about making this country self sufficient in food and rectifying the lopsidedness created by colonialism's export plantation economy from the adult-franchise days of the Donoughmore Constitution in the thirties, we have not gone very far, either in cutting down food imports or bridging the gap between population growth and food production. Commissions and Committees, both local and foreign, have investigated this matter during the last four deca-

des and more and had made recommendations, many of which had been implemented in part or in full. Far-reaching legislation affecting land tenure and the utilisation of land have been enacted during this period, and the most significant was the legislation adopted in the last two years establishing a Land Reform Commission to effect a ceiling on land holding held by private individuals and also to regulate the utilisation of land through Productivity Committees. High hopes have been proclaimed about the miracles the latest series of legislation will do to promote food production, but no decisive advance has yet been made but this slow take-off is being attributed to adverse weather conditions and the drought which has persisted in different parts of the island at different times during the last four years.

Tribune has made it clear that, in its view, the latest legislation on land will not by itself, be able to induce a major break-through on the food production front. On the other hand, we have also stressed that these narrow, sectarian, discriminatory and unnecessarily restrictive measures, (politically and not economically motivated) will only inhibit productive effort. It is also our view that the new legislation will neither promote individual effort to maximise food production nor ensure that state or co-operative undertakings will reach such high levels of productivity as to enable the country to be self-sufficient in food.

The legislation falls between two stools, one being the imperatives for private enterprise for the small man and the small peasant, and the other, that of public sector enterprise for state or co-operative undertakings. But while this Land Reform is being implemented to impose a ceiling on private individuals owning land privately, large joint stock companies which are termed "public companies" which own some of the best agricultural land in the island are exempt—except that the Government has taken over some of these big estates, either to be fragmented and distributed to the landless, or to be run as state enterprises.

LEGISLATION, however radical and however well-meaning, cannot always ensure food production.

In the critical situation which has arisen it would be inappropriate and irrelevant to divert attention on formulating new and better measures to promote proper and fuller utilisation of land on a long-range basis—although the present legislation, in our view, does not provide the most workable or the most practicable scheme for land utilisation. This country is now paying the price for utopian doctrinaire radicalism, and future generations and future governments will no doubt do a great deal of thinking on the kind of mixed economy utilisation of land to which we have become committed by the legislation adopted by the present government. Whilst we should have as our long-range objective the further reform of our land laws and the system of land tenure in order to ensure maximum utilisation to ensure higher productivity, our immediate task is to make sure that the maximum possible under the present system is produced. This is not easy, but it will be possible to produce at least the food we require for the present population of the island.

The most important thing to realise and that is one thing many forget, is that agriculture is capital-intensive. To get adequate production we must capital-intensively prepare even limited extents of the land to ensure high yields. The first priority is wells, reservoirs and tanks together with water pumps and other devices operated either mechanically or through cattle-power to lift the water for irrigation. The next priority is good seed materials and fertilisers, weedicides and insecticides. Fertilisers have become expensive and scarce because they are mainly imported and we have to depend more and more on compost manure made from animal dung and other waste matter. For this our livestock has to be conserved and fodder provided for them. Most insecticides and weedicides are petroleum based, and there are no substitutes as yet in the same way we can substitute compost for imported inorganic fertilisers.

On paper, great attention has been paid by the agricultural extension services to seed materials, fertilisers, insecticides and the like, but hardly any attention has been paid to utilising ground water

resources without which agricultural production in the really rich food producing areas of the Wannu will flounder in the vagaries of the Monsoons which have manifested the most freakish zig-zags in recent years. Unless and until, the Government promotes a crash programme to sink more wells in all the so-called Dry Zone, in the same way it was done in India and China, our agricultural production will not get off the ground. In the lucky years we providentially have good monsoon rains, we will no doubt have bumper harvests, but all the other years will be lean years.

We will concentrate on agricultural problems in practically every issue of *Tribune* and in the coming weeks and months we will publish a surfeit of articles to support our contention that the first priority in our agricultural programme for food production is a crash programme for sinking wells, surface, deep and tube, to tap groundwater.


Tribune has been publishing for over a year series of articles about a *Shamba*—a Swahili word for a Farm, even a one-acre farm—and the diary-like reportage of the happenings on that farm is one of the features in our paper which is most eagerly read by many readers. The author of this series is one of the people in this country who believes that land could be developed with human labour without the infusion of any real capital. He believes that agriculture is really labour-intensive and not capital-intensive and his experiment on this one acre was to demonstrate that with labour alone production of a high order was possible.

Readers can draw their own conclusions from what has happened on that farm as to whether labour alone can make a green revolution, but our dedicated idealist who had hoped to organise a like-minded team of enthusiasts to make his *Shamba* a show piece is still almost where he started from. He wants to make one more fresh effort to prove his point. In the coming weeks, *Tribune* will publish the diary of his new efforts. But we are still very much of the view that without the appropriate dose of capital-infusion it would be only a miracle that can make even a one-

acre plot of land a productive unit.

MANY PEOPLE in this country, even those in high office and holding top political positions, still believe that labour is the most important aspect of agriculture. That is the *raison-d'être* behind the free distribution of land to landless people without, at the same time, giving them all the capital goods, implements and inputs to make a success of agriculture. There is a fond belief that with human labour and a minimum of capital implements, the land distributed free to the landless would be utilised to the fullest.

Many people do not know that most of our colonisation schemes,



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even with irrigation from tanks, have not produced the best possible results, because the allottees did not have enough capital to utilise the land in a way that would have produced beneficial results for the nation. Only the allottees who were either able to mobilise the capital or were able to save the capital from what they had produced have been able to make a success of their farms.

In this issue, we have published an article about land reform in a socialist country—the G.D.R.—and the capital-intensive programme which was followed to make agriculture a success. Fragmentation of land into tiny plots—to satisfy political sentiments—was not done, but land taken over from the landlords and capitalists (the Junkers) was used to make large state and co-operative farms. In Sri Lanka we starve even our state farms of the kind of capital-intensive equipment to tap ground water and the like that is essential and concentrate on adding employment for an uneconomically large number of people—this is another aspect on the emphasis on labour-intensive agriculture.

Dudley Seers and manpower experts have suggested ways of harmonising labour-intensive technique with minimum capital, but these experts have been obsessed with finding employment that they have under-estimated the urgent need to ensure maximum food production in the crisis that has overtaken this country.

The USA, Canada and Australia are supreme examples where capital-intensive agricultural production along capitalist lines have produced outstanding results. China and Russia, using socialist methods, with adequate attention to capital-infusion have also once again brought self-sufficiency in food to their respective countries after major setbacks in 1972 and 1973. In China, labour has been wisely and widely used to make up for lack of capital goods, but in China the labour is disciplined and is willing to undertake long hours (not a mere eight hours a day) of drudgery and hard work to produce food.

In Ceylon, with its recent history of ultra-radical social welfare amenities, labour is not so amenable to sustained hard work with the necessary discipline to make up

for a lack of capital goods. This country is also faced with a number of other complex problems—and we cannot hope to do in Sri Lanka either what has been done in capitalist countries like the USA and Canada or in socialist countries like the USSR and China. We have to find our own way of doing things in the context of the realities in this country.

The more, thinking people in this country discuss this matter,

in seminars, in the newspapers, in meetings—in fact everywhere—the sooner, will we be able to forge a programme of action. *Tribune* is determined to play its part in this great endeavour to evolve and formulate an agricultural programme that will make this country self-sufficient within the shortest possible space of time. We cannot waste time in contemplating upon new utopias. We have to make the best of what obtains today to get quick but lasting results.

Letter to Editor

ON TRIBUNE

Sir,

As you know, I have been a subscriber to your valuable journal for quite sometime, and I have continued to subscribe because of your bold and independent outlook, and fair analysis of most of the important topics of the day. I am, however, unable to say the same thing on your writings on some of the recent happenings of this country. I find that you are trying to imitate the same policy as that of the *Times* Group. You are trying to curry favour with the authorities. I have no objection to your praising the good work of this government, but it is a sad thing to see that you have begun to give up your journalistic independence.

I would, particularly, like to refer to your comment on coup and counter coup which appeared in *Tribune* of 26th January. You seem to be quite content by referring to Mr. J. R. Jayewardene's coup story "a damp squib" and compel us to believe the statement made by the Prime Minister on it as Gospel truth. I am yet to understand what made you to become so low in your journalism? Is it some sort of fear? Or is it due to some personal interest?

Whatever it may be, as far as, the coup story is concerned, we the general public are anxious to know more about it. We are not satisfied with a mere statement of the Prime Minister which is purely intended to ridicule Mr.

J. R. Jayewardene and divert the attention of the masses from the main issue. The only conclusion that we can derive is that the Prime Minister is not interested in holding a fair investigation, probably because she intends saving some people. We also do not wish a body consisting of officials who could be influenced by the authorities conducting investigations into the allegations. The panel of investigators must consist of members of the National State Assembly representing all political parties.

We are unable to endorse your view, also the view taken by the Prime Minister, that a Select Committee cannot investigate a crime and that a Select Committee is only an excellent forum for political propagandising.

When you endorse such views it is ridiculous for you to suggest to other journals to be constructive and analytical.

U. B. Wijekoon

10, Nikape Avenue,
Dehiwela.
January 30, 1974.

Healthy Industry

The US State of Nevada has long been famed as a legalized gambling centre. Its numerous gambling dens are heavily taxed and supervised by the Nevada Gaming Control Board. The other day executive secretary of the Board Edward Bowers told the press that in the past fiscal year visitors to the state's gambling establishments had left a total of 804 million dollars behind. This was 18.6 per cent more than the previous year.

COMPOST

To Meet The Fertiliser Shortage

EACH DAY, an untold quantity of both human and animal waste goes waste in our country.

This, if used as a compost would, not only enrich the soil with organic matter but also improve the soil structure so necessary for continuous good yields.

WHAT IS COMPOSTING. Organic waste such as crop wastes, straw wastes, husks, stubbles, leaves, green weeds, cattle-shed sweepings, etc., are converted into valuable manure by the process of biological fermentation, popularly known as composting. So, what is normally thrown out as 'waste' can be converted

into a rich compost manure which is superior to ordinary farmyards manure.

HOW TO PREPARE. Where the sub-soil water level and the annual rainfall are high, it is always better to adopt 'heap system'. Otherwise, 'pit system' of compost making can be adopted successfully.

Dig pits of 4.5 x 1.50 x 1 metres (15' x 5' x 3'). The number of pits you should dig will depend upon the number of cattle you keep.

Better fill the pits in compartments. For this, make, partition of bamboo sticks, dry stalks of jowar or maize or some such material in the pit.

Collect cattle dung daily from the cattle-shed. Mix it thoroughly with urine soaked litter and place in the compartment in 25 to 30 cm layer. Sprinkle soil over it. Put the second day's collection over the first day's layer in the pit. Repeat this till pit is filled and the heap is raised a foot above the ground level. Cover it with a two inch layer of soil and see that no air gets into it.

FARM WASTES such as waste fodders or weeds, farm sweepings, etc., are spread on the floor of the cattle-shed to form a good bedding for the animals. This will absorb urine. Afterwards, mix this urine soaked litter with cattle dung and put in the pit in layers as described above.

Waste materials such as sugarcane-trash, paddy husk, forest leaves water hyacinth, etc., can successfully be converted into a rich compost manure. In places where the rainfall or sub-soil water level is very high, adopt the 'heap system' of composting.

Select a high-level plot and raise on it a small platform of 3.5 x 2.5 metres (12' x 8') with stone pieces or bricks, 6 inches (15 cm) higher than the surrounding ground level. Mix the day's collection of urine-soaked refuse and dung properly, and spread layer of 15 to 20 cm (6 to 8 inches) in the platform regularly.

Cover that with dry earth or dry refuse in a 5 cm (2 inches) layer. Go on adding each day's collections till the heap reaches a height of 1.25 to 2.5 metres (4' x 6'). Plaster it with a paste of dung and earth. All the matter is converted into a fine compost in about four months and is then ready for use.

— FIU

D. CASAR

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INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

BY ARIEL

- * Snap U. K. Elections
- * Indian Ocean
- * Thailand
- * Paracels

BRITAIN. The snap election in Britain ordered by the Prime Minister, Mr. Edward Heath, is no doubt being held under circumstances which the Conservatives believe are favourable for their party interests. In fact, Mr. Heath and the Tories have been preparing for this for over two months. When he met with stiff resistance from the trade unions for his Phase 3 of his economic programme, he seems to have decided to prepare the ground for an election in which the Labour Party could be thrown on the defensive.

The international oil crisis had come as a blessing in disguise to the British Tories. Austerity and other measures to provoke the trade unions were taken, and when the coal miners, railwaymen and other workers in essential services took "industrial action" to safeguard their interests, the Heath government adopted panic measures like the three-day week, reduction of fuel for heating in the midst of winter, closing down TV by 10.30 p.m. and the like. The Chancellor of the Exchequer Barber, in introducing his mini-budget in mid-December, stated that it was not the oil crisis but "industrial action" that had brought about the three-day week. The refusal of the miners to do overtime work had caused dislocation, but the Government exaggerated the impact of this by further specially-devised panic measures. The miners had replied with a threat of strike action, and this gave the Tories the chance they wanted. A coal strike was

an excellent excuse for imposing a two-day week, and this would give the Conservatives the most favourable take-off point for a general election.

The difficulties created by a three-day and two-day week would naturally drive non-committed voters in Britain, particularly the "floating" voters, to gang up against the trade unions which had been backed by the Labour Party. That this "crisis-situation" has already been created is obvious from the initial gallup polls which have given the Conservatives a lead of about 8 to 10 percent over Labour. With this heavy propaganda barrage based on the two and three day week of hardships and austerities, however unnecessary they may really be, the Labour Party will find it extremely difficult to put across its case: that Tory policy had brought about the economic crisis: that joining the Common Market on the conditions Heath had negotiated had not only increased public expenditure but also brought other setbacks for Britain: that the reduction of £ 4000 million of taxes to help big business in the UK had compelled the Government to resort to measures to cut down welfare amenities and even development; that the free hand allowed to Big Money had sent British money abroad for investment; that unnecessary increases had been incurred for arms expenditure, etc. etc.

The general elections which will be held in Britain on February 28 will be tricky one heading for a showdown that may not end with the elections. The wily Tories have placed the Labour Party in a difficult position in so far as swinging the election in their favour is concerned, but can the Tories do without the trade unions? Can the British workers be browbeaten by the Tories in the way they are seeking to do?

CUEA. Much significance is attached to Brezhnev's visit to Cuba. In recent months there have been persistent stories that everything was not going too well with the economic development work in Cuba. It had even been suggested that Fidel Castro had developed second thoughts about the validity about some of the economic policies he had plugged so far. Some reports, no doubt from capitalist

sources, had hinted that Castro had even begun to wonder whether the Marxist policies he had insisted upon were the most realistic and feasible for Cuba at the present stage.

The behind-the-scenes story of the Brezhnev visit to Cuba will probably not be known for a long time to come, but Brezhnev's visit will no doubt be a source of encouragement to Castro's Cuba and will also provide much needed economic assistance of a massive character on a re-orientated basis.

Comments on this visit in magazines like the *Economist*, *Newsweek* and *Time* have not become available to us, but Soviet Union's *Novosti* commentator Andrei Doglov was naturally enthusiastic about this visit. This is what he said: "A magnificent reception was accorded by Cubans to Leonid Brezhnev, General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee. During all its 15 years of existence the first socialist state of the western hemisphere has invariably enjoyed Soviet support. In the words of Prime Minister Fidel Castro, the Soviet Union stretched a helping hand to Cuba at the crucial period in its history and helped the Cuban socialist revolution to survive. Today, socialist Cuba is called the vanguard of the Latin American revolution. Having ousted the foreign monopolies and having abolished capitalist exploitation, the Cuban state of workers and peasants is winning ever stronger positions in the world. Its policy and its achievement are riveting the attention of all patriots in Latin America, of all those who are fighting for the national independence and social regeneration of their countries..."

With the recent Soviet announcement that grain self-sufficiency had been attained with the current harvests, not much has appeared in the foreign press about the economic situation in the Soviet Union, except for the reports about the activities and writings of Soviet intellectual dissidents and internal critics of the regime. The writings of a few of them have been smuggled abroad and have been published. Whilst the Soviet authorities have denounced these writings as the traitorous outpourings of a demented lot of disgruntled intellectuals, there is

perplexity among the non-committed in the rest of the world as to what all this means. The rabid anti-soviet critics naturally highlight these writings, but how much credence can really be placed on the significance they attach to these dissidents inside Russia?

DIEGO GARCIA. India has lodged a formal protest with the USA and Britain about the reports that the Diego Garcia base in the Indian Ocean was being turned into a major nuclear base. The story that something big was in the offing on Diego Garcia had come into the news columns of many internationally recognised papers in the last week of January.

The correspondent of the Madras *Hindu*, Easwar Sagar, in a despatch from Washington on January 22 had stated: "Pentagon officials have refuted reports that the British, who are reluctant to do anything which might anger the Arab oil producing States, had flatly turned down a recent request by the U.S. Secretary of State Dr. Henry Kissinger, to convert the Inaian Ocean island of Diego Garcia into a regular U.S. naval base. Instead they say that negotiations between the U.S. and the U.K. aimed at making the British-owned island which lies some 1,200 miles due south of the Indian peninsula, a naval station which U.S. units in the area can use as a full-scale support and refuelling base, are now in progress.

"Under an agreement finalised two years ago with the British, the U.S. gained rights to establish what was then officially called a communication facility in Diego Garcia, as part of its global network. The facility which has been functioning since last April comprises a small airstrip, a communications station and some 200 naval personnel to man them. The U.S. Defence Department, which since the October West Asian war has decided to maintain a regular naval presence in the Indian Ocean now apparently wants, to expand the existing facility into a regular naval complex from which its naval and air units can monitor activity in the western and southern approaches of the Indian Ocean as well as the oil lanes that lead from the Persian Gulf.

"The U.S. objective is said to be several fold. The U.S. believes that once the Suez Canal is re-

opened, following the recent Israeli-Arab agreement on disengagement of forces along that waterway, the Soviet Union, assured of a quick route to the Indian Ocean, will undertake a vast expansion of its naval presence in this strategic area. The U.S. wants to counterbalance that with a naval presence of its own. Diego Garcia is also regarded as the U.S. answer to the air bases the Soviet Union is reported to have in Somaliland.

"At present the U.S. maintains a small naval unit in Bahrein—this has been supplemented since October by the carrier *Oriskany*, the nuclear powered frigate *Bainbridge* and four destroyers. With Bahrein due to terminate its agreement with the U.S. later this year, and with the possibility of fuel supplies for its ships from Arab sources likely to be discontinued indefinitely, the U.S. apparently regards Diego Garcia as a viable alternative.

"Diego Garcia which, would act as a stationary aircraft carrier right in the middle of the Indian Ocean, could also relieve the U.S. of the necessity to maintain a costly floating carrier force, with all the logistic problems that would pose. What remains to be seen however is whether the British, overriding the known objections of the Arabs, as well as major littoral States like India, would grant the base rights that the U.S. is seeking in Diego Garcia."

Indonesia has already protested against the upgrading of the Diego Garcia base and most of the littoral states in the Indian Ocean will probably do likewise. The OPEC countries, with the exception of Iran, are also expected to protest but there are hints that Saudi Arabia may not join the chorus.

The setting up of a nuclear base in the Diego Garcia goes contrary to Mrs. Bandanaike's concept of a Peace Zone in the Indian Ocean and Sri Lanka will undoubtedly join India in whatever diplomatic activity that is taken to prevent Diego Garcia being made a nuclear arsenal.

THAILAND. Whilst the USA has, for some time now, endeavoured to play a low-key role in East and Southeast Asia, an incident in Thailand has focussed great atten-

tion on what may be a trifling incident. As usual it is the wide-awake press of the USA which has given this episode world wide publicity.

The Thai newspaper, *Nation*, which for long had been regularly carrying on an anti-communist campaign with a virulent anti-marxist edge, had reported in its issue of January 5, 1974 that the CIA had sought to "interfere with the internal affairs of Thailand." It was alleged that a CIA operative in Thailand had forged a letter purporting to be from a Thai rebel leader dated December 1973 urging the Government to agree to a ceasefire in exchange for the granting of autonomy to "the liberated areas." The letter was sent to the Prime Minister Sanyo Dharmasakti and five newspapers. An uproar followed, and the US Embassy in Bangkok had confirmed that a CIA agent operating in Sakonnakhon Province had been involved in the matter. This letter

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Due to Saturday being declared a holiday, copies of *Tribune* sent by post on Friday evening are being delivered on the following Monday. Arrangements are now being made to hand-deliver copies of *Tribune* on a zone basis to Colombo residents only, on a payment of an additional charge of ten cents per copy. Subscribers who are interested in this proposal please apply to The Circulation Manager.

was held to be a forgery and the incident has caused widespread indignation in the country.

The *New York Herald Tribune* 9/1/74, had reported that "the CIA agent who sent to the Thai government a phony cease-fire offer, purportedly from a Communist insurgent leader, has left Thailand and "appropriate disciplinary action has been taken." U.S. Ambassador William R. Kinter said today. Mr. Kinter spoke to Thai newsmen at Chiangmai in northern Thailand, where he stopped on an orientation tour. His remarks were reported by the U.S. Embassy.

"Mr. Kinter, who has been trying to play down his former military career—including his work with the CIA in Washington from 1950-1952—was reportedly angry over the phony letter. Sources said it was sent about one week after he presented his credentials on Nov. 29. The CIA agent, reported to be an American, was said to have hoped the letter would increase defections to the government."

With the present Watergate flare-up, in the USA, any incident which the American Press could use to beat the Nixon Administration is used with a fanfare of trumpets.

The *Los Angeles Times* correspondent Jack Fosie wrote an enlightening piece datelined Bangkok, January 6: "The U.S. Embassy here admitted yesterday that a member of the Central Intelligence Agency had with 'regrettable and unauthorized initiative' sent a phony letter to Thailand's premier offering a truce on behalf of Thai insurgents. The disclosure confirmed a story published by a Thai English-language newspaper, *The Nation*.

The correspondent also revealed some interesting background about this forged letter "According to informed sources, the letter was written and mailed in November to the new Thai Premier Sanya Dharmaskiti. Signed by a purported insurgent leader, 'Chamras', it proposed that control of insurgent held areas in the northeast, mainly adjacent to the Laos border, be recognized by the government and allowed autonomous rule. In return, the rebels pledged not to seek to expand their insurgency. The offer,

when publicized, was officially ignored by government leaders and its authenticity was discounted, even then...."

The report went on to say that this "regrettable" incident was an unfortunate throwback at a time when the USA had changed its policies and strategy in this region. "The incident of the cease-fire letter has been discussed with appropriate Thai officers. It is a regrettable and unauthorized initiative. The American ambassador has directed categorically that no American official be involved in any activity which could be interpreted as interference in Thai internal affairs."

"Under Ambassador Kinter, who arrived here recently, efforts, have been made to reduce some of the more visible symbols of official American presence in Thailand. American military shopping centres have been reduced, recreational facilities have been reduced or closed. U.S. military police walking Bangkok streets to curb Americans who misbehave are no longer carrying arms.

"This appear to appreciate these efforts, while continuing to express concern at the reduction in Thai civilian employment at American military bases and in U.S. agencies. There are presently about 30,000 Thais so employed."

There is no doubt that the USA, after its detente with China and the Vietnam Agreement, has changed its policies and strategy in this region. That is why it did not react in any way to the tough Chinese action in regard to Paracels Island. It will be recalled that, as early as 1936, Mao Tse-tung had told Edgar Snow that these islands, among other territories, came within the orbit of China.

CHINA AND VIETNAM. This Paracels Island episode, in which China has taken action in regard to an external matter, has sent, it is reported, tremors through many southern eastern capitals. The vacuum which has been created by the USA has also created apprehensions from Seoul to Singapore. Japan and the Philippines now exercise some kind of sovereignty over the Sankhaku and Spratly islands to the south of the Paracels Archipelago and fears have arisen whether China will claim these islands also.

South Vietnam has not been able to do anything about its own claims to the Paracels Islands although it has attempted to argue that agreements between France and China (not the present regime) had recognised Vietnamese (Indo-chinese) sovereignty over these islands. Further, the Chinese action in the Paracels has made it more difficult for Saigon to cope with the pressure from Hanoi and many other countries to implement the Paris Agreement to the hilt.

In the one year after the signing of the Peace Agreement, both sides are reported to have lost over 50,000 people — which is about equal to what the USA had lost during the entire Indo-China war. On the first anniversary of the Agreement, Hanoi had released the following information: that during this year the Saigon administration had been guilty of 301,097 violations which included 34,266 operations to capture territory, 35,532 shellings, 14,749 bombardments and intelligence operations, and 216,550 police actions which has resulted in over 6000 civilian deaths.

Saigon, however, has charged that Hanoi was making all preparations—military, political and propaganda—to launch a major offensive against the South. In a recent speech President Thieu had stressed that Hanoi had violated all the agreements. And with this excuse Thieu was reported to be getting ready for war himself. He has already gone over to the offensive in regard to all territories held by the Vietcong as at the time of the Peace Agreement.

Not content with increasing the tension in the area, in the same way he had provoked a situation in the Paracels hoping for US intervention on his behalf, Thieu is reported, according to the *New York Times*, to have asked the USA for increased arms' assistance. There are fears in the USA that the Nixon administration might take this request to the Congress to give South Vietnam multi-million dollar armaments' assistance including the latest models of fighters K-5-E, sophisticated electronic equipment and tactical rockets.

* *

CHRONICLE

Jan. 28 — Feb. 4

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

MONDAY, JANUARY 28: In a recorded television interview, the Prime Minister Mrs. Bandaranaike said that she was confident of an early solution to the problem of stateless Indians in Sri Lanka; the feelings of the Sri Lanka people over this issue had "died down a great deal"; though the issue of Kachchativu was discussed between the Prime Ministers of India and Sri Lanka no decision had been reached. The IMF team now in Sri Lanka gets down to serious discussions with government officials today. There is a great possibility of expanding Sri Lanka's trade with the Middle East countries, said Mr. T. B. Subasinghe, Minister of Industries and Scientific Affairs, who returned to the island after an extensive tour of the Middle East. The CWC has decided to support the TUF candidate for the Mannar constituency. The 35 million rupee satellite station proposed to be built off Padukka will enable operators in Sri Lanka to establish the direct dialing system with all the important cities of the world. The Acting Prime Minister, Mr. Maithripala Senanayake, directed the commissioning of the new Laksapana power station in March, in a bid to avert a major power crisis that is threatening the country. The extra half measure of rice which was issued in December last year will not be issued from the week beginning today; it is being withdrawn temporarily. The Ministry of Health has called for a full report following a news report that patients have been asked to bring drugs for treatment at state hospitals. Saudi Arabian oil Minister Yamani said his country wanted to reduce the current price of crude oil although it believed that the price was fair and reasonable.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 29: Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike, will return home today from her seven day visit to India. The Premier, it is reported has reached an agreement with the Indian Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, on the future status of the balance 150,000 "stateless" persons of Indian origin not covered by the Sirima-Shastri pact: the basis of the agreement will be announced in the joint communique which will be released today after the Premier returned to the island. The Criminal Justice Commission (Exchange Frauds) yesterday gave reasons for finding the six suspects guilty in the first case that came up for hearing before the Commission. The Commissioner of National Housing has concluded preliminary agreements with over 1000 tenant applicants who wish to buy the surplus houses vested in the Commissioner under the ceiling on housing property law. The Paddy Marketing Board has decided not to issue off ration rice for social functions, weddings and funerals. Government will send a delegation to the Aid Sri Lanka Consortium meeting to be held in Paris in April this year. No processions or demonstrations will be allowed during the election campaign for the Mannar by-

election. No fresh cases of cholera have been reported from anywhere in the island, according to the Ministry of Health. India and Yugoslavia have denied they have proposed a non-aligned summit conference before the next scheduled date in 1976. Finance experts from major oil producing countries who met in Vienna said that there will not be any reduction in prices. Israeli forces completed their withdrawal from the entire region of the southern sector of the Suez Canal.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 30: The Prime Minister Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike returned to the island yesterday afternoon from India: under the accord reached with the Indian Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, Sri Lanka will grant citizenship to 75,000 while the other 75,000 will be taken by India. It has been brought to the notice of the Ministry of Foreign and Internal Trade that one million textile coupons of the series 217 have not been surrendered to the Salu Sala by a number of co-operatives although textiles have been issued to the co-operatives by Salu Sala. Public officials are to be paid a higher rate for official travelling. The Executive Committee of the Kandy-Senkadagala Bhikku Front has appealed to Bhikkus who are coming to participate in the 'Satyakriya' to bring with them their identity cards: according to the Front there are reports of attempts to sabotage the 'satyakriya' by sending laymen in robes to participate in it: about 2000 members of the Maha Sangha from all parts of the country are expected to be in Kandy next Tuesday for the proposed 'Satyakriya'. There is no shortage whatsoever of raw material for the manufacture of synthetic textiles, as all manufacturers have been issued their quotas: this was disclosed by the Chairman of the Textile Weaving Materials Corporation. The Mayor of Colombo, Mr. M. H. M. Fowzie, has asked the Ministry of Local Government to promulgate regulations under the Emergency to penalise those who waste water in the city. Tea prices slumped at this week's auctions. The Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives, Mr. Carl Albert, said yesterday he believed the House would vote on the impeachment of President Nixon some time this year. A Los Angeles Superior Court Judge in a history-making act yesterday ordered President Nixon to appear in Court to testify at the trial of his former domestic affairs aide, Mr. John D. Ehrlichman, on February 25.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 31: The Arab League (the powerful international lobby of the Arab countries), has indicated that it will mediate on behalf of Sri Lanka to obtain special concessions of supplies and prices of oil from the oil producing countries: the Sri Lanka-Arab Friendship Association and other similar organisations have made representations for Arab League intervention and the League has communicated its willingness to do so. Four suspects have been summoned to appear before the CJC (Exchange Frauds) today which begins hearing its second case. Several plantation workers' unions have hailed the Indo-Sri Lanka agreement on the balance 150,000 stateless subjects of Indian origin. Mr. Anura Bandaranaike, chief organiser of the SLFP Youth League, will visit all the electorates of the Jaffna district from February 6 to 11. The chief opposition whip, Mr. R. Premadasa, said that the Opposition will issue a statement on the Indo-Sri Lanka agreement on the future of the 150,000 stateless persons. No special bus services will be operated by

the C.T.B. on festival occasions in future: high cost of fuel, the delay in receipt of spares, shortage of tyres are said to be the reasons behind this move. President Nixon will refuse to obey a court order calling on him to testify at the trial of Mr. John D. Ehrlichman, a former top aide, according to a White House announcement. President Nixon announced that a meeting would be called in the immediate future to discuss lifting the Arab oil embargo.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 1: A further drastic cutback in imports in 1974 has been planned to meet the expanding deficit brought about by the rising cost of essentials—oil, rice, flour and sugar. The Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike, will inaugurate the drilling of the first test well for oil on the island of Mannar near Pesalai on February 7. Three of the four suspects who appeared before the CJC (Exchange Frauds) in the second case have pleaded not guilty to charges. The Colombo Frauds Bureau has been called in to investigate the export business of a firm which was packing quality teas for a reputed tea firm: it has been found that this firm had shipped sawdust and refuse instead of tea. The minimum bus fare will be 20 cents, under the new fares structure prepared by the Ceylon Transport Board: the new fares structure is expected to come into effect from Monday, February 4th. The Auditor-General has reported a decrease of Rs. 2,416,800 in gross proceeds from the sale of sweep tickets by the National Lotteries Board for 1971-72. The food distribution system and the Government's import policy are under review again in an attempt to head off a major crisis threatening Sri Lanka. Charitable allowances paid by the Ministry of Social Services are to be increased shortly. Government is to revise the prices of all cotton textiles, with immediate effect: the revision which is expected to be in the region of ten percent will apply to all varieties of cotton textiles. South Vietnam has sent troops to the disputed Sparty Islands in the South China Sea over which China claims sovereignty. A group of men, claiming to be members of the Japanese Red Army, blew up a storage tank at an oil refinery in Singapore and held six hostages aboard a hijacked boat: they are claiming a safe passage out of Singapore.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 2: Higher bus and rail fares will be introduced by the Ceylon Transport Board and the Ceylon Government Railway from Monday: Railway tickets, including seasons tickets, have been raised by fifty per cent: Freight on parcels and goods transported by the CGR go up by 25 per cent: the new C.T.B. fares scheduled began with a minimum fare of 20 cents for the first stage. Persons sentenced to jail by the courts for non-payment of fines will be made to do street cleaning and scavenging work for the Colombo Municipal Council. The Criminal Justice Commission (Exchange Frauds) was told yesterday that the Yugoslavian firm which was engaged in the Mahaveli diversion project would remit £ 44,000 in the next two days to redress any loss the Sri Lanka Government had incurred due to the transactions of the Yugoslavs who have been found guilty. Mr. P. Senadheera of the SLFP was elected Mayor of Dehiwela-Mount Lavinia yesterday. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger said that he was "quite optimistic" of the Arab oil embargo against the United States: would be lifted following a February 14 meeting of Arab oil-producing states in Tripoli. President Sadat of Egypt said that he will not sign any document ending

the state of war with Israel unless Israel pulls out of all occupied Arab land and Palestinian rights are restored. President Nixon has bluntly challenged Congress to impeach him or swiftly clear him of corruption allegations.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 3: Colombo's Mayor Mr. M. H. M. Fowzie has decided to cut off supplies of water to firms and industries drawing large amounts of purified water for purposes other than drinking. With extra rice no longer available on the ration, bread lines in Colombo city and the suburbs have begun to lengthen again. The question of re-opening the register for the purpose of enabling more persons of Indian origin to apply for Indian citizenship, will be one of the main subjects to be discussed when official level talks on the Indo-Sri Lanka problem reopen in Colombo shortly. Top officials in the public service have been advised by the Treasury to do their official travelling by train and bus as far as possible—in view of the fuel crisis. There will be a definite improvement in the transport services of the railway and the Ceylon Transport Board from the middle of this year: this assurance was given by the Minister of Transport, Mr. Leslie Goonewardene. The price of aerated water—all varieties—has been increased by five cents a bottle following the fuel crisis. Rice not sold to the Government will be estimated at Rs. 45 per bushel and taxed on this basis: the Minister of Fisheries, Mr. George Rajapakse said this yesterday at a meeting. California Secretary of State Edmund Brown said that there was a very substantial possibility President Nixon would have to pay a 576,000-dollar income tax deduction claimed for contributing his vice Presidential papers to the National Archives.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 4: Two thousand four hundred students, who qualified for courses in medicine, engineering and science in the five Camouses, will be shut out this year: there is no room in the university for them: this, the Education Minister, Dr. Badi-ud-din Mahmud, said yesterday is likely to be one of the biggest ever massacres at university admission level in the history of Sri Lanka's higher education. The Prime Minister, Mrs. Bandaranaike, will on Wednesday hand over by a deed of gift the historic Mahamaluwa to the Diyawadana Nilame, Mr. H. B. Udurawana, lay custodian of the Sacred Temple of the Tooth. Libya has made a gesture to Sri Lanka by contracting to purchase 30-35 million pounds of tea this year—more than double her purchases in 1969 and 1970. The Health Ministry is considering closing down the two leprosy hospitals in the country. The United National Party celebrates 'Independence Day' today by holding a mass rally at Hyde Park in Colombo. Pope Paul VI has appointed Thomas Cardinal Cooray, Archbishop of Colombo, as Papal Legate at the Consecration of the Basilica of Our Lady of Lanka on Wednesday. Several Nayaka Theras and Buddhist Associations are making a final appeal to the members of the Sangha Sabha of Senkadagala to put off their Satyakriya fixed for tomorrow. Three Arab Guerillas demanding freedom for two comrades under death sentence in Athens kept two officers of a Greek ship locked in a cabin in Karachi yesterday. In a major fire that broke out in a skyscraper at San Paulo, Brazil, yesterday 220 people died and 300 were injured.

WE JOURNALISTS

Publish And Be Damned!

by CANAX

I SHALL be ever grateful to Mr. Alavi Moulana for remembering to spare a thought for us poor journalists at a time when everybody else seems incapable of thinking of anything but the suffering masses. Thanks to his initiative, the Press Council has announced its intention to look into and, believe it or not, even improve our lot.

The Council, having first obtained the required information from newspaper proprietors, will then call for written submissions from working journalists. I can hardly hold back my pen.

While I impatiently ticked off every passing minute waiting for the Council's call, I couldn't prevent myself from penning a personal note to the profession's benefactor which goes something like this:

Dear Alavi,

I can't bring myself to address you formally as Mr. Moulana, not after what you have done for us. You probably don't realise this but it required great courage and an even greater sense of selfless dedication to the cause of justice (or the underdog, take your pick) for you to come right out and offer us a helping hand at a time when journalists are regarded as a pest more dangerous to the country than the cumingi was to our coconut.

It may interest you to know that your generous gesture was received in some uninformed quarters if not with the proverbial pinch, than with a knowing smile. But don't worry, I have effectively wiped the smile off her face. I told my wife to stop being ungrateful and, for once, she listened to me. (Actually, I told her to keep her big mouth shut or else, but keep that to yourself.) In any case you don't have to worry about her anymore, I promise.

I hope you won't think me ungrateful for bringing this up, but I am somewhat disturbed that the Council will be calling for submis-

sions from working journalists, or so the story had it. If the Council is serious about this, I can only hope none of us will be. But should we be, then I'm afraid there won't be any submissions at all. When I left school, I remember, the alternatives before me were to either start working or become a journalist. Life is too short, I told myself then, to waste it working. Those who advised me did not suggest I become a politician or even a trade unionist. Looking back, I'm only sorry they didn't (it's too late to think of those now, for the two fields are as overcrowded as accountancy, medicine and engineering, and going into them late is worse than not going into them at all.)

Lest you get me wrong, Alavi, we journalists don't just stand there doing nothing. We go to elaborate lengths to keep up the pretence that we are working, and working hard at that. Is it therefore too much to suppose that what the Council really means is journalists who are employed and can show a monthly pay slip to prove it? It does seem unfair, especially when you consider that a public servant is defined as one who has his name on the Government's payroll. So why make an exception of us?

Seems you have asked our bosses to furnish you with our conditions of employment. They're terrible so don't believe a word of what the other side tells you.

You'll know just how terrible when you look at a typical day in the life of a newspaperman. We start the day, every day, with a clean slate, only it's called a "dummy" in our jargon and has 10, 12 or may be 24 pages, depending on how many advertisers have unwittingly consented to subsidise our existence and ensure our profitability for that day. Now our job is to fill that blank "dummy" from first page to last with something, anything, so the public can be induced to part with the money it has and doesn't know what to do with.

You may well ask why it is necessary to fill those pages. A good question, and I think I have a good answer. Exhaustive market research a long time ago taught us a funny thing about the public: it may buy a paper that's totally blank just once for the sheer novelty

(and possibly out of curiosity wanting perhaps to see how different a blank paper would be from a blank cheque), but it is not likely to buy blank every day.

So that is why we poor journalists have to pretend to work ourselves to the bone and come up with something new everyday, so the sub-editors will have enough stuff to fill in the blanks. Being a politician of sorts, and a trade unionist of sorts, you will appreciate what a challenge this poses to our...er, well, creative ability, I guess.

If one is doing straight fiction—like I am doing, for instance—then no problems, and anything goes. But if one gets pushed into politics it can be hell. It gets so one often doesn't know which side one is on. I tried my hand at it once and thought I was smart playing one side against the other, and ended by getting caught in the cross-fire. Needless to say, I retired hurt.

If politics is hell, trade and commerce is worse. For when one cons (naturally) in politics, what can happen is that you may be forced to give equal prominence the day after to the opposite view, also called a "contradiction", yet you still have the last word with a "Note by Ed." at the end of it. But you pull a fast one in commerce with no more sinister motive than to meet your journalist norm of one story a day, and the next thing you know the bottom has got knocked out of the market, the economy is allegedly in shambles, a motley crowd of businessmen screams for your blood, and your News Editor hollers for your scalp.

And yet we find ourselves almost compulsively driven to employ our creative ability all the time for fear that if you don't, some one else—and a rival at that—surely will. The inevitable consequence is that, either way, your News Ed. is after your scalp. What it all adds up to, Alavi, is that in this game, you can't win. So we have no choice but to play the game on the basis that it is better to have scooped and lost than to have never scooped at all.

Once you gather experience, of course, you don't go sticking your neck out too much and learn to con plausibly and within accep-

INANIA *Of This, That and The Other*

Conflict And Leadership

By INNA

George is desperate.

As a good Christian of the highest denomination, he was overjoyed that his pastor had at last ("after ten years from the Council", he said) started a parish council. But one week later, there he was back again at my home, with fallen mien, and tail down: his pastor in soda-bottle style had closed the parish council because someone had challenged him with one sentence: "I do not think that conflicts should be avoided at the start." To which the pastor had replied: "If you want to thrash out problems, not here; if you want conflicts, not here."

The abortion was done. The parish council was one week old and was killed, and all six member leaders attended the obsequies. They don't go any more to that self-styled leader's church ('tyrant' was the name George gave him in his desperation, "for that man," said he, has "outlived his usefulness").

I, for one, like a good many things said by the present Pope. A very famous document, left aside by the opponents of George, is the new *Dialogue Within The Church*, a Symposium organised by Rome, and published by the Vatican in 1971-1972:

"Authority is a vital centre, where decisions are taken together with others... Its presence is indispensable for the unity of the group. The task of authority is not to suffocate conflicts permanently but to render their integration possible... (p. 72)." The Church should humbly accept the conflict, as inherent to its state of pilgrimage. (86). It cannot be denied that dialogue often takes place on the basis of or because of a conflict... Conflict is a constituent element of individual and social life. Man creates his own history by conflicts which are integrated and solved; communities, through conflict, are enabled to obtain and put into practice the new means of action which permit them to go forward towards the future... (70-71)

George berated his leaders, tore to shreds "their puritanical fear, their constant invoking of scandal while they hid beneath the cloak of the upper ten in our country, hugging the status quo and kowtowing with the powers that be, swearing on 'poor' and poverty 'and' servant church 'and yet dealing with motorcades and festivals as if the kingdom had already come and is a fully achieved reality." These quotations

are directly from the article he handed me, a copy of which was given "for keeps", he said. It was then that I realised that those nearest to Rome have in their desperation, denied Rome and its documents, for at the end of his one page article I found this passage:

"Puritanical fear, deriving from the conviction that life cannot tolerate tension or conflict, is contradictory to a right outlook on conflict and produces wrong attitudes. In other words, it is important not to be afraid of the word 'conflict'. Far from supposing a unanimity of a solidarity artificially built and almost a priori, the practice of dialogue demands that we recognize that conflict is a component part of life" (p. 71, Roman document) 1971-72.

Of course, George made it clear that conflict is not a permanent state, a kind of romanticization. It is Roman, not Romance! he significantly nodded.

His final remark: "it is a pity that for thirty years or so, we in our Church have been guilty of avoiding conflict at all costs, invoking 'scandal' for puerile reasons", might be a bit exaggerated. His remarks about "an infantile-senile, colonial Church where some missionaries still keep our people kneeling and low, like a grovelling lot, whereas in the richer countries they had greater freedom", should be taken up, studied and discussed.

That's conflict!!!

table limits. But even this, believe me, takes a lot out of one. Tight-rope walking is never as easy as it seems, or is made out to be.

So much for our miserable conditions of employment. What you could do to help is to make our lives less risky by suggesting the setting up of a central command for all news distribution. Any newspaperman should be able to take his pick on production of his card, but not more than one story per man per day. Women may be issued half at most, and no man is likely to protest if they are given the better half. It's only fair.

I understand the Council is also interested in finding out the privileges we enjoy. I'm sorry to disappoint you, but we don't have even a utility Benz at our disposal, no free rail or bus travel. In short nothing, as far as transport goes.

The only privilege you could say we enjoy is that a lot of people we meet insist on being nice to us. You'll be surprised how some people go out of their way to ease the burden of life with a couple of drinks here, a little present there and so on. Of course I have heard colleagues say in private that people are nice to us only because they can get something out of us. That certainly is not a nice thing to say, or even think but there it is. I know, for that matter, that there will be enough guys spreading the story that you have taken up our cause because you are interested in, of all things, good publicity. The world is like that, Alavi, so you just go ahead and let the dogs bark if they must.

One last thing, and I hope you won't be cross with me for asking. I was just wondering if you had a good photograph to spare. No, not of the whole family, just yourself. There's so much you're doing these days, not for us journalists alone, and it will be a good thing for the public to take a look at the man who's doing it all. Next time you intend doing anything, remember to call me in advance. And leave the rest to me.

Yours gratefully,

Canax

IN THE G. D. R.

SOCIALIST AGRICULTURE

— MUTUAL AID AND ASSISTANCE —

By PRITZ FLEEGE

— THE ROLE PLAYED BY THE FARMERS' MUTUAL AID ASSOCIATION (VdgB) IN THE DEMOCRATIC LAND REFORM AND IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF A SOCIALIST AGRICULTURE IN THE GDR —

The defeat of Nazism opened up the prospect of a democratic system in Germany. The democratic land reform undertaken in what was then the Soviet occupation zone and now the GDR played a major role in this process.

The reactionary forces were deprived of their economic and political power through this and other measures, for instance, confiscation of industrial enterprises owned by war criminals, educational reform etc.

Under the Land Reform Act passed in 1945 all Junkers, war criminals and big landowners whose estates exceeded 100 hectares were expropriated without compensation. 3.3 million hectares of land were transformed into public property. About 550,000 farm labourers and smallholders then received land of their own out of this pool. Roughly one million hectares of land were reserved for the newly created state farms (VEG).

FIRST STEPS TOWARDS MUTUAL AID. The distribution of the land was only the beginning. The new settlers needed tools, machinery, tractors, fertilizers, seeds, livestock and many other aids. There were hardly any implements on the many estates that had been confiscated and parcelled out. Mutual aid was necessary. Implements were made available, draught animals exchanged and breeding and other stock handed over to the farmers.

Experienced farmers stood sponsor to new settlers. Yet the biggest support came from the working class. Committees of mutual farmers' aid emerged from various forms of co-operation as early as May 1945. They considered the immediate cultivation of all arable land to be their most urgent task.

THE FARMER'S MUTUAL AID ASSOCIATION (Vdg B). The "Farmers' Mutual Aid Association" developed from individual local committees in 1946 and became a mass organization of working farmers within a short period of

time. All farmers of a rural district were allowed to join a VdgB whatever the size of their farms.

Committees of the VdgB were also set up on district, provincial and state (Land) level to safeguard the land reform, strengthen and support individual associations and develop agriculture. It was the task of these committees to provide the VdgB in districts, provinces and states with tractors and draught animals, machines, inventory stock, seeds, fertilizers, building materials etc.

They were the connecting links between local associations and industry, credit banks and authorities.

THE TASKS OF THE VdgB AND THEIR IMPLEMENTATION. The most urgent task of the farmers during the first few years after the war was to produce sufficient food for the population to prevent a famine. At the same time it was necessary to consolidate the anti-fascist democratic order in the country.

A renewed dependence of new settlers and smallholders on the remaining big farmers had to be prevented. Therefore the VdgB organised lending stations for agricultural machinery and set up repair centres for farm implements.

Tractors, lorries, threshers graders, mowers and other inventory stock of the confiscated large estates were handed over to the machine-lending stations (MAS). The farmers had to pay very low

charges to use such equipment. Minor inventory stock including ploughs, harrows, grubbers, etc were handed over to the new settlers free of charge.

Breeding stock such as stallions, bulls, boars, bucks were brought to central mating stations. Agricultural processing enterprises like dairies, distilleries and mills were taken over or newly erected by mutual aid associations.

The VdgB organized and managed seed cleaning enterprises and provided their members with valuable seeds and also with fertilizers, inventory stock, building materials and credits. They gave advice in the elaboration of cropping plans and the determination of delivery quotas. (It was the duty of every farmer in the GDR until 1960 to sell a certain amount of food to the state.)

They also set up advisory centres for farm engineering and animal husbandry as well as experimental plots and tree nurseries. Agricultural co-operatives, especially purchasing and marketing societies, but also credit, dairy and electricity co-operatives, savings and loan banks were of great importance in mutual aid schemes. They provided new farmers with industrial goods and bought agricultural produce for sale in urban areas.

A CHANGE WITHIN THE VdgB AND IN AGRICULTURE. The new agricultural system gained in stability during the following years as the yields in crop farming and animal husbandry increased continuously. This was the first step towards the voluntary amalgamation of many private farms into agricultural production co-operatives (LPG).

More and more farmers realized the obvious advantages offered by the joint use of modern machinery in stock farming and field operations. The VdgBs actively supported the transition from mutual aid to large-scale socialist farming.

Special courses were introduced at technical schools to raise the professional qualification of co-operative farmers. The VdgBs now consider their task to be to consolidate the agricultural production co-operatives, increase production and promote political and cultural activities in the countryside.

— Panorama

U.S. - INDIA

Ambassador Moynihan Testifies On Rupee Accord

Washington, Jan. 29.

U.S. Ambassador to India Daniel P. Moynihan testified today before the House Foreign Affairs subcommittee on the Near East and South Asia regarding the recently negotiated U.S.-India Rupee Agreement. Testifying with Ambassador Moynihan was Mr. Sidney Sober, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Near East and South Asia.

Following are testimony highlights:

Ambassador Moynihan on the Rupee Accord: "Solving this problem is the single most important step we can take in improving our relations with India. I would like to stress that this is strictly a Rupee Agreement and does not involve dollars. The United States and India have two large sets of financial obligations. India owes U.S. 3.2 billion dollars in hard loans which we expect to get back. The Government of India has meticulously repaid its dollars obligations to the United States in the past, and we expect that they will continue to do so.

"The Rupee holdings are a different matter. We could foresee no cut-off date for the debt, and forever is too long for this to drag on. Our solution is very direct and provides mutual benefits. The U.S. Embassy expenses in India and Nepal will be taken care of for a generation. More importantly we have a generation ahead in which this problem will not poison relations between our two democracies."

Ambassador Moynihan on the benefits of the rupee accord: "One of the problems about rupees is that the Government of India has been reluctant to let us use them. Now we expect the GOI to be a lot more forthcoming about joint projects such as Agricultural Research which will benefit both countries. We now have 12

research projects in Delhi today moving through the pipeline in various Indian Government agencies financed by Rupees.

"India is not an underdeveloped country. It is a poor country, which has an amazingly high percentage of scientists and technicians. We hope rupee-financed projects will contribute to improving its situation."

Ambassador Moynihan on U.S. business prospects in India: "The Rupee problem has been one of the stumbling blocks in business exchange between the United States and India. Now a relationship can grow up of exchange. This is already happening in fields such as textiles. Many U.S. companies are interested in investing in India. Doing business is an important part of establishing a long term mature relationship between our two countries."

Ambassador Moynihan on the future of U.S.-India Relations: "We think our relations with India have improved. I hope they haven't just improved, but also matured. India and the United States are both democracies, and people can say what they want in each nation, so a certain amount of strain is inevitable. But on the balance, what we agree on is more than what we disagree about."

Ambassador Moynihan on Indian attitudes towards the termination of U.S. Aid Projects in India: "Indians are not resentful of the termination of our aid projects. There is a realization now that problems must be solved by themselves in realistic terms."

Ambassador Moynihan on the question of the Peace Corps in India (commenting on a recent Wientraub article):

"As of February 1 of this year, we have one American Peace Corps Administrator and no field personnel at all, but my view is that I want the Peace Corp to stay in India. It's a relationship that we wish to keep. But we want good projects. I've seen young Americans from Colorado in Rajasthan working on developing fish farms in the desert. Other projects like this, such as animal husbandry are important. We want good people for them, who know what they're doing. We have 20 such volunteers in the pipeline, and would

eventually like to get up to about 50."

Ambassador Moynihan on the food outlook in India: "The outlook is profoundly troubling. The oil price rise has been disastrous because of its impact on fertilizers. Last year the GOI paid 460 million dollars for oil—this year the same quantity will cost 1.3 billion dollars. The consequent reduction in fertilizer production, and on the harvest is a matter of grave seriousness.

Mr. Sober, on the effect of the Rupee accord on the excess currency situation in Pakistan: "There have been discussions of the excess currency situation between U.S. A.I.D. personnel and the Government of Pakistan, but these have not been formal discussions. Fortunately the problem does not have the political overtones of the size of the Indian problem.

"It is fair to assume that the Government of Pakistan may now raise the issue, but the problem isn't as insoluble as the Indian situation. Our relations have been better with Pakistan, so the situation hasn't become an issue."

Japan to Change Aid Policy

Tokyo Jan. 21.

The Prime Minister of Japan, Mr. Kakuei Tanaka, said to-day Japan must change its aid policy in order to be a "good friend" of Asian nations. Mr. Tanaka, who became the target of violent student demonstrations in three of the five South-East Asian countries he visited early this month, told Parliament, which opened a 99-day regular session that any change in Japan's aid policy should include "improvement in its quality". The nation "should become a good friend of Asian countries, share their joys and sorrows and contribute to establishment of lasting peace in Asia". He said that his Government would "take resolute steps to solve a mountain of difficult problems facing the nation."

THE OIL CRISIS - 2

More Background Facts

by Spartacus

OIL is inflammable. Wherever it is found and wherever it goes, it sets not only the wheels of industry and transport moving, but also the spark to many a conflagration. To pour oil on troubled waters is one thing; to exploit it for profit is another. It spells troubled lands and an unquiet world.

Oil played a star part in the intervention against the infant Soviet Union and delayed its recognition. Oil lurked behind the civil war in Mexico and many other civil wars in many other lands later. Oil prevented effective sanctions being enforced against Mussolini when he invaded Abyssinia. Oil enabled Japan to invade China and fight the Allies.

Even today oil is more than a shadow behind international affairs. It is the silent stranger that figures in the debates and disturbances concerning the Middle East. It plays a prominent role in Latin America and helps to shape the domestic and foreign policy of the USA.

During World War I, a leading Allied statesman said that "a drop of oil is worth a drop of blood." Harold Ickes, US petroleum administrator in World War II said that the oil industry "is actually dictating to Congress and is running this country exclusively for its own benefit."

Speaking in the US Senate on the debate on the Eisenhower Doctrine, Senator Kefauver showed how this doctrine originated, not in the US State Department, but in the Standard Oil Co. of New Jersey. In a speech whose recurrent theme was "what the oil companies wanted, the oil companies got," Kefauver proved with a solid array of facts and figures that John Foster Dulles had been pursuing the very policies that the oil magnates wanted in the Middle East during his years as Secretary of State since 1953. Said Kefauver: "This Government has sneezed whenever the oil companies took snuff."

It is an irony of history that today the oil-producing countries have turned tables on the oil monopolists who exploited them for decades. The decision of the Arab states to use oil as a weapon for their own political ends has given rise to the accusation by the West that the Arabs have 'politicalised' a commercial product. Such an accusation can only raise sceptical smiles.

TIME was when the oil imperialists could send naval squadrons, landed troops and accomplished coups in an attempt to strangle the peoples who wanted to establish control over their own natural wealth, oil in particular. The days of 'gunboat diplomacy' are over.

Today, even their various pressure moves and boycott campaigns fail to produce the desired results. Thus, when they attempted a boycott of Iraqi oil in retaliation for the nationalisation of the Iraqi Petroleum Co. in 1972, both the boycott and other attempted acts of violence failed primarily because the Soviet Union and other socialist countries took the side of the Iraqi people and rendered them all possible aid to overcome the crisis.

Again, when in 1973 the Shah of Iran announced that they would take over full control of the country's oil by 1979, the US and Britain sent diplomatic warnings. But much had changed since the 1950's when the CIA overthrew Mossadegh and restored oil to the US and British firms. The Iranian Government, even without waiting till 1979, took full control over its oil in 1973 itself. It was hardly a coincidence that the Shah first announced the imminent take-over of oil at the opening of the first Iranian steel mill at Isfahan—built with Soviet aid.

The oil imperialists also sought to split the unity of the oil-producing countries in an attempt to further their plans in the Middle East. With this in view they sought to fan up the contradictions between countries in that area with progressive, republican regimes and the conservative monarchies. Oil circles in the US harped upon the importance of establishing 'special relations' with Saudi Arabia, Iran, Kuwait and Abu Dhabi—four countries in which nearly half of the prospected oil

reserves of the non-socialist world are concentrated.

THE BRITISH too tried to pursue a policy of establishing 'special relations' in the Gulf area and formed the so-called Federation of Arab Emirates. But all these moves have been foiled in the wake of the latest Middle East war. The Arab countries have succeeded in forging a degree of unity among themselves never known before.

On the contrary, contradictions between the countries of the Atlantic alliance have continued to grow. It is now clear that many countries of Western Europe and Japan are not too keen to pay the price for Israeli aggression and American policy in the Middle East. They are making efforts to find sources of liquid fuel that are outside the Cartel's control or to establish direct relations themselves with the oil-producing countries.

According to Victor Perlo, the well-known American Marxist economist, the doubling of price paid to oil-producing countries need not be an added burden on working-people users of petroleum products in consuming countries. The increase could readily be absorbed at the expense of monopoly profiteering in the processing and distribution of crude oil. Says he: "Imperialist circles try to scare the public with alarms about being placed 'at the mercy' of producing countries when the latter control their own oil. This is nonsense."

According to his calculations, in 1972, governments, workers and contractors of producing countries received only 15 per cent of the amounts paid for petroleum products by final users in the consuming countries. But available data based on average requirements of capital and labour at different stages of production, transportation, processing and distribution indicates that producing countries should receive 30-33 per cent of the total amount paid by final users.

Under 1972 conditions, this would have required payments to producing countries and their workers of 3.5 to 4 dollars per barrel, or roughly double average actual payments.

Perlo concludes: "The exporting countries need the markets in the consuming countries as much as the consuming countries need the

oil. The exporting countries need many products from the oil-consuming countries. The change will simply be from uneven, unilaterally determined decisions on terms of exchange which are to the gross disadvantage of the exporting countries, to bilaterally determined, more equitable terms. The change will be from fluctuations in production imposed by the oil companies as they play off one country against another to the possibility of state patterns of production, negotiated through long-term agreements, with maximum regard for resource conservation.

The policy of international co-operation which is taking place as a result of the political detente must also be expanded to include the mutual relations between the oil-producing countries and the consumer-states. For this it is necessary to respect the sovereign rights of all peoples and co-operate on the principle of mutual benefit.

Middle East oil must serve not to enrich the foreign monopolies but to further and strengthen the political and economic independence of the Middle East countries. Only in that way can the interests of all peoples, including the interests of the people in the developing countries like ours, be assured.

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SCIENTIFIC STUDY

RAJASTHAN DESERT CAN BE MADE TO BLOOM

New Delhi,

If denudative factors like goats, camels and people can be kept in check, most of the Rajasthan desert can be made to bloom in approximately ten years, even if annual rainfall is as low as 7 inches.

According to experts at the Central Arid Zone Research Institute, Jodhpur, currently studying land, soil, water and vegetation resources of arid and semi-arid areas, all one needs is to control and harness flood waters and prevent soil erosion. The land is fertile enough.

The Plant Studies Division of the Institute has found that movement of soil because of wind erosion can be checked by planting wind-breaks, creating shelterbelts, strip cropping, and covering and stabilising sandy tracts and dunes with desert grasses. For sand dune stabilisation one needs efficient land management practices like fencing and mulching. Also planting of photo-insensitive and aridity resistant, yet remunerative, tree materials like castor and acacia.

THEN, shelter belts can be made across the wind direction on a farm to form basis with various trees—grown very successfully in our hot arid zones. Small micro-windbreaks, in parallel strips and in chessboard design can be erected across the wind direction with easily available local shrubs and grasses.

A co-ordinated research project, launched in 1970 to evolve suitable and remunerative crop production technology for dry lands, has yielded interesting results. For instance, inter-row and inter-plot methods of water harvesting can improve the grain yield of bajra by between 50 and 100 per cent. Also, in 80 days EB-3—a variety of bajra—can yield twice as much as local varieties. Then, the S-8 variety of moong can yield around 10 to 12 quintals per hectare in two months. Both these varieties are efficient utilisers of soiled moisture.

It has already been established that sunflower and castor are remunerative crops for this region. Currently intensive plant breeding programmes are under way to evolve high-yielding varieties of moong, til and sunflower. A suitable technology for conserving soil moisture is also being developed.

The Division of Wind Power and Solar Energy of the Institute has arrived at an easy method of the prediction of soil moisture under natural vegetation without actually measuring it. Using the climatic water budgeting approach, critical dates for commencement, and the duration, of the crop growing season have also been determined.

A BUILT-IN, storage-type solar water heater has been developed. It can provide 90 litres of hot water between 50 and 55 degrees centigrade every day, even in winter

These units cost only about Rs. 400 and, produced on a large scale, should prove popular.

Research findings, after selective breeding of sheep at the Animal Studies Division, have opened up the possibility of evolving an Indian Merino from the coarse and carpet wool producing varieties in the country. Sheep having a lower concentration of potassium (LK) yield finer wool. Therefore, farmers should maintain LK type rams and ewes as far as possible.

The technique involved a blood test of individual animals to isolate the breeding stock of flock and remove high potassium types. It will then be possible to produce an entirely low potassium stock, whose genetic determinants will ensure fine wool-rearing progeny.

SOME WORK in the field of rodent control has also been done at the institute. A suitable pesticide has been developed. It has been further demonstrated that after an initial period of prebaiting the best results in terms of actual kill are obtained when poison baiting is restricted to one day only.

Another method is to seek dried 'bers' (zizyphus nummularia) in a solution of sodium monofluoresceate for 24 hours. If each kilogram of 'ber' gets impregnated with 3 milligrams of the poison, each fruit is good for killing one rodent.

It has been estimated it will cost Rs. 1,000 over three years to develop a hectare of desert. Since the country has 3,17,070 square kilometres of arid land, this will amount to a considerable sum.

However, since the population in the desert is growing at a faster rate than in the rest of the country, perhaps its development will become vital in the not-too-distant future.

Watch That Dog!

After lengthy investigation the police found the thief who had stolen a wad of money at the Conservative Club in Newark (England). The culprit was the club's Alsatian watchdog. It used the banknotes as a litter in its kennel.

MEDICAL

Acupuncture Comes To India

By Nagarjuna

WESTERN medical men who once used to scoff at the ancient Chinese medical practice of inserting needles in select points in the body either to relieve acute pain or cure chronic ailments, are now convinced of its efficacy. Visits to China and their own practical experience at home have proved that acupuncture works but they do not understand how it works.

Nothing in modern medicine seems to agree with the theory and practice of acupuncture. This mystery, however, does not stop them from learning and practising the Chinese method for its many obvious advantages. It is reported that several dozens of acupuncture clinics which have opened in New York are doing good 'business'.

Indian doctors have been slow to adopt the Chinese system of ancient medicine, perhaps because it seems to verge on hocuspocus. The inhibition is being overcome slowly. Recently the efficacy of acupuncture was dramatically proved to Indian doctors when, under anaesthesia induced by the insertion of some plain needles, a 70-year-old man was operated upon at the G.T. Hospital in Bombay. It was a double hernia-cum-hydrocele operation, and the patient had hypertension too; yet the operation was smooth and painless. The acupuncture technique was resorted to avoid post-operative complications which were likely to follow the use of conventional anaesthetics for a hypertensive patient.

COMPARED to reports of some major operations being done under acupuncture anaesthesia in China and in recent months in western countries, the operation performed at Bombay is minor. According to an eyewitness account of a western newsmag of an operation conducted in a Chinese hospital a patient under acupuncture anaesthesia kept up a conversation with his doctor who was busy removing

a tumour in the occipital-parietal lobe of the patient's brain. Apart from talking steadily and calmly, the patient also was eating orange slices. In another case, a 13-year-old girl walked back to her ward after an operation to remove a cystic tumour of the subaxillary gland. It is reported that Chinese doctors use acupuncture for such serious operations as removal of a lung and for caesarian deliveries and also for such simple things like tooth extraction.

The acupuncture technique is also said to have curative applications. The Chinese are known to employ it for treating arthritis, headache, stomach ache, deafness, blindness, paralysis and even high blood pressure. Some months ago it was reported that the new York Acupuncture Centre had cured a 65-year-old arthritis patient using just plain needles. After the treatment lasting 15 minutes—26 needles were inserted into his chest, stomach, arms and legs—the patient flexed his fingers with apparent ease and swung his right arm in comfort. He said, he had been unable to do so for a long time before the operation.

ACCORDING to the Chinese source there are about 1,000 acupuncture points on the human body. Another version puts the number around 500 and yet another at 265. Apparently nobody, not even the Chinese, are certain about it. In one or more of these points needles made of different metals and different sizes are inserted and rotated, pulled up and down, or vibrated electrically to get the desired effect. The needles are pushed under the skin in a direction and manner determined by whether the target organ needs to be stimulated or quietened down. It is the relationship between the needle point and the target area or organ that baffles Western physicians. For instance, for the removal of tubercular right lung and a diseased rib of a patient a Chinese doctor inserted a single needle in his right shoulder. How are the two areas connected?

WESTERN SCIENTISTS are completely at a loss to explain the phenomenon. There are some who think that it is just hypnotism, but this view is not widely held now. Dr. George Wald, a Harvard

biology professor and Nobel laureate, said after a visit to China some months ago that he was convinced, the so-called acupuncture anaesthesia was absolutely real, and not hypnotism as suspected by some scientists. "The only sensation eliminated is pain. Patients have all the other skin sensations. They feel heat, cold, touch and pressure; but not pain."

One neuro-physiological explanation for acupuncture anaesthesia is based on the fact that pain has certain special characteristics, not shared by the other four skin sensations. It is noted that nerve fibres come in three sizes—small, medium and large. Fibres that carry the feeling of pain are the smallest in the body. When needles are inserted at acupuncture points they stimulate the large nerve fibres, and the resulting activity of large fibres suppresses the activity of the small pain-carrying fibres. This inhibition of activity of the small fibres occurs in the spinal-cord not where the needles are located. In other words acupuncture works by generating barrages of nerve impulses which would turn off pain.

This is only one plausible explanation. Nobody is really sure if it is correct. Even Chinese doctors who have been practising acupuncture treatment for over 2,000 years are divided about how acupuncture produces its effects. In any case the theory of pain inhibition in the spinal cord cannot explain the curative propensities of acupuncture treatment.

But the interesting thing here is that while there is no agreement on the theory of how needle anaesthesia works, western and eastern scientists are convinced that it does work. They are all operating on pragmatic evidence and are not waiting for theoretical justifications.

Like the Chinese, Indians have a very long tradition in the use of folk medicine. The ancient Indians were well-versed in the arts of duel and defence and had deep knowledge about certain weak points (*marmas*) in the body—the points where with simple knocks one could fell one's adversary.

Massage by which the body and its various organs are rejuvenated

and its lost vitality restored, is also probably an ancient Indian medical art. We have not hesitated to integrate this knowledge with our modern system of folk medicine. We might similarly gain much by integrating acupuncture anaesthesia into our folk medicine.

It is cheap, safe, has no post-operative ill-effects and involves less loss of blood. (In China millions of short course "barefoot doctors" treat the sick with acupuncture in the countryside. Peasants use the technique even to treat animals). In the light of the claims made here about acupuncture the Indian Council of Medical Research should consider the appointment of an expert committee to evaluate the Chinese technique and if found suitable initiate measures to propagate it.

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GOOD AND NUTRITIVE EATING

Elephant Yam With Extra-Large Tubers

The rainy season in the south is generally a lean season for vegetables. The common annual vegetables do not come up well under the highly moist conditions and market arrivals from distant drier centres are often scarce and costly. The consumers usually have the tubers as a stand-by when there is such a poor supply of fresh vegetables. One of the common tubers which is stocked in households as a stand-by is the elephant yam with its massive tubers which can be stored for a very long period, without damage.

The elephant yam, known as *senai* or *karunaikilangu* in Tamil, *suvarna gudda* in Kannada, *Potigunda* in Telugu, *Kachil* in Malayalam, and botanically *Amorphophallus Campanulatus*, is popular in vegetarian households, in spite of the acidity of the raw tuber with its irritating nature on the skin. It is one of the tubers which is freely recommended for convalescents and persons with weak digestion. It has a tonic effect and is given as a restorative in dyspepsia. As one of its Sanskrit names (*Arsaghna*) indicates it is a

"curer of piles" and regarded as a highly suitable vegetable for people with haemorrhoids. It is also said to be a hot crminative in the form of pickle according to Nadkarni.

Nutritionally, it is richer than potato in minerals and Vitamins A and B. An analysis of the corm by the National Institute of Nutrition, Hyderabad, shows that it contains in 100 grams of edible portion, 1.2 gm. protein, 0.1 gm. fat, and 0.8 gm. minerals, (potato only 0.6 mg), 18.4 gm. carbohydrates, 50 mg. calcium, 34 mg. phosphorus (potato only 20 mg.) 0.6 mg. iron, 260 micrograms carotene (potato only 24 micrograms), 0.06 mg. thiamine, 0.07 mg. riboflavine and 0.7 mg. niacin. Thus it contains all the essential nutritive ingredients except Vitamin C. The irritating taste is due to the acid juice in the tuber containing calcium oxalate. Boiling with tamarind will remove this acidity and seasoning with lime juice or tomato will make up for the lack of Vitamin C.

There are two varieties of elephant yam, one with smooth corm which causes more irritation in throat when eaten and the other which is superior in quality and almost non-irritating when cooked properly. The elephant yam has originated in India and is grown on a large scale in all parts of Peninsular India as well as in Maharashtra and Gujarat. The tuber can be used with any other vegetable and is also ideal for being fried into crispy chips. It is also a good and nutritive standby as it can be stored and used when required.

— Courtesy: Hindu

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OIL

PROSPECTING IN THE ATLANTIC

London.

The search for oil and gas is about to spread from the North Sea to the Atlantic. Shell UK Exploration Company said in London this week that its new £10 million drilling rig *Ocean Voyager* had arrived in the Atlantic west of the Shetland and Orkney Islands and would start drilling as soon as the weather permitted.

Oil in large quantities has already been found in the North Sea east of Shetland and the Shell plan to drill three wells in the Atlantic this year marks the first major move into these even more exposed waters where conditions will be among the toughest ever experienced by oilmen. *Ocean Voyager* will work in some 250 feet of water about 75 miles north-west of Kirkwall, the main town in the Orkney Islands.

The north-east Atlantic sector contains nearly 12 per cent of the area so far licensed in UK waters for oil and gas exploration. Shell is the biggest individual license holder with 21 of the 64 blocks, which cover nearly 5,000 square miles. *Ocean Voyager* is the first of Shell's new generation of larger rigs, designed to withstand the rigours of the Atlantic where winds can gust up to 120 miles per hour and where waves can reach a height of 95 feet.

Mr. Eric Everett, operations manager of Shell Expro, (an abbreviation of Shell Exploration and Production) said: "It is essential to have something of this size because the winter weather in the Atlantic will certainly be as bad as anything we have so far encountered, and it is quite likely to be worse."

Ocean Voyager's arrival on the drill site was delayed for five weeks by exceptionally bad weather. There are now 22 mobile rigs operating in British waters. In the North Sea, BP plans to start oil production next year from its Forties field.

Instead of X-Rays

To avoid the hazards accompanying the use of X-rays, especially in the case of children, Dr. David Holbrooke, a researcher at a San Francisco children's clinic, has designed an ultra-sound method of radioscscopy as a substitute for roentgenoscopy. The patient is immersed in water and the sound waves passed through the body are converted into light waves producing a sharp image on a screen, which shows, not only the bones, but also soft tissues and blood vessels without the use of contrasting agents.

A LESSON FROM INDIA

THE SMALL FARMER

and his ability to adopt new methods

By NIRMAL KANTI SAHA

The small farmers constitute the vast majority among the cultivating households in the country. They are handicapped in introducing new technology in the means of production. As a whole, they possess a low socio-economic status and are educationally backward. They are exploited by the institutions, big farmers and the local money-lenders.

Due to economic backwardness the small farmers are not able to avail the benefits of new technology in agriculture. The extension agency also by-pass the small farmers and pay more attention to the big cultivations. Thus the disparity between the big farmers-landlords and the small farmers has been increasing day by day. The former group is getting the major benefits of all the programmes and planning.

The small farmer is characterised by small and fragmented holding, lack of assured means of irrigation, and household expenditure involving more than 75 per cent of the receipt. Double or multiple cropping has not been adopted by small farmers to the desired extent. The small farmers are also handicapped financially and they have no capacity and/or will to take to new technology.

A number of factors stand in the way of small cultivators adopting agricultural innovations. Some techno-economic problems followed by social problems influence the rate of adoption of new technology by the small farmers.

FRAGMENTATION of land is an acute problem at this stage. Hence cultivation using modern technology is very difficult. In small plots of land the introduction of improved agricultural techniques is impossible. Our field data (in 1972) reveal the positive association between the size of holding and adoption of agricultural innovation. It was noticed that 79.6 per cent of the farmers having more than 10 acres of holding had adopted improved seeds, whereas it had decreased to 75.3 per cent, 62.9 per cent and 43.2 per cent among those having 7-10 acres, 3-7 acres, and below 3 acres of land.

This was due to the fact that the farmers having large size holdings are able to afford finance which is essential for any innovation. Another

reason is that acceptance of any new idea is a matter of risk and the farmers having small holdings, do not want to bear that risk as they have not sufficient money.

There is positive relationship between ownership of land and adoption of innovations. It was found that more than 65 per cent of the farmers who had their own land, adopted improved seeds, fertilisers, pesticides etc. This figure comes down to 20 per cent in the case of the farmers who cultivate the land on rent basis.

This is due to the fact that the farmers who possess agriculture holdings are compelled to hire the lands from the fellow farmers. Facilities for loan are extremely limited for such cultivators. As a result it becomes difficult for them to make investments to improve their agriculture.

DUE TO LOW income a large number of small cultivators possess no bullocks or only one bullock. They have to hire bullocks during cultivation of their lands. So they are not willing to take to innovations.

The main problem of small cultivators is the lack of adequate irrigation facilities. Our study on "Adoption of H.Y.V. paddy and wheat in West Bengal" reveals that large number of small farmers do not grow high yielding varieties due to lack of irrigation facilities. The high price of H.Y.V. seeds also discourage small farmers. Prasad (1967) reported that 42.2

per cent of the non-adopters of improved seeds did not adopt it due to high cost. It was also observed that supply of the seeds has been inadequate and not timely.

Sometimes, the small farmers do not get the fertilizers when it is needed. It was reported from the study that high cost and lack of money were main reasons given by the majority of non-adopters of fertilizers. Insecticides are rarely used by the small farmers. High cost of insecticides, equipments as well as small and fragmented holdings were the main reasons for non-adoption as reported by the majority of the non-adopters.

It has been observed that higher the income of the farmers, greater is the adoption of the innovations.

Education and social status are the two important social factors which affect adoption of agricultural innovations. It was found that the adoption of innovations increased with the increase in the educational level of the farmers.

The small farmers cannot afford higher education for themselves as well as for their children due to poor means. So they are left behind the educated farmers who develop more contacts with the extension agencies and get knowledge about innovations.

It was also observed that the membership of rural institutions or organisations affect the adoption behaviour of the farmers. The members of such organisations are well aware of improved technology to be applied in farming. The small farmers generally have low social status in the society and their representation in formal organisations, like panchayats, co-operatives, etc. is inadequate. Due to this the small cultivators are not able to get information about new technology which affects their adoption practices.

FOR NEWS
BEHIND THE NEWS

read

TRIBUNE

regularly.

TRIBUNE, February 16, 1974

IS IT TRUE?

Sherlock Holmes

* MALDIVIAN MUDDLE

IS IT NOT TRUE that Sri Lanka has made a terrible blunder in its relations with the Republic of the Maldives? That relations between the two countries have cooled down to such an extent that Sri Lanka is no longer the best and closest friend of the Maldives as she had been at all times in the past? That many do not know that the Maldivian language is a derivation of the Sinhalese language mixed with a conglomeration of other languages like Arabic, Tamil and the like? That, in the British era, the Maldives were the only and one "dependency" attached to the then-government of Ceylon? That the Sultan of Maldives had paid an annual tribute to the representative of the British Crown in Colombo? That everything had gone on very well even after the two countries had become independent? That whilst the Maldives had continued to be a British Crown Colony after Ceylon became independent, Gan Islands had been converted into a military base and a staging post for the UK armed services? That in spite of this and the protests which were raised in Ceylon about the Gan base, extremely good relations existed between Male and Colombo? That the highly successful Maldivian National Trading Company (MNTC) with its ever increasing fleet of merchant ships, had used Colombo as its headquarters?

IS IT NOT A FACT that short-sighted bureaucratic pig-headedness in regard to the guiding genius of the MNTC has been the cause of a virtual collapse of good relations between the two countries? That the breach of Customs and Exchange regulations which *Mi Manickoo* is alleged to have been guilty of could have been resolved with a little goodwill on the part

of the Sri Lanka administration without the infliction of unnecessary humiliation on the holder of a Maldivian diplomatic passport? That this and the obdurate attitude taken towards *Manickoo* by local officials has led to a rupture of the good feeling which had existed? That the interpretation which obstinate Sri Lanka bureaucrats had placed on the Regulations in question could well be challenged in equity? That the narrow *letter-of-the-law* as interpreted by wooden-headed bureaucrats is not the most important aspect of any matter which affects the relations between two countries?

IS IT ALSO NOT A FACT that since this incident the MNTC has shifted its headquarters from Colombo to Bombay? That it has also opened a big office in Singapore? That the work which had been done in Colombo has been transferred in the main to Bombay and in a smaller way to Singapore? That India and Singapore have welcomed the MNTC with open arms? That the MNTC means good business for any Indian Ocean littoral country in many ways? That this wholesale transfer of the MNTC was also accelerated by another diplomatic *faux pas* by Sri Lanka's protocol in regard to a Minister of the Maldivian Government who was passing through the island? That our Protocol has all the "correct" excuses for not doing what should have been done but that does not help? That many observers feel that there is a subconscious and unsaid feeling among our bureaucrats that the Maldivian Republic was only a little sprat in the Indian Ocean and that it would be enough for Sri Lanka to pay attention to the big whales still inhabiting the Ocean?

That this ultra big-brother attitude to the Maldives has led to another serious consequence? That the Government of the Maldives has now sanctioned the State Bank of India to open a branch in Male? That this Branch was opened a fortnight ago? That an application from a Sri Lanka bank to open a branch was laid aside on some technical ground? That it is also interesting that a private Bank (technically Ceylonese) has been the sole applicant from Sri Lanka? That neither of the two state-owned Banks in this country had sought to open a Branch in Male? That it is freely whispered that the private bank had the blessings of the Sri Lanka government in its attempt to have the priority for opening a branch in Male? That up to date Male has not had a Bank? That the first bank in the Maldivian Archipelago will be that of the State Bank of India? That for a long time to come it may be the only Bank there? That the Maldivian Republic, as it stands today, certainly does not need a second Bank? That Sri Lanka, which in the normal circumstances, should have had the first priority for opening a Bank in Male had missed the bus owing to sustained bureaucratic bungling?

That in the interests of long-range politico-diplomatic perspectives in this region Sri Lanka should have endeavoured to open a branch of one of its State Banks in Male? That the trade between the two countries has also dwindled? That, during the diplomatic imbroglio last year Male had taken the opportunity to point out that Sri Lanka had delayed in meeting the bills for Maldivian fish that had been supplied? That if Sri Lanka had developed her agriculture, as she should have done, she could have supplied the Maldivian market which imports all the food requirements of the Republic—except fish and coconuts? That it is time that our relations with the Maldives is looked into? That, sooner than later, amends must be made for our acts of commission and omission and better relations restored with the Maldives? That it is stupid for bureaucrats to argue that over-toughy and over-sensitive Maldivians had over-reacted to trifling incidents because even big powers are sensitive about matters of protocol?