

# TRIBUNE

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## STATISTICS AND TRUTH

TRUTH is no doubt that something which cannot be defined, but this is no reason why people should be misled by half-truths. Governments also have no doubt the supreme need to maintain an image, preferably in an atmosphere of exciting euphoria—that it was living up to its promises—but this is no reason why it should strain and stretch facts to make people believe something which time will demonstrate to be palpably false. Propagandists, especially official propagandists, believe that peoples' memories are so short that it would be enough to create impressions of truth and the sensibility of truthfulness to win the confidence of people on whom such propaganda is inflicted. Take what is happening in Sri Lanka today. A serious food crisis has been met by ad hoc measures that everybody who can see just beyond his nose will know that the whole business is a calculated risk which will succeed only because of the food imports which are expected to come in during the rest of the year. To cover the flour shortages which have arisen because of the bungling in the schedules of shipments, the rice ration has been increased to one and a half measures a week (although the equivalent of a pound of flour is not a half measure of rice in terms of the quantity of food and the volume of energy giving-food.) Not satisfied with thus keeping discontent under control, some circles in the bureaucracy seem to have decided to launch a propaganda drive that this increased food ration was because of the success of the Maha food production drive. To support this, all that is still being highlighted are estimates of acreages sown and what is expected to be reaped.

THE INCREASED INTAKE by the PMB, primarily induced by harsh measures which are the very antithesis of the mixed economy and the open market (with restrictions) which are the bedrock commitments of this Government and its Five Year Plan, on which the present rice-ration increases are temporarily maintained, is made the half-truth on which the whole propaganda gimmick is based. Those who are anxious to believe will be happy that the Government's food drive has begun to yield results, but when the final figures become available about the amount actually produced in this country and the amount which is imported, there is a major danger that the *credibility gap* which has now come between this Government and the vast majority of the people will begin to widen. So far as ordinary people are concerned they are not bothered whether the food they get is grown locally or is imported as long as they can buy adequate quantities at reasonable prices. But, to those who have the responsibility of sustaining the economy of this country and planning its future the truth of what is actually produced in this country is a primary imperative without which the economy of this country will go from bad to worse. Even today our statistics do not reveal the truth about actual production and we have not yet the means of knowing the truth. The Government has the figures of what officials claim is the acreage sown and what they estimate will be the production on an average yield for the district. But the actual amount produced can never be known in the realities which prevail today—officials tend to maximise the figures and say that the surplus over what the PMB had got has gone into the blackmarket and private hoards, whilst producers tend to minimise the production figures to have something in hand for personal use and the open market. The Government does not still have the means of knowing the truth of what is actually produced to regulate its imports. Without truthful statistics Sri Lanka will continue to grope in the dark.

# Tribunania

\* Tribune

\* The Food Crisis

**TRIBUNE** is the one paper which has consistently, in recent months, pointed out that the latest food production drive launched in the second half of last year, with vociferous tom-tom beating and heroic housetop shouting, would not produce results anywhere near what the bureaucrats had predicted they would be. *Tribune* had forcefully stressed this not because we wanted to denigrate the popularity of the Government, (or what is left of it), with dismal forebodings—in the way political parties and papers in the Opposition in parliamentary democracies do to further their own sectarian interests—but only because we wished the Government well and because we desired to tender constructive criticism in the hope that things would be done better in the national interests.

We have faith in socialism—socialism that is honestly conceived both in theory and practice, and is implemented in equity and justice to all citizens of Sri Lanka irrespective of caste, creed, race, or language. Unfortunately much of what has been passed off as "socialism" in this island from the days of Independence (efficient socialism, democratic socialism, SLFP socialism, UF Common Programme socialism, etc., etc.) was no socialism at all. Distribution of land to the landless, reminiscent of the French Revolution, is not socialism. Free food, free medicine and free education is not socialism. Tilting away from the big capitalist nations and leaning on certain socialist countries is not socialism. Third world non-alignment is not socialism. Some of these may, no doubt be necessary as tactical policies in certain historical situations, but they are no guarantee that we are on the road to socialism.

When socialism is made an empty word to cover humbug and demogogy, when it is made a smokescreen for discrimination, not on a

class basis (which would be permissible under certain circumstances) but on racial, linguistic and religious chauvinism (which is the very antithesis of socialism), *Tribune* has not been slow to expose the phony and the counterfeit. This paper has unhesitatingly supported whatever that was praiseworthy and commendable, but it has never feared to debunk humbug and sham, corruption and bureaucratism, and also policies and programmes (however seemingly radical) which are self-defeating and incapable of attaining the stated "socialist" objectives. We have criticised the UF, the SLFP, the LSSP and the CP for what we have considered to be pseudo-socialism (which will, in fact, do more harm than good for socialism) just as vigorously as we have condemned UNP's anti-socialism and FP's sectarianism—both of which will keep everything moving in circles in this country).

Like hundreds of thousands of ordinary people in Sri Lanka, what we in *Tribune* want is a practical programme of rational development to make things better—not land us (as it already has) into a *cul de sac* that can take us only to a point of no return. Where it is not yet possible to be dialectical in thought and deed, *Tribune* has felt that pragmatic common sense was better than romantic revolutionary idealism.

We derive no pleasure in recalling that all the warnings we have uttered about the food situation and food production have come true. It has been our view that the way food production was being organised would not produce the results bureaucrats and even politicians had confidently proclaimed. We had stressed over and over again that paper estimates will not become realities by repeating the mantra that we would soon be self-sufficient from platforms, in newspaper headlines or even over the radio. Every time there was a shortfall in the last four years, we have had an excuse to fall back upon—UNP sabotage, the 1971 insurgency, the drought and now the global price spiral and global shortages.

None of these excuses can explain the extent of the shortfall adequately, and all these factors, especially the "drought" (which

is perhaps the most vital for the productive effort) have not done as much damage as it has been made out to be. Many countries, similarly placed like Sri Lanka, had realised that there were certain global climatic changes and without waiting for monsoon rains had launched crash programmes for tapping groundwater resources two or three years ago and today have increased food production in a phenomenal manner even in periods of drought by the failure of the monsoons or the regular seasonal rains. The same information had been available to planners, politicians, and agricultural bureaucrats in Sri Lanka many years ago, (and *Tribune* had drawn attention to it on several occasions), but nothing was done to meet the new situation.

In the past every shortfall in local production was successfully hidden under massive food imports, but this year owing to global shortages and price increases it has become almost impossible to hide our deficiencies in food production by importing food from other countries. It is time that people in authority realised that ordinary people can no longer be persuaded to believe that the shortfall in local production of foodstuffs was due to the weather alone or the global price increases, but it will probably take yet more time for the ordinary man to realise that the romantically motivated policies of the Government have been the main cause of the failure of our food production. Self-defeating policies which have boomeranged and bungling bureaucrats tied up in red-tape or corruption have been responsible for the present debacle in food production—and unless something is done about these evils, food production will never come up to our expectations or our requirements. Wishfully believing that things will come right anyhow especially, by intensifying stern and harsh measures which we mistake for "socialism", will not take us anywhere: it will only make us sink deeper and deeper into the mire.

In some quarters, *Tribune* was regarded as anti-government, anti-socialist and anti-UF only because we stressed that the food drive initiated last September/October would not produce the minimum quantum of foodstuffs—(confidently

predicted by our bureaucrats)—necessary to cut down food imports almost to zero. We had stated in clear terms that unless some miracle overtook our food production drive we would have to maintain our imports at the old level if not increase them. We had also indicated what we thought might be a reasonably good production target to be expected—if the north-east monsoon would continue to be "normal" after the promising showers in October and November. Unfortunately, except for some showers in December, the monsoon failed in January, and this has not only adversely affected the total volume of the Maha crop but it has also increased the chaff content of what has been harvested.

We had also made it clear that the producers would not rush with their crop to the PMB. Apart from the fact that the PMB has surrounded itself with bureaucratic obstacles to make any producer dread to get anywhere near the PMB, the price the Government decided to pay, viz., Rs. 25 a bushel, is unrealistic and inadequate. Therefore, it was no surprise that PMB purchases fell far below expectations, even minimum expectations in January and early February. The producer began selling the paddy to the private trader at prices, ranging from Rs. 30 to Rs. 50, straight off the threshing floor without being subject to the arrogant bureaucratism and humiliating tyranny of PMB procedures.

To meet this challenge from the private trader who was paying a far more realistic and equitable price, the bureaucrats raised a scare-invested hue and cry—as has been done so often in the recent past—that the blackmarketeer and the hoarder were thwarting the efforts of the PMB to buy paddy. The bureaucrats had wanted a total ban on the transport of paddy and rice, a ban on all off-ration sales and unimaginably low ceilings on the quantity of paddy a producer could retain for his own use. With the grip the urban based bureaucracy still has on the Government, it was surprising that the Government only succumbed to the first two measures and did not place any ceilings on what the producer could retain. But there is no guarantee that a bureaucracy-in-desperation will not yet stam-pede a government-in-panic to

adopt the nationally suicidal measure of forceful appropriation (or expropriation) from the producer of the paddy he wants to keep for himself, his family and those who work for him.

The New Regulations were expected to flush out all hoarded stocks, but *Tribune* had pointed out that considering the realities of local production in the last three to four years, and more particularly in the last season, there were no really big hoards to flush out because the paper estimates of the bureaucrats as to local production were bogus. In spite of the song and dance over the SLBC about the paddy flowing into the PMB after the New Regulations, it is not clear whether it is only 350 odd thousands or 800 odd thousand bushels which have so far come into the stores of the PMB.

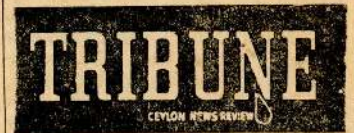
*But, there is not the slightest doubt that the PMB and the Government have not got what they expected (or had been led to expect) in PMB purchases after the New Regulations. It is probably true that without these Regulations, even the quantity which has now come in would not have come into the PMB stores. But this should provide only negative satisfaction.*

It must be mentioned that there is strong and persistent pressure from certain doctrinaire pundits that it is imperative that all the stocks with the producers should also be taken away by the Government. This, according to these gentlemen, would be "socialism". Apart from the fact that such a step would bring further disillusionment to the Government that the "hoards" with the producers are no hoards at all (the quantities being only a fraction of what urban prognosticators think is available in the countryside), such a draconian measure (in the prevailing situation) will become the last nail in the coffin of the already fast-dying corpus of rice producers in Sri Lanka.

Regular readers of *Tribune* will recall that we have stated many times, and that we had repeated it again last week, that even if all the paddy now with traders, black-marketeers, hoarders and even the producers were forcibly taken over by the Government, it would be insufficient for the minimum ration requirements of the people. We

had insisted that the Government had no alternative but to arrange for further imports this year, and that if better local production was to be achieved next year, there had to be serious re-thinking of policies and programmes, and a major overhaul of the Administration.

We were certain that the estimates on which we based our appraisals are correct. Though they were made on a rough-and-



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ready basis, they were made by realists connected with the *Tribune* who have no axe to grind. *Tribune*, further, was never misled by the machinery of bureaucratism with its army of field officers, statistical officers, supervisors, staff officers, technical officers, agricultural officers, agrarian experts and the like who have a vested interest in inflating production figures to justify their very existence and the remuneration they draw from the public coffers. Over a long period, *Tribune* has been far nearer the mark in assessing estimates of local production than official assessments or their statistical data. The bureaucrats never anticipated the shortfalls—they were wise only after the event, and then they had a long list of excuses for everything. Thereafter, they fell back upon imports to hide inefficiency, maladministration and even graft. But, now with the current global shortages and worldwide price increases imports cannot come to the rescue of the bureaucrats and the politicians who believe them.

It must be stressed once again that the surplus held now by traders, hoarders, blackmarketeers, producers and farmers is relatively minimal and insignificant that the New Regulations on the transport and sale of paddy and rice cannot be fully justified; and the quantities which the Government will flush out will be a good argument ultimately to show why the Government should have acted differently. These Regulations will curb productive efforts and act as a disincentive for producers on a short as well as long term basis. It would have been the lesser of the evils, to have maintained the open market in paddy and rice at least to the extent they had been permitted earlier—although the earlier Regulations too were full of infirmities which tended to decrease productive effort.

In the mixed economy of public and private sector enterprises, to which this Government is committed, the Regulations which the Government has imposed from time to time on agricultural producers are irrational and unrealistic. They pertain more to a state where everything has been already socialised and nationalised. In such a totally regimented and controlled economic structure, such Regulations have a validity. In the present

set up, such Regulations only disrupt production without bringing the benefits they are expected to bestow.

Pressed by the day to day problems of finding food, the Government seems to rush (rather than drift) from one ad-hoc decision to another. Faced with the food crisis brought by the failure of local production and the failure of PMB's procurement plans, the Government has decided to send senior Ministers on what is virtually a begging mission to certain selected countries.

The *Daily News* on March 7 had a staggering headline: **FOOD SUPPLIES: PM'S INITIATIVE—SENIOR MINISTERS ON MISSIONS TO USSR, INDIA, CHINA, PAKISTAN.** This is what the report stated: "In an unprecedented diplomatic initiative to meet the critical food situation, the Prime Minister Mrs. Bandaranaike has decided to despatch two top level ministerial missions to Moscow and Delhi, Peking and Pakistan. These special missions, which will discuss supplies to Sri Lanka of rice, flour and sugar, will be led by Mr. Maithripala Senanayake, Leader of the House, and Mr. T. B. Illangaratne, the Trade Minister. The Prime Minister's two top deputies are expected to leave the country in the next few days. Mr. Senanayake will go to the USSR and India while Mr. Illangaratne will go to China and Pakistan. Both Ministers will be accompanied by senior officials. The *Daily News* understands that Dr. H. A. De S. Gunasekera, Secretary to the Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs, and another senior Civil Servant, will accompany Mr. Senanayake, while Mr. Illangaratne's team may consist of Dr. Jayantha Kelegama, Secretary to the Trade Minister, and other senior officials.

"Mr. Maithripala Senanayake's itinerary will depend on the program of Soviet leaders, notably Mr. Leonid Brezhnev, the CPSU Secretary General. Mr. Brezhnev's timetable is now crowded on account of the visit of the French President, Mr. George Pompidou. In India, Mr. Senanayake is expected to meet the Indian Prime Minister Mrs. Gandhi. Mr. Illangaratne, who was in China late last year to negotiate the Sri Lanka—China Trade Pact, is expected to meet

Prime Minister Chou En Lai and other top Chinese leaders."

The *Sun* of March 8, 1974 under the headlines: **MINISTERS FLY IN SEARCH OF FOOD—MORE RICE: NO FLOUR ON THE RATION**, reported as follows: "The issue of flour on the ration is to be suspended and instead the rice ration will be increased. In Colombo and the suburbs, the ration book holders will be entitled to an extra measure of rice over and above the first half measure. In all, they will get a total of 1 1/2 measures. Outside this region, the total ration will amount to one measure—half a measure more than what is now available on the ration. The present price will remain the same and the extra half measure will cost one rupee. These changes in the rationing system will be effective from the rationing week beginning March 18, the *Sun* reliably understands. As regards bread, the supply position is expected to remain unchanged. The Government plans to maintain the present supplies of flour to the bakeries to make bread.

"While working out these steps to readjust the rationing system in the face of the critical food supply position, the Government is also flying out two emergency missions in search of rice, flour and sugar. The mission in search of flour and sugar to the Soviet Union, and India respectively, will be led by the Minister of Irrigation, Power and Highways, Mr. Maithripala Senanayake while the Foreign and Internal Trade Minister, Mr. T. B. Illangaratne, will lead the other delegation to China and Pakistan to obtain rice.

"Mr. Maithripala Senanayake's mission is due to leave on Sunday and Mr. Illangaratne will follow a few days later. The two Ministers will carry with them personal letters addressed to the heads of the four countries, Mr. Leonid Brezhnev, Mr. Chou En-lai, Mrs. Indira Gandhi and Mr. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, requesting their assistance in the light of the present crisis.

"In Peking Mr. Illangaratne is expected to negotiate for an additional 100,000 tons of rice over the 160,000 tons which China has to supply Sri Lanka under Sino-Sri Lanka Trade Pact. The exact quantity of rice Mr. Illangaratne

will try to get from Pakistan is not known. It is said that there is some rice available and the mission will try to obtain as much of it as they possibly can.

"It is understood the Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike, met the two Ministers at "Temple Trees" yesterday and briefed them on the objectives of the mission and the present food supply position. Another meeting to review the food situation is scheduled for today."

The *Daily Mirror* of March 8 under the stirring headline: SPECIAL SESSION TODAY: MINISTERS TO REVIEW FOOD SUPPLY POSITION, stated: "A special Session of Ministers will be held today to review the supply position of essential food items including rice, flour and the rising prices in the world market. The Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike will preside at the meeting. The Ministers will hold detailed discussions on the country's food supplies position in relation to the price hikes of food items in the world market. This session of the Ministers will also serve to brief the two top-level Ministerial missions scheduled to leave for USSR and India and Pakistan and China respectively early next week. The two Ministers are Mr. Maithripala Senanayake and Mr. T. B. Illangaratne.

"According to informed sources, the Ministerial missions are expected to negotiate for the purchase of essential commodities on concessional terms so that Sri Lanka could buy adequate quantities of essential goods despite the deepening foreign exchange crisis. The Foreign Exchange Budget Committee which drew up the country's import programme estimated that with the price escalation of essential goods including crude oil, an additional sum of over Rs. 1,500 million was needed to finance imports during 1974. The Committee also forecast that the country's foreign exchange earnings would be about Rs. 3,000 million this year following the boom in rubber prices, an increase in the export of non-traditional goods including gems and industrial goods and the income from tourist earnings etc. The Committee also reportedly stated that although the income from export earnings is anticipated to increase to this record

level, nearly Rs. 4,500 would be required to foot the import bill.

"In previous years, expenditure on imports was only about Rs. 2,000 to Rs. 2,200 million. But with the price of crude oil going up to as much as 12 dollars a barrel, Sri Lanka's already limited foreign exchange resources would be severely strained. Today's meeting will also decide the quantities of various items to be purchased from the various countries."

It is said that the flour on the ration was stopped because of some delay in flour shipments. Freighters which had been scheduled to carry these consignments could not load them for a variety of reasons including the fact that other cargo which were already in holds would have contaminated the flour.

All this shows how precarious the situation is in Sri Lanka: our existence is much more than being merely hand-to-mouth. This dangerous situation could have been easily avoided if the true facts had been placed before the Ministers by the bureaucrats or if the Ministers had the capacity of finding out the truth for themselves. The simple position is that the import of foodstuffs had been curtailed on the assurance that large quantities of paddy, manioc green gram, battala, yams, kurakkan, toordhal, soyaabean and a whole host of other locally produced eatables would be available before March 1974. Bureaucrats charged with work of producing food had convinced our Political Authorities and the Cabinet that by March 1974, whatever the weather, the country would be able to do with a minimum of imports.

Our politicians and Ministers wishfully believed these fairy tales—in spite of warning to the contrary from many quarters including papers like the *Tribune*. When the realities of food production, or the lack of it, began to dawn on the Government, during the last three weeks, the bureaucrats were once again able to raise a smokescreen that the food they (the bureaucrats) had helped to produce had been hoarded by traders, blackmarketeers and the producers.

**Stern action against the trader and the blackmarketeer.**

**coupled with draconian regulations that will deter the producer from producing in future more than he can keep or eat, have not revealed any hidden stocks worth speaking about.**

And the Government has now sent senior Ministers on missions of food buying to India and the USSR, on the one hand, and to Pakistan and China on the other.

But what about Australia, Canada and the United States which are today the only big countries in real surplus? Can a set of bureaucrats do what a ministerial mission can do?

.....

### Chronic Gastro Enteritis

Chronic Gastro enteritis is the result of badly treated cases of diarrhoea or dysentery. Sometimes it occurs independently. In this disease without any apparent cause there will be number of motions for three or four days and then even without treatment there will be a period of quiescence. The patient has an urge to pass motion soon after taking some diet. In spite of his taking usual meals he loses weight, his normal skin colour changes to dark or bronzed shade, he becomes pale and feels weak to do even his normal work.

As this is a digestive disorder involving stomach and intestines, diet plays an important role in its treatment. The food should not only be easily digestible but also sufficiently nutritive. Defatted butter milk is the best. This can serve as a diet and as a drink. Whenever the person feels thirsty he may drink a glass of butter-milk boiled with a little turmeric and cumin seeds. In case of frequent motious butter-milk boiled with pomegranate seeds may be given. Oily substances should be avoided. During the period of diarrhoea the treatment should be to stop the motions. For this *Jatheephaladi* or *Dadimashtaka churna* can be given. During the quiescent period medicines like *Draksharishta* or *Pippalyasavam*, which improve the general condition of the body, should be taken.

— Dr. V. Naryanaswamy

## CHRONICLE

## March 7 - 12

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

**THURSDAY, MARCH 7:** The Leader of the Opposition, Mr. J. R. Jayewardene, stated in the National State Assembly yesterday that the *Janavegaya* Group and the members of the Prime Minister's family constitute the real government of this country and they form an inner Cabinet with the Prime Minister in the background, in which most Ministers are only figure heads; he said this in proposing the Joint Opposition motion for the appointment of a Select Committee to investigate an alleged conspiracy to "destroy the sovereignty of the people". Mr. Jayewardene also said that the real government consisted of the Prime Minister, her daughter and son-in-law Kumar Rupasinghe, and various "miscellaneous officers and hangers-on." The Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike, told the National State Assembly yesterday that the statement read out by the Leader of the Opposition was intended to sling mud at her, her children and those around her. Winding up yesterday's debate in the National State Assembly, the Leader of the Opposition, Mr. J. R. Jayewardene, challenged the Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike, to resign her seat in the Assembly and to re-contest on this issue. The Criminal Justice Commission (Exchange Frauds) yesterday ordered that the three suspects, Mubarak Thaha, Raja Ratnagopal and George Abeyaratne, be remanded until the final determination of the inquiry—as a prima facie case had been established against them. The Prime Minister of Britain, Mr. Harold Wilson, announced his new Cabinet: according to political observers, there is a slight tilt towards the Left in the formation of the new Cabinet. Israeli Defence Minister, Moshe Dayan, has agreed to stay on in the new minority Government being formed by Premier Golda Meir.

**FRIDAY, MARCH 8:** Nearly 20,000 skilled labourers in government employment will get enhanced salaries and be entitled to arrears as a result of the government's decision to accept a recommendation of the L.B. de Silva Salaries Commission. Food, fuel and fertilizers the three main problems will be the main theme at the 30th session of the ECAFE due to be held in Colombo from March 27 to April 8. The Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike, has told the Ceylon Workers' Congress, she is "endeavouring to ensure to the whole country a basic minimum of one measure of rice on the ration as early as possible". The issue of flour on ration will cease from the 18th of this month: instead, every ration book holder in the city of Colombo will get an extra one measure of rice and those outside Colombo will be issued with an extra half a measure of rice. The Bank of Ceylon Ordinance is to be amended to arm the Bank's Board of Directors with sweeping powers—including the authority to summarily sell or take over

mortgage properties without obtaining a court decree and to empower the Minister to give the Board special or general directions. Canada has agreed to donate a Soya-based milk plant to Sri Lanka, expected to cost about Rs. 10 million. Britain's coal miners are expected to return to work next Monday. Former top aides of President Nixon—John Ehrlichman and Charles Colson—were indicted in connection with the 1971 break-in at the office of Dr. Daniel Ellsberg's psychiatrist. President Suharto told the Soviet Union's Deputy Foreign Minister that Indonesia favoured the establishment of a zone of peace in the Indian Ocean. The State Department told Congress it was necessary for the United States to boost its naval presence in the Indian Ocean to counter the political and potential military impact of the larger Soviet Naval forces in the area.

**SATURDAY, MARCH 9:** A high-powered committee headed by the Senior Assistant Secretary to the Ministry of Finance has been appointed to prepare recommendations on the broadbasing of private companies: Dr N. M. Perera, Minister of Finance, will introduce legislation based on the recommendation of this committee—so that companies will be required to conform to certain stipulations laid down by the government. At least 16 Cabinet Ministers, including the Indonesian Foreign Minister, Mr. Adam Malik, will be in Colombo this month to attend the 30th annual session of the Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East (ECAFE). The Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike, will visit West Germany during the latter part of this year: the visit is on an invitation by the Chancellor Willy Brandt. Another campaign for the boycott of government controlled Lake House newspapers will be held under the leadership of Mr. J. R. Jayewardene at Ratnapura on March 29. The Health Ministry said yesterday that 100 positive cases of cholera have so far been quarantined and are under treatment, all of them detected in Colombo and its suburbs. Lord Ballantrae, Chairman of the British Council, is due in Sri Lanka today. The Minister of Justice, Mr. Felix Dias Bandaranaike, proposes to introduce a new code of procedure in labour Tribunals. The CP-controlled Ceylon Federation of Trade Unions has proposed to the JCTUO that a two-day token strike be launched in support of the Council's demand for a 20 per cent wage increase to the public and private sectors. The new labour government of Britain enforced a five-day working week for British industry from midnight yesterday. U.S. Secretary of State, Dr. Kissinger, asked Congress to end trade restrictions against the Soviet Union, which he said threatened the detente with the Russians and run the risk of nuclear war.

**SUNDAY, MARCH 10:** A proposal to defy the rice transport ban and court arrest by Opposition MPs is now being considered by the Opposition Groups. Government has decided to waive off part of the FEEC costs in respect of the cars sold to the MPs from the Government Stores: consequent to this decision the MPs are to get a refund on the monies they paid for the cars. One million rupees has been approved as loans for setting up small scale industries—under a special credit scheme formulated by the People's Bank in collaboration with the Industrial Development Board. The Marga Institute of Sri Lanka has received

a grant of 75,000 US dollars from the International Development Research Centre for a project designed to modernize the rural areas of Sri Lanka. The emergency ministerial missions which will be leaving soon for the Soviet Union, India, China, and Pakistan are expected to seek supplies of rice, sugar and flour on deferred payment terms in view of Sri Lanka's serious financial difficulties. The Paddy Marketing Board claimed that it had purchased another 200,000 bushels of paddy last week. The Colombo Municipal Council is studying a proposal to take over the production and sale of gas in the city. "Janavegam", a Tamil weekly paper made its first appearance yesterday: this paper is being printed by the Janavegaya group of newspapers. A group of Ethiopian students invaded the Ethiopian Embassy in Moscow and hung a portrait of Emperor Haile Selassie upside down outside the building as a gesture of sympathy for strikers in Ethiopia. President Hafez al-Assad declared that Syria would remain at war with Israel until all occupied Arab land was liberated and the full rights of the Palestinians were restored.

**MONDAY MARCH 11:** According to the *Daily News*, unity talks between the soft and hard wings of the Communist Party have now reached the final round and the reconciliation of the two factions would be announced within the next month. Mr. Maithripala Senanayake, Leader of the House, and the Minister of Power, Highways and Irrigation leaves for New Delhi today, heading the Prime Minister's special ministerial mission to New Delhi and Moscow to discuss supplies to Sri Lanka of sugar, flour, oil, steel and agricultural equipment. Eleven have died of cholera in the last few weeks: according to the Health Department an average of four cases are being detected every day in the Colombo Municipal area. According to the *Sun* government is working out a proposal to withdraw rice ration books of paddy cultivators, owners of paddy land more than two acres in extent and their families: to compensate for this, the government will pay them one rupee a week per ration book. Members of Cultivation Committees and co-operative officials in paddy growing areas have been instructed to visit the houses of cultivators and buy all the Paddy available for sale. Sri Lanka will buy a further 30,000 tons of rice from Pakistan: an agreement for this purpose will be signed by the Minister of Internal and External Trade when he visits Pakistan this week. Mr. J. R. Jayewardene has said at a meeting yesterday that the present government should obtain a fresh mandate from the people if it wished to remain in power, after May 27, 1975, the day on which general elections were held five years ago. Britain's new labour government is likely to review the United States plans to expand naval, airfield and other facilities on the British Island of Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean. King Hussein of Jordan arrived in Washington today for talks with President Nixon on the Middle East situation.

**TUESDAY, MARCH 12:** According to the *Sun*, it is very likely consumers in outstations also may get another half measure of rice on the ration from next Monday. Government has ordered an immediate halt to the issue of Samba rice to employees of the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands and the Paddy Marketing Board: Since October last year, the employees of the above places were given the privilege of buying Samba and

other varieties of rice for a maximum of Rs. 2.40 a measure. Mr. Maithripala Senanayake, Minister of Irrigation, Power and Highways and Mr. T. B. Illangaratne, Minister of Internal and Foreign Trade, left Sri Lanka yesterday on separate food missions. Sri Lanka's sheet rubber shipment to China under the rubber-rice pact has come to a halt as the Government had been unable to find the ships to despatch the rubber to China: around 20,000 tons of sheet rubber valued at more than Rs. 40 million are clogged up in various store houses in Colombo and the outstations. The Minister of Housing and Construction, Mr. Pieter Keuneman, yesterday ordered the immediate requisitioning of the entire stock of asbestos sheets of one of Sri Lanka's major producers of this commodity: it was alleged that this producer had tried to cause an artificial shortage. The Thai Government is considering an urgent request from Sri Lanka to buy 30,000 tons of rice and 12,000 tons of sugar from Thailand Government. Sri Lanka will buy her immediate requirements of crude oil at 12 U.S. dollars per barrel from Saudi Arabia: 90,000 tons of crude oil will be bought paying about Rs. 52,910,000 in foreign exchange. The Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Michael Ramsey, announced his resignation from November 15. Federal tax agents are carrying out a criminal fraud investigation on the tax payments of President Nixon. President Georges Pompidou flies to Soviet Union today for a two day summit with Leonid Brezhnev. British industry began a slow trek back to work after the resumption of work by the coalminers.

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# Inania of this, that and the other

## Tamils Are Also People

by Inna

Catholics will always tell the world that people are sons and daughters of God, but sometimes, they are reluctant to follow this line of thought to its logical conclusion. People can and do make mistakes and if we make allowances for them, they will make allowances for us. And this is perhaps why they have an in-built mechanism called 'confession' or penitence and reconciliation, if I've got the terms aright.

LET'S FACE IT. The Dravidian ancestors of our Tamilian brethren were fully established in Mohenjo

Daro and Harappa in the Indus valley, long before our Aryan ancestors ever dreamt of pouring down into Mother India; they were here perhaps, when Vijaya and his Invaders came and enmeshed themselves in Sri Lanka and took root among an honourable people.

The tough soil of the Northern and Eastern parts of this country and the vagaries of the weather and rarity of rainfall, brought out the latent qualities in our Tamilian brethren and that hardihood grew into their soul. They became assiduous.

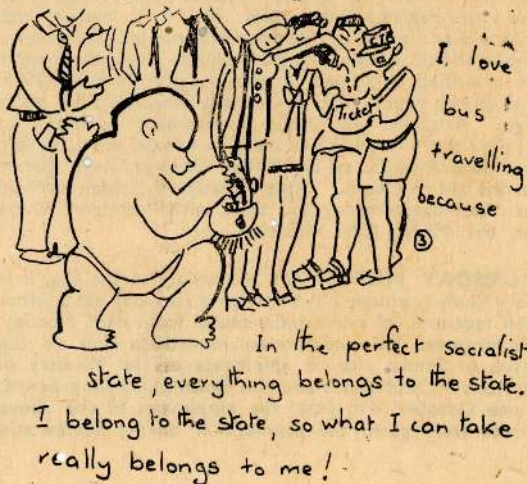
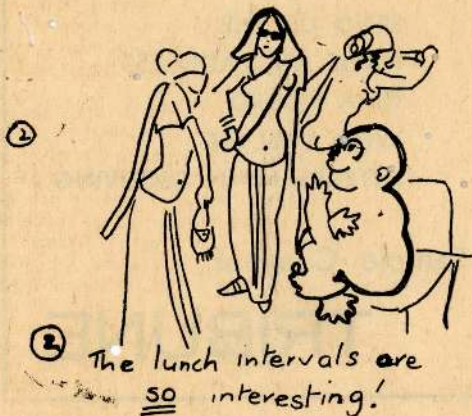
"Poke the soil and put in a bean seed and just watch it grow"—was the idea of our Sinhala brethren or at least a good many of them in the South and in the rest of the country. (Why, even now, a good many of them do not seem to know what all this food drive is about. They imagine: "Why grow food when we can live a ship-to-mouth existence") And this assiduity and hard work filled

the columns of the newspapers with names in all faculties of the University. They obtained places everywhere, like many of our Sinhala and Burgher brethren and Muslim brothers.

But now and again, jealousy and *lobha, dosa, moha, krodha* would rear their ugly head. It would even reach a gory climax as in 1958 in a blood-bath. Friend would even betray friend, and yet, saner elements always maintained:

"Where else could they go. They are our own brothers and sisters. They are our people." Ven. Hammalawe Saddha Tissa, the then incumbent of the Ovingdon Gardens Buddhist Vihara, summarising the events of 1958, told me at the shrine itself: "I feel sorry for these people. Where else could they go? Where else could we go? Why can't we share our little *dupatna* (island) with them?"

IN A GREAT MEASURE it is true to say that catholics have tried to





live out their Gospel; christians in general have tried to do the same. Now and again, of course the 'old man' within them, gets the better of them and in subtle ways there is a slight suspicion of discrimination, oh! very slight as to be negligible, but to the sharp eye, somewhat noticeable, if you get my trend of thought.

There are parishes or church-areas where there is a considerable number of Tamils. Why is there not even a single reading done in Tamil during the service? Not even one song or hymn. Why? Didn't Christ come for all? The other day a 'novena-ite' (there are special services on weekdays, I'm told, called 'novenas') said he found it very hard to get even one single booklet for a poor down-and-out Tamil lady who knows only Tamil and who would like to follow in her own tongue. She swiftly added (he told me): "Oh, she is not asking for a Tamil novena, but only so that she might follow it during the Sinhala and English services."

How have people forgotten the era of the common man, of brotherhood, ushered in by the late Mr. Bandaranaike. Didn't he say his ambition was to make of this country another Switzerland where language was concerned. My catholic friends, think seriously of this. You are based on the Gospel.

## BEFORE MAY DAY

# Re-unification Of The Two CP Wings?

by Kubera

Moves are now afoot and, according to informed sources, some headway has already been made to bring the two warring camps inside the local Communist Party together after their estrangement of almost two years.

It will be remembered that trouble started brewing inside the CP since their 8th Congress in 1972, when the hardliners led by Dr. S. A. Wickremasinghe captured power in the

newly-elected Central Committee. The softliners led by Pieter Keuneman did not take that lying down, but, using the Ceylon Federation of Trade Unions as their headquarters joined battle with Cotta Road forcing the latter to take action against such stalwarts like M. G. Mendis, L. W. Panditha, Samarawickrema etc.

When things had reached this stage and it became clear that Keuneman's sympathies too were with Mendis & Co. and not with the officially elected leaders at Cotta Road, the latter had a confrontation with Mrs. Bandaranaike herself at which they were asked to explain their position vis-a-vis the United Front. The nett result was that the hardliners were bundled out of the U.F.

A jubilant Keuneman hastily summoned a party conference where he got those present to endorse his line and the continuation of the CP as a constituent unit of the U.F. Thus to all intents and purposes, two CPs (leaving out for the moment two other tiny CPs owing allegiance to Peking) had come into being. The split was sealed with Keuneman & Co. opening their own party headquarters at Maligakande and bringing out their own weekly organ. Their own youth and women's organisations had been formed earlier.

AT A TIME when it appeared that the rift was irrevocable and the war between the two camps would go on unabated with greater fury this was one columnist who, asserted that a settlement was still not ruled out. This was due, not to any astrological prognostications, but from a knowledge of the CP's international affiliations and their importance in the eyes of all party leaders.

This is indeed what is being borne out by present developments. Under the strong pressure of the CP of the Soviet Union and other CPs of socialist countries, the two camps have been brought face-to-face to resolve their differences and work out an amicable settlement in the interests of the movement both locally and internationally.

It is learnt that while the hardliners are represented by Dr. Wickremasinghe, K. P. de Silva, Dr.

Leslie Gunawardene, and Sarath Muttettuweema at the talks, the other side is represented by Keuneman, M. G. Mendis, Samawickrema and C. Coomaraswamy. All of them are 'top' leaders who were in the Political Bureau before the controversial 8th Congress.

Political observers attach importance to the fact that H. G. S. Ratnaweera is not represented in the hardline side. In fact, reports indicate that he is much out of favour now with the hardline group. This is a cause for surprise because Ratnaweera was the man behind *Aththa*, was the one who helped the hardline cause in a big way before the 8th Congress and was one of the moving spirits whose masterplan resulted in the new Central Committee being packed with those in their favour.

One would have thought that with the hardline group being ousted from the U.F. the *Aththa* would have come back into its own in a big way. That is where the political pundits went wrong (and *Kubera* was proved right!), for just at that time, Ratnaweera too was ousted from his position as the Advisory Editor of *Aththa* and his place taken by K. P. de Silva. The latter has since followed a very careful policy vis-a-vis the U.F. from which they were ousted, taking care not to see that all the bridges were burnt completely and in addition to see (to mix metaphors) that fences were mended with the softliners once again.

He is the man who is reported to have worked actively behind the scenes to bring about the present talks. But Ratnaweera has not been idle either. Whenever "K.P." has been away, he has had his own back and once used his absence to launch a front-page attack on Keuneman's Ministry of Housing and Construction.

RATNAWEERA, it is said, has now displaced K.P. and emerged as the leader of the "young Turks" inside the hardlining CP—Indikka Gunawardene and others—who are dead set against any talks or settlement with the softliners. Against this background the reason for Ratnaweera not being included in Dr. Wickremasinghe's team to meet Keuneman's becomes obvious.

Anyway, after overcoming resistance within both the hardline

and the softline camps, Dr. Wickremasinghe and Keuneman are now holding talks on bringing about a settlement, preferably before May Day' when both sides, it is said, could appear together before the people and make it clear to them that their split is at last healed.

But all is not plain sailing. Already there are reported to be snags towards overcoming which both sides are making their most strenuous efforts. Perhaps, the most complex one is about how the longed-for reconciliation is to take place.

The hardliners now in control of the party apparatus appear to favour that those who left the CP will be taken back and restored to their former positions rescinding in the process all the disciplinary measures taken against them. Then jointly they could convene another party Congress and elect a new Central Committee.

Now that they have set up a party of their own the softliners on the other hand seem to be arguing that the reconciliation must be effected as between two distinct equal parties. Any forthcoming Congress, they propose, must be held on the basis of the 1972 membership now divided between the two camps.

How this impasse will be solved is difficult to say. Perhaps, in this matter as in many others, the fraternal CPs' will come to the rescue!

**ANOTHER PROBLEM** at issue is the fate of those young hotheads in the hardlining camp who are opposed to any sort of the agreement with their erstwhile comrades. Some say that if the top leaders unite, irrespective of their differences that separate them, these youngbloods will quit the CP altogether and form another party.

But another solution mooted is to send them abroad—to Moscow, Prague, or East Berlin—to be given editorial work on some international communist publications! The carrot seems to have had some effect on some who were contemplating the worst—viz. that of going into the wilderness or forming another party which comes to about the same.

Whatever, these differences, a united CP before May Day is now on the cards. Leaders from both factions will mount the platform and be photographed (for the benefit of the public) with Mrs Bandaranike and other UF leaders. Most of the rank-and-file will brave the sun and march in the same ranks as they have done all these years. Still others will shout "a plague on both your houses" and keep away altogether or only watch the demonstrators marching by.

**And what of those who take part in the May Day demonstration? Will they all shout the same slogans? Or will the hottest of the hotheads infiltrate the CP section in order to mouth the most r-r-revolutionary slogans and create another home-and-home dispute between the CP and the United Front?**

BRITAIN AND  
SOUTH ASIA - 3

## Guiding Principles Of Tory Policy

by

**B. Vivekanandam**

*This is the concluding part of the article entitled the Heath Government's Policy for South Asia which we have published with acknowledgements to India Quarterly. This article was written when the Heath Government was in power and before a General Election was ever contemplated in Britain. It will be interesting to see whether the minority Wilson government will make any substantial changes in the policy which had been followed by the Heath Government in regard to South Asia.—Editor*

A similar declaration also came from the Ceylonese Government. Ceylon's Ministry of External Affairs and Defence declared in May 1971 that the Government's policy not to concede any military base facilities to foreign powers would be "scrupulously observed without any exception". It added: "The Ministry trusts that the above statement of policy will leave no further doubts regarding Ceylon's

adherence to the policy of non-alignment, a fundamental principle of which is the denial of bases to foreign powers."

The Ceylonese efforts now are in the direction of creating a "zone of peace in the Indian Ocean," free from big power rivalry in the entire area. But Ceylon and USSR entered into an agreement on co-operation in marine fisheries on 19 August 1971, under which the USSR will provide Ceylon with technical assistance for fisheries training and also for the establishment of a training centre for this purpose in Ceylon. It also provides for co-operation between Ceylon and the USSR in the collection and exchange of scientific and technical data relating to marine fisheries in the Indian Ocean. On the part of Ceylon it will provide facilities for Soviet fishing vessels in the ports of Colombo and Galle. The subsequent visit of the Soviet Admiral Nikolai Ivanovitch Smirnov, Commander-in-Chief of the Soviet Pacific fleet, in April 1972 indicates the growing Soviet interest in the Indian Ocean.

Recent reports from Washington that the Soviet Union has got naval facility in Somalia and has established a solid military presence there is a disturbing factor for Westminister. Observers feel that this will enable the Soviet Naval Headquarters in Moscow to control the movement of warships throughout the Indian Ocean. They think that if the Suez Canal also is reopened the presence of the Soviet forces in Somalia will assume added strategic importance. It will effectively be in the corridor between the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean.

**THE PRESENT** British policy for South Asia is formulated in the light of evolving a new outlook for the region. It may be seen that in the past its policy for South Asia was overshadowed by the undue importance it gave to Pakistan. The Anglo-American efforts were to develop Pakistan as counterweight to India so as to maintain a regional balance of power. This outlook is not there now, partly, because of the changed situation in the Indian sub-continent and partly because of the changing pattern of global relationships.

Today the strategic and diplomatic utility of Pakistan for Western powers like the United Kingdom and the United States stands relatively diminished. After the independence of Bangladesh a truncated Pakistan's military potential remains substantially crippled. In its place a new military power is growing in the Islamic world.

There are indications that Iran is gradually emerging as a major power. The Shah of Iran's ambitious scheme to transform Iran into "a nation of world rank" by 1980 promotes confidence in Whitehall to give greater priority to Iran than to Pakistan. In terms of utility to protect the oil and strategic interests of Britain and West Europe in the Persian Gulf, friendship with Iran is considered more important than with that of a potentially weak Pakistan.

Therefore, there is a natural shift of greater reliability from Islamabad to Tehran. Moreover Iran is Britain's ally also in CENTO. Since Britain has withdrawn forces from the Persian Gulf a process is on to help Iran to emerge as a military power strong enough to protect the West's oil interests in the Middle East and the Gulf.

The growing strong ties between London and Tehran could be seen from the fact that when the Shah visited UK in June 1972 in connection with "shopping for the best conventional arms in the world" to equip Iran's defence forces he stated that Britain would be his major supplier. Earlier in July 1972 the Shah had talks with Sir Alec Douglas Home on the security of the Persian Gulf following the Soviet-Iraqi defence pact in April 1972.

These are nothing, but signs of growing confidence and friendship between Iran and Britain as well as the declining importance of Pakistan in Westminster. Apart from this, the shift in the power balance in the Indian subcontinent following the 1971 Indo-Pak war also had diminished Pakistan's importance. From the war India emerged as the dominant military power in the entire region stretching from Suez to Singapore.

**THE PRESENT BRITISH policy for South Asia has two obvious facets. One is the deep desire to emerge as a genuine friend**

**of all the nations of the region and actively participate in the diplomatic activities to promote peace, friendship and stability in the region. This new posture will be the best guarantee to its wide ranging economic interests also.**

In this respect Heath Government's achievement during the last three years is commendable. By its genuine desire to promote harmony among the nations of the region, the British recently emerged as the only Western nation unprejudiced in South Asian capitals. Consequently, its relation with the nations of South Asia has obviously reached a mature and balanced stage of rational understanding.

The other facet of the British policy for South Asia is the efforts to win the co-operation of littoral states to pursue its Indian Ocean policy, formulated mainly to ward off any threat to the freedom of navigation. Its policy for the Indian Ocean is designed to keep always Britain's and West Europe's trade routes open and forestall a threat to their vital supplies.

Moreover its lines of communication is stretched through many seas including Indian Ocean. Unlike Mr. Wilson who sought European security by strengthening NATO Mr. Heath pursues a policy of global vigilance through collective efforts. Britain thinks that the stepping up of the Soviet naval activities in the Indian Ocean in recent years has created a new situation which might transform the area into a centre of big-power rivalry. In its view the security of the Indian Ocean region has a vital importance to Western security itself in view of the Soviet Union's spectacular increase in the naval power on a global scale.

To quote Sir Alec Douglas Home: "We certainly dare not ignore the vital sea communications. If by any chance they were interrupted, this country could be brought to its knees". Therefore the shadow of Soviet Union over Europe is a governing factor of Heath's Indian ocean policy. Britain is not confident that a real detente has emerged out of Willy Brandt's Ostpolitik, and holds doubts on the future Soviet intentions.

No doubt, a large increase in the size and range of the activity of

the Soviet Navy can change the balance of power at sea and pose new political threats to coastal states. In the circumstances Britain wants to achieve its defence objectives in the region largely through the promotion of goodwill with countries like India, Bangladesh and Ceylon.

**EVEN THOUGH** the Heath Government has achieved considerable success during the last three years in resisting the Soviets from having substantial military or naval footing in South Asia, the small states of this region, where Soviets hope to gain ground eventually, continue to remain vulnerable to Soviet diplomacy and influence.

It is true that in South Asia so far the Soviets could not make much headway is establishing naval bases. While in countries like India, despite the Indo-Soviet treaty of friendship, strong public opinion can assert itself against any foreign bases there and withstand the pressure of the Soviet Union, how far this can be so, in the long run, in other tiny states where Soviet Union has already made small beginnings, one has to wait and see.

It is in the context of the future uncertainty that Heath Government, despite strong protests from a number of Commonwealth countries, took the initiative to reactivate the Simonstown Agreement between Britain and South Africa, which provides for the protection of sea routes around the Cape of Good Hope. Britain's naval strategists believe that without the Simonstown base, the balance sea power in Indian Ocean will be tilted dangerously to the West's disadvantage.

Obviously Heath Government is not prepared to relent on Soviet pressures in South Asia. Placing itself in Simonstown in the West and Singapore in the East and other strategic points like Diego Garcia, Seychelles and Gan and Mauritius, backed by the goodwill in important nations of South Asia, Britain is strategically well placed in the Indian Ocean region.

In the circumstances Britain's aim is not to seek new military bases in the Indian Ocean but to make the Soviet naval presence in the region ineffective by way

of depriving a foothold in vital points. But the fact remains that while Britain performs its diplomatic activities admirably in South Asia it does not have adequate resources to play a major military role in the region.

In this context Mr. Heath wants to evolve a common EEC policy for the Soviet Union. He envisages that in a Joint security arrangement for Indian Ocean, Britain, EEC and the US should involve themselves as valid partners since the Indian Ocean is a life line of the West in general.

*It is not correct to assume that Britain wants to synchronize its policy for South Asia with the United States. The difference of approach was obvious during the Bangladesh crisis in 1971 itself. For Britain the US policy during Bangladesh crisis was quite unrealistic and disastrous which forced New Delhi to return to Moscow for help and led to the friendship treaty between India and the Soviet Union.*

Similarly during their talks in Bermuda in December 1971 Prime Minister Heath did not agree to the claim of Mr. Nixon that it was

the despatch of a task force of the US Seventh Fleet to the Bay of Bengal that deterred India from invading West Pakistan. Britain believed that if it had followed the US line during Bangladesh crisis then it would have not only meant the loss of the goodwill of India and Bangladesh, but also would have led them straight into the Russian fold.

The Anglo-French abstention in the UN Security Council and General Assembly during the Indo-Pak war of 1971 were manifestations of the developing independence in their foreign policy (and thus no longer exclusively influenced by the United States).

While Britain does not want to draw a parallel for the United States in South Asia, as elsewhere the pull is towards independence of decision and open pursuit of its own and Western Europe's interests. In this it does not want to be subservient to the United States or to be completely under its protective umbrella. It wants to evolve a respectable relationship between them.

In effect, through strengthening the EEC in Western alliance, Mr.


Heath wants to give content to the Kennedy concept of two-pillared Atlantic Alliance, composed of North America and Western Europe. In the meantime Britain does not want to withdraw completely from other areas like the Indian Ocean or the Far East. Heath's idea is to co-ordinate Britain's defence efforts with Western Europe and develop a new personality for it in partnership than to go alone. Its plan is to strengthen European voice in the Western alliance and maintain good relations with the United States on new basis of increasing equality and mutual respect.

Britain's value to South Asia is important in the context of the new emerging situation. In March 1972 Mr. Heath expressed the view that "the Asian dimension to world affairs has become more active and significant. Four months later Sir Alec followed it up that great power rivalry for world power and influence would be decided in Asia. Therefore in the emerging Asian situation, for geo-political and strategic reasons, India assumes special significance in Westminster.

Britain's reasoning is that "India has a total capacity to pre-empt her own independence and, after all, in time you are going to be a country which is as strong as, if not stronger than, China. Whitehall concludes that with the Indo-Pakistan war in 1971 India has emerged as a major power in the Indian Ocean region and has great potentialities to emerge eventually as a leading power in Asia.

It thinks that India will be the biggest power between China and Europe and is capable of preventing the sub-continent from becoming a sphere of influence of any particular big power. According to it, despite the present leading position that Japan enjoys in industry and economy in Asia, the economic, political and military potential of India is much greater than others in the region.

Presumably, Japan cannot play the same significant role in the Far East, South or South-East Asia that India can play in the Indian Ocean. It is in this context Westminster desires India to evolve itself into the linch-pin of a new security arrangement for South and South East Asia. To quote Sir Alec.

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"I have always hoped myself that India—it is again for her to decide, she certainly is the most powerful nation in this part of the world—I have always hoped that India could be the sort of foundation and basis for a collective security system in this area".

If that corroborates the Indian thinking, Britain might assist India to build a navy strong enough to withstand pressures from big powers. If India emerges as a strong naval power between South Africa and Australia and play the strategic role of a sea power, that will be a guarantee of the stability of free navigation in Indian Ocean. From India's point of view also, such a development will be important, since, it also relies on sea routes to conduct its own imports and exports.

While there is a great deal of mutual desire for developing warm relationship between Britain and India the fly in the ointment is the Indo-Soviet Friendship Treaty. Despite loud pronouncements of British statesmen that Britain has no misgivings about India's treaty with the Soviet Union and that the treaty is in conformity with its traditional policy of non-alignment, Westminster believes that the Treaty contains many imponderables.

As Robert Jackson, wrote recently in *International Affairs*: "On the European side, and especially in Britain there is, of course, a guarded fear that India may give direct or indirect support to the expansion of Soviet naval power which is regarded as a threat to European interests in the Indian Ocean area. So this is the problem. Behind Britain's friendly relationship with India there exists a lurking apprehension that the Indo-Soviet Friendship Treaty, can well torpedo the mutual trust and understanding between India and Britain.

Therefore, to India's own larger interests it is necessary to remove misgivings in Whitehall. What India has to do is to make more explicit and give content to what the Indian Prime Minister said recently that the treaty of friendship between India and the Soviet Union did not mean that "we agree with them in regard to every matter."

However, Edward Heath's South Asian policy is the hallmark of a success story. It is a success because it is realistic and guided by a genuine desire to be friendly to all the nations of the region. Obviously, Britain does not make a choice among the nations of South Asia and therefore is trusted everywhere. Unlike the presence of super powers which tends to create difficulties, the presence of a friend and well-wisher like the United Kingdom in the vicinity is no doubt a source of confidence to small nations of the area even if they are not formal allies through defence treaties.

If properly handled there is every chance for Britain to emerge as a trusted friend with immense potentialities to play a major role in the region. Mr. Heath has already laid the foundation of a new and mature relationship between Britain and South Asia.

DIEGO GARCIA

## Peace Zone And Collective Security

by Spartacus

The US and British Governments are to go ahead building a military base on Diego Garcia island close to the shores of Sri Lanka. They have paid scant respect to the opposition voiced to the construction of this military base by the Governments and many public bodies in Sri Lanka, India, Malaysia, Australia, New Zealand etc.

Now it is reported that Sri Lanka will take the initiative in trying to convene a special session of the UN General Assembly to discuss this matter. India has pledged its support to Sri Lanka in this. Other governments too in this region can be counted upon to lend their support to this move. But whether even a special General Assembly session will make Messrs. Richard Nixon and Edward Heath change their minds is a matter of doubt.

The British Foreign Minister, Sir Alec Douglas-Home has sought to justify the creation of a military base at Diego Garcia by saying that it is necessitated by the presence of the Soviet Navy in the waters of the Indian Ocean. In other words, what he says is that only the navies of the Western Powers have the right to sail on the high seas in the Indian Ocean area.

If Soviet ships too dare to 'show the flag' then, that is a justification for the Western Powers to set up military bases in the Indian Ocean area close to the shores of many Asian states. This reeks of the old colonial mentality by which the Western Powers sought to turn the high seas which everyone has the right to traverse into their own, closed preserves. They fail to realise that those good old days are gone forever, never to return.

IN THIS CONNECTION, it is interesting to read the reply given by the head of the Soviet parliamentary delegation that was on a visit here recently to a question on the subject asked by Mr. Mervyn de Silva, Editor of the *Daily News*. Echoing the sentiments expressed by Leonid Brezhnev earlier, Mr

### HOW OLD IS ANTARCTICA?

Antarctica is as yet the most ancient witness of the formation of the Earth's core. This was the conclusion recently arrived at by researchers at the Institute of Geochemistry and Physics of Minerals of the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences. The newly established age of its rocks, according to the ratio of uranium and lead isotopes found in them showed that the sixth continent is 4,000 million years old. In this way Antarctica has turned out to be the oldest continent, and not the youngest, as was previously assumed. The samples of crystalline shale and granitelike rocks for analysis were collected by A. Kamenev, staff member of the Leningrad Institute of Arctic Geology, on the Enderby Land in the vicinity of the Soviet scientific station Molodyozhnaya.

Anna-Muhammed Klychev (the leader of the Soviet delegation) had said: "The USSR's position is clear. We are ready to take part with all interested states on the basis of absolute equality in finding a favourable solution to the question of making the Indian Ocean a peace zone. We believe that this concept of a peace zone in the Indian Ocean as proposed by your Prime Minister, Madame Bandanaïke, and our proposal for a system of collective security in Asia are not mutually exclusive or contradictory. Indeed a peace zone proposal could be a substantial component of an Asian security system."

Asked what the other components are, Mr. Klychev had replied: "Any proposal which is aimed at stabilising peace and security in Asia. On the other hand, the construction of military bases, such as Diego Garcia, represents a negation of all concepts of peace and stability, because such security must be based on the principle that no state should have an advantage over another in the zone of peace. Building of bases is in conflict with that principle." That is something which people like Sir Alec should realise, now that the days of gunboat diplomacy are over.

The presence of military bases on Asian soil or in the waters of the Indian Ocean — in Thailand, Bahrain, Seychelles Islands, Maldivé Islands, the Arab Gulf, Simons-town, the Reunion Islands, Saudi Arabia and other places—give a kind of juridical basis for the permanent presence of the navies of the Western Powers in this region, and we know what this often leads to.

For example, at the height of the Indo-Pakistan conflict in December 1971 the US aircraft carrier *Enterprise* suddenly steamed into the Bay of Bengal, together with other battleships. It was only when secret documents including minutes of meetings of the Washington Special Action Group were published later in the *Washington Post* that the world learnt that at that critical time there was the real possibility of a direct military clash between the US ships and the Indian Navy and Air Force. Perhaps some enterprising American journalist will, in the not-too-

distant future, let us know official details relating to the mission of the US naval force led by the aircraft carrier *Hancock* that entered the Indian Ocean during last year's Middle East war.

THUS, whether one is in favour of the peace zone idea put forward by our Government or the idea of the collective security system proposed by the Soviet Union, all will realise the necessity for the removal of military bases. In fact, the first requisite for the establishment of a peace zone in the Indian Ocean is the complete dismantling of all military bases.

As for the relation between the two concepts of the peace zone and the collective security system that too is a matter that should engage the attention not only of political and military leaders but of all statesmen in Asia.

Soviet leaders have repeatedly stressed that a system of collective security must be based on such principles as the renunciation of the use of force in relations between states, respect for the sovereignty and inviolability of state borders, non-interference in the internal affairs of other states and the development of cooperation between states in various spheres on the basis of equality and mutual benefit. These are precisely the principles to which the resurgent nations of Asia gave their approval at the Bandung Conference way back in 1955.

Now, nearly 20 years later, those Bandung principles have found expression in many bilateral and multilateral agreements entered into between many Asian states. There are also other proposals current such as, for example, the idea for the neutralisation of South East Asia put forward by Malaysia and the proposals for the reunification of Korea put forward by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Whether all these could go to build up a comprehensive system of collective security on our continent is the topic that merits close attention and study.

There are also numerous difficulties in the way before such a system could be fully implemented. The Asian political situation is still a complicated one. The level of economic, social and political

development in different Asian states vary greatly. Then there are still unresolved problems between Asian states bequeathed by colonialism. Finally, there are the opponents of detente and international understanding still actively operating in this region too.

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INDIAN COMMUNIST  
VIEW

# Agreement On The Stateless

New Delhi,

**WITH THE AGREEMENT ARRIVED AT BETWEEN the Prime Ministers of India and Sri Lanka on the status of 150,000 stateless persons of Indian origin in Sri Lanka, the colonial legacy left by British imperialism which marred Indo-Sri Lanka relations has been eliminated. The present agreement carries forward the Sirimavo-Shastri pact of 1964 and settles the issue of those who had been left out in that pact as well as hastens the pace of repatriation and grant of citizenship by the two countries.**

It may be recalled that under the 1964 pact India agreed to repatriate 525,000 persons together with their natural increase while Ceylon (as it then was) agreed to accord citizenship to 300,000 persons along with their natural in-

crease. The agreement was to be implemented within a period of 15 years on a proportional basis.

But then Sirimavo Bandaranaike's party could not return to power in 1965 and from 1965 to 1970 Ceylon suffered the rule of pro-imperialist and reactionary UNP led by Dudley Senanayake. The implementation of the agreement was sabotaged. A part of this blame is to be borne by some of our foreign office bureaucrats as well.

In 1970, the united front came to power in Ceylon and Sirimavo Bandaranaike again became the Prime Minister. Both sides thereafter tried to sort out the difficulties and when Indira Gandhi went to Sri Lanka on a state visit last April, several of the complexities were settled.

Both sides made sincere efforts to speed up the implementation of the 1964 pact and tried to catch up with the time lost. The rate of repatriation to India every year was raised by 10 per cent. Both sides have expressed satisfaction about the way the 1964 pact was now being implemented.

**THE PRESENT AGREEMENT** not only settles the question of the 150,000 persons uncovered by the 1964 pact (now Sri Lanka will grant citizenship to 75,000 while India will repatriate 75,000) but notes that "the problem of all persons of Indian origin in Sri Lanka" has been settled.

It should be noted that both in India and Sri Lanka there is no dearth of persons who oppose the repatriation to India and grant of citizenship by Sri Lanka of the persons of Indian origin. The reason is simple: most of these persons are tea estate labourers and constitute what is called "cheap labour". Some Sinhalese are opposed to giving them equal rights also.

As most of these stateless are Tamils they are also sought to be used as a political force by the Tamil nationalists both in Sri Lanka (especially in the northern areas) and in India. DMK has considerable contact with the Tamil leaders in Sri Lanka and it is not fortuitous that besides the two Tamil parties in Sri Lanka, there is also a so-called Sri Lanka Dravida Munnetra Kazagham.

The Indo-Sri Lanka joint communiqué, apart from the issue of agreement on the status of the stateless persons, also underlines the common position of the two countries on several issues like Indian Ocean as a zone of peace, improvement of mutual economic ties, question of non-alignment etc. The unanimity of these issues provides a strong basis to believe that Indo-Sri Lanka relations henceforward will develop in the spirit of close friendship and mutual understanding, and will not be marred by unwarranted misinterpretations or bureaucratic bungling. There is every reason to hope that India and Sri Lanka will be able to set an example of good neighbourliness.

—New Age, 3/2/74

## FOR THE FARMER

# Pulsed Irrigation

— better than drip —

Israel has made rapid strides in combating drought and utilisation of water to the best advantage. This nation which has introduced innovations such as sprinkler and drip systems is now forging ahead to adopt a more efficient irrigation method which, according to the claims of the inventors of the technique, could lead to harvests "bigger by 50 per cent for the same amount of fertilizer and only 10 per cent more water." With the Israel Government planning to reduce the amount of water released for agriculture in order to meet the rapidly mounting demands of industry and the more sophisticated population, a 20 per cent fall in agricultural productivity is envisaged. This can be more than offset by the "pulsed irrigation" according to Dr. Benjamin Zur of the Technion, Israel's Institute of Technology.

Irrigation techniques, even the best among them now involve some break in the application of water to the crop. The interval between one wetting and the other is properly spaced out to achieve at one stroke the economy in use of water as well as supply of the optimum quantity needed for the crop. Farmers have been

## ASTEROIDS' ORIGIN SOLVED ?

Leningrad astronomers claim to have solved one of the biggest mysteries of the solar system: the origin of the asteroid belt. This belt circles the Sun between the orbits of Mars and Jupiter, and includes many millions of small bodies ranging, from grains of sand to giants many miles in diameter. Now it is reported that the Leningrad Institute of Theoretical Astronomy has completed researches which confirm that the asteroids were formed some 5,000 million years ago through the gradual breaking up and collisions of "primary planets" which then occupied the Zone. Some of the asteroids have elongated orbits which bring them outside Mars' orbit and sometimes closer to Earth. One of the largest of them, Eros, will be a mere 17 million miles away on January 23, 1975.

advised that frequent irrigations are harmful as they lead to water-logging. This interferes with the movement of air in the soil which is also essential for the roots to develop.

According to Dr. Zur, "instead of spacing out the irrigation, the farmers should be irrigating continuously using small amounts of water." A low application rate involves not more than 0.5 to 1.0 mm. of water every hour. This can give better results than the drip irrigation. Crops grown under such controlled irrigation gave doubled yield and in the case of sunflower it was increased five-fold. The problem in field scale adoption arose as ordinary sprinklers could not deliver less than 3.5 to 4.0 mm. per hour. To overcome this difficulty the soil scientists tried the idea of pulsating the sprinkler flows by turning them on for ten minutes in every hour, using a device to switch the valves on and off. The soil responded to this treatment as if the flow was continuous and 3 to 5 centimeters below the soil surface it was uniformly moist.

Contrary to the general view that such a continuous exposure to soil moisture will lead to "disaster from disease", the crops were healthy and prolific. Grape fruit harvests even in the best tracts increased to 1,200 per tree with pulsed irrigation as compared to the average of 900 from conventional irrigation. A further development over this method was to do away with the sprinkler, the switch mechanism and even the drip tubes. The innovation involved the use of porous plastic tube (designed for reverse osmosis in desalination but found useless for osmosis). The tube had the right characteristics for delivering water in required quantities and achieving a controlled wetting of the soil. The "sweating line" as the irrigation equipment was called was worked by a slight pressure of water to ensure even flow in the undulating experimental area. The tubing is now being tried out on a golf course and a watermelon plot. It is reported that Dr. Zur is very hopeful of its success and the firm which had a dead stock of these tubes, is also happy in having found an outlet for its tubes.

—Hindu

## IN SRI LANKA TODAY

# ❁ ALL IN THE DAY'S WORK

— A random collection of cuttings and excerpts from the local Press reflecting the State of the Nation —

### LIGHTS OUT, ROGUES IN!

With 5,500 street lights, out of a total of 7,000, not lit in the nights as an energy conservation measure the darkened alleys and by-ways, of the city are becoming a haven for the underground operators like thugs, snatch thieves and perverts. On Friday night a man was stabbed while walking to his home in the Anderson Flats at Park Road. The victim had got down from a bus and was walking to the flats when two thugs waylaid him. When he raised cries he was stabbed and the thugs disappeared down an unlit by-way. On Saturday night an American tourist who was walking along the Galle Face Green to the Galle Face Hotel was ambushed and robbed. By the time he got to the hotel and telephoned the police, the thugs had disappeared.

Then on Sunday night, the office of the Public Trustee's Department was broken into. Police are intrigued about this because the thieves have not taken away anything except two pens and a pair of spectacles which were on the Chief Clerk's table. Several other instances of thuggery and burglaries have been reported to city police stations during the past week.

Police concede that there has been an increase in the crime rate but they do not feel it has snowballed into unmanageable proportions. The Superintendent of Police (Crimes), Mr. R. Sundaralingam, said yesterday the situation was not very bad although there had been a slight increase in the number of burglaries following the cutback on street lights. He explained that mobile police patrols in the city had been curtailed due to the energy crisis, but to make up for this foot patrols had been intensified. In addition plainclothes policemen are being deployed in places where people congregate.

Sun, 31/1/74

### SWEEP SALES DECREASE

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. During this period the gross proceeds from the sale of sweep tickets amounted to Rs. 33,672,275, compared with Rs. 36,089,075 during the previous year. The General Manager of the NLB has said this decrease was "due to vagaries in public demand and involvement of sales agents in election work." The Board's expenses in conducting the lotteries, excluding commissions paid to agents, amounted to Rs. 2,510,271 during the year compared with Rs. 2,400,712 in the previous year.

Sun, 1/2/74

### TEA: DROP OF 4.8 M. LAST YEAR

Sri Lanka's tea production last year totalled 465.8 million pounds—a drop of 4.8 million pounds over the previous year, according to official figures. But North India with a yield of 785.1 million pounds at the end of November, last year, was 28.4 million pounds ahead of the production figure for the corresponding period last year, South India with 208.4 million pounds, 1.9 million pounds more, Kenya with 113.1 million pounds, 7.7 million pounds more, and Malawi with 43.7 million pounds, 4.1 million pounds more. Bangladesh's crop for 1973 was 60.8 million pounds—a 9 million pounds more than the previous year. Shipments from Sri Lanka for the London auction in 1973 totalled 46.3 million pounds, as against 54.2 million pounds the previous year. Negotiations are in progress between a delegation from Libya and local tea exporters on tea supplies in the current year. Libya is expected to purchase between 20 to 25 million pounds.

Times of Ceylon, 31/1/74



### TREASURY TELLS TOP OFFICIALS TRAVEL CTB OR CGR

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. A circular to this effect has been sent to Secretaries of Ministries and Heads of Departments by the Secretary to the Treasury, Mr. C. A. Cooray.

The departmental heads have also been told that 65 per cent of government goods should be transported by train or bus, to save fuel allocated to the respective departments.

—Sun, 2/2/74

### UNECONOMIC TO EAT FISH, MEAT

Eating fish, meat, poultry and eggs as a source of nutrition is uneconomic especially, with the current food crisis. It is also an unkind act, particularly by Buddhists to deprive the life of our dumb friends.

This has been pointed out by Dr. W. F. Jayasuriya, President of the Ceylon Humanitarian Society in a leaflet titled, *Some Reflections on the Present Food Crisis*. Dr. Jayasuriya says that the estimate of the Director of Agriculture to feed the livestock population in the Island is the cultivation of 15,000 acres of soya bean as a substitute for fish meal. Why think of feeding animals and then obtaining animal protein when the first call should be to feed the human beings?

According to Dr. Ananda Nimalasuriya, the eminent nutritionist, a careful examination of meat fish and eggs reveal, that, while these are nourishing there is nothing in them in respect of quality or quantity that cannot be supplied from Lacto-Vegetarian sources.

Dr. Jayasuriya has pointed out that even if some of the vegetable foods are deficient in some essential amino acids that will not affect the common man because he is accustomed to taking a combination of vegetable foods that make up for the defects.

The importance attached to animal food in the diet is indefensible in

the light of newer knowledge. Millions of people of India bear witness to the falsity of such claims. Even nature gives the lie to such extravagant claims.

Observer, 28/1/74

### UPS AND DOWNS OF OUR RICE

The issue of the extra half measure of rice will temporarily cease from this week. With the news of the reduction of the ration, the price of rice in the open market which was on the decline during the last week recorded a slight increase by 15 to 20 cents a measure. However, trade circles expect the prices to take a tumble with the reaping of the Maha harvest. According to Trade Ministry sources it has received numerous complaints that there had been a large-scale hoarding of rice. The sources said that the government has already launched a vigorous anti-hoarding drive with the assistance of the Police and the Price Control authorities as they anticipate that unscrupulous persons may send stocks from the Maha harvest underground.

—Daily Mirror, 29/1/74

### EXTRA HALF MEASURE AGAIN FOR SINHALA NEW YEAR: TBI

The issue of the extra half measure of rice will be resumed by April before the Sinhala and Hindu New Year. This was disclosed to the *Daily Mirror* yesterday by Mr. T. B. Ilangaratne, Minister of Foreign and Internal Trade. The issue of the extra half measure was stopped from this week. The Government resumed the issue of the extra half measure in late December in the rice-deficit areas and for the entire island in the first week of January, this year.

However, Mr. Ilangaratne said the issue of the extra half measure would be resumed before the Sinhala New Year to both income and non-income tax payers. He also said that the Maha crop should be better than earlier anticipated because the drought that had been experienced in many rice-

producing areas in the country had eased. Meanwhile, shipments from the People's Republic of China are also expected to arrive continuously in the next few months. China has agreed to provide Sri Lanka with 200,000 tons of rice of which 40,000 tons is a free gift.

—Daily Mirror, 31/1/74

### BLEAK PROSPECTS: TBI

Addressing a seminar later yesterday Trade Minister Mr. Ilangaratne warned that Sri Lanka's weak balance of payments position is most likely to continue in the coming years due to the current unprecedented rise in the price of almost all imports. The seminar on Market prospects for Minor Export Crops was jointly sponsored by the Ministry of Foreign and Internal Trade and the Ministry of Plantation Industries.

"No realistic strategy for the improvement of our country's balance of payments can ignore the crucial role that exports can play" the Minister said. It was in this context that the export sector had been accorded such a vital role in the five year plan. A major factor that retarded the rate of economic growth in Sri Lanka was the acute shortage of foreign exchange. While this crucial situation demanded the utmost economy in the use of the country's foreign resources it also demanded vigorous and sustained efforts to increase foreign exchange earnings through exports and other means, he said.

The development of trade and the assurance of fair and remunerative prices' especially for the primary, and semi-processed commodities of developing countries such as Sri Lanka, were vitally necessary to secure the well being of the people. Trade of such a nature more than aid, is the need of the hour, he said.

Mr. Ilangaratne said that the expansion of the export sector should take place on an unprecedented scale so as to increase foreign exchange earnings. The progress made in the export sector will not only have to be sustained realistically but will have to be

accelerated to achieve the planned targets, he said.

—Daily Mirror, 1/2/74

### NO IMMEDIATE PRICE INCREASES: ILANCARATNE

There will be no immediate increase in the price of essentials and there will not be a shortage of these commodities in Sri Lanka despite price hikes in the world market, Mr. T. B. Ilangaratne Minister of Foreign and Internal Trade told the Daily News yesterday. Mr. Ilangaratne said there was speculation regarding possible price hikes in Sri Lanka soon where essential food and other items were concerned. This speculation was mainly based on reports of price increases in the world market on items such as rice, sugar and flour. Where Sri Lanka was concerned adequate supplies of these commodities at reasonable prices, in relation to world market prices, had been assured for some time more. As such there was no immediate fear of price increases or shortages.

Mr. Ilangaratne indicated that he was aware of unscrupulous individuals who were speculating on possible shortage and price increases and who had sent items such as sugar underground in the hope of making a fast buck. To counteract this he had instructed the Price Control Department to be vigilant and to smoke out such anti-social elements. Meanwhile, the Price Control Department conducted 11,332 raids in 1973 as a result of which punishments were imposed on 400 persons. In addition 1500 raids were made on bakeries as a result of which 50 persons lost their rights to bake bread, and a further 40 persons had their flour allocations reduced.

—Daily News, 5/2/74

### DROUGHT GRIPS N.W.P.

Kurunegala,

The entire North Western Province is in the grip of a severe drought which set in about two months back. In Nikaweratiya, Galgamuwa, Maho and Hiriyala areas, the cash crops of cultivation are badly affected. Chillie crops in Rajangane and Hiriyala area

perished due to the severe heat and scarcity of rain and water flowing from irrigation channels. A large number of village tanks which are rain fed have been converted to mere puddles of water with thousands of fish dying and stench emanating. Already a pound of dried chillies has risen up from Rs. 10/- to Rs. 15/- during the past week and is rising as limited supplies are coming here. Prices of local vegetables have risen up steeply—

—Sun, 7/2/74

### FORGED PERMIT USED TO OBTAIN CEMENT?

An ex-Army sergeant was remanded and a Buddhist monk released on bail by the Puttalam Magistrate, Mr. R. Paramaguru, on an alleged attempt to obtain about 400 bags of cement from the Cement Corporation at Palavi on a forged permit. On a complaint made by the Cement Corporation to the Puttalam police that a forged permit had been produced by a person from Alutgama, the Puttalam SCIB investigated and took into custody W.T.H.H. Silva of Alutgama and Welethara Wimalagnana Thera of Maggona and produced them before the Puttalam magistrate who remanded the ex-army sergeant and allowed the monk bail in Rs. 750. The Puttalam police are conducting further investigations.

—Daily News, 28/1/74

### BIG DEMAND FOR OUR CERAMICS

There is a big demand for our ceramics in America. Ceramics which are already earning a considerable amount of foreign exchange are likely to earn more in the near future. Several shipping lines have agreed to offer cut rates to ceramic exporters. This is in response to a request made by the Minister of Shipping and Tourism, Mr. P. B. G. Kalugalle for promotional freight rate for items such as tableware, porcelain, chinaware and such items. A spokesman for the Ceramic Corporation told "Observer" that this will greatly help the joint export venture started by the Ceramic Corporation and the Japanese firm, Noritake. Biscuits,

leather products, fruit juices too would be provided promotional freight rates and would not be subjected to the current increased freight rates the spokesman said. The Corporation is now planning to export porcelain in containers to USA and Japan.

—Observer, 31/1/74

### CUSTOMS IMPOUND CORP DOCUMENTS

A consignment of goods destined for export to London by a leading state corporation was found by the Custom to contain goods of quality finish far above the value stated in the export documents. The value of the goods not stipulated in the documents is estimated at about Rs. 700. The Principal Collector of Customs, Mr. D. B. I. P. Siriwardene ordered the export packages to be opened on information received that goods over and above those actually declared in the tendered documents were being sent out to London. A number of documents in connection with the transaction have also been impounded by the Customs.

—Daily News, 9/2/74

### NEW DISEASE

Beware of Leptospirosis a disease which often afflicts people following common exposure to stagnant water. According to health authorities, several cases of leptospirosis have been reported during the past two months. Health authorities say the disease should not be treated lightly and even requested the people to report any cases. This disease is not included in the list of statutory notifiable diseases. But health authorities have been directed to report any cases promptly.

—Sun, 1/2/74

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MILLING RICE

# Sri Lanka Cannot Ignore Innovations in India

by P. K. Kymal

Executive Director,  
Food & Nutrition Board

Rice, the staple diet for nearly half the world's population, is the principal food in India and rice milling, the largest single food industry.

In India, rice is cultivated in a larger area, consumed by more people, than any other farm product and provides employment to more persons than any other industry. The monetary value of rice produced in India at Rs. 40,000 million is the largest among agricultural commodities. The production, processing and marketing of paddy and rice thus constitutes a most important industry in the country.

FOLLOWING the wheat revolution, the country is on the threshold of a rice revolution. Introduction of new high-yielding strains of paddy, along with modification of cropping pattern, and intensification and extension of improved agricultural practices are part of the new strategy. It is however, recognised that an increase in the production is no assurance of a corresponding increase in quantity. As a result of the work done by the country's leading scientists and technologists and the advice and suggestions received from international experts and organisations, it has been found that the following steps are essential for increasing the outturn of rice from paddy: control of moisture by mechanical drying, safe storage of paddy and rice, parboiling of paddy followed by mechanical drying and employing modern milling equipment like paddy cleaners, rubber roll hullers, husk aspirators, modern paddy separator and improved whiteners.

Only 30 per cent of the country's rice output is hand-pounded. Machine milling uses metallic hullers (Engelberg type) and shellers (under running disc shellers) in combination with paddy separa-

tors and cone polishers. Most of the mills use metallic hullers.

THERE ARE at present over 67,200 processing units consisting of 57,500 single hullers, 1,900 battery of hullers and 2,600 shellers and 5,100 sheller-cum-huller combinations.

As a first step towards modernisation of rice milling, the Union Government initiated a project for pilot study and evaluation. Seven modern rice mills of improved designs were set up in important rice producing areas in 1964 with equipment selected by an expert team. Milling equipment of high efficiency were imported from Japan and Germany and the remaining components fabricated indigenously.

Parboiling units of the latest design developed at the Central Food Technological Research Institute, Mysore, were fabricated in India. The mechanical driller of the Louisiana State University design was also fabricated in India. Cement silos for the shortage of paddy and mechanical handling and conveying equipment were also made indigenously.

A COMMITTEE set up by the Central Government evaluated the overall performance of the seven mills between 1966 and 1968. The committee compared the relative performance of these mills with traditional sheller and huller mills in regard to yield and quality of rice in various regions, and came to the following conclusions:

The modern mills gave an overall increase in total rice outturn averaging 2.5 per cent over sheller type units and 6.6 per cent over huller units in respect of raw paddy. The actual increase varied from 0.8 to 4.2 per cent for the sheller unit and 1.8 to 12.5 per cent for the huller unit.

In the case of parboiled paddy, the corresponding increase in total rice yields from the modern mills average 0.8 per cent over the sheller mills and 1.6 per cent over huller units. The actual figures varied from 0.8 to 1.3 per cent for sheller mills and 0.3 to 2.5 per cent for huller mills.

THE DIFFERENCE of rice yield for raw paddy in the modern mills from existing sheller mills varied from 1.9 to 12.4 per cent with an average of 6.1 per cent. As compared with huller mills, the corres-

ponding increases varied from 6.9 to 27.7 per cent with an average of 15.1 per cent. For parboiled paddy, the corresponding increase over sheller units varied from 0.8 to 2.5 per cent with an average of 1.3 per cent and over huller mills from 1.0 to 8.5 per cent with an average of 4.1 per cent. Apart from significantly higher outturn of total edible rice and head rice, the modern mills yielded rice of superior quality with less broken and foreign matter.

Studies conducted to assess the economic viability of the modern mills have indicated that they will start earning profit after processing paddy to the extent of about 50 per cent of their capacity.

Information available indicates that the modern mills, even with comparatively higher capital requirements are capable of yielding return at the rate of about 12.5 to 15 per cent on capital.

The Government has also initiated action for the production of modern equipment by licensing adequate capacity in the private sector. A new centre for training of technical and managerial personnel in the different aspects of the modernisation of the industry is also being set up. Other measures include the amendment of the Rice Milling Industry (Regulations) Act and the rules thereunder to make modernisation of the existing sheller, sheller-cum-huller and better huller units a statutory obligation.

The Government has further introduced a superior grade for rice, providing a premium for better quality of rice which will serve as an incentive for modernising the industry.

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TRIBUNE, March 23, 1974

# IS IT TRUE?

## Sherlock Holmes

✱ PESALAI

✱ KACHCHATIVU

✱ SRI LANKA

IS IT NOT TRUE that the first stage of the four-stage drilling programme for oil well at Pesalai has been completed? That the second stage will be begun almost immediately? That the work on the next three stages will take less time than the first? That the first stage drill hole which is the biggest in diameter (may be 8") is complete and has been cemented? That in the next phase the diameter will become less, and this progressively in the two final stages, until the final diameter will be about 3"? That at a depth of 2000 to 3000 metres the gas vapor layer might be reached? That everybody concerned is hopeful that the first test site itself will produce the oil? That everybody, however, is prepared to sink two more wells in the Pesalai-Talaimannar area before going over to other areas earmarked as potential sites? That Delft is one such site? That at the moment the Ceylon Petroleum Corporation office, a few miles away from the actual drilling site, is very press conscious and press shy? That unless the orders come from on high in Colombo, the boys at the office will neither talk nor be even courteously pleasant? That everybody, who shows any interest in the drilling, including journalists, are treated with suspicion almost on the footing that they are potential saboteurs? That the drilling site itself is like a military encampment? That security precautions are no doubt essential but if it is carried beyond the point of no return it becomes a mockery and a joke? That even if a keep off board (to shoo away journalists) is stuck up both at the drilling site as well as the office, it will be a good thing

if a liaison officer who is not so press-shy is attached to the office on Mannar Island.

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IS IT NOT A FACT that the number of pilgrims who are likely to go to Kachchativu this year will be much less than in other years? That though the same arrangements as last year are available, the difficulties of carrying food has increased immensely with the current ban on the transport of rice? That, if press reports are correct, that unlike last year the seas to the east of the island will be patrolled by the Ceylon Navy whilst the seas to the west will be under the surveillance of the Indian Navy? That this kind of joint exercise is evidently thought necessary until the ownership of the island is finally decided? That once the median line between the two countries in the Palk Straits is fixed, it is reasonable that the island should go to the country on whose side Kachchativu falls? That many believe that Kachchativu will go to Sri Lanka? That though there are professors and pundits who think that the ownership of the island should not be decided on the basis of the median line, it must be admitted that it is one way of resolving the difficulty? That they point out that the median line is one thing whilst ownership is another? That whilst pundits and professors argue, history moves on? That the ownership of Kachchativu has recently acquired special attention because of the belief that oil may be found in and around the island? That in this era of offshore drilling Kachchativu will become important if oil is available? That so far no surveys have been made in the area and any claims about oil in

or around Kachchativu is pure and simple guesswork or mere political kitemarking?

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IS IT TRUE that government circles derive great comfort from the statistics of the acreages which it is claimed have been sown with this, that or the other? That government also derives comfort from the fact that so many million rupees had been distributed as agricultural and cultivation loans? That emphasis is also laid on the fact that part of these loans were handed out as fertilisers, agro-chemicals and the like? That there was also a cash content in these loans? That if the acreage sown is multiplied by the average yields attained previously in the district with value added for current improved methods, seed and the like, to obtain the projected production estimates? That even if the statistics about the acreage sown and the loans granted is physically correct, there is no way of knowing what a producer actually reaped? That whilst the government official is driven to exaggerate and inflate all possible production figures, the producer confronted with emergency Regulations, the tax laws and what not, is compelled to depress and deflate his actual production figures? That unless the producer is enabled to be "honest" in many matters actual production figures cannot ever be found? That in a capitalist society where the market economy is open and free, where the tax laws are not oppressive, reasonably correct production figures become available particularly because banks, which advance money and extend credit, keep a sharp eye on physical stocks? That in fully socialist society actual production figures are not difficult to obtain—unless the bureaucrats' capacity to provide bogus figures has not been brought under popular control? That in a socialist society, with a closed economy and a closed market, bogus figures will soon come to light? That in a completely free exchange open market economy bogus figures will also be shown up? That only in heterogenous societies like that of Sri Lanka, with its mixed economy of being neither here nor there, bogus statistics can flourish until Doomsday? That bogus figures of local production are always hidden under the massive weight of imports?