

TRIBUNE

CEYLON NEWS REVIEW

Cts. 75

Vol. 18 No. 50

April 6, 1974

E.C.A.F.E., FOOD, AND SRI LANKA

SRI LANKA is host this week nearly to 600 delegates from over 50 countries who have come to attend the 30th session of UN's Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East which is now in the concluding stages of its two-weeks meeting at the Bandaranaike Memorial International Conference Hall. Significantly the first major conference held in this Hall brings all the nations of Asia together—and it must be remembered that the development of Asia was something which was dear to the heart of the man after whom the Hall has been named, S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike. Many tributes were paid to the memory of the late Prime Minister, and the Executive Secretary, J. B. P. Maramis, in his introductory remarks had observed that it was only fitting that the 30th session of ECAFE should be held at the BMICH which perpetuated the memory of "a great son of Asia" who had been a firm believer in the concept of regional co-operation. Sri Lanka's Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike, in the inaugural speech declaring open the sessions proposed the creation of a World Fertiliser Fund to reduce the impact of rising fertiliser prices. In an appeal to the developed countries as well as those oil producing countries whose revenues have been increased by the recent energy crisis, Mrs. Bandaranaike said that her proposal would take the food problem out of the arena of international politics. The Fund could be financed, she said, out of the increased oil revenues and could be used to provide a substantial rebate for all nitrogenous fertiliser imports and production in developing countries. The main emphasis in her speech was that food production in the world should be substantially increased because the bulk of the world's population were still without the minimum food requirements.

THE FOOD PROBLEM had been singled out by many delegates, including official spokesmen from Sri Lanka, as the most important question before the ECAFE, although the Executive Secretary had listed a number of other pressing problems, like the world-wide shortage of raw materials, which had to be tackled without the least delay. Though, very correctly, Mr. Maramis had stressed that there was "no magical formula for the food problem", it was evident that every country in the region was most deeply concerned about finding a solution to the food problem. In his review of the economic situation Mr. Maramis had pointed out that world inflation had stubbornly resisted efforts to control it and had even escalated causing grave dislocation in international monetary stability. From the agenda and the discussions at the Conference it would appear that this 30th Session of ECAFE is a major landmark in the history of this important UN agency. It would appear that ECAFE now seeks to adopt a more dynamic role in development-implementation than before. At the very beginning the ECAFE was nothing more than an advisory body with a function of being a glorified statistical record office for the region. But in the last two decades, ECAFE has assumed an increasingly positive role in matters of economic development in the region. If the declared objectives of this 30th Sessions are achieved, even partially, there is no doubt that ECAFE would have taken its first giant step towards making it an effective instrument for the economic regeneration of the region.

IT IS ONE THING to be proud of regional co-operation and development and the good work that is being done elsewhere, but it is even more important for us to ensure that we in Sri Lanka succeed in growing more food in this country. The ECAFE can only help us marginally. The glory of the 30th Session of ECAFE can help to create a temporary euphoria. Emergency food imports can only postpone the Day of Reckoning a little longer. But that Day should not be allowed to dawn. We must increase our production of food in a massive way as quickly as possible.

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FOOD AND FOOD AGAIN

March 28,

IN THIS COLUMN last week we had expressed *Thanksgiving* for the bounty we had received from India, Pakistan, China and Russia for the rice, wheat and flour we have been promised in response to the special appeal made to the leaders of these countries by our Prime Minister through her envoys, Mr. Maitripala Senanayake and Mr. T. B. Ilangaratne. We had made it clear that we felt that we should be thankful that we received anything at all — whatever the price.

But we had also expressed satisfaction that press reports had indicated that we have been offered these shipments of food on "very favourable deferred terms of payment." However, we had pointed out that up to the time of writing for the last issue details of prices and payment terms had not been made public. All that we knew, and still know, officially, is that the 10,000 tons of rice from India was on loan with no date stipulated as to when the loan should be returned.

News reports in the newspapers of the government-sponsored *Lake House* group and in the violently pro-government *Times of Ceylon* group, immediately after the return of the two envoys had made it appear that Sri Lanka was getting enough food to tide over present difficulties on terms of payment which would cause no serious difficulties immediately. But the *Sun* of March 27 had a disturbing front page news story. If that story is correct, Pakistan and China had wanted a 50% cash down for the 80,000 tons and 30,000 tons respectively before the shipments could begin. The report also said that the prices stipulated were the highest ever and that in the case of China it was in the region of US \$ 420 a ton. No specific price was mentioned in regard to the Pakistan offer but it appeared to be in the region of £ 190 a ton.

But the report was emphatic that between both countries Sri Lanka had to find 23 million dollars before the shipments begin. World prices being what they are, we in Sri Lanka cannot complain about high prices, though only recently we had found comfort in the fact that whilst we paid Rs. 25 for a bushel of locally grown paddy Pakistan paid its farmers the equivalent of Rs. 15.52 per bushel and China's internal purchase price was only Rs. 15 a bushel.

If the *Sun* story is correct, the price demanded by Pakistan and China is many times their internal price, and even the 50% down payment will cover much more, indeed very much more, than the internal price. But, as *Tribune* has often pointed out, Sri Lanka cannot complain of the high prices for food charged by other food producing countries in the context of the increase of oil prices and other commodities.

Nevertheless, we feel that it is necessary to point out again that as special incentive for farmers of marginal paddy lands to grow more paddy, a higher guaranteed PMB price than the present Rs. 25 a bushel should be offered at least until productivity levels increase significantly — until what are marginal paddy lands today will have yields which will make Rs. 25 a bushel a worthwhile price.

We had supported this plea for a higher price because we were aware of the increasing costs of inputs and the terrible shortage of fertilisers without which yields would drop even in the best of irrigated fields, especially in respect of sophisticated high yielding varieties.

What we still think is that it would be wise to pay a higher guaranteed price for paddy than Rs. 25, really a figure closer to the import price, as a temporary measure to bring marginal paddy lands into cultivation. We still believe that only an inducement of this kind will prompt owners of marginally productive fields to cultivate paddy on their lands and be also tempted to make investments to tap groundwater resources to stabilise paddy production in the rain-fed areas.

An increased guaranteed price for paddy should be coupled with crash programme to sink more wells—surface wells, deep wells and tube-wells—for individual farms as well as to be jointly owned by a number of small farmers.

FOR THE RECORD, we are publishing the report in the *Sun* of March 27 which appeared under the headlines: STAGGERING PRICE FOR RICE: CHINA, PAKISTAN ASK FOR DOWN PAYMENT OF 23 MILLION DOLLARS—IMMEDIATELY

"Twenty three million dollars—that's the price Sri Lanka will have to pay immediately to obtain additional rice from Pakistan and China. The *Sun* understands that this represents 50 per cent of the full amount payable for 80,000 tons of rice from Pakistan and 30,000 tons from China.

"These rice deals were negotiated by Mr. T. B. Ilangaratne, Minister of Foreign and Internal Trade during his special 'food mission' this month. Mr. Ilangaratne visited Pakistan and China and held talks with Premier Bhutto of Pakistan, Premier Chou En-lai, of China and other officials.

"Informed sources say both Pakistan and China have indicated to Sri Lanka that the "down payment" for the rice should be made before shipments begin. The balance due both to Pakistan and China is to be paid in two years, although Sri Lanka had asked for a five-year period.

"The price Sri Lanka has agreed to pay for the 80,000 tons of Pakistani rice is 420 US dollars a ton C&F. For the 30,000 tons of Chinese rice, the price agreed upon is 425.6 US dollars a ton C&F.

"According to economic observers, this is the highest price Sri Lanka will pay for rice. The prevailing world market price is said to be in the region of £ 190 a ton.

"How Sri Lanka could meet this staggering rice import bill is now being studied by the Government. The matter was reviewed in detail by the authorities yesterday. The Pakistani rice is to be shipped from now till the end of October

while shipments of Chinese rice are to begin immediately after details are finalised."

There was no immediate report in official circles to this *Sun* story, but the *Daily News* on Thursday morning, March 28 had a cautiously worded note, in a small way, on the front page under the headline CHINESE RICE AT LESS THAN WORLD PRICE and the report stated:

"China has contracted to supply 30,000 tons of rice to Sri Lanka (under the terms negotiated by the T. B. Illangaratne Mission last week), at a price which is £ 7 per ton less than the world market price.

China, in addition, has stipulated a two year grace period and the rice will be paid for by shipments of sheet rubber beginning in 1975 and ending in 1976. These shipments are outside the contractual obligations of the rubber-rice pact.

"The price quoted by the Chinese is 425 US dollars per ton (£ 183). The present world market price is around £ 190 per ton for the rice China has agreed to supply.

"Pakistan has contracted to supply Sri Lanka 80,000 tons of rice at 420 US dollars, which is nearly £ 180 per ton. The terms include a 50 per cent cash payment and the balance to be settled within a year."

THIS REPORT suggests that the *Sun* story is incorrect only in some details. There is to be no cash remittance so far as China was concerned. She wanted payment in sheet rubber which is as good as cash, but with this difference—that whilst hard currency 'cash' is difficult to find immediately, Sri Lanka produces sheet rubber. But sheet rubber, in the current world situation, is as good as gold, and the extra rubber diverted to China for rice will reduce our hard currency earnings for the import of other essentials. But in the case of Pakistan, we have nothing to barter, and so Sri Lanka must find ready cash for the down payment of 50%.

Even so it is a good bargain for Sri Lanka because rice

can be got only at a price today. And Pakistan too needs foreign exchange to import crude oil at enhanced prices. In these circumstances there is no doubt that Sri Lanka has got her rice under "favourable terms. But what is not clear is what the "world price" of rice is today. It is also not clear whether in the situation which exists today there is anything which can be called a world price for rice. It is not a commodity which is universally used like sugar which can be said to have a "world price". Rice is produced by a limited number of countries, and the number of rice eating countries are even less—though the populations are huge. Within this framework, can rice be said to have a world price?

But in the sellers' market of today, the world price is said to have been around £ 150 a ton a few weeks ago before the harvests were reaped in most rice producing countries. And except for Sri Lanka and a few other countries, most rice producing countries have had good crops. Even in countries where the rains had failed them, they had made much lee-way through the groundwater they had tapped during the three years when virtual drought conditions had plagued these countries. The "world price" of rice has also tended to move up with the price of crude oil in the international market, but in the domestic markets governments are naturally determined to keep prices down.

THE DIFFERENCE between the internal price in different countries and the world price is the profit which Governments, which have become the sole exporters, make. Understandably in China, export is only by the Government. In Burma too the Government has for many years been the sole exporter. But the governments of Pakistan and Thailand seem to have come into the field more recently. Last year, a private firm in Pakistan which had contracted to supply Sri Lanka with rice had defaulted, but this time the agreement is said to be on a government-to-government basis. All this is very

good, but it is difficult to discover how the "world price" was fixed at £ 190 or US 425 dollars.

Very little information is available in the leading financial and commercial journals on this question, because in reality what the new sellers (just two or three) demand becomes the "world price."



Founded in 1954

A Journal of Ceylon and World Affairs

Published Weekly Every Saturday

APRIL 6, 1974

Vol. 18, No. 50

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

One Year	Rs. 37.50
Two Years	Rs. 62.50
Three Years	Rs. 87.50

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TRIBUNE, April 6, 1974

Mr. Ilangaratne when he spoke over the SLBC, on his return from his historic mission has stated quite clearly that he hoped that he would not have occasion to go on another begging mission of this kind. *Tribune* can well understand his sentiments. For many years this paper has pleaded for increased food production. If this country is to develop in self-respect it has to stop begging for food abroad—for which we are, in the end, compelled to pay stiff and sometimes unconscionable prices.

The Chinese Prime Minister, Chou En-lai, had made it clear several times in recent years that a country has to be self-reliant and self-sufficient at least in food. This country had proudly proclaimed to all and sundry that by March 1974 this country would not be faced with the prospect of having to import any substantial quantities of food. It was believed that food imports would there after be only a fraction of what they had been earlier.

But, the realities of March 1974, are different and an astute person like Chou En-lai could well have asked searching questions why Sri Lanka had not been able to attain declared targets—and everybody knows that the weather, as we have said so often, is only part of the cause for the sad plight in which we find ourselves.

ALTHOUGH THE EUPHORIA generated by the ECAFE Conference has tended to overshadow some of the domestic political problems in Sri Lanka, there is no doubt that tensions are being built up in various sectors which threaten to come to a head sooner or later—unless they are defused by suitable political action.

J. R. Jayewardene and the UNP, still licking their wounds at the failure to get anywhere by prematurely crying 'wolf! wolf!' with the coup slogans, are reorganising their forces for a major political onslaught on the United Front. The Prime Minister had characterised the "documents" JR had tabled in the Assembly as forgeries, but JR has sought to side-step the issue by raising the constitutional query whether the Govern-

ment was entitled to take these documents away from the Assembly with its permission—thereby insinuating that his documents had been tampered with to make them forgeries.

It is unfortunate that the UNP should still indulge in casuistry without dealing with the economic realities on a straight forward political basis. There is no doubt that vast crowds flock to UNP meetings today. This is understandable in the current situation of sky-high prices and unbelievable shortages. The fact that conditions are no better in other countries is no answer though it will mollify supporters of the Government.

One trend that must be watched is the fact that more and more Buddhist priests are being drawn into the agitational field and should they come into the political fray many unnecessary tensions are bound to be generated.

With the prospects of bigger rice and wheat imports, the Government is likely to defuse the mounting tension with increased rations per week for the New Year and a partial lifting of the ban on the transport of locally grown paddy and rice. This will no doubt stave off serious problems for some months, but unless the country really gets down to the task of producing food, Sri Lanka will make no progress. But how will the Government be able to meet the real challenge of growing more food?

March 31,

On Friday March 29, late in the evening it was announced that the Guaranteed Price of Paddy had been increased from Rs. 25 to Rs. 30 per bushel with immediate effect. At the same time it was also announced that from the third week of April, the price of the paid measure of rice would go up from Rs. 2 a measure to Rs. 2.30 a measure. On the question of the increased GP price of paddy, all that *Tribune* can say is that it is again too late and too little, but we can of course console ourselves with the thought that *it's better late than never* and that's *something is better than nothing*. Any increase in the GP price of paddy should have come before the sowing for

the Maha at the end of 1973—and depending on the extent of the increase, more and more of the marginal lands would have been brought under paddy cultivation. The producers who have not yet surrendered their paddy to the PMB will stand to gain by the Rs. 5 increase, but this price increase can only have limited effect on the less widespread Yala and the coming Maha. It is yet our view that the price increase is not adequate enough to induce farmers (a) bring all marginal paddy lands under cultivation; (b) take the necessary steps to tap groundwater resources which alone can make this country self-sufficient in rice—especially at a time of a world shortage of fertilisers for the sophisticated high yielding varieties of paddy. With the best intentions in the world, this Government has still not realised the importance of making price increases to induce and increase production timely, opportune and adequate. The Government has also announced wage increases ranging from ten to twenty percent for wage-earners in the middle and lower income brackets. But how far can these wage increases compensate for the increased prices and costs?

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A Sample Copy of
TRIBUNE

March 22 - 27

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

FRIDAY, MARCH 22: Major General Richard Udugama, MP for Matale, announced in the National State Assembly yesterday that he was quitting the SLFP and the United Front Government: the reasons for quitting was the Prime Minister's failure to contradict or disclaim the statement made by the Opposition Leader, Mr. J. R. Jayewardene, that she asked him whether Major General Udugama was his informant in regard to the alleged coup conspiracy: his second reason for leaving the SLFP was the immense difficulties the people in his own constituency of Matale were undergoing in view of the non-availability of essential foodstuffs. The Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike, said in the National State Assembly yesterday that the documents tabled by the Leader of the Opposition in regard to his alleged coup conspiracy were all "forgeries": she also tabled the report of the Government Examiner of Questioned Documents: the Leader of the Opposition, Mr. J. R. Jayewardene, raising a question of privilege said that certain documents he had tabled in the House had been removed without the permission of the Members of the Assembly. The Prime Minister yesterday told the National State Assembly that Lake House was neither a Government Department nor a Corporation and denied responsibility for the administration of Lake House. Pakistan has offered Sri Lanka 75,000 tons of rice, it was reported in the *Sun*, on deferred payment terms: negotiations are now underway to decide on the conditions that should be embodied in an agreement covering this deal. A section of the education authorities have considered the proposals of the Ministry of Education, to declare certain schools as University Colleges in order to accommodate the "shut outs" to be impracticable, due to lack of funds. Over 7000 acres which have been vested with the Land Reform Commission will be handed over to the co-operatives or leased to tenant cultivators this week. Princess Anne and her husband Captain Mark Phillips escaped unhurt yesterday when a gunman peppered their limousine with bullets in an apparent kidnap attempt.

SATURDAY, MARCH 23: Every politician, including members of Parliament belonging to Opposition parties, will have to obtain the Prime Minister's clearance to leave the country: the Deputy Minister of Defence and Foreign Affairs, Mr. Lakshaman Jayakody, revealed this yesterday at a news conference. A petition signed by one million people demanding permission to transport at least two measures of rice per person, is to be presented to the National State Assembly next month: for this purpose the Joint Opposition will launch a campaign across the country to collect one million

signatures. A powerful section of the United National Party membership in the Colombo Municipal Council wants the Party's Working Committee to call on all UNP Councillors to resign their seats forthwith: this the councillors claimed is in protest against the Minister of Local Government extending the life of the Council by two years: the normal life of the Council ceased in December 1973. The Criminal Justice Commission inquiring into foreign exchange offences yesterday reserved its order. Companies will be prohibited from owning property or carrying on any undertakings in Sri Lanka after September this year unless they are incorporated under the Companies Ordinance or are exempted companies: a Bill known as the Companies (Special) Provisions Bill to give effect to these provisions, has been gazetted under the authority of the Minister of Foreign and Internal Trade. Mr. Maithripala Senanayake, Minister of Irrigation, Power and Highways, and Mr. T. B. Ilangaratne, Minister of Foreign and Internal Trade, who led food missions to India and Russia and to Pakistan and China respectively are due back tomorrow. A massive new move to guarantee food for all in Asia, jobs for the unemployed, education and training for children and the unskilled is envisaged in a series of wide ranging proposals to be submitted to the ECAFE conference opening in Colombo next Wednesday. Detectives investigating the Princess Anne kidnap attempt and shooting incident believe that the would-be kidnapper had planned to hide her for a one million sterling ransom.

SUNDAY, MARCH 24: The Government has made top level security arrangements for the ECAFE sessions starting here on Wednesday: every head of a delegation of Ministerial rank will be provided with a security officer and any delegation that wants additional protection will be provided with extra special security by the Intelligence Services Divisions: part of the Soviet delegation is expected to arrive this morning. Sri Lanka's multi-million rupee underground bookmaking business, that had been going on in spite of police raids, came to a virtual halt yesterday: the arrest of a leading bookmaker by the Police is attributed as the reason for this halt. The Colombo Health authorities are now launching an intensive campaign to stop people from using water directly from the Kelani river for bathing and consumption purposes: according to health authorities the mounting spread of cholera in the northern part of the city as well as the areas in the immediate vicinity of the river is due, largely to the use of water from the Kelani. The European Community's Executive Commission has made a dramatic appeal for the setting up of an International 3,000 million dollar fund to aid 25 developing countries including Sri Lanka "dangerously threatened" by the oil crisis. The Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike, has called for all information on public servants and corporation officials who have travelled abroad on pre-paid tickets to transact Government business. Mr. Anura Bandaranaike, President of the SLFP Youth League, is leaving for Moscow this morning to participate as a special invitee in a youth seminar. Soldiers and Para-military forces were in position throughout the Indian State of Bihar in preparation for a state-wide strike called by the student organisations. A prominent U.S. biologist, Norman Borlau, fears that between 50 and 60 million people may die from starvation in the developing countries this year.

MONDAY, MARCH 25: Sri Lanka's special envoys Mr. Maithripala Senaayake, Minister of Irrigation Power and Highways and Mr. T. B. Ilangaratne, Minister of Foreign and Internal Trade, returned to the island yesterday and reported to the Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike, on the outcome of their food missions: the Ministers have obtained a total of 120,000 tons of rice and 30,000 tons of wheat—from India, Pakistan, China, and the USSR. 500 delegates from 39 countries have started to arrive in Colombo for the 30th annual sessions of the ECAFE due to start at the BMICH on Wednesday: The Minister of Industries and Scientific Affairs, Mr. T. B. Subasinghe, will lead the Sri Lanka delegation to the ECAFE sessions. The Minister of Education Dr. Badi-ud-din Mahmud, who is on a visit to the northern province gave an assurance that the proposed University Campus in the North would be set up soon and the Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike herself would participate in the ceremonial opening of the Campus. A multi-million-rupee coarse-count spinning mill with an annual production capacity of 4.43 million pounds of cotton yarn is to be set up in Sri Lanka with assistance from East Germany. The Government has started actively lobbying the Aid Club group nations because it has found that emergency balance of payments support is vital to offset a steep deterioration in its terms of trade. Military patrols and tanks guarded key points in the Uganda capital of Kampala after a night of intermittent shooting. Libya yesterday proposed a three-tier price scale for oil with the third world and Muslim countries receiving preferential treatment over the industrialised states. The United Nations Secretary General, Dr. Kurt Waldheim, has said in a report on the 'Brain Drain' prepared at the request of the General Assembly that the United States, Britain and Canada are the chief beneficiaries of the 'brain drain' from the developing countries.

TUESDAY, MARCH 26: The Customs has found that every week gold worth at least Rs. 1 million is smuggled to India: the pawn brokering trade is believed to be the pivot of this vastly lucrative smuggling enterprise. Sri Lanka is likely to obtain supplies of crude oil from China soon: the possibility of supplying Sri Lanka with a part of her oil requirements had been conveyed to the Ministerial delegation which was in China recently to negotiate for rice. The Mercantile Bank which has been functioning in Sri Lanka since 1854, has sold its business to the Hatton National Bank Ltd. with effect from April 1. Mr. T. S. Fernando, (Q.C.) has been appointed as High Commissioner of Sri Lanka in Australia. All but 105 of the 2000 odd science students who were shut out of the University of Sri Lanka due to lack of space have now been found places in the campuses. The Senkadagala-Kandy Bhilku Front has warned that if the Government attempts to cling to power even for one day after the five-year period, 5000 bhikkus will fast unto death. At a public meeting in Badulla, Mr. J. R. Jayewardene, Leader of the Opposition, announced the date of the proposed civil disobedience campaign: people will be asked to travel in buses and trains without paying fares on April 21 and they also will be asked to carry at least one measure of rice without a permit on May 1. All delegates arriving in Sri Lanka for the 30th sessions of the ECAFE will be given VIP treatment by customs men at the Bandaranaike International Airport. Australian Prime

Minister Gough Whitlam, was punched, kicked and pelted with eggs and tomatoes during a violent demonstration at a state election rally in Perth yesterday. A policeman detailed to help guard French Prime Minister, Pierre Messmer, on his visit to Corsica, tossed a tear gas grenade at the Premier's official car; but no one was hurt.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 27: According to the Sun the Government has to pay 23 million dollars immediately to obtain additional rice from Pakistan and China: this represents 50 per cent of the full amount payable for 80,000 tons of rice from Pakistan and 30,000 tons from China: how Sri Lanka could meet this staggering rice import bill is now being studied by the Government. The 30th annual session of the Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East (ECAFE) will be inaugurated by the Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike, at the Bandaranaike Memorial International Conference Hall at 10 a.m. today. Iran has mooted a new rubber/oil barter deal with Sri Lanka. An official committee headed by the Secretary to the Treasury is now looking into all aspects of the proposed salary scale for public servants: this committee will report soon to the Minister of Finance, Dr. N. M. Perera, who will then present all the data to the government for final decision. The United Front's Joint Council of Trade Union Organisations (JCTUO) meets this evening to discuss a one day token strike proposed for April 10 in support of a demand for a 20 per cent wage increase for workers in the public and private sectors: the work stoppage proposed for next month to be followed by another three-day token strike towards end of April was tentatively decided on by the Secretariat of the JCTUO. US Secretary of State, Dr. Henry Kissinger, told Soviet leaders in Moscow that in the remaining three years of the Nixon administration he hoped to make Soviet-US detente irreversible. Australian Prime Minister, Gough Whitlam, who was mobbed by some 10,000 punching, kicking, farmers has condemned the scenes as 'ugly' and 'very violent'. Syrian President, Hafez Al-Assad, will pay an official visit to Moscow during the first half of April.

For News Behind The News

Road

TRIBUNE
Regularly

Inania of this, that and the other

A Cultural Revolution in Sri Lanka?

by Inna

And why not?

Wherever there is good, it is a trace from the source of all good, or as my philosopher friend George would say: "truth is from the source of truth as all sunrises are from the sun". Good for him. He probably does not know that some people accept this only when it is convenient for them! What a deal of proper motivation is found in christian teaching: they insist on formed conscience, removal of inequalities, the pressing into service of baptismal virtues, and they tear up any sign of selfishness because, they add: "Jesus Christ came in total selflessness", and "we are christians".

Fair enough. The logic of it is inebriable, unshakeable.

HOW HAPPY christians would be to learn that there is something in the cultural-revolution urges of China. A guiding motive-force is necessary for man's activity, whether that be working for Man, or for one's brothers. The three phases of China's development would indicate this kind of search for a motive force.

The rapid development and the penury of man-power of the 'fifties gave place to the industrial micro-development, regional autonomy and and full employment of the 'sixties', until in the 'seventies' the scene changes to a marked renewal of heavy industry and appearance of an organised economic structure. If this surmise of Bruce McFarlane is objective, one would see the fruits of the new systems of education in which *moral stimulants* will have first place not only as motivating force of production but

as one of the key objectives of the Chinese economic system (Troisième age du socialisme Chinois, Bruce McFarlane, in *L'Expansion*, mars 1972, n. 50, pp. 71-76)

WESTERN CAPITALISM too needed an ideological, moral framework in 'frugality, savings, personal interest', and China needed an ideological, moral framework to present the moral idea of *egalitarianism*. Through some of Chairman Mao's articles this idea was pushed across during the cultural revolution from 1965-1969. These referred to the working for the *common good without egoism*, and to reject the individualist morality of competition.

I once met a catholic priest from a leading catholic college in Colombo (not so long ago: 1973!). He was "disgusted at the rabid competition in their schools, which had been sacramentalized and brought to the head by the Prize distribution". He spoke of incentives gone mad; of the systematic weeding-out of the have-nots; of "the slow distancing of oneself from the Gospel spirit"—he had a point there to which few men with common-sense would not subscribe, those whose outlook on the future of

morality/religion is solid enough to be stable and fluid enough to be open.

McFarlane, Political Science Professor of Canberra adds: "technology and production are not ignored but moral consideration dominates and the engineer of souls counts more than the engineer of machines."

Wasn't it Dumont who said that "a cultural revolution is needed in Ceylon, one that should precede and accompany even the co-operative movement".

Isn't Dumont asking for "new mentality, a new man"?

What on earth is the annual Sinhala-Tamil new year doing if not reviving interest in this new man? Nothing so old as sin, bribery, corruption, injustice, graft, suspicion, condemnation without trial, firm enmeshing of self in neo-colonial grooves—in short, seeing to "your own tomorrows without seeing to your neighbours todays", as the present Pope said at the outset of the christian Lent season this year?

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Peace Council

DIEGO GARCIA

Mr. T. Duraisingham J.P.U.M., Attorney-at-Law and member of the World Peace Council on his return to Sri Lanka after attending a meeting of the World Peace Council held last month at Sophia, Bulgaria, stated that the people of Sri Lanka and particularly the peace fighters are very much perturbed by the news about the preparations on the part of USA and Britain to extend the war base in Diego Garcia which is strategically situated in the Indian Ocean. It is a serious blow to the initiatives taken by our Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike, to make the Indian Ocean a zone of peace.

A meeting of members of the World Peace Council from the littoral states around the Indian Ocean was held last month at Sophia, Bulgaria, to discuss the problem of war bases in the Indian Ocean. Members from about sixteen countries including those from South Africa, Madagascar, Tanzania, Iraq, Pakistan, India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Australia attended this meeting. Here it was decided to hold an international conference in August this year about the elimination of war bases in the Indian Ocean and for the declaration of the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace. It was also decided to explore the possibilities of holding the international conference preferably in Sri Lanka or, if that is not possible, in any other suitable country in or around the Indian Ocean.

SHAMBA

Life in the Village

By

Anatory Bukoba

March 10.

A day of rest it is, and the choice lay either in staying in the village and reading or getting away. I chose the last. There was a bus waiting and I hopped on it. My impressions will do. There was the barber, eighteen but looking sixteen, laying out a strip of new oil cloth, price Rs. 10/- and re-arranging his half length, three-face mirror, and pictures as long in length. Before this, he had just newspaper down where a barber usually puts his tools. The new effect looked good.

Next there was the house where the young workman seemed really a part of the family, as familiar as sons, just like an English farmhouse, out on even more familiar terms it seemed. One worked in the fields, and the other in the *mola*. You might almost say that any building which is not a *geddere* or house, or a *kadday* is a *mola* or workplace. Yet these two lads were not forward in any way; they fitted in perfectly and behaved as gentlemen are supposed to behave.

There was another house which unasked, brought out the seemingly ubiquitous barley water, now costing more than Rs. 1/-, and in better times fifty cents, or were they better times?

A *Pansala* was going in for intensive agriculture, as it has been doing for some time past. A lad and a boy were using mammothies and the young priest in charge, not much older than the eldest of them, was raking up with a pole what they dislodged or tore up. They had had their bath at mid-day, and they would be content with a wash at the day's-end. A bus always came along at the right time as I went from one place to another.

At one place I got to, I was able to post a sheaf of Shamba notes in a box to catch the post at 10

pm, and this on a Sunday night. So this is our life in the country in the year '74. Some places have certainly not improved in the matter of cleanliness: flies in glass cupboards with food, and the people working there taking this as quite normal. Other places have improved, and they usually go by towns. Either the whole town is clean, or the whole town is fly-blown.

As usual, I was constantly meeting people I knew. There were tourists around, happy in their own way, and determined to be care-free. Films have not lost their popularity in these out of the way places, but I do not think people travel miles to see a film as they used to do once. As in remote country places in England, we still have places where we keep open our shops late.

March 11,

Some of the murunga trees planted by my partner are showing small leaves. I hope they do not go the way of the trees I planted. Thejak planted by his wife is growing, albeit the only survivor, the *Wattakka* plant is reaching quite a long way along the ground. My clearing away with the *vici kaththa* has revealed many self-sown wood apple trees all of which I carefully keep. There are some selfsown *siyambala* trees, too, some quite small, all saved by me, too.

Our housewife set fire to some dried grass today and damaged some of the *Siyambala*. *Siyambala* is used in curries. The *vici kaththa* broke twice today where the shaft joins the *katha*. I shall have to stick strictly to grass with it, if I am not to be held up in the work. I found what I think must have been an old well; there is a wood apple tree growing right out of it.

Cowpea was the order of the day, we had it twice. We had some *polpala* to drink after a long time. I drank mine without sugar and enjoyed it. I also drink tea without sugar. As we drink tea often this is a way of avoiding diabetes. Village life is becoming very full, so many people I know on the one hand and new faces on the other.

In our major town twenty-three miles away, food which used to cost twenty cents a piece now costs fifty cents. I even heard forty

cents quoted for tea without milk and to think that I once used to refuse to pay twenty five cents for tea with milk, thinking it was too much. Two buns and two plantains cost me Rs. 1/60 at a mean looking *kadday* in this town, and no daily paid worker earns more than Rs. 6/- a day at the most. Yet people pay these prices.

People do not often buy plain tea now. They buy tea in another form now, what is called *kahata*, without sugar, but sucking a piece of jaggery while you drink the tea; it only cost fifteen cents, a great saving on the thirty or thirty five cents you have to pay now for plain tea, which is tea with sugar but with no milk. Where jaggery is not available, I have known people suck a date instead; but I do not like this, after having had too much of dates at one time in the Sudan. I have had too much of them travelling third class on the Nile, and still feel quite sick at the thought of them, but dates well-prepared, such as we used to buy in attractive little wooden boxes, are a different cup of tea altogether.

March 12,

About this question of growing more food, I have just been reading Isaiah, who said, if you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land; cease to do evil, learn to do good, seek justice, correct oppression. I have rather reversed the order and, 'picked out my own phrases.

The *Vici Katha* broke again today, and we decided to put on a new shaft. The new shaft is green, heavy and not well balanced but it should improve with time, as the wood dries out. Inspire of the delay, I got the whole of the top side of the path that runs through the acre finished, that is all I could cut with that *katha*, and on the river side of the path. Then I started on the other side, at the far end of it, by the path, that is on the side that has been encroached. When I get working on this with my *kgife*, I am going to have all my old problems of thorns, and of unravelling the knots formed by the creepers, some of which are the edible fruit bearing *karambe*, and all of them thorns. It will be slow work the way I do it. Even the part I have still to do with the *vici kaththa* is very rough,

Family Planning

with short thorn plants, much weed, and rather uneven ground. The *vici katha* is strictly for cutting grass, but I use it for any kind of mowing.

A young man turned up whom I have not seen for a long time. His home is not so far from here, and he has been working away. He wants to join me, or me him. It is not so much the farming angle he is interested in as batiks, or selling them. There is a place for everything so, why not, I said, but it will take time. So I am hoping he will help me with the farm. Meanwhile he has to go out to work.

Once again I have tried to set my housewife up in business, the capital is Rs. 8/-, and on this we hope to make a profit of Rs. 1/60 each day. It will be a start if it works, and it will be better than no income at all. If all goes well, she starts tomorrow.

Struck am I by the number of young *mudalalis* around here, around twenty years of age, throughly confident, competent, and doing well. They must all have left school early, and lucky thing they did, because I think further schooling would have knocked all initiative out of them; they would have joined the ranks of the salary and wage earners.



WANT AN ISLAND?

One real estate company in Hamburg specializes in selling islands. It has a list of about 200 to choose from. The cheapest is Buck Island in the Saint-Jean River in Canada. The price is only 75,000 marks. Fort Bloque, off the coast of Brittany in France, is priced at more than 900,000 marks, although it is very small in size—about a hectare. But, then, it has an ancient castle. More or less the same price is asked for the 2.7 hectare Swedish island on Lyunggalen: it has an oak grove, and fjords, and is "populated" only by a few elk. The company has already sold about fifty islands.

IN INDIA

INEFFECTIVE

— Family Planning —

by

Kamala Mankekar

ADMINISTRATORS of India's population control programmes should be shaken out of their complacency by the findings of the **Baroda Operational Research Group**. After a decade of intensive drives to curb population growth, 82 per cent of the couples of reproductive age in the country still remain untouched by these programmes in so far as they have never adopted any contraceptive practices to limit their families.

The couples surveyed by the Group for this study are by no means exceptional, they represent the general population of the country and are drawn from different strata of society. They come from both urban and rural areas. More than 78 per cent of them, it was found, were aware of at least one method of contraception; yet only 18 per cent of them had ever attempted to plan their families. Even out of them, four per cent had given up family planning for one reason or other, leaving about 13 per cent who were currently practising contraception methods.

Some time ago another study had revealed an equally disturbing state of affairs in sterilisation programmes. In areas of Gujarat, a socially advanced state where family planning programmes are said to be highly successful, it was found that 40 per cent of the men who had undergone vasectomy were not really "eligible" for these operations; they were either too old, or were widowers or had wives who had either reached menopause or had undergone tubectomy operations. Yet none of these factors had deterred the zealous officials and programme organisers putting them on the operation table and thus swell the "achievement" figures.

Operational Research Group's findings indicate that it is not the resistance of an orthodox society which is responsible for poor re-

sults in population control efforts, but failure of the administration to meet the basic requirements of motivation which, if effective, should automatically lead to acceptance of the programmes. Somehow the system has failed to reach the people and where it has reached them, it has failed to convince them of the need for planned families, and if, in small, segments it has won them over to small family norms, the system has failed to provide requisite services for contraceptive practices.

THE BARODA STUDY, conducted in 1970-71, is the first survey of its kind on the national level. It covered the entire country except Jammu & Kashmir, NEFA and off-shore islands. The respondents for the study were drawn from currently married women aged between 15 and 44 years, and their husbands. In all 25,330 individuals, 12,716 husbands and 12,614 wives, were interviewed. They were drawn from 254 urban and 704 rural settlements. They came from a wide range of income groups, from below Rs. 100 to above Rs. 1000/- a month. Over 30 per cent of the respondents had a monthly income of less than Rs. 100 while another 36 per cent earned between Rs. 100 and Rs. 200; thus three-fourths of the respondents earned upto Rs. 200 only. Those with over Rs. 1000 a month income constituted 1.6 per cent of the couples covered.

As already mentioned, the study revealed that 82 per cent of the couples interviewed had never practiced family planning. Out of these, nearly half, 40.7 per cent said they disapproved of contraception. However, when questioned further, it was found that their disapproval was not based on any particular reasons or belief but stemmed out of their ignorance of the methods; they had not been exposed to mass media nor to inter-personal communication to be motivated in favour of family planning. The disapproval of family planning practices, it was found, decreased sharply as these couples acquired knowledge on the subject either through mass media or general education.

Most of them had never given a thought to the question of family size or family limitation. This

was evident from the fact that when asked how many children, in their opinion, a couple should have, 78 per cent could not give an answer. They displayed utter ignorance of the reasons supporting small family norms, or the aids and facilities available for contraception.

Only 40 per cent of the interviewed, 55.6 per cent of husbands and 25.2 per cent of wives claimed having ever seen the much publicised symbol of family planning—the inverted red triangle. But only 14.5 per cent of the individuals interviewed could correctly identify this symbol.

A LARGE NUMBER of the couples, however, expressed a desire to acquire knowledge of methods to delay and prevent conception. A majority of them were from among the groups who had never practised family planning and were obviously ready to accept small family norms. A majority of them wanted to acquire this information through doctors and para-medical personnel.

Many other interesting points have emerged from the Baroda study. For instance it is found that pressure on family resources due to a large number of offspring often is a strong enough reason for parents to undergo sterilisation. While almost all husbands and wives wanted a son, this desire was stronger and more marked among husbands than wives.

The survey results do not support the common belief that family planning is practiced mostly by Hindus. The practice is found to be highest among Christians and Parsis (29.6 per cent) followed by Hindus (18.5 per cent) and Muslims (12.7 per cent).

An encouraging factor which can well contribute to the success of future programme is that the age of marriage has been rising steadily almost all over the country. Prior to 1951, the average age of marriage was 20 years for men and 13 for women. It rose steadily and reached 23.8 for men and 18.3 for women during the five years 1966 to 1970. Similarly the rate of literacy among the couples entering marital life has been going up steadily. Prior to 1951 only 44.1 per cent of the husbands and 16 per cent of the wives entering married life were literate; as per

figures for 1966-70, 58.8 per cent of such husbands and 30.1 per cent of the wives were literate. Examination of the data by the Research Group suggests that by 1975-76, about 70 per cent of those entering marital state will be literate while the figure will rise to 77 per cent by 1978-79.

These are encouraging trends and together with the general desire on the part of the married couple to know and adopt small family practices provides excellent opportunities for curbing population growth. However, what results are achieved in the next decade would largely depend on the administration of the population control programme.

—Foreign News & Features

DELHI LETTER

GUJERAT, BIHAR— What Next?

by K. Rengaswamy

The violent agitation that erupted in Gujarat and the developments that followed would continue to be analysed for a long time here and abroad. One aspect of it is the manner in which the government yielded to the demands of the agitators. First the Congress ministry led by Chimanbhai Patel resigned and then the State Assembly was dissolved.

It has been vigorously argued that the government should not have yielded to violence and that the government should have stuck to its initial approach and refused to dissolve the Assembly until violence ceased. Yielding to violence would create a bad precedent and would strengthen a determined group, even if it consists of one or two hundred people, by its readiness to make any sacrifice, to bring down a government elected by the people and if this happened it would be an end to democracy. There is logic in this argument.

IN GUJARAT, it can be said that the ministry did not fall because of the violence. The ruling Congress party was so hopelessly

divided into so many factions that it utterly failed to take a united stand against the violent agitators. The decision that the ministry must resign was taken at the organisational level. The ruling party still had its majority in the Assembly intact and naturally the Congress High Command thought that after the restoration of normalcy a new Congress ministry could be formed with a new leader. But the resignations of so many members of the Assembly obliged the Central government to revise its stand and hastened the decision to dissolve Assembly. It may be said that if a correct appraisal of the situation in the State had been made earlier and the decision taken to dissolve the Assembly before pressure mounted, the question of yielding to pressure would not have arisen.

But the old habit of utilising President's rule to the advantage of the ruling party persisted until the atmosphere in the State compelled the leadership to retreat. One may say in passing that this practice of dismissing a ministry and yet keeping the Assembly suspended but alive, has invariably served the interests of the ruling party as opposition parties have repeatedly complained. This happened in Uttar Pradesh and in other States too.

In Uttar Pradesh, after Kamlapati Tripathi resigned, the Assembly was kept suspended until the ruling party could sort out its internal differences and find a new Chief Minister. The new Chief Minister, Bahuguna never called the Assembly to meet even for a day before going to the polls. The ruling party took advantage of being in power to announce so many concessions and benefits to so many sections of the voters besides organising innumerable foundation-stone laying ceremonies. Could not the election be held under President's rule so as not to give room to the charge that the official machinery was being misused to the advantage of the ruling party?

There must be a convention that when a ministry goes the Assembly gets automatically dissolved. Leaving this issue aside the question will continue to be argued whether the Bihar developments followed

Gujarat because of the feeling that violence can pay dividends.

ANOTHER ASPECT of the Gujarat situation that needs consideration is the composition of the agitators and the causes that led to the agitation. There can be no doubt that the agitation was spontaneous. No political party claims to have launched the movement and consequently no party can claim credit for whatever success that attended it. It has been said that Congress men who wanted to discredit Chimanbhai Patel encouraged the movement at least initially. But even if it is so, no movement can continue, undiminished in intensity even against severe police measures, without the participants firmly believing in the justice of their cause. It may be said that Moraji Desai's fast has hastened the government's decision to dissolve the Assembly.

The Nav Nirman Samithi is an organisation of students as well as teachers. It is essentially an organisation of students drawn from the families of middle income group of salary earners. The middle class is a pivotal section of the community in any country and more so in developing countries. It must be noted that the textile workers of Ahmedabad did not join the movement and that the bulk of the rural population too remained aloof. The middle class movement is anti-Communist. It plays a very significant role in running the administration of the country and keeping many other things moving in a variety of sectors of national activity.

What brought this middle class together is obviously the deteriorating economic situation. The middle class living in cities and towns is the largest consumer of a wide variety of manufactured goods whose price has been soaring for the last two years without any sign of its being arrested at any level. The middle class is the worst affected by the economic crisis afflicting the country. The middle class can see what havoc corruption is causing at the political and administrative levels.

Where then should the middle class turn for relief? It has chosen to rely on itself in Gujarat. A similar situation prevails in every State. Even if the number who participated in the agitation may

be small they enjoyed the full support and sympathy of the people and of this there can be little doubt. Is anything still left of that abundant goodwill which the people showered on the Congress in 1971 and 1972 elections?

The agitation in Gujarat has ended. Calm prevails again. What next? The Nav Nirman Samithi has not put forward any political demands. It has not shown any desire to develop into a political party. It has succeeded in the first phase of its activity by bringing down the government which in fact many be said to be a negative gain. But what are its demands on the constructive side? One of its demands is that an enquiry should be held into the charges of corruption against the former ministers. Another is that compensation should be paid to the victims who died in the recent agitation. These again are limited demands and may even be called negative demands, which would not by themselves lead to anything startling. If experience of other countries including Germany and Italy is any guide, it is a negative movement like the one in Gujarat that can breed a fascist approach.

But a great deal will depend on what will be done in the coming weeks and months to improve the situation where the causes that inspired the agitation will cease to operate. If nothing is done to remove the negative thinking then surely something positive would develop jeopardising the cause of democracy. Is it the responsibility of the people alone to sustain democratic institutions irrespective of the part, disreputable or undemocratic, played by the men elected to wield power? In a country like India where the overwhelming majority of the people is illiterate and indifferent, elections are not won on merits but by the play of a variety of other factors, not all of them linked with democracy or democratic practices. The people of Gujarat are mild-mannered, essentially business like in their approach to men and matters. And if they should rise in revolt, the position in other States can well be left to be imagined. The sturdy Biharis can be stubborn and create greater complications.

THE GREATEST FAILURE of the government is its inability to check

the rising prices. Finance Minister Chavan said in his first budget speech four years ago that he would soon come forward with a comprehensive wage-income-price policy. But there is no sign of his having evolved any such policy even in his fourth budget. Should he not then admit his failure and withdraw gracefully?

Chavan claimed that his fourth budget was "anti-inflationary". But when members complained that prices have risen all round Chavan replied that "the psychology of inflation is still operating." What does this mean? Is it not an admission that he is not in a position to control the prices and that the effect of the budget is inflationary? Actually he was treating the members of parliament in a very light-hearted vein.

Chavan also declared that the 'dual pricing' policy would be extended to more commodities. What is this 'dual pricing' policy? It means that the government will take over a certain quantity of the production of a particular article and sell it at controlled prices to the vulnerable sections of the community. The balance of the production will be left in the hands of the producer who can sell it at any price he liked to the so called 'affluent sections' of the society.

In other words, people are divided into rich and poor classes, consciously or unconsciously provoking class consciousness and sowing the seeds of civil conflict. It is indeed a pernicious policy. Why should not the government take over the entire production and distribute it at a fixed price throughout the country?

The other day A. P. Shinde, junior Agriculture Minister told parliament that "a national food policy is not possible to implement in this country". Why not? Is not India one country? Why should a person in Punjab and Andhra Pradesh get 16 ounces of cereals per day while those in Kerala or Gujarat or Maharashtra must eat less? How would Shinde describe the policy of allowing free movement of coarse grains throughout the country—national or State policy?

As has been pointed out in these columns, for 560 million

people 70 million tonnes of food-grains would suffice allowing 16 ounces a day per individual. Even in the worst years of drought the country produced more than 90 million tonnes according to official estimates and this should be sufficient for feeding the entire population even while reserving some quantity for seeds and for wastage too. At no time is it necessary for the country to go about with a begging bowl. Is it merely because of administrative incompetence that the Agriculture Minister cannot think of a national food policy?

There is certainly politics in 'dual pricing' and the refusal to evolve a national food policy. If the old practice of surplus States under-estimating their surplus and deficit States exaggerating their deficit continues, is it not because politics has been allowed to creep in? If a producer, because of the 'dual pricing' policy, could make a lot more money by selling to the affluent sections of the community, cannot the ruling party claim a share of it?

It is this vicious practice of collecting funds for election that has inhibited the government from formulating bold and sensible policies to check rising prices? Naturally the ruling party is in a better position to raise election funds than the opposition parties as businessmen would wish to be on the right side of the government.

Of course all political parties collected money for the elections in Orissa, Uttar Pradesh, and else-

where. The election expenses in Uttar Pradesh alone have been estimated at between Rs. 30 and Rs. 40 crores and one can only guess how much of this amount would fall to the ruling party's share. Where did this money come from? Whoever gave it and whoever received it, can there be any doubt that the money is almost entirely 'black'.

Few will believe that the money came from small collections from the

the common man. How then can 'black' money be eliminated and corruption put down? The receipt of money entails quid pro quo and an obligation to adjust policies so as to help the giver of money to recover several times what he has actually given. The situation cannot improve until a lead comes from the top. 'Physician, heal thyself' is a sound 'prescription'.

—Foreign News & Features

ENERGY CRISIS-2

U. S. A. Out manoeuvred – Arab Finesse

by K. Subramanyam

The impact of the energy crisis need not have been as severe as it actually turned out to be but for certain complacency among the industrialised nations, especially the United States, about their ability to deal with the oil producing nations.

The warnings were all there. First came the demand for a higher price which was conceded by the Tripoli/Tehran agreement of February 15, 1971. With the January 1972 Geneva agreement, the prices were further jacked up from \$ 0.80 to \$ 1.25 per barrel. The nationalisation of some of the oil companies also got under way simultaneously. Libya nationalised the British Petroleum Company in December 1971 and Iraq took over the Iraqi Petroleum Company in June 1972. Subsequently, in June 1973 Libya nationalised the country's major oil company, the American owned Bunker Hunt. Meanwhile, the Shahanshah of Iran demanded that either the oil companies operating in Iraq must surrender their assets and take long term supply contracts or he would take over the assets of the companies at the end of the expiry of the current licensing period in 1979 and would not guarantee supplies thereafter. The companies had to yield. They surrendered their assets and obtained 25-year supply contracts.

NO DOUBT there were American oil economists, who were urging concerted action by the oil consumers to contain this rapid price rise in crude. But it was difficult for the industrialised countries to agree on a concerted policy, given the degree of divergence of their respective interests and their varied degree of dependence on imported oil from the Arab states. For instance, even in early 1973 Japan concluded a deal with Abu Dhabi for a price which was higher than the prevailing price paid by other countries and Japan made it abundantly clear that it would not join any consortium of oil consuming countries to take a joint stand against the producing countries.

As the nationalisation process started, the U.S. reaction to it

was one of retaliation. The U.S. went to the World Court on the issue and at the same time tried to pressurise the foreign companies not to buy what they termed the 'tainted oil'. Since almost all the oil majors were dominated by the United States, it was felt that such pressure tactics would succeed. However, two important factors had not been taken into account. First, the French were prepared to buy such 'tainted oil' and secondly the Eastern European countries were also not worried about the oil being tainted. Consequently, this American pressure tactic backfired on them, both in respect of Libya and later on in regard to Iraq.

In the earlier period, when only the Western oil companies had the knowhow for prospecting, ex-

Victoria's Wedding Cake

A piece of an old cake was recently sold at Christie's the famous London auction house specializing in art objects and curios. It was bought by an Australian collector for £ 70. The tidbit was a piece of the cake made for Queen Victoria's wedding 134 years ago. The proof of its "authenticity" was a cardboard box with the inscription: "Buckingham Palace, 10th of February 1840." The former owner inherited it from her grandmother, who had received it from the Queen herself.

tracting and refining oil and the oil production was running slightly ahead of the demand for oil, most of the oil producing countries in the non-socialist world were under the mercy of the oil cartels which, in turn, were dominated by the United States. But this situation underwent a fundamental change in the late '60s for two reasons. One of these is the emergence of a spirit of new nationalism in most of the oil producing countries and the fact that a new generation of leadership, some of whom had the benefit of Western education, and thus had learnt tough bargaining strategies, had moved into positions of power. Secondly, the socialist bloc offered them alternatives, both in terms of markets and technology and expertise to run installations, if necessary.

IN THE WEST, elaborate calculations had been done extrapolating the requirements of oil into the 1980s. The major purpose of making these exercises was to demonstrate how important Iran, Saudi Arabia and the Persian Gulf Sheikdoms were from the Western strategic point of view. In the West, the whole perception was in terms of black and white, namely that Iran, Saudi Arabia and the Sheikdoms being conservative monarchies and regimes would have an interest in maintaining their friendly relations with the West and also in expanding their oil production in order to increase their revenues to meet their expanding development needs. While some of the Western oil economists did point out that if the oil producing states were not faced with a united stand on the part of the industrial consumers, then by the end of this decade the price of crude might exceed \$ 5 per barrel, this was considered wild pessimism by many.

Take the case of Saudi Arabia. According to Western calculations, it would have had to expand its production from its present 8 million barrels per day to 20 million barrels per day by the end of this decade to meet the requirements of industrial countries. When the government revenue was around \$ 1 per barrel, a 20 million barrels per day production would have given Saudi Arabia about \$ 7.3 billion revenue per year, which they could easily absorb. Even

if the government revenue went up to \$ 3 per barrel Saudi Arabia would have received \$ 21.9 billion as its annual oil revenue though this sum itself would be considerably more than it could absorb profitably. At the present price of crude which entails a \$ 7 government take per barrel, even to have a revenue of \$ 20 billion per year, it is not necessary for Saudi Arabia to produce more than 10 million barrels a day. It is, therefore, extremely doubtful whether it would now be possible to persuade the Saudis to expand their production to 20 million barrels a day by 1980 as was earlier contemplated.

This is true of all other oil producers as well. While countries like Iran and Iraq, which have greater capacity to absorb such vast sums in their economies, could perhaps be persuaded to produce more, it is quite unlikely that they could make good the production gap between what was originally expected of Saudi Arabia and what they are now likely to produce.

Between 1950 and 1972 the dependence of industrialised countries on oil increased by leaps and bounds. Thus, while the swing to oil in the United States was only 8 per cent (from about 38 to 46 per cent) in the case of Western Europe, it was 48 per cent (from a mere 12 per cent to 60 per cent) and in case of Japan the swing was a phenomenal 62 per cent (from 8 to 70 per cent). Given these trends established over the last two decades, it is not easy to reverse this overnight without inviting serious repercussions on the economies of these countries.

PERHAPS the Americans thought that the dependence of the Saudis and the Iranians on the West for their security, would be a check on their pushing up prices of oil. Between Saudi Arabia and Iran, who are the two largest exporters, they thought, the world oil price could be determined. Here again, perhaps, the Soviet policy was a determinant. The Soviet Union's attempt to improve its relations with Iran had led that country to a path of self-reliance, away from total dependence on the West. The American policy of total and unequal support to Israel in its occupation of the Arab

territories since the 1967 war had alienated Saudi Arabia.

Not that the Americans did not take into account the possibility of a price rise for oil. Some experts did calculate that if the price rise did occur and the price went beyond \$ 6 per barrel, then it would make it economical for the United States to extract oil from its vast reserves of shale and tar sand. Since the dependence of Europe and Japan on imported oil for energy was vastly more than that of the United States, they also anticipated that a price rise would reverse the trend in evidence for some time where the German Mark and the Japanese Yen gained at the expense of the U.S. dollar.

Obviously, they could not foresee the rapidity of the sequence of events and rocketing of the oil prices in a matter of weeks. While the present trend might enable the United States to go in for economical exploitation of shale and tar sand, it now threatens to destabilise the international monetary system, bring about a vast industrial recession and raise serious issues regarding the U.S. leadership in the Western alliance systems.

—Foreign News & Features

SILVER LINING

Dr. James G. Price, studying the growing energy crisis in the United States, has come to the conclusion that, as the saying goes, every cloud has a silver lining. So what if it's cold in schools and offices. "Youngsters in school, adults in offices, even patients in hospitals, will have no ill effects from the slight drop in room temperatures," he said. "Indeed, office workers may benefit. Cooler surrounding may keep them more alert. They may also burn up more of their own fat to keep body temperature up." If people move about more, it may be a good thing—they will work more intensively.

A MARXIST VIEW

ON TERRORISM

by

Andrew Rothstien

SEVENTY YEARS AGO, preparing for the historic second congress of the Russian Social-Democratic Workers' Party, Lenin drafted the following resolution on terrorism; it was never read because of the other vast discussions at the Congress:

The Congress decisively rejects terrorism, i.e. the system of individual political assassinations, as being a method of political struggle which is most inexpedient at the present time, diverting the best forces from the urgent and imperatively necessary work of organization and agitation, destroying contact between the revolutionaries and the masses of the revolutionary classes of the population, and spreading both among the revolutionaries themselves and the population in general utterly distorted ideas of the aims and methods of struggle against the autocracy.

This was no sudden or fleeting thought of the great revolutionary leader. Ever since the 1870s, revolutionary intellectuals had displayed marvels of heroism and self-sacrifice, as well as of stubborn persistence and painstaking ingenuity, in attacking tsardom through its leading representatives by terrorist methods. In 1878 Stepniak - Kravchinsky killed Mezentsev, chief of the gendarmerie, in broad daylight, with a dagger. In 1881 the 'Peoples Will' organization killed Alexander II with a bomb. These and other acts made the Russian terrorists famous throughout the world.

And yet their declared aims of forcing the tsardom to make concessions in its regime (out of fear of the consequences if it refused), of gradually wrecking the tsarist machinery of repression by destroying its chief functionaries and of arousing the oppressed masses by the force of example had not been achieved. More, tsardom had reinforced its own terror and, it must not be forgotten, had, from the early nineties, secured massive financial help from French, German and ultimately British investors and

governments enabling it to carry on against the revolutionaries.

The first Russian Social Democratic paper, *Iskra*, had already spoken out against these tactics. Lenin had written in his article of 1901, 'Where to begin?' that they were "untimely and inexpedient distracting the most active fighters from their real, most important task in the interests of the whole movement, and disorganizing not the government forces but those of the revolutionaries." In *What is To Be Done?* the following year, he wrote that essentially the use of such a weapon was the work of people, full of indignation against tsardom, who, however, either "had lost faith in the working class movement, or had never believed in it." Only the kind of force which the masses would use was what Social Democrats should aim at preparing, he said in his article *Revolutionary Adventurism*, later in 1902. And, still in that year, he wrote.

We consider that a hundred assassinations of tsars will never have such a rousing and educative effect as this one participation of tens of thousands of working people (he was referring to an unprecedented strike at Rostov-on-Don) in meetings which discuss their vital interests and the connections of politics with those interests, as this participation in a struggle which genuinely RAISES ever new 'untouched' strata of the proletariat to a more class-conscious life and to wider revolutionary struggles.

On many more occasions, after the second congress as before it, Lenin drove home this point again and again, combating the belief of the latter-day successors of the nineteenth century terrorists—the Socialist Revolutionaries—in the effectiveness of what they called 'revolutionary terror'.

WHO PROVED RIGHT in this debate, which took up not a little time and energy of the revolutionary movement in Russia at least up to 1914? It was not the Socialist-Revolutionaries, who found themselves in the camp of the Allied, i.e. tsarist, warmongers in 1914-17, backed Kerensky in the struggle against the Bolsheviks in that revolutionary year, and finished up in the camp of the imperialist invaders

of Soviet Russia, as their allies and tools in fact, during the years 1918-25. It was the Bolsheviks led by Lenin, with their invincible faith in the working class and its destinies, who headed that class in the October revolution which was to put an end not only to the peril of a tsarist restoration in Russia but to capitalism there itself.

Revolutionary Social-Democrats everywhere in those years condemned the tactics of individual terrorist acts as being in essence the last resort of despairing middle class intellectuals (whatever individual workers or peasants temporarily fell under their influence) who had no faith in the working class or its historic destiny set forth by Marx and Engels and their followers—to use its one great weapon of organization in order to overthrow in the end the whole capitalist system including its ruling classes, take charge of society and remould it into socialism.

This did not mean that in a period of mass upheaval, whether for a social revolution or for the overthrow of national oppression, when the ruling classes and governments were using terror on a large scale themselves, Marxists ever condemned mass counter-terror by the workers and other oppressed. During the revolutionary years of 1905-6 in Russia, the Marxists supported to the full partisan warfare of every kind—denounced as 'terrorism' by the workers' enemies—and urged its extensions. When the Irish people in 1919-21 were fighting their heroic partisan struggle against the war conducted against them by the British army, police and 'Black and Tan' thugs, neither Marxists nor other honest socialists were deterred in supporting them by the denunciations of the Irish patriots by politicians and millionaire newspapers as "terrorists". During the second world war the name of 'terrorists' was regularly applied by the Nazis to the thousands of resistance fighters who used every device they could to kill the invaders of their countries—whether in France or Yugoslavia, in the Soviet Union, or Italy or elsewhere. And when British imperialism, administered, by a right wing Labor government had begun open war in 1948 against the working people of Malaya, led by the organized workers and

Terrorism

the Communist Party of Malaya, the stubborn struggle for national liberation was also denounced as the work of 'terrorists' by the reptile press and politicians in Britain and other capitalist countries—but this did not hide from the working class movement here and abroad that the Malayan partisan armies were waging a legitimate war of self defense.

TODAY the question of terrorism has come up again in a new form.

Most socialists understand that world imperialism has been dealt a decisive blow by the extension of the socialist group of countries in 1944-49, by the failure of Hitler to destroy the Soviet Union and of Western imperialism subsequently to bring it to its knees, and by the political liberation as a result of these events of scores of former colonial countries. There is increasing sympathy with the continuing efforts of the Arab peoples to resist the aggressive policies of the latter-day 'pocket of imperialism' of Israel, backed by the United States and the finance of international Zionism. There is worldwide sympathy, too, with the people of Northern Ireland, against whom British imperialism having 50 years ago successfully practiced its traditional policy of 'divide and rule, by partitioning Ireland, has now resorted to the same diabolical means to set brother against brother, and thrown in the forces of the British army to make sure that the process continues.

In both situations the imperialist aggressors are being helped by a reappearance of the old tactics of individual terror, in a new and even more hopeless form.

That every provocation and terrorist method should be used by the agents of United States imperialism who rule Israel, just as their predecessors the tsarist gendarmes and the 'Black Hundred' did against revolutionaries and subject peoples (including the Jews) in the Russian empire, is understandable. That the same should be the case, allowing for different circumstances in the Six Counties—but above all bearing in mind the 50 years of police rule and fanatical Orange propaganda against the Catholic minority—is equally in the nature of the beast. What is a glaring

fact in both cases is that (not all) of the partiotic forces have reverted to the utterly bankrupt tactics of the old Russian terrorist intellectuals, and in a peculiarly damaging and senseless form against, all the lessons of experience of national struggles.

THE ARAB PEOPLES outside Israel have the inestimable advantage—which the old Russian revolutionaries lacked—of independent organized states to defend them. To reinforce the military (and not only the military) strength of these states, against all possible aggression, above all to make their peoples feel that the states exists for them, the working people, and to come effectively to the aid of any among them who is attacked is an obvious necessity. So is the forming, strengthening and uniting of every kind of underground organization in the occupied territories able to organize the countering of attacks by the aggressor, in whatever form. In these activities the support of the socialist countries has for years been available to them (subject to its not being rejected by pigheaded fanaticism). And on the whole they have the sympathy of the majority of working people throughout the capitalist world as well, as shown by the general support shown for the United Nations resolution of 1967 requiring Israel to evacuate the territories seized by military aggression.

But the kind of terrorism which wantonly kills innocent people—whether by bombs thrown in crowded shops and offices, by the massacre of sportsmen at the Olympic Games, or in the course of hijacking aircraft—does absolutely nothing to win the sympathy of the working people in other countries, particularly the organized workers who have the greatest power to exercise pressure in the imperialist countries (not to speak of the growing opposition in Israel itself): on the contrary, it alienates them, without 'frightening' the imperialists or their Isaael agents into making concessions, or 'hindering' the working of their apparatus of aggression, or 'impressing the world' with the despair of the terrorists. These self-deceptions by the people who blind themselves to the lessons of history and of political experience are as counter-

productive as were the similar self-deceptions of the Russian terrorists who, by the way, did take care wherever possible to warn off possible companions of those they were planning to kill, as in the well-known case of the Grand Duke Serge, Governor General of Moscow, in 1905).

THE SAME ENERGIES devoted to organizing support in other countries—even on the scale adopted by the Zionist propagandists—side by side with the activities underground and in the Arab states, would beyond doubt produce tangible results.

Even more does this logic apply in the case of Northern Ireland. For there the Irish patriots are not fighting in a far-off country, remote from the experience of British workers. On the contrary during the 1916 Dublin strike in a small way, in 1919 and 1929 during the Irish War of Independence on a much larger scale experience has shown that active support of British organized labor in pressure on its own government could be won, at times when the British workers were far less politically angry, aware and active than they are today. Moreover, recent articles in this journal by Irish militants have reminded us that Irish trade unionism is a powerful force across all the borders, while in Northern Ireland itself there have been a number of initiatives to promote a non-sectarian trend of discussion and activity which, have been the target of special hostility from the fanatical Orange side.

In these conditions, for a section of the Irish patriots to permit themselves the kind of act which is evidently based on the theory that 'the worse things get the better'—that, by provoking increased repressions from the British side and from the Orange murder gang and that of their allies, they can unite the Irish side more effectively—is once again to repeat, even though with different arguments, the self-deceptions of the old Russian terrorists. Throwing bombs without discrimination into crowded shops or other places where ordinary workers gather, or shooting persons selected only because they will serve as a symbol of reprisal, without their actually being connected with the forces

of the national enemy (or his agents) helps the enemies of civil rights in Northern Ireland and the enemies of Irish unity in freedom, by pushing away the advocates of working class unity against those enemies, both in Ireland and in Britain.

This waste of precious energies, this self-stultification, cannot but arouse serious concern.

—Labour Monthly, September 1973

LOOKING

For Alternative Energy Sources

by Robert Gamzey

A solar pond covering one square mile theoretically can generate 18,000 kilowatts from the sun's rays—sufficient to satisfy the electricity requirements of an average American city of 250,000 to one-half million population.

This is the estimate of Dr. Harry Zvi Tabor, director of the Israel National Physical Laboratory, who participated in a symposium on solar energy in New York City under the auspices of the U.N. and the Rockefeller Foundation.

A long-time adviser to international agencies on exploitation of solar energy, Dr. Tabor sought American financing for joint U.S.-Israel research and development based on his discoveries in this field. He developed the ubiquitous roof-top sunshine heaters for hot water boilers that clutter the skylines of Israel's cities and towns. These provide Israeli householders with free hot-water at the cost of installing a \$ 200 apparatus.

Canine Contraband

When Singapore banned imports of dogs, enterprising people began smuggling them in. Some time ago the police smashed a gang that had been smuggling puppies from neighbouring Malaysia. The dogs would first be put to sleep and then transported in special containers by car or motor boat.

The 56-year-old London born, London University educated Hebrew University scientist who immigrated to Israel in 1949 started his research on solar ponds in 1958 to harness the sunlight for large scale megawatt power projects. After six years of research, the Israel Government abandoned the Tabor project during the 1966 recession because of the abundance of cheap imported oil for conventional power plants.

At that time, Tabor's small solar energy models, up to 35 by 60 meters in size, projected the cost of producing sunpower at one to two cents per kilowatt hour. At the 1966 price of crude oil at \$ 13 per ton, electricity was being produced at six-tenths of one cent per kilowatt hour.

At ever-rising 1974 crude prices, now at \$ 80 per ton here, Tabor figures electricity costs two cents per Kilowatt hour, about the same as sunpower.

"We're in the ball park now," declares Dr. Tabor, "There's plenty of free sunshine. Oil can only go up in price. Solar ponds have the advantages of built-in storage for cloudy days. There is an enormous thermal mass in the water and in the underground beneath the solar pond. It is clean, pollution-free, and presents no problems of disposing of radio-active wastes from nuclear power plants. I don't say that solar ponds are the exclusive solution for the energy crisis. The solution will be found in a mixed system of solar and other alternative sources. In the short-term, one-third of energy consumption can be saved by using solar energy for heating and cooling houses. The technology is available now, and has been used in Israel and other sunny countries for many years."

Dr. Tabor estimates that large-scale megawatt solar ponds can be built at a capital investment of \$ 400 to \$ 1,000 per kilowatt installed. This compares with \$ 300 per kw for conventional fuel fired power plants and \$ 700 for nuclear. One square mile solar pond can produce 18,000 kilowatts or 18 megawatts. Israel's total generating capacity from fuel-fired power stations is 1410 megawatts for a population of three million.

HYDROGEN

Instead of Petrol

Technion (Israel Institute of Technology) Plan

by Ya'acov Friedler

A research team in the Technion's Physics Department is currently working on a system to convert car engines to run on hydrogen instead of petrol.

According to Professor Peter S. Rudman, who is a member of the department and head of the Solid State Physics Centre, the Technion plan is based on a solid fuel element of a hydride compound which would release hydrogen into the car engine as it moves. It should provide 500 kms. of driving (the same as a conventional car fuel tank) and could be replaced at filling stations. In the stations the element would be re-charged with hydrogen, for re-use. Any adjustment in the car's combustion chamber and fuel pipes would be "modest," and the gasoline tank would be replaced by the hydride element, "which can be made roughly the same size and shape," Prof. Rudman said. He added that he thought this system preferable to the use of liquid or pressurized gas hydrogen, methods scientists abroad were working on.

Prof. Rudman stressed he had not yet carried out any practical experiments on the idea, "which is still on the paper at the moment. But there is no question that it is both workable and practicable. The big problem is that we fear it may not be patentable, and we're looking into it." He had suggested that the Technion management put an interdisciplinary research team to work on practical development of the system.

Prof. Rudman said "Israel will make a mistake by rushing to order a nuclear power reactor now, while the prices are at a 'panic' level. The prices are bound to stabilize at a lower level within the next several months and we should certainly wait until they do."

Another mistake, in his opinion, will be the relatively small, 600

megawatt reactor which the Electric Corporation has apparently decided to buy. "At best such a reactor will save fuel in the future, by obviating the need for more oil-burning power stations. But it will do nothing to solve the major part of our fuel needs, for non-electricity purposes, and will not benefit from the economy of scale," he said.

"If a nuclear reactor is ordered it should be of 1,000 megawatt. Its excess capacity should be used for producing hydrogen from sea water by electrolysis and thus start converting Israel to a hydrogen economy, which I believe is the real solution for our energy problems," the 46-year-old, American-born graduate of the Massachusetts Institution of Technology told me.

Other alternatives to nuclear energy include solar energy, "not the sophisticated but not very practicable solar ponds, but power station constructed of mirrors and wind energy," he said. "These were neglected, because Israel has an Atomic Energy Commission but neither a solar nor wind power commission, as we should have.

"I propose that we should go into solar and wind research. Their drawback, that they can generate energy only when the sun shines or the wind blows, is not a problem if they are exploited to produce electricity, to be used for making hydrogen which can be stored for when it is needed. There are still storage problems to be overcome with the highly explosive gas, but I'm convinced they'll be overcome within the decade, and we must be ready for a hydrogen economy in Israel." One of the big advantages of hydrogen is that it causes no pollution,

Prof. Rudman revealed that a Department team was also "doing a very intensive study of wind energy for generating electricity to produce hydrogen. Preliminary estimates show that "it will pay within 10 years, because of the high price of oil." His main argument is that Israel should not panic into going nuclear to the exclusion of other alternatives, which may be much more suitable for this country, and may if properly developed become attractive enough to warrant exporting to other countries too.

NEW THINKING?

IN LSSP: IN CP

by Lankaputra

The crisis in the constituent parties of the United Front seems to be spreading from one to another.

First we witnessed the crisis inside the Communist Party which has been virtually split into two different parties now for nearly two years. Then, recently we have seen the youngbloods in the SLFP, the major party of the UF, levelling strong criticism at several top leaders in their own ranks and culminating this campaign with a call for a new Common Programme to enthuse the people and take the country forward. Now on the grapevine comes the news of an "agonising re-appraisal" within the LSSP too *vis-a-vis* their relations with the UF and the Government.

It is not difficult to see what lies behind the crisis within the UF parties. These crises are a reflection of the general economic and social crisis prevailing in the country. As the general conditions deteriorate and the people at large experience ever-increasing difficulties in obtaining their bare necessities, their discontent and frustration mount. These are sometimes brought to the attention of MPs of the UF in the most dramatic ways. Naturally, therefore, they find their expression within the UF parties too.

AS WE SAID in an earlier article, the UF has much to its credit during its four-year old period of office. But, maybe due to circumstances beyond its control, they have been unable to redeem their election pledge of making life cheaper for the common people. The Opposition, under the new leadership of J. R. Jayawardene, has not been slow to capitalise on the people's grievances and mount an increasing, aggressive campaign against the UF Government.

The people as a whole are not concerned about the state of the world market prices or the politics and economics involved in Middle East oil. What they are worried about is the increasing prices they have to pay for their everyday needs. And for this they have always had a ready whipping-boy at which to vent their fury—the government in power.

Perhaps it was a realisation of this situation that led the Nation

(a paper run by those close to top LSSP leaders) recently to say that "if the people are to be abandoned to the mercy of price fluctuations that are typical of an imperialist world economy in its death throes, they will be compelled to look in dangerous directions for the protection that their Government cannot provide them. Any Government that is so helpless deserves rejection by the people."

And now, if the news on the grapevine is true, there seems to be much re-thinking in LSSP ranks as they look out for some drastic road out of the impasses in which they are placed.

IT WILL be remembered that two years ago, when the last LSSP conference took place, there was a bitter clash of opinion between the leaders at the top and those who have now made their way to the higher echelons of the Establishment on the one hand and those young LSSP radicals who have not yet lost their pre-1970 revolutionary fervour. The party leaders were accused of losing their revolutionary zeal after their took Ministerial office in 1970. Many of these who have been appointed to influential posts like the directorships of corporations were accused of bribery, nepotism and worse.

It was said at that conference by one speaker that the fact of such a large-scale uprising as took place in Sri Lanka in 1971 took the LSSP completely by surprise showed to what extent the party had alienated

themselves away from people whose struggles it had been in the habit of leading for well over 30 years.

It was only the persuasive eloquence of the LSSP leaders and the prestige they still command among their followers that saved the day for them. They were able to placate the impatient youth in their own ranks by nominating and electing several of their representatives to the new Central Committee while themselves holding the majority of seats in that august body.

THEREBY they were able to avoid the situation as arose in the CP that same year when the young-bloods in that party allied themselves with others who were against the old Central Committee leaders for other reasons to oust them and capture power in the new bodies that were elected at their congress.

The LSSP leaders, were thus able to keep their hotheads in check, but apparently, no longer. Perhaps, therefore, the new heart-burnings and soul searchings that are said to be going on in that party.

We do not know what will happen in the LSSP in the near future or what its position with the United Front and the Government will be. It is difficult to believe that they will burn their boats completely as far as the United Front is concerned and go it alone as they did once for a very long period. But there are unmistakable signs that a lot of thinking and re-thinking is going on inside LSSP ranks in regard to their own line of immediate action.

Incidentally, the CP moves for re-unification which were on the verge of success just two weeks ago, have run into fresh snags as May Day approaches. These snags, it is learnt, relate to the unification of the trade union movement and the re-constitution of Aththa.

READERS will remember that the softliners led by Keuneman used the CP-led Ceylon Federation of Trade Unions as their base to wage war on the hardliners. The latter hit back by breaking some unions away from the CFTU and federating them into their own United Federation of Trade Unions.

Now it appears the hard-liners want the two rival trade union federations to talk merger in the same way that Keuneman & Co. insist for the reunification of the party proper, viz, as between equals. The softliners who control the vast majority of the trade unions (only an insignificant minority having gone away to the hard-liners) appear to be averse to that.

As for the Aththa, re-constitution of its editorial board and paid staff was one of the key points agreed to by Dr. Wickremasinghe and Keuneman in their first talks for unity as far back as last June.

But now, it appears, hardliners insist on retaining some of their own men in key places even after the merger of the rival party factions.

One cannot say whether these differences will be straightened out in time for both factions to present a "united front" on May Day. If they are not, one might witness this year too what one saw last year—two rival CP contingents marching separately and verbally striking together at each other on the day of international labour solidarity!

* * *

IN SRI LANKA TODAY

✻ CHANGING TIMES

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

SOS FOR 10,000 TONS OF SUGAR

Ilangaratne explains supply and price position

Sri Lanka has sent out an urgent appeal to potential suppliers for 10,000 tons of sugar to meet the country's requirements.

The low position of stocks of sugar with the Food Commissioner, high consumption (14,500 tons per month) and spiralling world market prices (standing today at 293.72 pounds per ton when it was 106.7 pounds in June last year) are the main reasons for the Government's decision to increase the price of off-ration sugar to Rs. 5 per pound. Mr. T. B. Ilangaratne, Minister of Foreign and Internal Trade told the "Daily News".

Mr. Ilangaratne said the other alternative the Government had was to reduce the sugar ration to half a pound per individual and keep the price of off-ration sugar at Rs. 2 per pound.

Instead now the ration has been increased to a full pound in order to soften any hardships consumers may have to face as a result of the increase in price of off-ration sugar.

Sri Lanka consumes 174,000 tons of sugar per year. Of this amount

20,000 tons are produced locally while the balance is imported. To maintain consumption at prevailing levels Sri Lanka needs 100,000 tons more for this year.

Due to large payments falling due on maturing debts and import bills during the coming months, it has become imperative that consumption be reduced. The price increase of off-ration sugar is expected to achieve this to the extent of 5,000 pounds per month.

According to market reports, world prices are unlikely to decline.

The Food Department held a buying tender for 10,000 tons raw sugar earlier this week, but did not buy any sugar as the prices quoted were too high. The lowest price quoted was 600 US dollars a ton.

The February price for sugar according to the London market reports was about 300 pounds per metric ton. In the last few weeks sugar prices have shot up by about pound 45 a ton.

The main buyers are the Middle Eastern countries Iraq, Iran, Libya and Morocco.

— Daily News, 1/3/74

BEEF SHORTAGE

Colombo is now facing an acute shortage of beef. Most municipal beef stalls in the City put up their shutters before noon after exhausting their supplies.

The Chief Veterinary Surgeon of the Colombo Municipal Council, Dr. C. L. Wisidagama, said yesterday that the quantity of beef passing through the municipal slaughter houses had dropped by about 30 per cent.

According to informed sources this time of the year is a lean period for purchasing cattle. Another reason is that the strict checks on road transport of rice had brought to a halt the transport of cattle without permits.

—Daily News, 2/3/74

HOME AND HOME CLASH!

For what may be the first time, a multi-purpose co-operative society has initiated action against another M.P.C.S.

The Dehiowita - Deraniyagala MPCS of which Mr. Dhanapala Weerasekera, M.P. is Chairman has claimed Rs. 130,000 from the Ruwanwella MPCS of which Mr. Chauda Seneviratne, M.P., is Chairman.

According to official sources, the Commissioner of Co-operative Development and the Minister of Foreign and Internal Trade have both asked the Ruwanwella MPCS to meet the claim, which has been made in respect of certain goods taken by the Ruwanwella society.

—Sun, 2/3/74

POLITICAL AUTHORITIES UNDER FIRE

Scrap Them, say Colombo District MPs

The system of Political Authorities came under heavy fire at a meeting of Colombo District MPs held last week. The MPs contended that this system seemed unnecessary because there already existed an efficient Cabinet system. Several of them protested that the Political Authorities were usurping the functions of the Cabinet. Mr R. S. Perera, Minister of Information

and Broadcasting criticised the allocation of funds under the decentralised budget. He said the money was hardly sufficient for continuation of work in progress as well as for new work.

Mr. Ratne Deshapriya Senanayake, Deputy Minister of Planning and Economic Affairs, interrupted Mr. Perera to point out that fresh funds would be available for work next year. Mr. Stanley Tilekaratne, Speaker of the National State Assembly charged that the Political Authority system ran counter to the existing system of the Cabinet. Mr. Tilekaratne said he as well as all present had full confidence in the Prime Minister and Ministers of the present Government. He could therefore see no reason why Political Authorities should be foisted on them. He asked the Ministers present at the meeting why they permitted the setting up of the Political Authority system while there was an efficient Cabinet. He said he wanted socialism to be the goal of this Government but did not want that socialism sapped by the creation of parallel administrations. Mr. Bernard Soysa, Mrs. Vivienne Goonewardene and Mr. Bonnie Jayasuriya also made critical comments about the decentralization of the Budget.

Several MPs asked why some areas were given more than a million rupees while Colombo District MPs were given only Rs 97,000 each. Mulkirigala, Beliatta, Minipe and Tissamaharama were cited as specially favoured areas. The MPs demanded that a break down of the allocations to other constituencies be tabled at the next meeting. Among the other MPs who attended the meeting were Dr. A. D. J. Leo (Wattala), Mr. W. Senanayake, (Homagama), Mrs. Kusala Abhayawardhana (Borella), Mr. K. C. de Silva (Katana), Mr. Wimalasiri de Mel (Moratuwa), Mr. Chandra Gunasekera (Kottawa), Mr. Pieter Keuneman (Colombo Central), and Mr. A. T. Basnayake, (Gampaha). Mrs. Sunechra Rupasinghe and some Planning Ministry officials were also present.

—Sun, 4/3/74

MARKETING DEPT. WON'T SELL JAMS, CORDIALS

The Marketing Department yesterday suspended the wholesale

distribution of jams and cordials made by the department. Mr. N. Vamadevan Marketing Commissioner told the 'Daily News' that the wholesale distribution of those products with a sugar content would be stopped till the department works out the new cost of manufacture based on the new sugar price. The wholesale distribution of these products was stopped to prevent hoarding by traders. However, the department's retail points continued to sell them at the old prices yesterday.

Ice cream manufacturers said yesterday that the new costs had to be worked out. A manufacturer who claimed that the new price of sugar would increase the cost of a gallon of ice cream by Rs. 2 said he would not impose a price increase. Confectioners said yesterday they were not willing to discuss the impact of the price hike of sugar on their trade. One of them said, 'lack of wheat flour has already crippled our trade and price increase of sugar is not going to make a big difference.'

—Ceylon Daily News, 1/3/74

QUICK-YIELDING INCENTIVES TO ROPE IN MAHA PADDY CROP

- 1 For two bushels paddy or 1 bushel rice promise 1 bag cement free of charge.
- 2 For one bushel paddy or 16 measures rice promise 4 gallons kerosene at Rs. 2/- per gallon or 2 gallons petrol at Rs. 5/- per gallon.
- 3 For 10 bushels paddy or 5 bushels rice promise 1 cwt. urea manure at an attractive nominal fee.
- 4 For 2 bushels paddy or 1 bushel rice promise 1 bicycle tyre and tube.
- 5 For 4 bushels paddy or 2 bushels rice promise 1 bicycle rim with spokes included.
- 6 For every 1 bushel paddy or 16 measures rice promise that a coupon will be issued which will enable the farmer to purchase subsidised articles of essential use in a very poor home and of the value of Rs. 7/50 per month.

Let those in authority think of further methods.

—G. P. de Silva
Nation, 22/3/74

IS IT TRUE?

Sherlock Holmes

THONDAMAN, JANAVEGAYA AND NATIONAL MINORITY

IS IT NOT TRUE that the new Tamil weekly *Janavegam* has made far greater progress in terms of circulation and readership than had been anticipated? That there might be an initial curiosity which has pushed its circulation and readership high? That what the Tamils had least expected was a Tamil paper from the SLFP? That nobody in the North, East and in the up-country plantation sector had expected the SLFP rooted *Janavegaya* to start a Tamil paper? That more than this it is what the paper set out as its objectives and the objectives of the progressive movement which has caused even greater surprise? That in the past the SLFP and the CP had spoken about Sinhala-Tamil unity? That they had even spoken about the parity or equality of languages? That over the years the Tamils had "felt let down" by these established Left Parties which had started tailing behind the language and religious jingoists in the SLFP? That the *Janavegam* now seeks to pick up history at a point where the Left Parties had stopped many years ago? That for sometime now the Left Parties had taken refuge behind the plea that the Tamils were lost in the reactionary and communal politics of the Federal Party and that there was nothing which could be done until the Tamils turned over a new leaf? That the attitudes and policy postures of the *Janavegam* are a refreshing change from the patronisingly superior sermons which leftwing UF circles have recently preached to the Tamils?

WAS IT SURPRISING THEREFORE that the *Congress News*, the fortnightly organ of Thondaman's Ceylon Workers Congress, should in its issue of March 15 welcome the *Janavegam*? That the comments of the *Congress News* merit serious attention and this

column thinks it necessary to quote it in extenso not only for the record but also because it throws light on developing trends among the up-country Tamils of recent Indian origin? That this is what the *Congress News* said: "CONGRESS NEWS welcomes the *Janavegam*, the latest Tamil political weekly which made its debut last week. *Janavegam* is a sister of the Sinhala political weekly *Janavegaya* which reportedly reflects the opinion of the progressives within the Government group. *Janavegam* comes at a time when the stock of the government is lowest among the Tamils, so much so that none of the three constituents of the United Front could field a candidate at the Mannar by-election. While the *Janavegam* will carry to the reading public the views of the United Front it should also carry to the Government the views of the people. The very fact that this progressive group had considered it necessary to publish a Tamil weekly is proof enough that the progressives have realised the importance of the national minority. Speaking for ourselves we are happy that *Janavegam* calls for the integration of the people of Indian origin with the local population. They have been kept as a segregated community not by themselves but the powers that be. *Janavegam* has quite rightly welcomed the recent Indo-Ceylon accord resulting in the ultimate absorption of 375,000 of these persons as citizens of Sri Lanka. In this context, we who have been categorised as a "class organisation" take pardonable pride in being mainly instrumental in this end being achieved. When the Indian and Pakistani Citizenship Act was enacted in 1948, leaders like the late Mr. D. S. Senanayake and Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike maintained that the Act was final and that not even a comma will be

altered in it. But we have con a long way from 1948 and during this quarter century fought relentlessly against this Act, which resulted not only in the original Act being altered from time to time, but even in the latest accord. If fighting for a down-trodden community, who happen to be the bulk of our membership, is class struggle then we are happy that ours is one such especially in the light of our achievements. Even as *Janavegam* does, we have asked successive governments of independent Lanka to let the plantation workers integrate with other communities of the country, not to be confused with assimilation. But they have been confined to their ghettos, deprived of all means of human development, proper educational facilities, employment opportunities, scholarships, vocational training and so on. Though we can understand the reluctance of the Government in delaying the conferring of political rights on these applicants for Ceylon citizenship until they are registered, the denial of all means of human development to those who will someday become its citizens is inexplicable... *Janavegam* would have filled a void if it could help to open the eyes of the Government to the miseries the people of Indian origin are being forced to undergo and help to create at least the proverbial silver lining in the dark and gloomy clouds that obliterate their horizons."

IS IT NOT A HAPPY AUGURY that in these dark and troubled days when shortages are acute and national minorities are labouring under a sense of neglect and discrimination that a pro-UF, a pro-Government group, well entrenched in the Government, and close to the mainstream of power, should decide to make the question of national unity a question of importance and priority? That in a multi-racial, multi-lingual and multi-religious country like Sri Lanka, national unity is a fundamental imperative for any kind of economic development or national progress? That many people in this country have not as yet realised that economic development has been retarded owing to the absence of national unity? That national unity can be achieved in a country like Sri Lanka in many different ways, but none of these ways have been pursued by any of the established political parties with persistence.