

TRIBUNE

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English Compulsory FOR EXAMINATIONS?

FOR SOME MONTHS NOW there have been reports in the daily newspapers that the Government, which in recent years had begun to revive interest in the teaching and study of the English language in schools, would make English a compulsory subject for examinations. Speculation on this matter was finally laid to rest when the *Daily Mirror* carried a relatively full (in these days of newsprint shortage) report of a talk given by Mr. Peter Connell, the British Council's Adviser in English to the Ministry of Education, to the Rotary Club of Colombo North at the Hotel Taprobane on May 27th.

Excerpts in extenso from this *Daily Mirror* report will set out the position which the ministry of Education is likely to adopt

A Non—Traditional
Export

?

Particulars
next week

very soon. Speaking on "The Future of English in Sri Lanka", Mr. Connell said that, "English will be made a compulsory subject for the National Certificate of General Education, which replaces the General Certificate of Education (Ordinary Level), from 1975. It will also be made a compulsory subject for the National Certificate of Higher Education (NCHE) which replaces the GCE (AL).

Mr. Connell who has been loaned to the Ministry of Education by the British Council to improve the standard of the teaching of English in schools said that by teaching English they were not trying to perpetuate a particular social structure in Sri Lanka.

The English language, he said, should not be thought of as an avenue for them to attend cocktail parties. A smiling face is all you require at a cocktail party, he said. He added that some thought that English helped them to interpret 'pop' songs. "I am a little disturbed about the interpretation of pop songs. English would not help to interpret 'pop' songs of today", he said.

Mr. Connell then cited the instance of a song "Macarthy's Park" which had reached the top ten in the British and American current pop parades. Reading the last four lines of the song which was supposed to be a love song, Mr. Connell showed how absurd the wording was.

He said it was right that the mother tongue should be the medium of education as it was an essential requirement for social development sensitivity of the peo-

ple and development of the country. It was therefore natural for Sri Lanka to adopt Sinhala and Tamil taking precedent over other languages for the education of the people.

He, however, pointed out that there was a great need for the study of English in Sri Lanka and commended the efforts made by the Ministry of Education to improve the standard of English in schools.

Mr. Connell said that English helped to promote international understanding. It also helped to promote productivity, efficiency and development. In the field of international trade export, all bills of lading and other documents are made out in English. All information regarding maintenance of equipment and machinery be they even of Russian make is made out in English.

He disclosed that in the investigation carried out by the Ministry it was revealed that in the C.T.B English was essential for all executives as it helped in research investigations etc. For the personnel in the Banking sector and for postmasters English had been found to be essential. At present 99 per cent of the law books in Sri Lanka are in English. In promoting tourism the language become more important. In many other fields like broadcasting, telecommunication services and the armed services, English had become essential to understand the working of equipment and advanced training.

He said that in the Colombo Campus of the University of Sri Lanka of the books in Maths and

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Physics, 2,974 were in English, 26 in Tamil and 11 in Sinhala. In the teaching of Botany the University staff felt that by the time the Botany texts were translated into Sinhala they would become outdated. The Medical Faculty was having the same problem.

Commenting on the teaching of English in schools, he said that reading comprehension adopted by the Ministry was a sound idea because it helped comprehend advanced books. Writing skill was also essential in the field of commerce and industry. Mr. Connell stressed that all those who had a knowledge of English should educate those in the rural areas the importance of English because it has been found those living outside Colombo did not understand the importance of English.

EVER SINCE its began publication in 1954, *Tribune* has consistently pointed out that without a "world language" like English, a small country like Sri Lanka would suffer many disadvantages. In the forties, fifties and even in the sixties, this country suffered at the hands of those who felt that English could be discarded as easily as the white man's dinner jacket could be thrown away. It was argued that Sinhala, and even Tamil, could take the place of the English without difficulty, for all purposes. Those who had pointed out that, without a "world language" like English this country would soon be cut away from the mainstream of development throughout the world, were branded as lickspittles of British Imperialism; and those who had stated that, if English were discarded for political reasons, it was necessary to adopt another "world language" like French, German, Spanish or Russian were regarded as anti-national persons without adequate pride in their national languages. However, *Tribune* has persistently and consistently re-iterated at every turn that in the narrow self-interest of this country it was essential to pay even greater attention than in the past to the "world language" which history had brought to this island, viz English.

Today, the wheel has turned a full cycle, and even those VIPs who had wanted all traces of the English to eradicated from the

soil of Ceylon are now anxious that the youth of Sri Lanka should have a working knowledge of the English language. There is now a search for those capable of teaching the English language in schools and the Ministry of Education and the Government have also sought the aid of Britain to help them in this matter. We are now importing advisers, specialists and VSO teachers from Britain to bring English back into our schools' curriculum—because after three decades of sterile opposition to the English language our education system has been drained of talent to teach English. As the "brain drain" of English teachers took place, standards were lowered, and the teaching and learning of the English language was reduced to filling in blank spaces.

The result is that today we have a new generation of graduates and elite from our universities who are neither able to understand English adequately nor communicate in English. And there are not enough books in Sinhala, or even Tamil (with its market for 40 millions in South India), to help these products of our Universities to keep abreast of world developments. The books translated are already outdated. And the cost of translating contemporary information is such that this country cannot afford it especially because world knowledge is moving ahead so rapidly that much becomes outdated even before the translation is complete. Furthermore, with the brain drain out of the country and the three—decade estrangement from English has left this country without a sufficient number of competent translators.

It is a happy augury that those responsible for the future of education in this country have, at last, begun to understand the importance of a language like English. In the beginning of this century there were idealists who had urged that one common world language should be adopted, and *Esperanto* had been "devised" to serve that need. But in the current era of violent nationalist upsurge throughout the world, *Esperanto* soon went into the limbo of forgotten things. But in spite of these violent nationalist upheavals, four or five languages have gained importance as world languages, with

a few more gaining momentum as important international languages English, French, Spanish, German and Russian are accepted as the leading languages of the world. Chinese, Japanese, Hindi, Arabic, Italian and Swahili are gaining in importance everyday, but it will be long time before they can attain the status of world languages.

In the circumstances, the sooner English is given its rightful place in the scheme of things in Sri Lanka, the better it would be for the future of this island.

Tribunania

* Devolution Within the United Kingdom

VERY LITTLE ATTENTION has been paid in Sri Lanka to a significant development which has taken place in the United Kingdom. News agencies have carried brief reports about what it all means, but the first interpretative analysis available to us has come in *The Economist* of June 8. Under the title *DECLINE AND FALL*, a leading article, stated as a sub-heading that "It is now almost certain that Scotland and Wales will be given their own assemblies. It should not be assumed that these will do anything much to prevent any break-up of the United Kingdom."

On Monday June 3, the British Government had published a "discussion document", entitled *DEVOLUTION WITHIN THE UNITED KINGDOM*, (HMSO 17 pence) which contained seven possible devolutionist designs, largely for Scotland and Wales.

With apologies to *The Economist* we publish below extracts to show the present culmination of trends which had been gathering momentum in the United Kingdom. It will be recalled that the United Kingdom has always been held out as the example *par excellence* of a "united nation state", where different communities and races had merged into a homo-

genous "nation." The British had endeavoured to mould multi-racial multi-religious, and multi-linguistic countries in their former Empire into single nation states after the image of the UK. The history of these attempts to make "nation states" in the British and European, (Napoleonic and Bismarkian) models throughout the world is a matter for study, but what has now developed in the U.K. is a pointer to what is happening elsewhere.

This is how *The Economist* opened its own analysis: "Symptoms of decay abound in a country which has experienced a prolonged economic failure and which, as a result, has been permeated by a loss of self-confidence. A sure sign of an advanced state of deterioration is when parts of the country begin to think that they would be better off on their own—and are convinced that, at the very least, they would be no worse off. There are many indications that the United Kingdom is now on the verge of this stage of disintegration. The leaderships of the Labour and Tory parties are hoping that a little political devolution will burst the nationalist bubble."

The *Economist* then briefly attempts to trace the political logic which had compelled the British government to consider devolution seriously. "To place faith in Scottish and Welsh assemblies is to misunderstand the feelings which lie behind the vogue for political devolution. The demand for devolution has grown as successive Labour and Tory governments have failed to produce the British economic miracle. Regional assemblies and executives will do little, if anything, to contribute to Britain's economic performance, and there are no signs that a government is going to take over in London in the foreseeable future which knows how to produce 5 per cent growth and rising real living standards. In continuing economic difficulties the regional governments would begin to bear the brunt of the public's anger with repeated economic failure. It is then that the Nationalists would argue that only independence can deliver the economic goods for the Scots and the Welsh and, particularly in Scotland (where the vision of vast wealth from limitless North Sea oil revenues is already be-

ing pushed), and that is an argument which will be increasingly alluring.

The *Economist* briefly indicates the under-currents which presently affect the situation. "The alternative schemes for devolution that the Government has published this week were originally contained in the Kilbrandon report last November. The paper has already been roundly condemned by both the Scottish and the Welsh Nationalists, who suspect that the lack of specific proposals is simply part of the Labour Government's stalling for time in the hope that the Nationalist tide will recede at the next election. The SNP and Plaid Cymru are now threatening to withdraw their nine MP's usual support from the Labour Government to try to force Mr. Wilson to commit himself more fully.

The Government is now committed to coming forward with definite plans for Scotland and Wales by the autumn. But Mr. Wilson has several difficult hurdles to jump before then. Four of the alternatives for discussion—involving advisory councils and regional co-ordinating committees—are so obviously toothless talking shops that to introduce them would simply be playing into the Nationalists' hand. At the back of its document, the Government lists series of questions which it thinks will have to be answered before a decision is taken. Most of these refer to different types of elected legislative assemblies. It is a proposal on the variations on elected assemblies which the Government is hoping to bring out by October. The choice is between (1) directly elected assemblies legislating in those matters at present covered by the Scottish and Welsh offices with the possibility of additional economic and revenue-raising powers); (2) an assembly run by a committee structure which would adapt Westminster legislation to special regional circumstances and assume control of all regional outposts of Whitehall departments and (3) a restricted assembly with no revenue raising powers and loss power to make ordinances over a wide variety of policy fields."

The *Economist* examines the difficulties in getting a scheme of devolution which would be acceptable to the Scottish or Welsh nationalist. "It is significant that the one direct quote from Kilbrandon in the

discussions document is the one which says that since devolution 'is a matter requiring political judgement, the final decisions must be political' It is not the merits and demerits of each particular scheme which will cause Mr. Wilson the most problems. His greatest headaches will be political. It is indefensible, for example, to give Scotland and Wales powerful assemblies and not reduce their parliamentary representation. That would mean that Ulster, with no



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effective assembly, was under-represented, while Scotland and Wales, with strong assemblies, would be over represented. Yet if it had not been for the Scots and the Welsh there would have been no Labour government either in 1964 or today. And the Scottish Labour party, which is pretty luke-warm to devolution anyway, is not going to sit back and allow the number of Scottish MPs to be reduced from 71 to 57. Further, the Scottish Labour party is resolutely opposed to electing any assembly by proportional representation because that would make it more difficult for Labour to dominate Scotland. Yet all three assembly plans in the discussion document involve PR."

The *Economist* finally points out the real difficulties Mr. Wilson will face. "Mr. Wilson's biggest headache will be in deciding how much power to give each assembly. If he plumps for the inoffensive second or third schemes then the assembly will soon be full of people committed to winning more power for it. If he goes for a powerful legislative assembly with some control over economics, oil revenues and finance, then it is difficult to see how such a scheme can operate and the United Kingdom remain united. And if he gives an assembly legislative control over housing, education and social services then he has done nothing to dish the Scottish Nationalists, who will continue to make the running on North Sea oil revenues. In fact, regardless of the form of devolution, the Scottish Nationalists should still be able to capitalise on the situation. The SNP has come pretty unpleasant undercurrents but the leadership is at least a match for what the Scottish Labour and Tory parties are capable of throwing up."

It is yet too early to say what impact the new development toward Devolution within the United Kingdom will have on many newly independent countries of the former British Empire, particularly countries like Nigeria, India, Pakistan, Burma, Malaysia and Sri Lanka. The latter half of the seventies and the whole of the eighties of this century will no doubt witness many important changes in the devolution of power within many countries.

Comment

- ✱ NARCOTICS
- ✱ MORE CO-OPS
- ✱ JANAVEGAYA & THE SINHALE

A GROWING MENACE. Newspapers in Sri Lanka have recently been full of stories about the increasing use of narcotics among students and young people in the Island. The newly set-up Anti Narcotic Bureau in Colombo, it is reported, has stressed that the consumption of dope in the island, especially in Colombo, has touched an all-time high and increasing numbers of schoolboys, youths and socialites were smoking "pot" in a big way. It has also been revealed that Colombo has upgraded itself as a transshipment port for opium and with the re-opening of the Suez Canal more ships were expected to call at Colombo port making it an important point in the illicit traffic in narcotics.

The Sri Lanka Narcotics Bureau has, it is reported, also obtained the services of Mr. Pio Barro, a Drugs Adviser to the Colombo Plan and a world authority on anti-narcotics work to check the drug menace. It has been estimated by the Bureau that at least five tons of opium are smuggled every year from India into Sri Lanka across the Palk Straits and at current international prices this will tot up to well on Rs. 15 millions (in hard currency). A pound of raw opium fetches about Rs. 1300 in the north of Ceylon (Mannar or Jaffna), while it gets Rs. 1800 in Colombo. A kilo of raw opium (2.2 lbs) is only Rs. 300 in India, in UP or MP, where the plant is grown, but on the southern coast at the 'point of smuggling, it fetches about Rs. 800 a kilo.

Smuggled to Europe and the USA in the raw state it fetches ten to twenty times the price paid in Colombo, but once refined its value shoots up a hundred fold or more. The Narcotics Bureau has still not disclosed whether any refining is done into heroin in

Sri Lanka, but there is no reason why our smart boys should be backward in setting up the mobile laboratories which are a feature of the French underworld. It would surprise nobody if we are told that Sri Lanka is riddled with mobile laboratories turning opium and ganja into more sophisticated stuff to get an enhanced price.

HOUSES TO BE REQUISITIONED The *Ceylon Daily News* of May 29 carried a news item which read as follows:

"Several premises in Colombo and the outstations will soon be requisitioned by the Ministry of Foreign and Internal Trade for the opening up of a wider network of consumer co-operatives. This follows poor response so far to a call by the Ministry for buildings to be used for this network. According to the Ministry's plans it is proposed to ensure as early as possible that a consumer Co-op is available for a maximum of 1,500 persons in Colombo and 1,000 persons elsewhere and later to reduce this number further. At present some co-operatives cater to the needs of over 3,000 householders and this has been attributed to be one of the main causes of queues and inconvenience at co-operatives. With consumers now having to rely more on co-operatives to obtain supplies of essential commodities the Ministry has proposed to provide greater facilities for the convenience of consumers."

There is no doubt that the more co-operative stores and more selling points for the essential goods retailed by the co-ops the better it would be for the country. But this should not mean that the costs of retailing and distributing the goods should go up out of all proportion to the services rendered. Far too often have we found that in increasing the number of co-ops stores it has been an excuse to recruit an excessive number of un wanted hands to satisfy political pressures and the result has been increased distribution charges which are passed on to the consumer.

In the present instance, we hope that the houses which are being "requisitioned" for the new co-ops are not buildings belonging to people who had been foolhardy enough to fly a white flag on May

22. According to the *Times of Ceylon*, the Minister Mr. Illangaratne had threatened to take over the houses and buildings which had sported a white flag on May 22 and it is to be hoped that this was not the threat being carried into effect. (vide *Tribune*, June 8)

JANAVEGAYA'S WELCOME TO SINHALE.

Beginning with the issue of June 8, it was announced that the *Sinhale*, which had recently been only making an occasional appearance, would be made into a weekly to carry forward the "Bandaranaike policies". The *Sinhale* is a paper with a history. It was started long before the SLFP came into beginning. It was one of the papers sponsored by the late Mr. S. W. D. Bandaranaike when he had formed the Sinhala Mahajana Sabha, which later became a constituent part of the UNP. As long as Mr. Bandaranaike was alive, the *Sinhale* played an important role in the political life of this country, and even after he died the *Sinhale* was a paper of some consequence for many years. Later it fell into troubled days and has been in abeyance for some years now—in a state of animated suspense.

According to reports in the *Daily Mirror* and the *Times of Ceylon*, it was said that Anura Bandaranaike, the President of the SLFP Youth League, had taken the initiative to revive the *Sinhale*. Many political observers felt that this was a counter to the *Janavegaya* which has been making its presence felt in a big way in recent months. Whilst the *Sinhale* spoke about the primacy of *Bandaranaikism*—as opposed to any other *ism*—the *Janavegaya* had a one and half column comment welcoming the *Sinhale* into the fraternity of political journalism in Sri Lanka.

This is roughly what the *Janavegaya* had said in its issue of 14/7. The *Sinhale*, said the *Janavegaya*, has been reorganised and the new version has made its appearance. Arrangements have been made to publish it weekly without any break. The *Janavegaya* had then gone on to recount the good work the *Sinhale* had done in the past to assist Bandaranaike to break the imperialist stranglehold which had held this country in its grip, and hoped that the new *Sinhale*

will join the *Janavegaya* to carry on the common struggle against imperialism in the interests of the people.

The *Janavegaya* commended the article on the front page of the *Sinhale* in which attention had been drawn to the threats from the reactionaries to the progressive front. But, said the *Janavegaya*, that the *Sinhale* article had talked about the danger from the extreme Right as well as the extreme Left. Whilst accepting that such dangers existed, the *Janavegaya* stressed that it was necessary to distinguish between friends and foes, and hoped that the *Sinhale* would support the *Janavegaya* campaign to show the masses as to who were its friends and who were its enemies.

The *Janavegaya* also made a point of the fact that the *Sinhale* had stressed that sabotage could not be allowed within the United Front, and wanted the workers and peasants, who were committed to making this country economically independent, to take note of this. The *Janavegaya* also pointed out that when the *Sinhale* talked about the journey started in 1956, what was essential was socialism and a democratic programme for which the late S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike had lost his life. It was recalled that the march which had started in 1956 had received a setback in 1964 when C. P. de Silva had stabbed the movement in the back. The government which had come into power in 1970 to take the 1956 revolution forward was based on the United Front and it was essential to carry this unity forward.

Finally, the *Janavegaya* appealed to the *Sinhale* to join the *Aththa*, the *Janadina* and the *Janavegaya* in the common struggle for socialism, and this, said the *Janavegaya*, would be a blessing for the masses.

Most political observers had not expected this clever and graceful welcome to the *Sinhale* in the columns of the *Janavegaya*, but there is no doubt that such journalistic finesse and political sophistry has been rarely seen in Ceylon in recent times in our political weeklies.

How the *Sinhale* will react to all this is yet to be seen.

INTERNATIONAL-AFFAIRS

BY ARIEL

✽ MIDDLE EAST

✽ SOUTHEAST ASIA

PRESIDENT NIXON'S VISIT to five states in the Middle East marks a new beginning in the history of US relations in that part of the world. In 1956, Dulles had cancelled the US offer of aid to the Aswan Dam and he had started a process of hostility which had culminated with most of the Arab countries breaking diplomatic relations with the United States. The Soviet Union had made great strides in this region in the era of Nasser and his lieutenants like Ali Sabry, but with Sadat there was a change.

It took Sadat a long time to start his de-Nasserisation of Egypt, and this he was able to do only after staging conspiracy trials in which most of the colleagues and the closest advisers of Nasser were thrust into gaol or exile or forced retirement. But Sadat has had his way, and now he has re-established Arab-US relations on a footing which promises to expand limitlessly.

The credit for all this must go to Henry Kissinger, the Jew who was able to convince the Arabs that Israel wanted to live with its neighbours in peace. Only the Palestinian question is yet to be solved, and though this is tough and difficult, the US has adequate pulling power with Israel to bring about a reasonable settlement acceptable to all parties. Now that the proper climate has been created in the major Arab countries *vis a vis* the USA and Israel such a settlement is no longer a distant or unreal dream.

But will all this adversely affect the detente between the USA and the USSR? There are elements in the USA which do not want a detente anywhere in the world, and it will be interesting to watch how Nixon and Kissinger handle the talks in Moscow next week in the era of Watergate. The US Congress has not been inclined to extend to the USSR trade

concessions and new credits—until it is said the USSR changes its policies on Jewish emigration and Nixon will have a difficult time finding a basis for any new agreement with Moscow.

Whilst Nixon's trip to Moscow is likely to steal the headlines in the coming week, events in other parts of the world continue to create new problems that seem insoluble. In Ulster, the British have got hold a tiger's tail which they cannot let off—least the tiger swallow the tail-holder. Ireland was Britain's first foreign colony and until this original sin of British imperialism is wiped out, Britain cannot enjoy any internal peace anymore. Scottish nationalism and Welsh nationalism have made such impact that the Government has been compelled to recently publish a "discussion" white paper entitled *Devolution With in the United Kingdom*. Before the century is out, the world will probably witness England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland as separate political entities, independent and sovereign—perhaps joined together in a loose confederation as part of a European Common Market with the embryonic beginnings of a new political relationship between the countries on the northern Atlantic shoreline.

Israel's new Prime Minister, Ritzhak Rabin, has just formed a Government consisting of old and new forces, and it is yet too early to say whether he would be able to stabilise himself. Some of the old "perpetuals" like Ebban and Dayan have been dropped, but will be the new blood be able to carry the Knesset and the country? Israel now emerges into a period of internal political instability at a time when the Arabs are riding the crest of diplomatic triumphs and oil millions.

The new governments in France and West Germany have yet to

get into their stride and the men at the helm represent forces which have newly emerged in the seventies determined to break with the past. They claim that they want to solve the problems which their predecessors had failed to tackle. The first sign that something new was breaking in the best was the Committee of Twenty were able to agree on a new package plan to solve the monetary chaos in the capitalist world. This was possible mainly because the USA withdrew its earlier objections to the IMF's SDR money, and many observers believe that the USA adopted new attitudes after the end of de Gaulle's in France and Brndt's Ostpolitik in West Germany.

In Asia, Pakistan is having more than its fair share of internal problems, but it has adopted an aggressive attitude towards India after the latter exploded a nuclear device. Pakistan wants China, the USA and other nuclear powers to provide her with a nuclear umbrella, and also teach her the know-how to make Pakistan a nuclear power. Whether Pakistan has the necessary infrastructure and political stability to go forward into the nuclear age is a problematic question, but Bhutto is today knocking at the topmost firmament in the heavens demanding the return of Kashmir from India and a parity of power as between Islamabad and New Delhi in the region.

BUT THE MOST SIGNIFICANT event of this fortnight was the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Malaysia. Southeast Asia had been a closed door, diplomatically, to China after the fall of Sukarno and the abortive communist coup in Indonesia of 1965. The ASEAN bloc had set a hard face against China although trade relations had developed with its member countries to a considerable extent. It must be remembered that the largest number of Overseas Chinese are found in the five ASEAN countries and there is no doubt that China was anxious to establish friendly relations with these five countries which are on its very doorstep.

With Malaysia opening the doors, it is likely that the Philippines will follow suit soon. Thailand

will not lag behind very much, and Singapore and Indonesia may be the last to fall in to lines.

Malaysia's calculations in this matter has been summed up by *The Economist*, 8/6/74, thus: "Malaysia's prime minister, Tun Abdul Razak, perhaps doth protest too much. On Sunday he returned from a visit to China bearing Peking's assurances that all *hau Chiao* (overseas Chinese) who live in Malaysia should be assimilated as native Malaysian and that Malaysia has a free hand to deal firmly with its pro-Peking communist guerilla groups. Well, that principle was laid down by Mr. Chou En-lai at Bandung 20 years ago and has been piously repeated several times since. Yet Chen Ping, the formidable Malaysia born Chinese communist leader, in his fifties, still operates three regiments of Malay and Chinese guerillas along the jungle border with Thailand, and is still succored by the Thoughts of Mao advocating jungle insurgency from The Voice of the Malaysian Revolution, a radio station in southern China.

"However, Tun Razak evidently believes that the advantages achieved from recognising China, and potential Chinese support for the region's aspirations for a neutral south east Asian zone, will outweigh the dangers of continuing internal subversion. His lead already has the open support of the Philippines (President Marcos is expected to visit Peking this year), the tacit support of Thailand, which faces better-armed subversion in its north-east, the doubtful support of an Indonesia which still remembers its abortive communist coup of 1965, and the expedient support of Singapore, where Lee Kuan Yew has succeeded in converting his Chinese into Singaporeans.

"Taking a long view, Tun Razak's hopes could with luck be justified, Diplomatic relations with China could lead to greater unity and strength for the Association of South-East Asian Nations (Asean), which is slowly beginning to find its feet. Burma, beset by its own guerillas, still openly backed by China, might now find it worth while to become the sixth Asean member.

"The question now is whether Tun Razak will follow Lee Kuan

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Yew in attempting to integrate fully Malaysia's huge Chinese population. Hongkong may indirectly supply a first answer. About 20,000 stateless Chinese of Malaysian origin who returned to China are stranded in Hongkong still vainly seeking visas to get back again to Malaysia. China allowed them to leave during the past two years. Will Tun Razak accept them as strayed but now restored putative Malaysians?"

Looked at from another angle, a despatch from Tokyo to the Indian paper *Hindu* sets out the implications of the new situation which has opened new perspectives in Southeast Asia. "Following its formalisation of relations with Malaysia late last month, China has started negotiations with all the four other ASEAN countries—Philippines, Thailand, Singapore and Indonesia—for the establishment of diplomatic relations with them. (Nominally diplomatic relations exist between China and Indonesia but in reality they have been practically frozen since 1967).

"Reporting this yesterday from Peking the nationally-circulated *Asahi Shimbun* quoted reliable sources in the Chinese-capital as indicating that negotiations were proceeding mainly at the United Nations. Negotiations, they added, were taking place on the basis of the same formula which led to the establishment of Sino-Malaysian diplomatic relation. It will be recalled that in the agreement which led to normalisation with Malaysia, China renounced its hitherto held principle of dual nationality for all Chinese residing in that country and agreed that any Chinese who had already acquired Malaysian citizenship would automatically renounce his Chinese nationality.

"Peking's overture to the four ASEAN countries interpreted as of great strategic significance in that it constitutes a bid to counter Soviet moves to strengthen its position in South-East Asia. China obviously also hopes to isolate Taiwan in the international community."

WITH THE OPENING of diplomatic relations with ASEAN countries, China will become a major force in Southeast Asia which geopolitical observers regard as part of China's

natural sphere of influence—although this would be considered a bourgeois approach to a relationship which was nothing more than co-existence based on the *pancha sila*, which has long been upheld by Peking as the corner stone of its foreign policy.

The ASEAN countries have now accepted the assurances that China was not interested in subversion or in extending encouragement to the communist and national liberation minded guerilla forces operating in these countries. If China fulfils the high expectations of the countries in Southeast Asia, a new chapter will be opened in Southeast Asia, but should China overtly or covertly indulge in actions contrary to these assurances then the future is unpredictable.

Economically, politically and ideologically, China is a big enough power to dominate this region, and it must not be forgotten that there are millions of over-seas Chinese in this region. The extension of China's influence to this region is inevitable and it would be interesting to watch its impact on the rest of Asia and the rest of the world.

READER'S VIEWS

- ✳ India's Nuclear Explosion
- ✳ "Athavassi"
- ✳ Democracy in Sri Lanka

Sir,

The Executive Committee of the Sri Lanka - Pakistan Friendship Association is reported to have passed a resolution unanimously expressing "deep shock and concern over India's nuclear explosion and described it as a grave threat to peace and security of neighbouring countries including Sri Lanka and a great set-back to the Prime Ministers proposal for loving countries in general and neighbouring countries in particular."

As a citizen of the country, with no bias for or against India, and

being free from Pro-China, Anti-Indian attitudes which may be deeply rooted in personal interests, I feel I must comment on this matter and not permit a Ceylon friendship organisation to misrepresent the people of Sri Lanka in this way.

I consider this resolution to be calculated mischief on the part of the Executive Committee to create and misrepresent an occasion for great jubilation among all free asian nations and coloured peoples in the world, in particular.

When China exploded a nuclear device, this association did not condemn it but its committee members had expressed their satisfaction as a guarantee of peace in this part of the world. Why this distinction I know not? Would they kindly explain to those who differ from them as to why they welcome or condone China exploding a nuclear device? In fact they have not so far criticised China for not signing the Test-Ban treaty. I for one congratulate the Peoples Republic of China in carrying out the necessary tests both for research purposes, for defence as well as for peaceful purposes. And I am glad that China is a member of the Nuclear Club. I feel Sri Lanka too should join the Nuclear Club if possible.

Sarath Vattala.

55/3, Seevali Lane, Wattala.

30.5.74

අත්වැසියා--Fact or Fiction

Sir,

There is a legend in Sinhala folklore that to be a successful planter one must be endowed with "athavassi" (අත්වැසියා). That is, a certain quality of soul or spirit which externally manifests by transmitting itself from the body, along fore-arm and finger-tip, to the seed which one plants in the soil, making it grow successfully; just as certain psychics, such as Fr. Matthew and my great-aunt caroline (Mrs. E. L. F. de Soysa) for example, have or had the gift of healing, viz. a certain electricity of touch at the tip of their fingers (rather on the lines of the impulses or vibrations given out by the Electric Eel) which

transmits itself to the patient and makes him well.

This particular brand of 'faith-healing' by the laying-on-of-hands is a gift which usually originates during a time of severe illness and or deep mystic experience. Whether these powers spring from God's Divinity or out of Satan's Armoury, however, is not always easy to distinguish, for it is well-known that the devil, masquerading as "an angel of light" can counterfeit almost everything that God can do, except perhaps resurrect the dead, when it suits his scheming purposes to wit.

Even the gift of healing, therefore, could sometimes come from Lucifer: and that is why we Seventh-Day Adventists have been forewarned to be wary of 'faith healers'.

Fr. Matthew also gets the power, after praying to St. Michael and his Holy Angels, of discovering places where malefic 'charms' are buried, with the purpose of unearthing them and removing the evil influence which seems to emanate from them (a gift which is akin to water-divining, which Cardinal Cooray is said to possess); and also claims to have an ability to exorcise the 'demon-possessed' with the aid of a 'blessed' crucifix placed on the stomach of the victim; which appears to burn and drive away evil spirits, e.g. Kalukumaraya, who are supposed to inhabit the bodies of living persons.

Whether these are supernatural demonic powers which 'haunt' and torment the minds and bodies of human beings, or a spontaneous psychotic condition induced by auto-suggestion, or the way the individual concerned has developed from infancy; coupled with a preconditioned belief in the ability of the exorcist to remove such condition: me not for an ordinary mortal like myself, with a limited knowledge of such things, to try to decide! However, the argument between the two opposite schools of thought, respectively represented by Fr. Matthew and Dr. Kovoor at either end of the scale, will continue its stalemated, deadlocked and unresolved course until Christ Himself comes, and puts an end to all our idle speculations, by cutting short our vain works with His Righteousness.

To return to our subject, is

athavassi real or imaginary?

Or in other words, is it just a coincidence that a seed planted by one person dies, while another's grows to full maturity?

Perhaps conditions for successful growth were just right in the case of the latter a great KNOWLEDGE of plants and soils, together with the right mixture and amount of fertiliser required, and the right time and season for planting, etc. influencing his effort better than the other's. Not necessarily අත්-වැසි.

Athavassi (අත්-වැසි) is not only a gift which tests or measures the successful planter, but can be applied to animal husbandry too.

In the case of my poultry-rearing Uncle Harry, for instance, of his two male-servants Piyadasa and Haramanis Appu who tend the fowls, one seems to have the gift of අත්-වැසි while the other has not. The hens lay eggs a-plenty on Piyadasa's persuasion, but appear to go barren with fright no sooner they see Haramanis! Isn't this a clear case of the presence and absence of අත්-වැසි?

Jepharis.

Colombo.
29.5.74

What Price Democracy

Sir,

Popular acceptance or belief is no criterion of the worth or truth of any Proposition. For instance, each of the four main religions in the world is held as sacred by millions of its devotees, although their doctrines are irreconcilable and each is condemned as a heresy by the devotees of the other three.

2. The same is true of the popular concept of the value of Democracy based on the universal franchise, as a form of Government. It seems to be accepted without question that this is the ideal form of Government for a country. Politicians especially, as the high priests of Democracy, miss no opportunity to extol its virtues. This can of course be understood as their prospects depend on its operation. But a moment's serious detached reflection will show that this belief is based on false premises.

3. One is that all men are created equal and therefore that their votes are of equal value. The very claim that men have been created is itself rejected by many men of sound judgement. Created or not? that no two men are equal in any single respect must be obvious to anyone in his senses. Can a manual labourer be regarded as equal in intelligence and responsibility to a Judge of the Supreme Court or a peasant to the Chancellor of a University? Yet under Democracy and the Universal Franchise their votes are of equal value and, as the number of the former classes is vastly superior to the latter, the policy of a Government under this system will be shaped mainly by the wishes of the former nursery controlling the policy of a home or the kindergarten that of a school would be apt analogies.

4. In Sri Lanka this system has opened up a happy hunting ground to opportunists and unscrupulous adventurers who vie with each other to pander to the basest instincts of the voters by offering them bribes in the shape of free rice and various free services at the expense of the country's progress, in return for their votes. Having got themselves elected in this manner they proceed to reward their supporters by giving them plums in the various services and interfering in their favour in the administration of the Public Service. They will also pander to their reactionary demands and tendencies regarding race, religion, language and culture and thereby obstruct the evolution of a united and progressive Ceylonese Nation.

5. Having catered to the wishes of the electorate in this manner,

Frog Crisis

Frenchmen, writes, "News week," appear to be threatened with a crisis that will disturb many of them at least as much as the energy crisis. Frogs' legs, a delicacy that France consumes at the rate of 800 million a year, are in increasingly short supply. The reason is pollution, which has decimated France's domestic frog population and wiped it out.

they in their turn help themselves in various ways at the expense of the country. It is generally believed that foreign banks hold their ill-gotten gains. Democracy based on the universal franchise, instead of being the means of promoting the country's interests, thus degenerates into a racket between the electors and the elected to help each other at the country's expense. This process has been in operation since Independence. The country has been reduced to penury as a result and election pledges such as two measures of free rice can no longer be fulfilled.

6. The new technique adopted to meet this situation and to placate the masses is to create class antagonisms by attacking capitalists and destroying the established economy and institutions of the country by such measures as suppressing private enterprise, fixing ceilings on incomes, lands and ownership and rentals of house property and thereby punishing the honest, hardworking, thrifty and enterprising section of the people, who have built up in conformity with the law, their own and the country's prosperity, thus leaving them so frustrated and perplexed that one or two of them have even committed suicide.

7. The administration of the Services has been handed over to the Politicians. This would have been all right if they were men who were in a position to decide issues strictly on their merits without fear or favour. That however is not the case. Politicians are under the obligation to win votes by doing favours to their supporters. Their political prospects depend largely on the extent to which they succeed in doing it. This obligation, *ipso facto*, would hamper their freedom of action and vitiate the quality and impartiality of their administrative decisions. Can a sound Government be established under such conditions?

8. Under Democracy based on the Universal Franchise the country today is in the toils of a group of men who have brought her to her economic ruin, promoted class antagonism, undermined sound Administration, Justice, Law and Order, abolished the Freedom of

the Press and of Public Assembly, discouraged Private enterprise and sacrificed the Country's interests in order to promote their alien -ism: the ladders up which they climbed to the top.

9. It is time that the intelligentsia, who owe everything they have and are to their Motherland, roused themselves from their apathy and made an effort to rescue her from her peril and set up a Government which, led by patriotic men of high calibre and unhampered by the obligation to please the voters at any cost, will eliminate the evils mentioned above, set the country back on the road to Freedom, Justice, Law and Order and promote progress and the evolution of a United Ceylonese Nation.

"For, while the rabble with their thumb-worn creeds,

Their large professions and their little deeds,

Mingle, in selfish strife, Lo, Freedom weeps,

Wrong rules the land and waiting Justice steps",

Dr. J. P. Perera

22, Palm Grove,
Colombo 3.

Press Association appeals to President on Journalists' behalf

THE Press Association of Ceylon had appealed to the President, Mr. William Gopollawa, to exercise his prerogative in respect of the jail sentence imposed on Mr. Frederick Lionel David de Silva by the Criminal Justice Commission (Foreign Exchange Offences) following charges of contempt of court.

Here is the full text of the appeal addressed by the Association to the President:--

"While assuring Your Excellency of our highest respect for the members of the Criminal Justice Commission appointed by Your Excellency and for all judicial tribunals in the Republic, we the undersigned, on behalf of the Press Association of Ceylon earnestly

appeal to you for the exercise of your prerogative in the matter of the sentence now being served by Frederick Lionel David de Silva on the order made by the Criminal Justice Commission (Exchange Offences) on June 8th 1974 on a charge of contempt of court. Our appeal to Your Excellency is based entirely on compassionate ground.

"Although Mr. Frederick Lionel David de Silva, Deputy Editor, (Ceylon Daily News), is not a member of our Association, the Press Association of Ceylon as the most widely for representative organisation of journalists in the country with a membership drawn from editors, editorial executives and newspapermen of the 'Ceylon Daily News', 'Times of Ceylon', 'Dinamina', 'Lankadipa', 'Ceylon Observer', 'Janatha', 'Ceylon Daily Mirror', 'Silumina', 'Thinakaran', 'Tribune', 'Ealamani', 'Virakesari' and other national periodicals feels it our sacred duty to address this appeal to Your Excellency on behalf of a fellow journalist who has practiced our profession for more than twenty five years.

"We sincerely trust and rest assured that Your Excellency will extend to our appeal your urgent attention, sympathy and human consideration. We are addressing copies of this appeal to Hon. Sirimavo Bandaranaike, Prime Minister and Hon. Felix Dias Bandaranaike, Minister of Justice and circulating it to our colleagues of the national press."

Mervyn de Silva
President,

A. Kariyakarawana,
secretary.

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CHRONICLE

June 8 - 14

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

SATURDAY, JUNE 8: The Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike, yesterday met a deputation of the Government Medical Officers' Association and heard their grievances over the salaries issue: the Prime Minister will inform the Ministers about the issues raised by the GMOA over the latest salary offer made to them by the Cabinet and will inform the GMOA later about the Government's decision. The Companies (Special Provisions) Bill was passed unanimously in the National State Assembly yesterday with amendments moved by the Government. The Finance Minister, Dr. N. M. Perera, left for Washington yesterday to attend the meeting of the Committee of 20 Ministers on the proposal for international Monetary Reform: the meeting begins on June 12. The Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike, will address two United Front rallies today at Kurunegala and tomorrow at Kandy. According to the *Daily Mirror*, the resumed debate on the motion by the UNP in the Colombo Municipal Council to condemn the Government over the incidents at the precincts of the Town Hall on Republic Day, came to an abrupt end yesterday when the UNP applied the closure: several Opposition Municipal Councillors opposed the closure and the Mayor, Mr. M. H. M. Fowzie, declined to vote: pandemonium reigned at the meeting. According to the *Daily Mirror*, the micro-wave telecommunication link between Sri Lanka and India will be implemented shortly: the Indo-Sri Lanka Sub Committee for Economic Co-operation which concluded discussions in Colombo yesterday decided that it would meet again very early to draft the memorandum of understanding for the execution of the micro-wave project. According to the *Daily News*, Sri Lanka will try to get a consensus amongst tea-producing countries for phasing out sales at the London auctions: she will also actively pursue the question of having quality labels for tea at the FAO conference on Tea to be held in Rome next week. Chinese Vice Premier, Teng Hsiao-Ping, has dismissed India's nuclear test as an event of little importance. Britain has made contingency plans to evacuate British citizens from Uganda if President Idi Amin carries out a threat to expel all Britons from the country.

SUNDAY, JUNE 9: The Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike, addressing a mammoth United Front rally yesterday at Kurunegala said that despite the numerous problems the people were facing, they were not prepared to hand back the countries to the reactionaries: according to the *Observer* an estimated 100,000 people assembled for the meeting. According to the *Observer*, the Land Reform Commission will take stern action against any persons who commit mischief in lands already vested in the Commission and

thereby negate the aims and objects of the Commission: the Chairman of the Commission wants the public to bring to the notice of the Commission's head office or the Offices of the District Organisational Committees any instances of damage caused by landowners to their lands vested in the Commission. According to the *Times*, several young lecturers at the University of Sri Lanka have refused to accept scholarships for post-graduate research abroad owing to the stringent terms covering their acceptance. An official Sri Lanka delegation left for the People's Republic of China for discussions relating to the Joint Shipping Service between the two countries. According to the *Times*, Sri Lanka will go metric shortly: a Bill amending the Weights and Measures Ordinance to give effect to this has been tabled in the National State Assembly and will be taken up for debate shortly. According to the *Times* worm-infested 'bathala' which were said to be unfit for human consumption were supplied by the Marketing Department to the Castle Street Hospital for Women last week. United States Secretary of States, Dr. Henry Kissinger, said yesterday that official Soviet discouragement was at least partly responsible for a fall in Jewish emigration from the Soviet Union this year. According to *Reuters* opinion in Britain is hardening in political circles that Britain's minority Labour Government will call a general election in the autumn; most Cabinet Ministers are said to be in favour of an early election.

MONDAY, JUNE 10: According to the latest review of the World Bank published in the *Daily News*, as it lead story, the need for a more clearly demarcated role for the private sector was vital for a healthy private sector activity in a mixed economy: the review adds that in Sri Lanka, large scale private industry is restricted in its operation for the domestic market to maximising the utilisation of existing capacity and setting up medium-size labour intensive manufacturing units based essentially on domestic machinery and raw materials. According to the *Daily Mirror*, the Government Medical Officers' Association and the Medical Specialists Association will meet Pieter Keunemen, Minister of Housing and Construction and chairman of the Sectoral Committee of the National Planning Council which reported on the new salary scales for Government doctors, today, to discuss some amendments they propose to the report of the Sectoral Committee, which has been accepted by the Cabinet. According to the *Daily Mirror*, Six Deputy Ministers and an M.P. are now acting for seven Ministers who are out of the island: The Speaker of the National State Assembly, Mr. Stanley Tillekeratne left for Gaberone last Saturday to attend the Conference of Commonwealth Parliamentary Association in the African region. The Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike, on the occasion of the takeover of Queens Hotel and Hotel Suisse in Kandy said that in recent times it has been observed that the standards at these two hotels had been deteriorating and at the request of the people of the Senkadagala electorate these two hotels were vested with the Hotels Corporation. Nearly 250 delegates are expected to attend the Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference to be held in Sri Lanka during the first two weeks of September. The Deputy Minister of Foreign Trade of the GDR arrives today to officially open the National Textile

Corporation's Textile complex at Tulhiriya. The French South Pacific Nuclear test site at Mururoa atoll will be closed to shipping from next Tuesday, indicating that France's last above-ground tests are imminent. The *Sunday Times* of London in an editorial comment has said that any tarnishing of reputation of Dr. Henry Kissinger by Watergate would be worse for the world.

TUESDAY, JUNE 11: According to the *Daily News*, a refund of compulsory savings for certain categories of persons will be made soon: the Finance Ministry will shortly issue regulations in regard to this after the Inland Revenue Department and the Central Bank have worked out a scheme for the purpose: those likely to benefit from this facility are persons who fell into the Rs. 6000 to Rs. 12,000 income group per year and made compulsory savings payment for the income tax year 1971-72: one of the reasons for the refund is to relieve hardships of income tax payers who are no longer paying compulsory savings and those who have retired. According to the *Daily Mirror*, the delay in the issue of the "Land Reform Bonds" has resulted in the Department of Inland Revenue not being able to collect over Rs. 10 million due to it on account of Estate Duty. According to the *Daily Mirror*, patients are now being admitted to paying wards of the Colombo General Hospital: the paying wards had been vacant since May 1 following the boycott of these wards by doctors. Mr. W. T. Jayasinghe, Secretary Ministry of Defence and Foreign Affairs, left for India yesterday: he is expected to meet Foreign Minister Sardar Swaran Singh and Foreign Secretary Mr. Kewal Singh for discussions on bilateral questions. The Ceylon Chamber of Commerce has protested to the Indian High commission in Sri Lanka about the reluctance of the giant State Trading Corporation of India to pay nearly Rs. 200,000 in foreign exchange to six local shippers for exports of copra, arecanut and cloves, some of which had been sent as far back as 1969: one of the local shippers is the state-run Consolexpo. The Duke of Gloucester, the only surviving brother of the late King George VI, died at the age of 74. Soviet-built MIG fighters of the Egyptian air force will escort President Nixon's plane when he enters Egyptian Air space for the start of his three-day Middle East visit on Wednesday. Palestinians have decided to boycott the Geneva peace conference unless a satisfactory formula is found for their participations.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 12: According to the *Daily News*, the Government Medical Officer's Association has suggested to the ministerial sub-committee on the 'brain drain' that one way to halt the 'brain drain' from Sri Lanka was to make long-term leave available liberally

Garlic Oil as an Insecticide

Laboratory and field tests conducted here have proved that garlic oil is an effective insecticidal and larvicidal substance. A study on garlic oil was undertaken by the bio-medical group of the Bhaba Atomic Research Centre and the findings have been published in the latest issue of "Nuclear India".

to all medical officers: they have proposed a scheme whereby 150 doctors a year may be allowed no-pay leave, on completion of five years of service: they have said a maximum of six years abroad should be allowed: in the case of senior medical officers in the specialist category, the GMOA has suggested that they be granted a year's no-pay leave abroad at the end of every four years: the ministerial sub-committee has accepted the basic principles underlying the GMOA plan. According to the *Daily News*, the massive rallies organised by the United Front have had a shattering impact on the UNP and leading groups within it: divisions within the party, which were earlier more personal than political have sharpened into serious dissensions over party politics and tactics. According to the *Daily Mirror*, quoting the Director of Economic Research of the Central Bank, since Sri Lanka has an unemployment rate of 17.4 per cent, the unemployed along with those who fall into the lowest income brackets would be living below the poverty line. An agreement for cultural and scientific exchange between the USSR and Sri Lanka was signed in Colombo yesterday at the Ministry of Defence and Foreign Affairs: the agreement envisages the mutual exchange of dance troupes, teachers students, and writers as well as of films and radio programs between the two countries. US Secretary of State, Dr. Henry Kissinger, threatened to resign unless there was an end to what he called "attacks on his honour" concerning Watergate-related wiretapping in Washington at a press conference in Austria. Dr. Kissinger said he would quit if news leaks continued, alleging he was directly responsible for or involved in wiretapping of his aides. The Italian Government resigned yesterday after three months in office. President Idi Amin of Uganda suggested that the man he deposed as President, Dr. Milton Obote, should be the next Commonwealth Secretary General.

THURSDAY, JUNE 13: According to the *Daily News*, the Government is expected to decide soon on a law which will compel periodic declaration of assets and liabilities by Ministers, MPs, Judges, all state officers, chairmen, directors, executives of corporations and statutory boards and officials and elected representatives of local bodies: the likely statutory period for making declaration will be every five years: the declaration will include the assets and liabilities of the spouse, and children and assets both local and abroad. According to the *Daily Mirror* the implementation of the 28 demands submitted to the Government by the pro-United Front Joint Committee of Trade Union Organisations will now be taken up at a political level with the leaders of the three parties of the UF. According to a Central Bank press release, the Bank has taken steps to restrict bank credit to the levels prevailing at May 24 in order to prevent an inflationary situation: in recent months, adds the release, bank credit has risen much faster than production and supplies and if corrective action was not taken prices would go up further creating a very unhealthy situation. The GDR Deputy Minister of foreign Trade, Mr. P. Clausnitzer, yesterday officially handed over the Tulhiriya textile mills which was built at a cost of Rs. 240 million with GDR aid. At the invitation of the Sri Lanka Press Council, a delegation of eight newspaper editors representing all three languages groups and journalists from other leading newspapers appeared

before the Council to present their views of journalistic code of ethics: According to the *Daily News* the university campuses are experiencing serious difficulties in providing library and laboratory facilities owing to foreign exchange not being granted for the purchase of books and chemicals. Addressing the second World Islamic Tamil Literature Conference held in Madras, the Deputy Minister of Information and Broadcast, Mr. A. L. Abdul Majeed, said that Sri Lanka does not perpetrate or commit any injustice, atrocity, repression or uncivilised acts against the Tamil speaking people in Sri Lanka. President Nixon arrived in Cairo yesterday to a tumultuous reception at the beginning of a week-long tour of the Middle East, during which he will seek ways of moving Israel and Arab States towards a permanent peace settlement. American Congressional leaders rallied to the defence of Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger, by urging him not to resign because of news stories questioning his alleged role in wire-taps related to the Watergate scandal.

FRIDAY, JUNE 14: The Deputy Minister of Defence and Foreign Affairs, Mr. Lakshman Jayakody, said at a press conference yesterday that Sri Lanka will be totally opposed, if India turns its nuclear capability to develop nuclear weapons: the Deputy Minister said, that India had stated that its recent test was aimed at developing nuclear energy for peaceful purposes: Sri Lanka accepted that statement which was made by the Indian Prime Minister: the Deputy Minister also said that the drug addiction among the youths of Sri Lanka

had become a serious threat to society and the drug addiction had increased five-fold within the last five years. According to the *Daily Mirror*, the British Medical Council has withdrawn the recognition of the MBBS degree of the University of Sri Lanka: the decision to withdraw recognition has been intimated to the Ceylon Medical Council by the BMC: this means that doctors holding the MBBS degrees will not be able to secure employment in British hospitals or set up in private practice there: however doctors holding this degree would not be debarred from studying in British hospitals for higher qualifications: no reason was given for the withdrawal of this recognition. According to the *Daily News*, the Government is hoping to set up a Bandaranaike Institute of International Studies under the proposed Bandaranaike Trust: the broad purposes of the institute will be to make possible a serious academic study of international affairs and train young career diplomats in languages etc. According to the annual report of the Colombo Plan published by the Colombo Plan Bureau, Sri Lanka received over 27 million dollars in the form of bilateral capital aid and technical assistance under the Colombo Plan during 1972. Police fanned out through three West German states hunting a guerilla party which the police fear might attack the stadium on the eve of the World Cup-soccer match which gets underway in Bonn today. Despite India's nuclear bomb tests, an international Aid Consortium is expected to grant the Indian Government a substantial increase in assistance to help it overcome a crisis due to soaring oil and food prices.

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THE SUBCONTINENT

Indo-Bangladesh Relations

by K. Rangaswamy

May 25,

Indo-Bangladesh agreements just concluded may be said to mark the beginning of a new, more mature and practical relations between the two countries. For two years after its Liberation, Bangladesh was engaged in the immediate task of rehabilitating and resettling its people uprooted by the Pakistan Army's atrocities and putting the shattered economy in some sort of order.

India, with all its own difficulties, provided assistance of the magnitude of Rs. 230 crores of which Rs. 137 crores were grants and the rest loans on very easy terms. The assistance was in the shape of supply of foodgrains, essential goods like petroleum products, fertilisers, coal, cement, cotton, drugs, etc., and shelter material, restoration of telecommunication and rail links and so on.

The earlier transactions were as between one government and another. This phase of Indo-Bangladesh relations is now over. The new agreements on trade and economic co-operation which involved tough bargaining also, reveal the businesslike relationship that is being forged.

UNDER THE AGREEMENT India would provide a credit of Rs. 5 crores for the establishment of a cement plant at Chatak in Bang-

ladesh. The feasibility report on the project is taken as the project report itself and work is due to commence almost immediately. India will supply all the machinery and equipment necessary for the plant. Limestone will be supplied from Meghalaya. At the same time a clinker plant will be established in Meghalaya and the clinker will be sent to Chittagong for being powdered and sent to the Cement plant at Chatak.

A fertiliser plant, estimated to cost about Rs. 90 crores, is to be set up in Bangladesh. Feasibility studies have already been completed and work on the project report is about to commence. India is to provide about Rs. 30 crores worth of machinery and equipment for the project. Bangladesh will find Rs. 30 crores from its own resources and will seek external assistance to the tune of Rs. 30 crores. India is also to assist in the establishment of a sponge iron plant in Bangladesh based on supply of iron ore from India. Feasibility study for this project is to be ready by December 1974.

INDIA has agreed to provide credit of Rs. 69 crores altogether for which agreements have been concluded. Of this Rs. 5 crores is for the establishment of the cement plant, another Rs. 10 crores for commodity purchase and Rs. 6 crores for the purchase of textile machinery, all of them on government to government basis. In addition Rs. 48 crores will be provided as credit by the Industrial Development Bank of India. Assistance during the financial year 1974-75 would come to Rs. 38 crores and the balance will be utilised subsequently.

It has been agreed that the volume of trade between the two countries would be of the order of Rs. 30 crores each way for the next three years. The trade is to be on a balanced basis.

THREE COMMODITIES which figured prominently during the Delhi talks were jute, coal and newsprint. Both sides had a lot of complaints to make. It may be recalled that Bangladesh had agreed to supply six lakh bales of jute but only two lakh bales came to India. India agreed to supply 600,000 tons of coal of which one

half was to be moved by railway. But the difficulties faced by the Indian railway in reaching even essential goods to the people of this country during the past several months prevented India from fulfilling its part of the contract.

India's alternative suggestion that coal could be shipped from Calcutta to Chittagong was not acceptable to Bangladesh because of the inadequate transport system inside that country. Newsprint which Bangladesh promised to supply was not moving towards India. Each side has now agreed to take energetic measures to fulfil promptly the agreements reached.

A point about which Bangladesh was very sore was the smuggling of jute into India by what were described as "powerful vested interests." This smuggling of jute has a long history. When Pakistan was ruling over Bangladesh India did not bother to take strong step to check smuggling. Later during the liberation struggle the leaders of the Mukti Bahini encouraged smuggling of jute across the border to India.

Over the years the smuggling operation has been perfected on both sides of the border. In Bangladesh the State Trading Corporation has the monopoly of jute purchase. But it has not yet developed a machinery which could provide convenient centres where the growers could sell their jute without difficulty. The result is that the grower prefers to take his jute to the nearest market across the border. Also, the Bangladesh Taka is probably about 50% of the Indian rupee in real value, although officially they are at par, and this is a powerful factor which influenced the operations on both sides of the border. Border trade which has agreed to soon after Bangladesh become independent was suspended within a few months. The two governments have now agreed that effective steps must be taken to stop this smuggling and a Joint Committee at the ministerial level will soon be set up to deal with the problem.

THE TWO GOVERNMENTS also agreed to set up a Joint Commission at the ministerial level to promote closer co-operation in the field of production, trade, technical development and manufacture of

Didn't Help

Forty-three-year-old Monathan Nicholas Vivien Francis Hilary Boise Randolph Montague Jarvis Hyacinth Bertram St. John Aubin-Gale de la Courtie has the longest name in Britain. He took the names of all his relatives in the hope of inheriting their fortunes. His hopes, however, have failed to materialize: all they have left him so far is debts.

jute. There seems to be however a feeling that the question of co-ordinating the jute policies of the two countries is too complicated to admit of an easy solution. A ticklish question is the price of Bangladesh jute.

An important agreement relates to rail movement between Calcutta and Agartala in Tripura across Bangladesh. It has been agreed that goods and passengers from India could move by rail to Chandpur, a river port in Bangladesh, and from Chandpur to Agartala by rail via Akaura in Bangladesh. A joint survey will be carried out for the provision of a rail link from Akaura to Agartala to facilitate cross traffic from Calcutta to Agartala and vice versa.

The controversial Farakka barrage still defied solution. From India's point of view there is a distinct improvement from the previous position. The joint declaration said "the two Prime Ministers took note of the fact that the Farakka barrage project would be commissioned before the end of 1974." This is an advance on what was said in July last year or February this year when similar joint statement gave the impression that the project would not operate at all without prior agreement. But the present declaration also adds, "the two sides expressed their determination that before the Farakka project is commissioned they would arrive at a mutually acceptable allocation of the water available during the periods of minimum flow in the Ganga." What is welcomed is that a decision must be reached before the end of the year. The controversy is indeed a very minor one if it is remembered that it relates to supply of water during two to three months only in summer when the flow in the Ganges is less. For the rest of the year Bangladesh's problem is one of floods, not scarcity of water. It may be recalled that when a former World Bank President landed in Dacca some years ago the first request Ayub Khan, the then President of Pakistan made was that Bangladesh should be saved from floods. Bangladesh has enough water to submerge the entire country to a height of three feet. Even now, in the case of areas which received water for irrigation from the Ganges before

1947 there would be no difficulty in getting water.

But subsequently the Pakistan Government went on increasing their demand far in excess of what was being used traditionally by bringing in new areas for irrigation from the Ganga waters, by demanding navigational facilities and fresh water for removing the salinity of the water. A. M. Abbas, Bangladesh's irrigation expert, is still carrying the briefs he produced under the orders of the Pakistan government when Bangladesh was part of Pakistan. A factor which must be borne in mind is that the need for water in India itself is growing and the Ganges and its tributaries are the main source for northern India. Bangladesh has many rivers whose waters just drift into the Bay of Bengal and if Bangladesh needs more water it must turn to rivers like Brahmaputra and Meghna.

The most heartening part of the agreement relates to the finalisation of the boundary between India and Bangladesh. Only half of the boundary was settled and demarcated when Bangladesh was part of Pakistan. For the rest Pakistan created legal and other difficulties and demarcation was held up. Every now and then there used to be exchange of fire across the border and tension was deliberately maintained by Pakistan.

Bangladesh has now agreed that the whole of Berubari, a subject of litigation in India, will be with India. Every sector of the boundary, where there has been some controversy has been taken by the two sides and the basis on which the boundary is to be drawn has been clearly laid down. Detailed maps for all the sectors should be ready by the end of this year. Demarcation is a longer process but the boundary will be easily understood and recognised by the common man in the two countries.

India's relations with Bangladesh have thus been put on a firm foundation based on mutual interests. Pakistan has been endeavouring to provoke conflicts between India and Bangladesh aided by anti-Indian elements inside Bangladesh. Bhutto has been in great hurry to visit Bangladesh. But Bangladesh leaders feel that the visit will materialise only after

they have worked out all the details of the various issues to be discussed and settled. What reception Bhutto gets and what emerges from his visit to Dacca must be watched with interest.

Inania of this, that and the other

Suspicion Unfounded

by INNA

A big leader of a christian denomination looked into the affairs of a returner from abroad and found that he had signed top on the list of this recommendation of five lines in July 1971: "It is better if all the ministers and their leader discuss this all important matter of justice and of ministry-celibacy." Five lines and not more were signed on July 25th by six ministers over a happy glass of orange juice prior to the departure (for studies) of the first-signer, scheduled for 27th July from Katunayake.

The communications breakdown came on again, like turning water on tap in bygone days! The celibacy became impurity, chastity, marriage etc., by half-starved sex-maniacs who sold typed, cyclostyled sheets for a rupee at Fort station with garbled versions of affair! Of course, automatically the justice became Injustice with a big "I".

The returner-from-abroad duly finished his studies and settled down to a job of work but no end of harassment crossed his path through phones, letters, religious-women-message-carriers, for eight months; was asked not to preach; was asked to get out of his place of work and all in the name of Christ and Justice.

Meanwhile, Justice was talked of in a big way. Unjust ways and means were employed and the big meeting decisions were abandoned, to all intents and purposes. Give a dog a bad name and hang him! Try to found an unfounded suspicion and you'd find as many

The One-Acre Farm

eyes peering at you as hoppers in Pitipana! Now youth are being told: "don't go there, you'd lose your soul".

The sad outcome of that unprepared synod was available to me in a European magazine which said: "The great disappointment of the Pope at seeing that only France, Spain and Canada had prepared fully by discussion for the two questions on Celibacy in the ministry and World Justice." Other countries, especially Third World christian leaders coming for their central meeting had just wasted time and poor people's money (which is very easily done, if you ask me!)

Old Gab once shouted out that ministers must focus attention on ladies' mini-skirts in sermons. He was hard-up. Old Pappylooks shouted out the same thing: Jooles went into a kindergarten and looked at a sfeeveless girl and said: "this one's morality is bad".

Pope John XXIII knowing all this in 1959 Lent, (we are told) said that "you give away your thoughts when you harp on women's attire. Don't be too morbid and speak of such things". Wiseman he realised that, may be, women dress and undress for men, but that's no reason why some men should always speak of this. Why join too early? why have cradle-snatching and put into an enclosed place aforetime, see? So the Chastity-Celibacy shouts and garbled versions of "Hebrew" scholars reveal a would-have-been sector in that christian denomination, among some few who do not yet know that an excellent candidate is still the one who has known love, rather than one who has been near - missing it all the time! When such men lead, life can lead to hell, for others.

And all the while, work of Justice comes to a stand-still. No retrieval of good-name or reputation. How can this christian denomination pretend to stand for justice when it is unjust within, on many counts?

What DID the October 1971 Synod say? Communism can take a line from this example - precept sentence: "No one can speak about justice who is not first seen to be just" this is the opening line of the Justice in practice (result of the Catholic Bishops Synod of 1971).

Will my christian leaders (a helper-bishop) realise the truth of this sentence the one mentioned in paragraph one above.

SHAMBA

Determined to Go On

by Anatory Bukoba

May 19,

A day for a rest it was, and so I went for a walk. Four miles I had been told this walk would be, and just as well or I would, not have gone, for it turned out to be seven miles, or fourteen with the return. It was 8 a.m. when I left and 5 p.m. when I got back, and I was on the move just about all the time. It was a well used route, and the first part on a path I would not have used as a rule, in the day to day course of life, as I could not see when I put my feet, because of the long grass on the sides. It would have hid snakes.

Part of the route was in water, a stretch at a time. There were no forks except in one place; just cross-paths where I could not go wrong. A canal with a high wooden bridge of sticks but no sides stopped me: I could not face it, and stepped into the water and went through up to my thighs. Then it was I could have gone wrong. A path went off to the right. I saw a white trail on the rock; it was worn white. That turned out to be the right track. The path turned into a cart-track and then a grand road. There was real mud at two places, where I just had to step through it, to my ankles.

May 20,

Learnt did I, today, that it is Republic Day in two days. Someone said so just to say why he was off on leave. The radio is full of it, but I have seen no signs of it, nor so much as a whisper in any place. So did it come to my mind, that some time in the last two days, I saw how quite two things are life in Ceylon as we learn it from the press, and life here as it is lived.

The press seem to live in a small world of its own, with its own tales of what is on, especially here, but for all the world it may just as well be a tale of Mars, the planet, so much some other thing does it appear to those whose lives are not the same at all, and that means all of us.

Arranged I for two lads to sleep on the Shamba while I am away; our housewife will not do it alone, and I cannot blame her. She did it for quite some while. I really gave the two lads no choice, but they are still free to disregard my wishes. I warned them that they would do so at their own peril.

The bull calf, with the bed sores on his chest, died yesterday at this other place, as I learnt just an hour ago on my arrival there. His mother was very old, a good milker, but, so far, as I know, had never given us a heifer calf, and I wanted just one to perpetuate her. She was so old, she died, leaving us with this last calf to bring up.

May 27,

C. S. Lewis *The Screwtape Letters* is what I have been reading the last few days. A quarter of a million copies of it have been sold. A slim volume, it is power-packed reading, and I thought at the time it was making a deep impression on me. Just now I cannot recall anything to mind, except just one, inaction, us being reduced to state where we do nothing at all. Is this what is meant by frittering away our time? On reflection, a hidden life, as it is called, is to be valued but that is a life of activity. Mere noise is not activity.

So returned to the Shamba did I; a long time away, it was, and it seemed like a very long time, during those days that I was away. I found there had been no change while I was away, except one which I shall mention later, and very thankful was I that the Shamba was still intact and not abandoned.

One thing that keeps me wedded to this place are these Shamba notes. I suppose I am not a typical villager, but I think I must in these notes be making contact with village like at certain points.

May 28,

An error in this week's *Tribune* rendered Fr. Martin d'Arcy's name as Marthis d'Arcy in the *Shamba* article, but I know that at last one person recognized his name, and that because he knew the quotation, so I understood. The previous number of *Tribune* has me saying that Ceylonese can live on a measure of rice a week; I am sure I wrote two measures, but my housewife tells me that even that is not enough.

This morning I learnt that a thief walked away with the walls of the new house. He or they had started to remove the roof, too, certainly the eaves. I am glad the walls have gone, but I am sorry a thief has the cadjans; the walls cut off a vital part of the acre from those sitting in the old house. Only the children have been using the new house, to play in, the roof has to be lifted back into position at least once a day. The centre of it and that is nearly the whole of it slips off and the main beam only stays up because and it is firmly secured at one end, or rather, on one side. The roof is what, I believe, used to be called American style, just sloping one way and nog able.

There is a cool wind tonight. It tried to rain several times during the day, but it always stopped within seconds or minutes. I made no come-back to manual work. My blacksmith has twice failed to make me a new *Vici katha* so I cancelled the order, for the time being anyway. He has wanted to make it all in the afternoon after each visit, but it did not suit my plans and I gave him longer. This has made him wait until after my next visit each time, before starting work, so each time it has been like a visit wasted.

People have remarked on my being away so long. While I was away, I certainly felt I was being away a very long time. I am going to give this *Shamba* one more chance; it is a question of people joining me and staying here, and on my ability to feed them.

My own countrymen, the people of this island, ask me sometimes what the political situation is; certainly I have never, felt it so quiet. On the occasions I see a newspaper, I would say, from

glancing at the headlines, that it had never been so stormy, and the newspapers are not always to blame. There are times when they have faithfully to report the speeches, the government speeches. I would say this quickness is a healthy one, or rather, situation. I have heard it described as a tired democracy. I do not agree that some one should always be making a noise but let me say this, that perhaps life was never so quite as before April 5th. 1971. We know now that many people were doing some cooking, or rather, hatching up something, then.

Let us hope that tomorrow will bring a new day in this *Shamba*. Certainly, I had never felt so low, and it was going to take more than promises to make me feel better.

Chesterton once wrote a great poem on Alfred the Great. It was called the Ballad of the White Horse. I think, the difference between Alfred the Great and all the others was this, that when all had given up and dispersed to their houses it was Alfred who called them all out again for one more battle after the last of a series of battles had been fought and lost, and he won the day. He was the one man who never gave up.

May 29,

These words read I today. I was wondering about myself. My reluctance to work, the point of working at all, the futility, and then I read what follows.

I have coveted no one's silver or gold or apparel. You yourselves know that these hands ministered to my necessities, and to those who were with me. In all things I have shown you that by so toiling one must help the weak, remembering the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, it is more blessed to give than to receive.

Those words these were, I shall not say here; some of you will know. It was just when I was starting to write this that I also read: *Happy the man who consider the poor and the weak, the Lord will save him in the day of Evil, and so on.* Somebody else said this.

The upshot of this all was that I started to do some handweeding. *Podi singha marra* it was I weeded, how much tougher than it was a

month ago, for some of it was breaking off about the root inspite of all the rain we have been having. Said our seven-year that what I was pulling out was good for putting on wounds. What's this I asked, for the idea of pulling out anything useful is abhorrent to me. Her mother, on being questioned, confirmed it; and just now she told me that she learned this here, where people use it so, but that it is not used thus in her village.

There was *Vel-pennala* where I was weeding, said the seven-year old that this, too, was good for wounds. What's this, I said again, and this, too, her mother confirmed. She has just told me that it is good for suppurating sores, when used with coconut milk, and when the sore is clean, it heals it when used with gingelly oil.

Old readers of *shamba*, those with good memories, will remember that we used to eat *vel pennala* here; that we do not do so now is because it has to be cooked with coconut oil, whose price is rather beyond us.

Two vegetables we ate today which are found wild around here: one of them where there is good soil, which is not the case with this acre. They are *rannowara*, pronounced *ranwara*, a leaf growing on a tree on this acre, and which we had for lunch, and *sarana*, which we had for dinner. The *rannowara* is in flower now, a yellow flower, which is used as a drink and is good for the blood.

What I did today has given that place a new look. It looks as if the jungle has been driven back a little, for *podi singha marra* is a tall weed. A young *syembella* tree stands out now without that weed around it. The weeded area is

Service

The owner of a Milan ladies wear emporium has thought up a novel way of bucking up business: he has hired a full-time fortune-teller to cater to anyone wishing to have her fortune told. This new kind of service has proved to be highly popular and business has naturally picked up tremendously.

The One-Acre Farm

still a bit of a jungle but and what is left of it can be more easily distinguished from each other.

This seems a better year for *pol-palla*, which is growing in some profusion. 'As everybody in Ceylon knows, it too is a drink and a medicine, and it is also being exported. I am living for the day when it supplants tea in Saxon countries, which use lard and fats in excess. Latin countries could stick to tea. I am also living for the day when we have Kitul estates. *Kitul-panni* or honey is, I feel, one of the answers to the sugar problem. I am waiting for the day when we have Galloway and west Highland cattle here, but people will go in for Aberdeen Angus and Hereford which are more formidable eaters. It is strange that when people think of cattle, they always think of dairy cattle, as if the beef breeds did not exist.

Here are short jottings. It is best to break *pol-palla* off above the root; then it will grow again and you will not have to go scrounging far afield for more. There is no reason to be afraid of cutting off *vel pennala* plants when you are cutting grass short, for if the root is there, it will grow again. My few *sorghum* plants, which were never cut but lost their grain, probably by being removed have new grain now growing on them; the plants are about seven-feet high. Someone gave me a maize cob so that I can plant the grain but unlike *sorghum*, it will have to be watered once the rains stop, so I was told.

May 30,

After washing my face, scrubbing my nails, and shaving by the river, I paused on the way back, where the river is very broad, with land everywhere because of the islands; the whole kind of great hall of land and water, with the great *kumbuk* trees, towering to great heights, casting it all in shade; and here I thought and reflected, and words came to me that I had heard often, that we are not to worry about how we are to eat, drink or be clothed; and I waited to hear what else I was to do, but the time was not yet for that I had to live for the moment. So it was that another day went by without my doing any work on the farm, but I do not think the day was wasted.

Our housewife cooked some *lowalu*, both the leaf and the flower, for dinner, which we had at six o'clock. The *lowalu*, not to be confused with *laverlu*, which is a fruit, is a tree which grows on this land behind the house. A whole arm of it broke off. The tree grows, too, by the road on the way to this place, and small branches seemed to have been cut off, and a woman was gathering the flower, a laborious task, as the flower is small, though it seems to grow in clusters. She did not seem interested in the leaves, but our enterprising housewife took the leaf as well.

Mosquitoes, which have not worried me much, are rather bad today. Before coming on to the *Shamba* this evening. I waited a bit on the road and looked down on the *Shamba* from that small elevation. I remarked to a passer-by what a tangle of thorn had formed, and he asked me if I was not going to clear it. His question was the sort of fillip one sometimes needs.

Today I bought a new mat for Rs. 5/-. Our housewife thinks it is made of *pang* and coconut leaf. Somebody said he has *pang* in his house but no one to weave it. This gave me the idea of setting our housewife to the task, but she resolutely said she could not. I can well understand if she feels that looking after her children and cooking is a full-time business, and that the exuberance of the children would never give her the peace and quiet she would need to work undisturbed at her weaving, so she pleads ignorance, and quite forthright about it, too, she was. Her eldest daughter has a mind of her own like her mother.

May 31,

The housewife told me that soot fell from the roof in a wind, the sudden gusts that we have, and from that part of the roof which is over the kitchen, and she asked me to replace these *cadjans* with those in the roof of the new house. So I dismantled all that roof except that part of it which forms the front eave, and I stacked the *cadjans* in case it rained. *Cadjans* are always counted in pairs, and there were sixteen. With the ones still up, it should be enough to do the kitchen roof.

With all that trouble with mosquitoes last night, I thought I had best clear round the house, and this I did, knocking off two manioc tops in the process. There were many stones lying about and I made two or three big heaps of these. Some of these stones were those I had used to mark out my vegetable beds more than a year ago.

An important thought came to me today. It was that Mary was the only person who knew Christ all through his life, the whole thirty-three years of it. This, I reckoned, makes her a very important person. She knew him right through his public ministry and the whole of the thirty years that preceded that, of which she, alone, has the key. I should think that her companionship in all we do will assure us of success. I am very glad she is called Lady of Lanka and Queen of the Indian Ocean.

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A CONCRETE SUGGESTION

Return To Coffee Growing

by Jepharis

"Those were the royal days of coffee-planting in Ceylon" observed the late Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (1859-1930) "before a single season and a rotting fungus drove a whole community through years of despair to one of the greatest commercial victories which pluck and ingenuity ever won. Not often is it that men have the heart, when their one great industry is withered, to rear up, in a few years, another as rich to take its place, and the tea-fields of Ceylon are as true a monument to courage as is the lion at Waterloo." The eminent author of historical romances, tales of twilight and the unseen, and creator of Sherlock Holmes, goes on to add that "in '72 there was no cloud yet above the skyline, and the hopes of the planters were as high and as bright as the hillsides on which they reared their crops."

(Vide. "De Profundis" p. 855 of THE CONAN DOYLE STORIES published by John Murray; and "A HUNDRED YEARS OF CEYLON TEA 1867-1967" by D. M. Forrest p. 100. Also ref. Christine Wilson's "THE BITTER BERRY"—a story of the early pioneers).

In 1972, the ear of the new Republic, it would appear that after a hundred years the wheel of history had come full circle, once again, with the suggestion that coffee ought to replace tea on the sunny hill-slopes of Sri Lanka.

THE PRICE of tea had fallen to such an alarmingly low ebb at Colombo's Chamber of Commerce Tea Auctions that year, in the wake of increasing competition from overseas producers (e.g. Assam, Kenya, S. Africa, Malagasy formerly Madagascar, Australia, S. India, S. China, & Taiwan), and the failure of our own crops in the face not so much of a "blister blight" as in the 1870s, but of vagaries in the traditional rain-drought cycle (caused by deforestation, nuclear pollution, i.e. radio-active fall-out from atom-bomb tests, and other factors) coupled with the denudation of the top-soil caused by insufficient replenishment to compensate for continual weather-erosion and nutrient-extraction; as well as the supply being greater than the demand due primarily to the Russian and Middle Eastern markets being (temporarily, as it was proved) withdrawn, making the production of tea not worth its cost: caused certain up country planters, if not the Ministry of Agriculture

or the plantation sector of the islands as a whole, to think seriously in terms of replacing tea with coffee, if not on an island-wide scale, at any rate in certain experimental, isolated localised, ventures, or "pilot-projects."

Dick Felsing, who hailed from a famous planting family which included his father and brothers Walter and Lucien, shortly before emigrating to the Antipodes with his family, converted a clearing of Rayigam Rubber Estate, Ingiriya, where he was the superintendent, into a coffee holding; and certain other planters have done similarly, with beneficial and lucrative effects, not only to themselves, but to the general health and economy of Sri Lanka at large.

EMPHASIZE Health because it is my considered (may be misguided) opinion (which may or may not be corroborated by the Medical Profession at large) that COFFEE is a far more healthful drink than TEA (although the *caffeine* in it is said to be artery-hardening, and therefore harmful to those with tendency to corpulency and heart-trouble,) because the greater percentage of caffeine in the former is supposed to be a *sedative* which has a beneficial, soothing effect on the nervous system, particularly on the gastric and respiratory functions (being valuable in combatting digestive disorders); while the higher *nicotine* content in the latter, as in cigarette smoking and all forms of tobacco and ganja, is a *stimulant* which tends to increase the heart-beat, encourage palpitation, banish fatigue and ex-

cite the nervous system into heightened activity.

Coffee is usually preferred by students who wish to stay awake at night to study or 'burn the midnight oil' over long hours of mental work, while Tea is the common choice and more favoured drink of professional men, business executives, and manual workers who have to keep to strenuous schedules or undertake heavy labour. Again, coffee rather than tea is more desirable to ward off travel nausea on long journeys.

Ideally however, the Seventh-Day Adventist Church, for one, frowns on the drinking of both tea and coffee, and indeed incorporates the abstention from both these (what it considers harmful) beverages into its baptismal vows—but albeit tolerates the drinking particularly of the latter, in small quantities for urgent medical reasons when, no other medicine is readily available. One would agree that its reasons are quite sound, as a church which presumes to dedicate itself to promoting the health and well being, besides the spiritual welfare of the populace, in keeping with the Divine Principle: "Sacred thy BODY, even as thy SOUL" and "The BODY is the TEMPLE of the SPIRIT, so keep it HOLY". One's life would be of greater use to God's purposes if one's body is not contaminated with unclean food (and drink which would include alcohol, tea & coffee as listed in Deuteronomy XIV-THE MATALE DISTRICT (particularly in and around the Dumbara Valley) is the most suitable region in Lanka not only for coffee cultivation, but also for the growth of cacao, cardomoms, cinnamon, pepper & nutmeg (in fact, for most of the spices for which this isle of "spicy breezes" has been renowned from time immemorial); on account of its comparatively dry climate, sheltered as it is from the full blast of both the South-West and the North East Monsoons, but this does not necessarily mean that coffee cannot be grown successfully in other parts of the island as well.

It can, and DOES grow, in every area of the island where tea grows, and even in the low-country of both the wet and the dry zones

where tea does NOT grow. Indeed prior to the 1870's before the pest *Haemilia Vastatrix* attacked this plant, causing it to be abandoned wholesale in favour of tea, it grew throughout the Central Hill Country in ALL or MOST of the areas where tea is now grown, and in many areas where it is not. It would be true to state that it could be grown successfully almost any where in the island apart from her sandy beaches. It is not however a plant indigenous to the country.

It was originally introduced to Ceylon from Brazil by colonial pioneers in the 1820s, just as the first rubber sapling, *HEVEA BRASILIENSIS*, was brought here from the same country, to be more specific from Manaus, in the centre of the densely forested Amazon Basin, about a half-century later, and planted at Heneratgoda Garden (one of the five villages which comprise modern Gampaha) in 1876. We should be celebrating the centenary of this event a couple of years hence. Incidentally, the first clearing for tea in Lanka was on Loolacondara Group, Rangobodde (now Ramboda) in 1867, and D. M. Forrest uses this year as a convenient starting point for his centennial volume.

I do not envisage that a gradual, systematic replacement of tea with coffee on the sunny hill slopes of Sri Lanka would affect the economy of the nation to any detrimental degree, but, on the other hand would tend to improve it. The cost of re-planting would be the main prohibitive factor. There would always be a demand for coffee in the world market, owing to the global scarcity of its production, the demand being greater than the supply; while tea would ever have to face the threat of increasing competition from overseas producers, and the likelihood of the supply being greater than the demand.

PROPAGANDA BOARDS for Ceylon Coffee could be set up both at home and abroad on the lines of the Tea Propaganda Units currently in vogue, and would help to foster the coffee drinking habit.

Tea, Rubber and Coconut, in that descending order of prevalence, were the country's three foremost export commodities in

British times. Tea though still Sri Lanka's chief revenue-earner is now declining in its proportion to the total foreign exchange income of the island. From earning around 75% of the nation's overall export revenue in its halcyon days (i.e. the late colonial era, from about the turn of the century upto declaration of Independence), it has now dropped to about 60-65%, and is still on the decline, in the face of the increasing industrial development of the nation, and in the agrarian sector, the cultivation of certain other consumer crops.

IN SRI LANKA TODAY

Credit Squeeze: Is It Too Late?

There are two opinions about the credit squeeze now being implemented by the commercial banks on instructions from the Central Bank. In certain trade circles the squeeze is considered too severe because it was sudden and because it has been imposed at a time of rising prices.

In other circles the squeeze is considered as having come too late. According to these circles the credit limits in March to May 20 were at their peak levels. Though no figures are still finally available the total credit is expected to have reached about Rs. 250 million in these two and a half months.

Government corporations according to these sources are reported to have obtained very big credit limits before the squeeze come in to operation.

In the view of these circles the commercial banks will have no difficulty in re-adjusting their operations to the Central Bank new rule, since credit had reached peak levels.

The Central Bank's circular on the squeeze was the first since April 1, 1972. The circular dated May 27 was signed by the Governor, Mr. H. E. Tennekoon and endorsed by the Chief Accountant. This is the full text of the letter on the subject of "Commercial Bank Credit"

1. The attention of commercial banks is invited to Circular No. 50 dated April 1, 1972 which stipu-

lating every factor into consideration, one would think we have now reached an opportune moment in the ongoing story of our island home to encourage the growth of coffee once again on an intensive scale in Sri Lanka, even if it would mean less tea, whether to drink, to send over the sea, or to see.

And after a century's progress, we would be making history's grinding wheel come full circle once again.

lated that until further notice commercial banks should refrain from increasing credit for non-essential purposes such as consumption, speculative*stock building etc.

2. Commercial banks are now informed that the Central Bank does not wish commercial banks to increase credit for any purpose. Accordingly, commercial banks are hereby informed that they should, until further notice, refrain from increasing credit over the level as on May 24th 1974.

3. The Central Bank also wishes to impress on commercial banks the need to provide credit for essential purposes. Accordingly the Central Bank also desires that in complying with the provisions of this Circular commercial banks will utilise repayments of advances already granted only for the purpose of granting credit for essential purposes.

—Daily News, 5/6/74

TV Episode

Television commercials in which Clement Freud, grandson of the famous psychoanalyst, advertises dog food were banished from the air until after the British general election. Freud was a Liberal Party candidate in the election, and electoral laws strictly limit TV appearances for candidates even if they only advertise dog good.

IS IT TRUE?

Sherlock Holmes

❁ Live Fences

IS IT NOT TRUE THAT that the Government has drawn up excellent plans to get a *National Compost Making Drive* a reality? That the Government has also made valuable suggestions in regard to the *Establishment or Improvement of Live Fences*? That plans have also been drawn up to launch a *Paddy Weeding Campaign* on a big scale with the help of students and school children? That these wonderful plans which have been drawn up, will remain *paper plans* unless they are transposed into action? That *paper tigers* may be symbolic of imperialism in decay but plans which remain only on paper is a sure indication of national *hara kiri*?

That in regard to live fences the Government scheme has stated: "succulent green material constitutes one of the more important components of compost material. Limited supply of such material will inhibit the compost programme? It is therefore desirable to embark on a related programme of improvement or establishment of live fences of *glicridia* or other suitable species in home gardens, uplands allotments and on the periphery of paddy tracts. This can be undertaken in the Wet Zone during Yala. Arrangements should therefore be to supply *glicridia* cuttings etc. to selected villagers. This can often be supplied from within the village itself. Live fences are also desirable in view of the high cost of barbed wire and fence posts." That the Report did not mention anything the Dry Zone where such fences can be established only during the Maha? That it is as important to have such live fences in the Dry Zone as in the Wet Zone? That there are other succulent green material besides *glicridia* which can make good fences? That in recent times farmers and rural folk have become

❁ Weeding

so accustomed to using barbed wire that they have even forgotten that live fences, closely planted, could make even better fences? That barbed-wire fences have become prohibitive in cost? That fence posts of jungle timber have become scarce and costly? That concrete fence posts have become unthinkable in terms of cost and availability? That what is even worse is that barbed wire cost as much a gold had cost sometime ago? That a hundredweight of barbed wire in the "good old days" had cost only about Rs. 30 odd? That the price had moved up to Rs. 60 odd in 1969 and today it is over Rs. 200 odd if available? That in addition one needed nails—which now cost a packet? That this high cost of barbed wire fencing is a blessing in disguise? That farmers and others will now go back to the traditional live fences and thereby ensure greater food supplies for their livestock and also green mulch for our compost fertiliser pits? That it is necessary for the Government to start a nationwide campaign right round the country to make people forget barbed wire fencing and establish live fences?

IS IT NOT A FACT that the paddy weeding campaign can easily become a gimmick and a tamasha if it were not properly channelled and controlled? That in the heyday of the Dudley Senanayake *Grow More Food Drive* weeding of paddy fields by school children was made such a tamasha that it became a joke? That publicity was given to "respectable children" from "respectable schools" making a picnic of it in buses to weed paddy fields? That village children who had day in and day weeded in their parents' plots were not made the heroes and heroines that their brothers

and sisters who came in special buses had been turned into? That the latest Government directive on the paddy weeding campaign is short, terse and brief? That this is just what it said: "Paddy weeding campaigns should be organised at a village level, the minimum unit being a *yaya* or tract which will also provide a *demonstration field*. That the assistance of the Education Department should be sought with a view to enlisting the support of students over 12 years and adjusting the schools days. It has to be repeated that one of the methods of off-setting the short supply of fertilisers is by having a clean field. The Political Authorities should formulate suitable weeding programme in their respective districts." That the present Government seems to have learnt one useful lesson from the tamashas that had been conducted during the last UNP regime under the guise of weeding programmes? That these colourful exercises would be avoided? That the present campaign was to be conducted weeding at a village level? That the national campaigns of UNP days when school children from the big schools in the big towns invaded village paddy fields with a fanfare of trumpets has been abandoned? That to confine such weeding campaigns to a village level is a concrete and practical way of dealing with the situation? That in reality children had in the past helped their parents in their fields? That when the craze for white collar jobs had gripped the population in all our schools, even children in our rural schools had stopped such traditional work as weeding? That the time has now come to reverse the process and persuade children in our schools that school education is only part of the main vocation available to them, and that was agriculture—in the allotments owned by their parents or which they would later be able to get from the government? That white collar jobs were no more and that jobs in corporations and government establishments would sooner come to a grinding halt? That jobs in out town-based private industries were even more scarce and that it was best to stick to the cultivation of the fields in the village and its environs? That to achieve this a change of values will constitute a major social revolution?