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Cholera Pandemic And Complacency At All Levels

ALTHOUGH A HUE AND CRY has been raised in this country about the growing danger of the creeping cholera that is in our midst today, this shouting has been done only in fits and starts—whenever there are reports that a number of deaths had occurred in a particular area or town. The first outbreak was in the North over a year ago. It was in Kayts in the Jaffna area and a terrific hullabaloo was raised verging on political hysteria. Governmental attempts to establish a *cordon sanitaire* was resisted as an attempt to impose political restrictions, and this was no doubt due to the total lack of a purposeful dialogue between the Tamils in the North and the Government. With pro-

governmental Tamil MPs also undermining the work of the Health authorities to impose necessary restrictions to contain the disease within the Kayts area—they did this to show that government was not guilty of discriminatory conduct stemming from political inhibitions—it was inevitable that the infection should spread throughout the length and breadth of the island.

Even before the disease had become *endemic* in the Kayts area, bungling by the authorities at all levels and myopic complacency among the entire population had enabled the seeds of infection to be carried far and wide, and today the disease is well on the way to becoming *pandemic*. The

term *pandemic* is not some mystic mumbo-jumbo, but a plain and simple word to indicate the fact that a disease was "prevalent over the whole of a country or over the world." Today cholera is *pandemic* in Sri Lanka, from the north to the south, and from the east to the west. It breaks out, now here, now there, now everywhere. And if really serious and meaningful steps are not taken by the authorities immediately, and if there is not adequate co-operation from the public, the disease may soon trigger a major *epidemic* throughout in the country.

The public relations work of the government and the health authorities about the dangers of cholera have been woefully inadequate. Half-hearted and fitful, Health Department admonitions about basic precautions like "wash food well before cooking", "avoid eating at hotels and as far as possible eat home made food," and "drink only boiled water", etc. etc., are neither impressive or effective. These slogans are of the same genre as the Family Plannig propaganda gimmicks and slogans—"Love is beautiful, but a large population isn't" etc. etc.—emanating from the discipliness of advertising copywriting, but totally unsuitable to induce the common people of Sri Lanka to take any effective precautions against either cholera or a high birthrate.

CHOLERA IS NOW PANDEMIC in Sri Lanka and it is no longer a matter for jokes. Slogans, catchwords and cliches will be of little avail to stem the tide of this dangerous illness. The first step is to make the public aware of the

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dangers of the disease and to persuade them to voluntarily impose such self-discipline upon themselves so as to prevent the further spread of the disease. *Diktats* from on top will be worse than useless. And governmental action should not be irrational.

If the religious festivals in Katragama and other places must be banned, why was the Kandy Perehara allowed? This is a question which is on the lips of the multitude. Was it because that foreign tourists should be appeased even if the cholera menace is to be allowed to spread?

It is no longer a question of containing cholera to endemic pockets, in Kayts, in Katragama in Talawila, in Madhu or anywhere else. It is necessary to take action on an all-island basis and without the slightest delay. What is most distressing is the total complacency which seems to prevail in all quarters, especially governmental quarters. There seems to be a feeling that with near-mass inoculations in affected areas and with slogan shouting over the radio and the press, this disease will vanish from the fair isle of Sri Lanka. The fact that such steps have failed so far should make some people to sit up and think.

And it is also necessary to point out that warnings of the dangers of cholera becoming pandemic throughout the world had been given by the World Health Organization for some years. We publish below a report which had appeared in the *New York Times* on September 26, 1971 which was based on a WHO report that had been released in Geneva a few days before.

"In a manner unique to the jet age the current cholera pandemic has continued to spread with remarkable rapidity, reaching recently into as remote a region as Lapland. In recent days, too, health authorities in France have reported three cases, and two have been reported from Britain. The victims had all visited Spain or Africa.

"Not since the great outbreak of 1899, which finally faded in 1923, has so much of the world been involved. Particularly hard hit in recent months have been the African nations, where, by

Sept. 17, this year's reported death toll had reached 9,863. Since reporting from remote areas is fragmentary, the actual figures must be far higher, according to specialists of the World Health Organization here. The 1971 world total is thought to be well past 20,000, including 5,730 refugees from East Pakistan. Among these refugees from 700 to 1,000 new cases are being reported each week, but the W.H.O. experts believe the epidemic in East Pakistan is being brought under control.

Pandemic means that a disease is spreading over a vast geographic area whereas an epidemic is generally defined as a large number of cases of a given disease in a specific area. The Lapland case is typical of the manner in which cholera is being carried to the most remote parts of the earth. On Sept. 8 a 56-year old woman returned by charter flight to her home in Sorselo, Swedish Lapland, from a holiday in Majorca, Spain. The next day she became sufficiently ill to be hospitalized. Laboratory analysis showed infection with *El Tor vibrio*, the bacteria causing the form of cholera that in the past few years has spread over much of the world.

"In contrast to previous pandemics however, this one is not a serious public health problem in countries with adequate medical facilities. With antibiotics and replenishment of body fluids, recovery is almost always swift, leaving no after-effects. It is the catastrophic discharge of liquids, leading to death from dehydration, that has made cholera such a swift killer. Modern methods for delivery of fluids directly into the blood stream has made it possible to save victims seemingly on the point of death.

"Thus high mortality in the current pandemic is limited to remote areas and those with meager medical facilities. Nevertheless panicky fear of cholera has led to bizarre reactions. The postal service of one West European country for a time refused mail from an infected country. In the Middle East one country cut off iron ore imports from a neighbour where cholera had appeared.

"W.H.O. officials will not publicly identify these countries for

diplomatic reasons, although the recently issued W.H.O. handbook for cholera control refers to "exaggerated reactions in some countries. Thus, as an impediment to trade the disease, has become an economic as well as a health problem.

"A resolution passed at the World Health Assembly here in May noted that some countries were imposing an 'unjustified embargo' on importing food stuffs from afflicted areas and urged that such embargoes be lifted. Except for milk and milk products, according to the W.H.O., there is no evidence that cholera bacteria can survive long enough in food to spread from one region to another in that manner.

"That same resolution reaffirmed the general belief that cholera vaccine was of little use in preventing spread of the disease. While relatively ineffective, it is being used locally to mitigate the effects of severe outbreaks. The ultimate answer is considered better sanitation, since the disease is spread by contamination of food or water by human waste.

"The first great cholera pandemic occurred in 1817 where developing international trade and travel carried the disease far from its native habitat in the combined deltas of the Ganges and Brahmaputra Rivers. The six successive pandemics of the 19th century struck severely as far afield as New York City. In 1905 at the El Tor quarantine camp on the Red Sea, designed to prevent pilgrims returning from Mecca from carrying the disease to Egypt, a new form of cholera was discovered that broke down red blood cells without producing diarrhoea and other normal symptoms of the disease. This El Tor strain of the disease remained localized on the island of Celebes (Sulawesi) in Indonesia until it suddenly, broke out in 1961 and began marching around the world.

"For unknown reasons it also began producing the symptoms of classic cholera, though often milder form, and apparently ceased attacking the red cells. By 1963 it had reached north to Korea, Taiwan and the Philippines, whereupon it spread westward. In 1966, it reached West Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq and the southern

Soviet Union (where it has now been eradicated).

"Last year it invaded Africa, where it had been so long absent that little immunity remained. In the region of India and East Pakistan where the disease is endemic, it usually strikes children because those surviving to maturity have become immune, but in Africa it has struck all ages. Special W.H.O. cholera teams have been sent to a half-dozen African states where crash programs have been instituted to teach health workers to cope with the disease. "No patient with uncomplicated cholera arriving at the treatment center, with his heart beating should die, says an article in the W.H.O. Chronicle. The problem in Africa, however, is getting the patient to such a center."

* * *

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

BY ARIEL

MAINLY ABOUT CYPRUS

THERE ARE TOO MANY STARTLING events taking place in different parts of the world to pinpoint on any single as being the most important. Cyprus continues to steal the headlines although the US Supreme Court's verdict on the Nixon tapes has taken the breath away from many people because impeachment of President Nixon has become a virtual certainty (and this has been borne out by events). In Japan a new political crisis is brewing in the ruling Liberal Democratic Party and this was reflected in the setbacks suffered by Tanaka in the recent elections and the resignations of senior Ministers from his Cabinet. While conditions in Portugal continue to be in a state of flux, in Spain General Franco, aged 81, signed over the supreme power to Prince Juan Carlos, the 36 year old heir to the Spanish throne—thus ending an era of 35 years of unchallenged dictatorship.

Near home, the most staggering piece of news was the boast made

by Bhutto that he would annex Afghanistan. He threatened to hoist Pakistan's flag on Afghan soil in the event of a war. In speeches during his recent tour of border areas, Mr. Bhutto said at Saidu Sharif that Pakistan could lay claims on Afghanistan since that country was part of it during the rule of Aurangzeb. The Urdu daily 'Elan' quoted him as having said that if a Sikh like Raja Ranjit Singh could conquer Afghan territory up to Kabul, "the proud nation of Pakistan" could do more. "If there is a war we will fight to the finish. As long as I am the Prime Minister I will not accept a ceasefire or knock at the doors of the United Nations...the world will see the Pakistani flag fluttering over Afghanistan."

Mr. Bhutto added: "I was keeping quiet about whatever Afghanistan was doing against Pakistan because Pakistan had become a bit weak, but now Afghanistan cannot harm Pakistan". This reports were contained in the Pakistan paper: Nawa-i-Waqt.

A few days after these intemperate speeches, Bhutto offered to enter into a bilateral agreement with Afghanistan under which both countries would pledge not to interfere in each other's domestic affairs. Mr. Bhutto made the offer during a speech at Pishin, a small town close to Pakistan's frontier with Afghanistan. Mr. Bhutto said he sought good relations with the Afghans but was unable to understand why Kabul was seeking to form a new State of Pakhtoonistan for the Pakhtoons living in Pakistani Baluchistan. Mr. Bhutto said that Afghanistan's economy was not in good shape. He added that Afghanistan's new President, Mr. Mohammed Daud Khan, had just celebrated his first year in office but had been unable so far to give the country a constitution.

Bhutto's mercurial politics continues to amaze the world, but his present "mania" continues to revolve around the explosion of a nuclear device by India. But, he added "It is difficult to be assured of India's bonafides." Mr. Bhutto repeated his known views on India and its recent explosion of a nuclear device in an interview to a visiting *Financial Times* correspondent in Rawalpindi. Mr. Bhutto said the

question of Pakistan going nuclear was still being examined." We have achieved sufficient progress in our nuclear technology. As far as the option goes, I tell you quite candidly that we are still examining the pros and cons of it because it is serious decision. It is not that we don't have the capabilities of going nuclear but it is full of all kinds of implications."

He declined to say how quickly Pakistan would be able to explode



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a nuclear device but, conceded that India had a long lead over Pakistan. According to the interviewer Mr. Bhutto is likely to step up his pressure on President Nixon to relax the American embargo on sale of lethal weapons to countries of the subcontinent. The correspondent said it seemed likely Mr. Bhutto wanted nuclear assurances and guarantees for domestic political purposes so that he cannot be accused of bowing to 'nuclear blackmail'. Mr. Bhutto however, admitted that "between you and me and the reader, there is no such thing as a nuclear guarantee." It sounded very good but in the case of war it might be different.

THE CONFLICT IN CYPRUS has brought into the forefront the differences which continue to exist among the big and influential powers of the world on matters of geopolitical significance—in spite of the *detente* which has begun to make its presence felt in all parts of the world. (*Detente* enthusiasts have re-iterated that but for the *detente* events in Cyprus could easily have led to a serious conflagration in the Mediterranean into which the Big Powers might well have been drawn). The facts about developments are too well-known to be repeated, but what is interesting are the undertones and overtones implicit in the affair.

There is no doubt that the Greek Junta had engineered the coup and it was alleged that it was with NATO connivance. But all European NATO powers quickly supported Makarios and denounced the coup, but the USA took a dubious stand at the start. There is no doubt that President Nixon regarded Makarios as the Castro of the Mediterranean and that White House (including Kissinger) were at first inclined to allow the Greek Junta to have their way and set up the Sampson government in Nicosia. But Turkey, another member of the NATO, upset the plans of the Greek Junta and President Nixon by invading the island to hold the parts occupied by the Cypriot Turks, and even encroach into territory inhabited by the Greek Cypriots. It was when Greece and Turkey nearly went to war, that the USA seems to have brought pressure on Greece to backtrack and this could only

be done by forcing the Junta to liquidate itself and by handing over power to the former elected civilian rulers whom the the Junta had thrown out in the military coup of 1967.

In Cyprus itself, the Greek Cypriots replaced Sampson with another, who wanted to keep Makarios out, although the UK and other European NATO powers and even the new Karamanlis government in Athens recognised Makarios as the head of the Republic of Cyprus.

It was at this stage the UN Security Council, which had shown unbelievable lethargy at the beginning, had insisted on a ceasefire which would lead to a Conference in Geneva. At the time of writing these notes, the Conference is still going on. Only the Soviet Union and probably Britain wanted to see the full restoration of Makarios and the *status quo ante* in Cyprus. The USA would be happy to see a Cyprus without Makarios. Turkey wants a federated Cyprus—which will mean virtual partition. The new Greek Government, though openly in favour of Makarios and the *status quo ante*, is not a strong force as yet. France and Germany seem to go along with Britain.

China has, however, adopted a surprising attitude that came as a shock to many. Although this column had believed that China would back Makarios, especially because the Chinese leaders had promised Makarios full support for independent Cyprus when he had gone to China, the position taken by China disturbed many observers in third world countries. The first thing that caused surprise was that China did not condemn the action of the Greek Junta in masterminding the army coup in Cyprus. The position taken by Peking, at the early stages, was that sufficient information was not available about the events in Cyprus and that it was therefore not possible to say anything about the coup.

According to Turkish sources, the Chinese had advised Turkey that it was wrong for Turkey to intervene militarily in Cyprus because a clash between Greece and Turkey would undermine NATO unity. This is consistent with

China's support for NATO as a necessary deterrent to check the Soviet bloc. At the UN, the Chinese representative had stated that he had received instructions from his Government to abstain from voting on the resolution on Cyprus on the ground that what had happened in Cyprus was an entirely an internal matter of Cyprus.

WHILE CHINA'S ATTITUDE can be understood only on the basis that all its policies are based on fundamental and unchanging anti-Russianism and anti-Sovietism, the role of some of the Big Powers in the crisis reflected the undertones of the continuing cold war in the world. None of the powers involved in the recent tragic development in Cyprus, including Turkey, can claim to have respected international law and morality. Turkey's intervention can perhaps be justified on the basis of the 1960 treaty to which it was a signatory along with Britain and Greece. It saw the coup in Cyprus against the Makarios government as an attempt to impose *enosis* by force. As stipulated in the treaty, it immediately consulted Britain with a view to taking common action to restore the *status quo*. When Britain refused to intervene, it acted unilaterally.

But the Turkish action can be criticised on two grounds. First, it cannot be said by the leaders in Ankara that all the diplomatic processes had been exhausted before they sent their army and navy into Cyprus. They could have waited for at least another 24 hours to see if the peace mission attempted by Dr. Kissinger had any effect on Athens.

"To the Greek Cypriots, Turkey is enemy number one. Its military intervention must have been looked upon by them as a repetition of the Turkish invasion in the sixteenth century. Since few Greek Cypriots—and they form 80 per cent of the island's population—would like living under Turkish rule the invasion inhibited domestic opposition to the coup."

While some reports of massacre might be exaggerated, there is plenty of evidence of widespread bloodshed and destruction on the island after the coup. Ankara's intervention has undoubtedly exacerbated tensions between the

Greek and Turkish communities, which will linger.

"But Turkish intervention was not entirely in vain. Its one positive achievement has been to force the world to keep the changed political situation in Cyprus under review and not to accept the coup as a *fait accompli*. The US seemed to be moving towards recognition of the Sampson regime just before the Turkish invasion. Other countries might have followed suit.

Britain, however, played a more positive role. This is how one commentator summed up the situation. "in contrast to the US reaction to the overthrow of the Makarios government. Britain as the third signatory to the 1960 treaty, lost no time in launching a diplomatic initiative to keep the situation under control. A note was promptly despatched to Athens demanding the withdrawal of the Greek officers of the Cyprus National Guard. Archbishop Makarios and the Turkish Prime Minister were invited to London for talks.

"But Britain failed in one important respect: in not calling an immediate conference of all the parties concerned—that is the three signatories to the treaty and Archbishop Makarios. It did not do so partly perhaps because it underestimated the strength of feeling in Ankara over the developments. It merely kept on exhorting Turkey and Greece to refrain from any rash adventure. It did not give sufficient weight to the domestic pressure being exerted on the Turkish government.

"It will be an insult to the intelligence of Dr. Henry Kissinger to assume that he did not quite foresee the consequences of the coup in Nicosia. The reason why he turned a Nelson's eye to the coup and his scrupulous avoidance of any criticism of the Greek junta must be found in America's preoccupation with strategic consideration even at the cost of moral principles. To the men in the Pentagon and the State Department a firmly pro-western Cyprus is preferable to a neutral and non-aligned one. One suspects they heaved a sigh of relief when Archbishop Makarios, whom they had begun to look upon as 'the Castro of the Mediterranean' was over-

thrown. The 'Red priest' was suspected by them to be scheming with the Kremlin to turn Cyprus into a communist satellite because he had refused to turn the island into a NATO base.

"Like the British, the Americans misread the mood in Turkey and thought that a word of admonition from the leader of the alliance would be sufficient to deter them. The damage to America's power and prestige from the Cyprus affair may not be beyond repair. But the damage to NATO will be considerable. The main pillars of the southern flank of the alliance are close to a shooting war, using weapons supplied by a common source."

ANOTHER COMMENTATOR, examined the role of the United States in some detail. "Even if America did not have direct hand in the crisis, moderate intellectuals here think that its eventual outcome—the liquidation of non-alignment either through a rightist government or through partition of the island between the two NATO members, Greece and Turkey—will fit in well with Dr. Kissinger's 'ground plan' for a West Asian settlement by facilitating more convincing security arrangements for Israel.

"In February 1972, when the US was still his 'enemy', the Soviet forces had not yet been expelled from Egypt. President Sadat himself suspected that the Americans were getting busier in the Mediterranean to 'offset their reverse in the Indian Ocean' during the Bangladesh war.

"They want to get President Makarios out of the way so that they can obtain new bases in Cyprus Mr. Sadat said. 'All this is directed against the Soviet Union as part of the race to dominate the seas. The basis for this observation was America's resumption of military aid to the Greek junta, its acquisition of base facilities in Piraeus and the secret return of the Eoka leader, Gen. Grivas, to Cyprus

It is, however, interesting to see how different observers view the internal situation in Cyprus. One said: "Cyprus is neither a state nor a nation" a commentator said. 'It is a juxtaposition of two nationalisms, Greek and Turkish, which have nothing in common in history

of culture, language or religion. Nothing illustrates this more than the fact that three foreign armies—Greek, Turkish and British—are billeted legally on its territory. A fourth operates illegally to protect the Turkish Cypriot Community. The state's writ does not run in Turkish Cypriot quarters and the country does not have an anthem or a university.

Yet another commentator went into details about the internal problem in Cyprus: "Six years of inter-communal talks between the Greek Cypriots, who make up 77 per cent of the island's, population of 650,000, and Turkish Cypriots, who account for 18 per cent, have made little headway. The two communities live in a tense and distrustful neighbourliness, separated by 2,200 UN troops under an Indian commander. Gen. Prem Chand. Neither the US nor the Greek junta has ever had any sympathy for President Makarios. His non-alignment irked the Americans. As pressure from the Enosis-seeking rightist increased, he had to lean more on the leftists and the communist Akel party, which controls the trade union movement and has nine seats in the 50 member legislature.

"Archbishop Makarios visited Russia in 1971 and China last May. Just before his overthrow, he had

Experiment

Prof. Clifford Cosgrove of the University of Rhode Island (U.S.A.) has a rather unusual job—he teaches a course in sensory evaluation of foods. In February he held a class in which he offered fourteen students and a hound named Jubilee a menu including three different types of dried dog foods and a crunchy cereal marketed for human consumption. The four products were ground up to give them the same look and texture. Jubilee ate the dog foods and the cereal without indicating a favourite. The students could not detect which of the four foods was the human food and most of them chose dog biscuits as the best tasting of the samples.

lined up visits to East European countries. All this increased the alarm in Athens and presumably Washington."

About the current crisis this seem to be the generally accepted view. The current crisis, however, appears to have been the result of miscalculation both by President Makarios and the Greek junta. In demanding the withdrawal of the 650 Greek officers of the Greek Cypriot National Guard, he probably gambled that Greece would not dare to react violently when it was in serious confrontation with Turkey over the oil-bearing continental shelf in the Aegean sea. Greece, for its part, presumably thought that a *putsch* was opportune because Turkey, locked in an opium war with the US would not risk antagonising it further by invading Cyprus. Even after Turkey began moving its fleet from Mersin harbour the Greek colonels thought it was a bluff like similar moves in 1963 and 1967 and were, in the event, caught unawards.

"Turkey which, lost its Ottoman colony of Crete in 1898 and watched it accede to Greece 14 years later and its 20 per cent. Turkish population gradually squeezed out, probably, feared that the Greek-inspired coup in Cyprus, which was seized from it by the British in 1914, would have the same fate soon.

The precise political objectives of the Turkish invasion are still unclear. Ankara may settle for a federal set-up which will forswear Enosis (union with Greece) and allow the presence of a Turkish contingent as big as the National Guard. Or it may demand partition."

The 1960 independence constitution is regarded by many as a 'monster'. A federal one may be even worse, to the point of being unworkable. What President Makarios has said about Enosis—'desirable but not feasible—may well be said of 'double Enosis' or partition. A straight division along the 35th parallel will be unacceptable to the Greek Cypriots because it will give 50 per cent of the territory to the Turkish Cypriots who make up only 18 per cent of the population. Any other partition plan will involve a massive transfer of population as the Turkish community is spread all over the island.

"A federal arrangement under some leader like the speaker of the House, Mr. Glafkos Clearides, a Makarios man but very much to the right of the Archbishop, or partition, which will split the once-nation-aligned republic into two NATO-affiliated territories, will be welcome to the US. The possible acquisition of bases on Cyprus or at least staging-post facilities in an emergency will enable Dr. Kissinger to convince Israel of its future security under American auspices and help to persuade it to withdraw further from the occupied Arab territories.

"Although the Israelis have always considered the US sixth fleet as their 'strategic reserve' they have painfully noted the trouble the US had in finding refuelling stops for the emergency airlift during the October war and the reluctance of Greece and Turkey to let American bases be used against the Arabs. An aligned or partitioned Cyprus may well be the answer"

"The question, however, is whether 'perfidious Albion' as *The Times* called it again in connection with the Cyprus crisis, will let a Commonwealth member disappear through partition. Will Russia allow a non aligned country to be split up and doubly aligned to NATO or the sixth fleet, thus endangering its own position in the Mediterranean?"

These are intriguing but nevertheless interesting questions of significance in current developments in Cyprus.

IN SRI LANKA

Medical Supdt's shock Report: Hospital workers drink and gamble

A drastic revision of the method of recruitment to the labour force in the General Hospital, Colombo, has been advocated by the General Hospital's Medical Superintendent Dr. Dharmasiri Senaratne in a report submitted to the Director of Health Services. His three page report details with what he claims is the deteriorating situation in the hospital which he says has affected the entire structure of the Hospital.

Dr. Senaratne has stated that drunkenness among employees, especially

on pay days was by far the most dangerous problem. Some even pilfer surgical spirits when they run short of alcohol. Every effort made to prevent pilferage of surgical spirits had been of no avail. Gambling in hospitals is another problem, according to Dr. Senaratne. Many employees indulged in this practice specially on pay days and even outsiders were involved. The gambling was so well organised with a system of signalling that even the Supervisory Officers were not able to stamp it out. Police assistance was sought in this matter but they too were reluctant to intervene for fear of trade union action.

Thieving went hand in hand with drunkenness and gambling. Petty thefts occurred almost daily. Dr. Senaratne has stated that from gauze to surgical instruments and furniture fittings were being pilfered. Of late, thefts had assumed more serious proportions. A few weeks back the consumable Stores had been broken into and several boxes of torch batteries stolen. Some time last year an attempt was made to rob the Secretary of the Health Ministry when he was a patient in the General Hospital. A special CID team was assigned to work in the hospital on the instructions of the Health Ministry but even they had not apprehended the culprits so far.

Dr. Senaratne's report claims that food for patients was being stolen systematically. Chilli powder and sugar were the main targets. Even food brought on trays for patients was robbed and Diet Stewardesses were threatened if they reported the culprits. "Dishonesty has eaten into the very fabric of the service." Dr. Senaratne has stated.

He has suggested a drastic revision in the method of recruitment. Only those temperamentally suited to work in hospitals should be taken in. This could be done by a system of screening. With regard to drunken employees, Dr. Senaratne has suggested that in the first instance they should be fined heavily but if they were caught drunk a third time they should be dismissed. The assistance of trade unions should be sought to tackle the problem of gambling.

—Daily News, 2/7/74

CHRONICLE

July 26—July 31

A DIARY OF EVENTS IN SRI LANKA AND THE WORLD
COMPILED FROM ENGLISH-LANGUAGE DAILIES
PUBLISHED IN COLOMBO.

FRIDAY JULY 26: According to the *Daily News* district boards, co-operative colonies and multi-purpose co-operatives will maintain estates taken over by the Land Reforms Commission under the Land Reform Law: they will ensure that a high level of productivity is retained during the interim period until a final decision is taken on what should be done with the estates. According to the *Daily News*, on Tuesday the Food Purchasing Board of the Ministry of Foreign and Internal Trade rejected all tenders opened for one cargo of raw sugar on the ground that the prices were unacceptable. According to the *Daily Mirror*, the Minister of Finance, Dr. N. M. Perera, has told a meeting that there is no future for communal politics in this country and all those who preached communalism have disappeared from the political scene. The Minister of Housing and Construction, Mr. Pieter Keuneman, who also heads the Sectoral Committee on Social Overheads, Mass media and Transport will visit Jaffna today to inspect the proposed site of the new Jaffna Campus of the University of Ceylon: Mr. Keuneman will visit Parameshwara College, Ramanathan College and Jaffna College to ascertain for himself all aspects in regard to the proper setting up of the Campus. The Democratic Workers' Congress, the second largest trade union in the plantation sector, has called upon Mr. S. Thondaman, President of the Ceylon Workers' Congress, to join hands with the progressive forces and the Government. According to the *Daily News*, export earnings from graphite have hit the highest level since the boom during the second world war: total foreign earnings last year from the three mines managed by the newly established State Graphite Corporation were Rs. 11.6 million without FEECS; this is an increase of 22 per cent over 1972 in the value of exports. President Nixon, on Wednesday, averted a major constitutional crisis by agreeing to obey the Supreme Court and surrender 64 Watergate tapes and documents: his decision was announced by Presidential Lawyer James St. Clair after hours of suspense and tension resulting from the Supreme Court's historic ruling: The House of Representatives Judiciary Committee opened its historic public debate on the impeachment of President Nixon.

SATURDAY, JULY 27: Dr. N. M. Perera, Minister of Finance, told a meeting in his electorate that the free half measure of rice costs the Government Rs. 720 million a year. According to the *Daily Mirror*, the Ministry of Foreign and Internal Trade will come down hard on co-operative society high ups and private authorised distributors found selling essential consumer goods to people outside their area: a directive to this effect has been issued by the Minister of Foreign and Internal Trade, Mr. T. B. Illangaratne, to the Com-

missioner of Co operative Development following the spate of complaints made by consumers that the co-operative in their areas were selling hard-to-get items to outsiders. According to the *Daily News*, the Minister of Plantation Industries, Dr. Colvin R. de Silva, yesterday invited estate unions for talks on Tuesday regarding a Government decision to ensure minimum earnings on plantation labour. According to the *Daily Mirror*, admissions to the University for the next academic year will be on a district quota basis: the Ministry of Education would soon release a brochure to the public explaining the reasons for and the method of standardisation. A dangerous new crisis blew up in Cyprus yesterday when President Glafkos Clerides accused the Turks of building up their forces and continuing to advance into Greek Cypriot areas in defiance of the ceasefire and ordered his own armed forces to prepare for battle: Turkish Prime Minister, Mr. Bulent Ecevit, said that Turkey took 783 prisoners of war during its weekend invasion of Cyprus. President Nixon's popularity has declined to the lowest point of his Presidency, the Gallup poll reported in Washington yesterday: it said only 24 per cent of the people questioned in a survey approved of his performance in office. Possible further increases in oil prices will be discussed during the next meeting of the Organisation of Petroleum countries (OPEC) in Vienna in September: the Venezuelan Minister of Mines and Hydrocarbons said that his country will abide by OPEC's decision should the organisation decide to increase prices.

SUNDAY, JULY 28: The Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike, addressing the 10th United Front rally at Anuradhapura yesterday said that it should be possible for the Government to ban the import of rice to Sri Lanka in 1975 judging from the enthusiasm shown by the farmers. Two earth-slips in the early hours of yesterday smothered the lives of 33 people, including two children at Talawakelle and Punduluoya: disaster struck 26 workers of Devon Estate, Talawakelle, when the hill by their lines tumbled down: at Punduluoya even people were buried alive when a second earth-slip carried away two labour lines of Dunsinine Group: according to reports reaching Colombo, heavy rains in most parts of the country have caused havoc to people and crops and making several roads impassable; all train services beyond Peradeniya have been stopped. According to the *Sunday Observer*, for the first time in the recent history, Kataragama was placed out of bounds to pilgrims from 10 am on Saturday by the Superintendent of Health Services, Matara, owing to cholera: one patient died of cholera on admission to Kataragama hospital: only persons who have obtained clearance from the health authorities will be allowed to proceed to Kataragama: those living within half a mile radius from Kataragama will not be allowed to leave their areas without permission from the Health authorities. According to the *Observer*, a large consignment of maize is expected to arrive in Sri Lanka shortly: the first shipment carrying 1000 tons is expected on August 3: another consignment of 1000 tons is expected on August 10. According to the *Sunday Times*, the International Organisation of Journalists (IOJ), the world's largest body of professional journalists in the Press, radio and television, have granted formal recognition

to the Press Association of Ceylon as an affiliate member. According to the *Times* the team of Education Ministry and University officials headed by Mr. Pieter Keuneman who visited the north to inspect Jaffna College, is expected to recommend its take over for the Jaffna Campus of the University of Sri Lanka. Foreign Ministers at the Cyprus peace talks in Geneva wrestled with a crisis after a Greek walk-out threat brought the talks to the verge of breakdown; the Greek Foreign Minister threatened to walk-out if the ceasefire agreement is violated.

MONDAY, JULY 29: The death toll in the series of earth-slips in the up country area over the weekend increased to 44: the people killed are 26 from Devon Estate in the Dimbulla Police area, nine from Hatton, six from Punduluoya and three from the Talawakelle area: according to reports reaching Police Headquarters, thousands of people have been rendered homeless and more than 1000 families marooned in Yatiyantota: several roads in the up country and in the down south are impassable and railway lines washed away by flooded waters. According to the *Daily News* a delegation of Japanese Buddhist leaders and businessmen led by Archbishop Kodo Kasuga, Japan's Chief Abbot of the Buddha, is now in Sri Lanka studying ways and means of assisting this country. The twenty-four member delegation which calls itself the Association for Economic and Cultural Organisation of Sri Lanka met the Minister of Shipping and Tourism yesterday: it later paid a courtesy call on the President, Mr. William Gopallawa, and is scheduled to meet the Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike on August 4. According to the *Daily Mirror*, the volume of several essential consumer items produced by a number of major industrial public sector corporations declined during the first four months of this year: the items which dropped in production include milk, coconut oil, provender, flour, yarn, textiles, paper, paper board, plywood and tyres. According to the *Daily Mirror*, the distribution of bread at a number of sales points have been criticised by parents of school going children. The House of Representatives Judiciary Committee in a momentous decision, on Saturday, voted overwhelmingly to recommend the impeachment of President Nixon for obstruction of justice: President Nixon, proclaiming his innocence over Watergate said he was confident the House of Representatives would refuse to impeach him. Turkish Premier, Bulent Ecevit, said in Ankara that Turkey will not sign a Cyprus ceasefire agreement in Geneva unless the security of Cypriot Turks is guaranteed and the rights of Turkish troops on the island are recognised.

TUESDAY, JULY 30: According to the *Daily News* the Ceylon Petroleum Corporation is well on the way to becoming Sri Lanka's third largest foreign exchange earner this year next to tea and rubber: already for the first five months of this year the corporation has earned Rs. 140 million in foreign exchange: it has estimated that it will earn Rs. 450 million by the end of the year. The earthslips and floods experienced in the Nuwara Eliya district, causing over 50 deaths and rendering several thousands of people homeless, is the worst of its kind experienced in the area since 1947. According to the *Daily Mirror*, Sri Lanka's industrial exports have risen dramatically during the past three years. According to the *Daily News*, all six million

identity cards will be issued before the end of this year: nearly three and a half million cards already prepared were now being issued by Kachcheries and Grama Sevakas. Mr. J. R. Jayewardene, Leader of the United National Party, addressing a meeting of Youth Leagues said that the U.N.P. was opposed to any form of violence to change the Government: the party stood for peace, freedom and democracy and as an established political party it will change the Government only with the weapon of the vote. The Jaffna College Parents Association has protested against the take over of Jaffna College for the setting up of a Campus of the University of Sri Lanka in Jaffna. According to the *Daily Mirror* the average cost of living index for the first five months of 1974 was 13.5 per cent higher than the average index for the first five months of 1973. According to the *Daily Mirror*, Sri Lanka is among Commonwealth countries invited to attend a symposium on international tea market expansion which takes place in London in December: the symposium, hosted by the Commonwealth Secretariat at Marlborough House is designed to ensure equitable and remunerative prices for a larger market for tea. New impeachment charges against President Nixon were being drawn up as Senate leaders made the first formal move to prepare for a trial to decide whether he should be removed from office: two leading British national newspapers, *The Times* and the *Daily Telegraph* were next to certain in their editorials on Sunday that President Nixon would be impeached.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 31: According to the *Daily News*, the Minister of Social Services, Mr. T. B. Tennekoon, has made an urgent appeal to the Government to release a million rupees on a special authorisation to provide relief to those affected by floods, earthslips and heavy rains in the upcountry and in the south. Fresh floods and earthslips were posing a dangerous threat in the Sabaragamuwa and Central province: most large towns were completely cut off yesterday not accessible by road or rail and disrupted telecommunications. The Government yesterday officially announced that there were positive indications of the existence of oil and gas deposits in the area now under exploration in Pesalal. According to the *Reuter*, the Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike, will visit Bonn in September for talks with the West German Government: the talks are expected to centre on financial and technical aid for the country. According to the *Daily News*, a team from the International Monetary Fund is now in Sri Lanka to review the country's economy and report back to the and before the second instalment of the stand-by of 24.5 million drawing rights is approved: when the stand-by was approved in April, Sri Lanka withdrew about 8 million special drawing rights. According to the *Daily Mirror*, the Minister of Plantation Industry, Dr. Colvin R. de Silva, has announced a new wage scheme for estate workers whereby proprietors of estates of over 100 acres in extent will be legally bound to pay wages for a minimum of 18 days a month or 108 days for six months to every employee irrespective of whether is available or not. The annual Vel festival will be held this year from July 31 to August 4. The United States House of Representatives Judiciary Committee went into a night session yesterday looking set to approve by 28 votes to 10 a second article of impeachment accusing President Nixon of abusing his powers.

Inania of this, that and the other

Some People Feel

By INNA

SOME PEOPLE feel the inner urge to unburden themselves in writing and so, write to a paper or review; others have the unmistakable impulse to speak: some doing it in sermons where there is no possibility of being challenged directly on the spot, and others doing it in conferences with a give and take in word.

I strayed into a wayside chapel recently and sat down for the rain. There were people of all sorts richly attired. I noticed a known business man, a doctor and some key figures (perhaps from the areas or from elsewhere). In the pelting rain I thought I'd not be able to hear what the sermon would be like, but soon it ceased and the sermon didn't. It was interesting up to a point. What was it all about? About the fullness of man, never to separate body from soul; never to separate nature from supernatural. The drift of it was that to be a Christian was hard, demanding but we must try. If we fail, at least we can keep up the effort and at least be human.

IT WAS a foreign priest speaking, and through his faulty first world accents there came unmistakable signs of his views on the poor. He showed how private property does not constitute and inalienable right. From the Pope we showed how we must try to eliminate the poor. I was not so amazed that Pope Paul VI had spoken in these sharp accents, for the world would remember how we was shouted 'Comunista! Comunista!' in Bogota when he went there some time in 1968 if I remember correct, for a great festival.

My sermon preacher went on and the rain had fully ceased. He was saying forcefully that we "must attend every meeting, prayer-meeting and social discussion meeting", because the Lord had said: *wherever two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.* If we don't

do this we are making storms in tea cups, more than in the stilling of the storm, and so on. He told the people that the days are gone when we gave cups of cold water in the name of God. Today we had to fight to set up a waterworks, and doing that is part of the Gospel, an essential part of the Gospel was to see to the whole man, now that Christ has come to take up the whole man and, therefore all men back to the Father of all.

HE SAID that the poor were made poor by the affluent nations. He quoted the World Council and said: "*Western countries did not go to the east and find underdeveloped countries there. They made them.*" (He quoted a Samuel Becket of Bickett, I could not grasp what he said). Then he challenged the people to get down on their knees and ask pardon for sin, for this is the sin, and on this we will be judged. God's justice he said was His holiness and we must be holy and perfect as he is holy. This justice, he said, will be seen in our justice, distributive justice, to our fellowmen, for we will be judged (he linked it with justice in a few words) only on whether we have fed, clothed, slaked, visited and befriended the needy. In a dramatic mystical prayer-charismatic (heavy words he used) ending he said, with St. John of the Cross: "*At eventide they will examine thee in love.*"

I had not intended to stay, on, but stayed on and met him and asked for some quotations, and for his name. He gave both to me and I am grateful. I'll use them in later in some of these Inna numbers. If more would preach thus, more would believe.

SHAMBA

Life Goes On

by Anatory Bukoba

July 18.

The trees I brought here, plantains, and that my colleague brought later, have not grown. For the rest, this is not the season when things grow. In this respect we look like any other place at this

time of the year, overgrown with the weed that came up with the crops. I write here of high land, and not land which is watered from tanks.

There was dung here when I got back today; buffalo have been through the last three days I was told. The elder son of the family that owns them has been bringing them through. His younger brother used a different route to the river.

The Shamba may not have been a success yet as a farm, but this time back I have noticed a very great change. The family seems financially independent of me. My colleague has been selling wood-apple. It is his to sell, and it gladdens me that he has taken the trouble to do so. It makes him a little independent, I think, of hiring himself out.

This place, of course, must still be developed, even if it is only with houses and places of work, such as a bakery, a carpenter's, and a blacksmith's, and so forth. There was a lad I met today who has got himself into some mess or other. I invited him to come here, and I told him he will have to rely on himself, right from the beginning, to support himself. He expressed his readiness to come.

MOST PEOPLE in the Dry Zone are clearing chenas at this time. A chena is a piece of land in the jungle that is only used for growing crops for two years. There is much I could write about this chena work as I saw it being done this time away. Some of the finest men in the island are doing it, and I shall forbear to criticize. It is a man's work doing chena work, and the way I saw it being done, it called for leadership, very fine leadership, and the leaders were there. I cannot approve on principle of chenas, but I realized that the answer is example in the opposite direction, which is of permanent occupation. One lad expressed his disbelief that he would be allowed to retain occupation by the government. The point of the chena, I believe, is that it relies on the ash of the burnt vegetation, which includes huge trees. A stockade is also made from heavy branches.

This place was really lively when I got back. High excitement reig-

TRIBUNE, August 10, 1974

ned all the time. Our two year old is two years older. Her sister and she kept up the excitement for an hour or more. It is quieter now with the young one asleep. The elder is walking around carrying her doll of clothing; as far as looks go, there might well be a baby or a doll wrapped up in swaddling clothes in her arms. The family seems well on its feet and of this I cannot but be glad.

Here is more of my adventures away. I have managed to get in a visit to Jaffna. A friend in Colombo warned me that it was quiet, that the life was slow, and so I found it slow and healthy it was, healthy in a way a fast life can never be. I have said quiet, yes; quiet politically, but travelling in some buses was like travelling in a Basque train, noisy with talk, laughter, the well-being, the friendliness of God's own people.

Ceylon can be divided into three; physically you could divide it into six or more; you can live three kinds of life in Ceylon; life as it is lived in Jaffna, Batticaloa and the rest of the island. There is not much different living in Colombo and on a tea estate, surprising as that may seem to people who consider only the external facis of living and not its inner being, the philosophy the culture that moves it.

July 19.

There is a difference on the *Shamba*. Yesterday I said this in reference to the family; today I refer to the physical facts, and it is so also with regard to the land that surrounds the *Shamba*. It is this, that the vegetation looks thinned out, as if some of it has been cleared. It is not so; the effect is the result of the dry weather, another week of it in the middle of the Dry Season. The vegetation has been scorched by the sun. The leaves have gone or have dried up large extent. Outside the *shamba* someone has burnt patches of dried-up grass. Fire has also consumed the wood piles that our would-be neighbour made when he was clearing the adjoining land, that he was going to take over, some months ago.

Another neighbour had intruded on the acre, as I said before. I heard the sound of clearing on this,

someone working with a mammoty; two mammoties, so two people. The person, whose mammoty shaft had split down the middle, had asked me to cut him another. It was the least I could do. I remembered that some very good saplings had been left on the cleared part of the acre. So I went round and cut myself a five mammoty handles. Then I went round to the house, whose youthe are working the land, to tell them I had done so, as I had handed over that part to their care, and so I had to let them know who had cut the sapling. They assured me it would be sufficiently thick to hold the mammoty. They stripped the bark off. It was a nice, smooth, even light bit of wood. When I handed over the shaft to the person for whom I had cut it, I told him to make an incision in the middle of the end that would hold the mammoty, and to drive a wedge into it. The wedge could easily come from the other end of the handle, as it was long enough to be cut shorter I said.

With the thinned-out vegetation, which was the effect of the sun, I saw we had a potential paddy-field or fields, if it could be prepared. It was like a *wadi* or valley, one end of which I had seen on the side of the *shamba* in which I had confined my activities so far; I was now seeing the other end for the first time. I pointed out this idea of a paddy-field to the two youth to whom I was speaking. They agreed that it was feasible, and that the shade from the wood-apple trees should not be a hindrance to the paddy. Without my expressly saying so, this has rather like giving them a go-ahead sign to go on and give effect to the idea. I promised to give them some sorghum seed for what they have cleared already.

There was a light shower of rain today. People said it would do more harm than good to whatever was a-growing. I saw their point. It was like having a bath, or rather the difference between a true Ceylonese having one, and one who had lost the art of true Ceylonese living, or who had never acquired it. The difference is this, that a villager will always bathe long enough to lower his body temperature; we western-educated people do not do so. A true Ceylonese will not bathe unless he

has time to lower his body temperature; we are always in too much of a hurry to have but a quick bath. A villager's body is always cold after his bath, even on the hottest day at the hottest time; our bodies will scarcely have changed their temperature. So it was with this light shower of rain; it would not have cooled the earth; it would soon have been like hot water.

One family, I hear, has been picking our wood-apple on quite a large scale I heard this away from the village. It may be that that family feels it has a proprietary right to the wood-apple. I had already heard elsewhere that they had ignored requests to stop, and that they were the only people to do so.

On my last return to the *Shamba* this morning, our two babies were carrying their babies about, all clearly made up with clothes. I was told they had been bathed and fed, and now, it looked to me, as if they were to be put to sleep, it was their mothers' mealtime, meals which their grandmother had made.

Tourist Souvenirs

Some 160,000 Japanese have visited South Korea in the past few months, most of them for a day or two. And, according to estimates, each one of them has brought home on the average 20 kilogrammes of washing powder, 100 cakes of soap and 300 rolls of toilet paper. These things, like many other necessities have become so expensive in Japan that it pays to buy them in Seoul, although they are not very cheap there either. The Japanese are now racking their brains over another problem: where to go to buy rice, sugar and other foods, the prices of which have also gone up tremendously.

LETTERS

✻ MR. MUSTAPHA
✻ PENSIONERS

OPEN LETTER TO
MR. MUSTAPHA

Dear Mr. Mustapha,

Your letter to JR is a manifesto at once to the Nindavur electorate which you represent in Parliament, and an apologia addressed to the general public for severance of your long-time connexions with the UNP. This open letter to you is not so much an excoriation of your political attitude as an impassioned plea from a life-long political neutral for an all-round improvement in such relations more, I would say, in accord with the best traditions in political life than with the polyglot culture and genius of our island home.

Your own several applications opportunely made for transfer of political allegiance have rarely if ever been indignantly repulsed: so fluid and brazenly utilitarian has been the general attitude of most political parties since the dawn of democratic government more than 25 years ago. Similarly your requests after each initiation for an appreciable share in the proverbial porkpie have invariably received most favourable treatment.

YOUR INTRODUCTORY PARAGRAPH and prelude however baffles intelligent scrutiny. For how could you have had *prolonged consideration* of the present political situation especially when you "have at *various times*..given expression to some of these views"! These views are neither synonymous nor synchronous with the present situation! This unprecedented majority refers I believe to seats captured, not to votes cast. On the latter reckoning the defeat of which you speak, does not appear to be as thorough as your persistent crowing would seem to proclaim.

The only lesson to be learnt in the circumstances is that election statistics should be thoroughly rationalized to ensure return of party members commensurate with the votes cast. As to political maturity, the juiciest attraction

in the 1970 manifesto was the guarantee of a fully subsidized issue of two measures of rice per individual. It could not however have escaped your attention that the current issue of the reduced ration of half a measure has often hung precariously on the assiduous wooing of our rice-producing neighbours. This political maturity was also sometimes exercised in favour of the UNP, the party to which you have now waved adieu.

SOCIALISM I concede is a splendid concept cutting through all humnly erected barriers and leading man common, and uncommon, towards the supreme realization of heaven on earth. But as the uncommon man cannot be commonized but must needs emerge superior to the milling crowds surrounding him, this much-vaunted socialism is achievable only in heaven where despite the hierarchies of anthropomorphism among the blessed spirits, both socialism itself and the more radical communism would be ideologies unwanted.

As to the socialism enunciated by the late Mr. B, there are far too many conflicting interpretations of this much lauded policy, which however has never been codified either by Mr. B during his lifetime or by anyone of his critics or selfproclaimed disciples. If only we could resurrect him, he would perhaps indignantly repudiate what passes off as socialism under his name and stricture with high disdain many of his present day disciples for their clamant heterodoxy.

Fully acquainted as you appear to be with the aspirations, genius and culture of the peoples of Ceylon, it is doubtful as to whether you have yourself ever uncovered any historical traces or tradition of Socialism in the long end chequered story of Sri Lanka. Furthermore, the Moorish patriarchs from whom you claim descent believed only in capitalism and the lavish besto-

wal of alms, both equally repugnant to the concept of socialism. And in any attempted reconciliation of Karma and Kismet with the egalitarian goal of socialism you will have ample need of subtleties and sophistries, both logical and metaphysical. As to the relentless pursuit of "socialist policies in every sphere of human activity", it is inconceivable how these can be made to operate except in a theocratic void or be *relentlessly* pursued in the midst of the multitudinous vicissitudes with which this government has been besetted.

THE HYPOTHETICAL is much in evidence in your attempt at evaluation of the work "of successive Bandaranaike governments." Any such evaluation would necessarily be an armchair academic exercise bereft of any meaningful objectivity, there being in the process so many imponderables and possibilities with as many permutations and combinations. Such a poser would be: "What would upcountry look like if enterprising foreign elements, Indian and British, had not opened up these lands to tea and rubber and cocoa? "Practically everything we see around us there is the work of a succession of planting entrepreneurs of whom any country could feel the utmost pride.

Nor is every nationalized venture the creation of successive Bandaranaike regimes. The Gal Board, the cement factory, the paper factory—to mention some of the most viable—are alien creations. State employees should remain neutral if they are to serve the state and not any particular party. If political appointees to statutory boards such as are unfortunately most board employees, become political turncoats during elections or shortly thereafter, it is because the fiend of expediency counsels them to do so.

Turncapism is not peculiar to state employees only. Neither corporations nor legislative enactments are in themselves achievements: only history can pronounce such a verdict. Corporations do not solve unemployment creative if they are of monopolies and if being hotbeds of nepotism corruption and consequently of inefficiency, they have to be maintained with additional taxation itself lead-

ing oftentimes to widespread unemployment. Legislation itself becomes a mischievous enactment if it engenders class warfare, reduces GNP, raises aloft the spectre of communalism or accentuates unemployment.

YOUR QUERY relating to the achievements of the Opposition during the period 1970-74 seems to stem from a supreme non-acquaintance with the functioning of democratic institutions. The opposition cannot achieve having no majority: steamrollered into acquiescence with the will of the majority, it must await its turn to legislate and execute for achievement. As to personal differences within the party of your desertion, such rifts have occurred even in other parties similarly composed of unregenerate elements drawn from multifarious sources.

Not the UNP only and the SLFP but others as well of lesser renown and consequence speak of socialism proclaiming it the supreme panacea for all the ills to which humanity is fallen prey through aeons of non-socialism. A vote-catching expedient, every such proclamation appears to be born not of conviction but of convenience and utilitarianism. Bureaucrats do advise on policy: they are not of yesterday nor of yesteryear but of the permanent secretariate. They also help formulate policy once its essential framework has been laid down by ministerial fiat and then proceed to execute it by cognate administrative action. If once the people found the UNP with a blank sheet of achievement as against the succeeding regime with a happier record of service, their political maturity would not have entrusted them with the reins of power on so many subsequent occasions since 1930 or even after 1948, after one such period of bleak non-achievement.

Vested interests are to be found everywhere not only in the hell of the reactionaries but even in the heaven of the socialists with this noteworthy difference that whereas in hell there is but one supreme demon of tyrannical power, in the socialist paradise everybody is supreme with several within more supremely vested with power than the ordinary rank and file of comradeship.

THAT INDEPENDENCE was won in 1948 without one drop of human

blood is no longer at issue now. The UNP crowd over it as they did also over political stability and several other such achievements. Emancipation from long subjugation still fires the imagination of youth and political stability is as always a sine qua non for national development. The history of 1970 has still to be written: it is so perilously close to the present that no authoritative evaluation thereof would be attempted by any serious student of history. Of the UNP's past as also of its present impact on history, you seem to have more categorical and authentic information; even of the future which is a closed book to most of us, ordinary mortals, your prescience is suggestingly not inconsiderable.

As to the elections to be held in 1975, that is exactly what your erstwhile party stands for not because of the republican constitution enacted in 1972, but because of the Constitution in force when elections were held in 1970. No one I believe swears allegiance to the Constitution: you have all sworn to uphold the Constitution which apparently is the instrument in which should be enshrined the will of the sovereign peoples of Ceylon. In the case of the Civil Disobedience campaign to be staged in 1975, the only honourable course open to you in full accord with party discipline was to have tendered your resignation once it was realized that your political conscience could under no circumstances whatsoever subscribe to such a party direction. To have waited so long to do the correct thing does not speak volumes for your political sagacity: on the contrary, your critics can say that it seems to smack of political opportunism.

To say what would happen when it is launched, is to declare unequivocally that of many possibilities the only one within your comprehension is also the only eventuality. The political maturity with which you have flattered the entire Ceylon electorate, does not envisage nor will it tolerate to anarchic and chaotic a situation.

There is no electoral division however small, be it simply rural or urban or municipal, which is without problems innumerable. As one such problem finds solution,

another and yet another emerges seeking solution. Changes cataclysmic are taking place social, political, economic, even religious: which of these are going to be all abiding, which purely ephemeral, no one can definitively proclaim. No one wishes to be a passive spectator, I believe not even an armchair pipesmoking recluse, but involved as much as possible in the maelstrom, himself activating changes likely to be of enduring utility to himself, his community or the people at large whom he has been duly elected to serve.

Living as you do in a democratic state where political parties should be allowed to operate without let or hindrance within constitutionally or conventionally defined limits, you must accept the position that the function of the Opposition is to oppose not because it is invariably good to do so in every instance, but because you, the loyal Opposition, can do it better.

EVERY ADMINISTRATION has its achievements positive as well as negative. When you sat cross-legged in 1956 on Galle Face green or made some such non-violent demonstration, you believed in the negativeness of achievement associated with that memorable enactment. If you are convinced that Mrs. B is the only hope for democracy you would make us all believe that no other leader of comparable status can be found in Sri Lanka today or tomorrow to take over the functions of democratic government once her work is done. There are fortunately many who are not co-sharers with you in that forlorn hope or belief.

Your regretful severance of connexions with the UNP is perhaps nostalgic of those larger and more spacious times when you basked in the sunshine of the outer cabinet, a firm believer in the achieved and achievable greatness of that party now blanksheeted by you with achievement, now licking its paws in the political shadows, now writhing giantlike in pain stricken by many a wily Ulysses.

Defecting from a party in which you were long considered a stalwart and to which you owe your present seat in Parliament, you have not at the same time resigned seeking, under a manifesto radically revised, a further mandate from your electorate not opted

for independent membership—a comparatively innocuous course—but rather made complete volte-face seeking membership in a party whose proclaimed policy is a negation in toto of all your earlier asseverations.

Gone are probity, integrity, honesty, values all honoured and cherished in democratic lands: honoured often indeed in the breach but honoured still with lipservice larded with many a wellworn slogan culled from Sanskrit ritual and Pali while bemused the herded crowds make applause in grim wonderment.

With a bang and flourish is born the new era of opportunism, callous, all pervading, all consuming. In the blast of that expansion whatever the ruler—regime may require, whatever the vicissitudes of fortune, and however fitful and calamitous the winds of change, many there are those who will seek and find galloping seats of power with that slimy adaptability which is the grand hallmark of all their genius.

E. Seemanpillai

Chenkaladi,
25th July 1974.

PENSIONERS' CRY

Sir,

Their cry is not always a wail. This is first and foremost a cry-up of the Government for ignoring the request of a Pensioner's Association to give a reduced Cost of Living allowance to Pensioners drawing over Rs. 400—and granting instead the same allowance to them as that granted to the Public Servants from last April. Nearly 100,000 Pensioners and their dependents add up to about 500,000 voters. Flying Time, 55ers, Abolition of office etc., are multiplying their number which can cause a considerable dent in the voting strength of Political Parties. In their own interest, if for no nobler reasons, pensioners do all they can to support and strengthen the Government.

SECONDLY, this is a cry to the Public Servants who are Tomorrow's Pensioners to take up at once the cause of the Pensioners which is their cause also. Chesterton gave the wise warning, "Cry before you are hurt! It is too late to cry after the axe des-

cends on your head!" 20 million WORKERS in Italy went on strike crying out for higher Basic PENSIONS (mark you!)—and their cry bore fruit instanter. Surely, Sri Lanka's workers too have the will, the wisdom and the foresight to make a similar demand. It need hardly be added that at this juncture confrontation has to be avoided as a mark of gratitude, and loyalty to the primeminister who is directing the Production War and is, at this moment, in the thick of the battle for food for the people.

NOW THAT we have a benevolent Prime Minister, a compassionate Minister of Finance, and a considerate Minister of Public Administration, Home Affairs, Local Government and Justice, it augurs well for a fruitful Dialogue with the Government. Will the Public Service Trade Unions act NOW and make up for the dead years of inaction regarding Pensions and Pensioners and their own identical interests of the future.

The Commuted Pension is a vampire that preys on the Pensioners. On a hypothetical commuted pension of Rs. 9,000 the poor Pensioner has to pay up a total of Rs. 15,150, or Rs. 6,150 over and above the CP of Rs. 9,000. For want of space the clarification of this calculation has to be deferred. Of the woes and wails of Pensioners, more anon.

J.S.T.

Colombo
18.7.74

EDUCATIONAL REFORMS—3

SHORT COMINGS OF THE N.C.G.E. Examination Scheme

This is the third instalment of the Memorandum submitted by the All-Ceylon Educational Federation to the Minister of Education on the new Scheme of education and examinations which become operative from next year.

i. Venturing To Tutor Pupils In An Unprecedentedly Encyclopaedic Array Of Subjects In An Inadequate Period Of Time.

UNDER THE GUIDELINES of the new scheme, the G.C.E./O.L. syllabuses of Physics, Chemistry and

Biology have been lumped together as one subject while the entire syllabic content of Civics, History and Geography have been lumped together as another, and in what we consider to be its worst feature this new scheme envisages teaching every student all these subjects in the space of only four years.

An estimate of approximately how much of these subjects a student is scheduled to absorb can be effectively garnered from the following facts: Under the G.C.E./O.L. system in Grades 9 and 10, 16 periods a week are reserved for Physics, Chemistry and Biology. In the stampede to teach everybody everything this has been dramatically slashed to 4 periods of Science a week, and one does not require a Ph. D. in Education to discern quite clearly the resultant inevitability of a drastic lowering of the standard of scientific knowledge in this country.

We are aware that these 4 Science periods are taught in Grade 6 and proceed upwards in a like manner numerically from there, but would like to point out that General Science was always taught in Grades 6, 7 and 8. In Grades 9 and 10, the important Science subjects (Physics, Chemistry and Biology) were taught as individual subjects in intensive sessions—as they should be—of upto 6 periods of instruction per week, maintaining a weekly total of 16 periods of Science at this level.

All the new scheme does is to fragmentize the present G.C.E. syllabus, taking whole isolated chunks from each subject and cram these sections into the curriculum of Grades 6, 7 and 8, thus burdening young minds (aged 10, 11 and 12 in these forms at the average) with information too sophisticated for them to cope with and understand.

THESE 'REFORMS' might make for bureaucratic convenience but it has turned out to be chaotic in practice in that a student now preparing for the G.C.E./O.L. Examination at times finds his younger brother or sister in Grade 6 painfully grappling with the identical sections of educational literature in a curious contravention of universally accepted educational principles.

In Grades 6, 7 and 8 these 4 periods (of Intergrated Science) should be devoted to General Science (as was formerly the practice) planting the seeds of interest in scientific knowledge in the minds of these young students in a gradual process, ensuring their riveted attention on this subject from then on, instead of provoking their resentment at being swamped with advanced tracts too dense for their as yet limited comprehension. This basic grounding in General Science would serve (as it did in the past) as the foundation of scientific knowledge which would then branch out into the science subjects proper, namely, Physics, Chemistry and Biology.

All this new scheme has accomplished is to arrest the natural flowering of knowledge in gradual stages, and to take isolated, sometimes unrelated chunks out of the present G.C.E. syllabus and introduce these advanced segments of knowledge to bewildering Grade 6 students under the seemingly innocuous heading of Integrated Science, discarding the identifying nomenclature usually referred to as Physics, Chemistry and Biology.

THE BUREAUCRACY has, in effect, created a new subject totally incomprehensible, to the young students and even to some teachers in that this arrangement defies logical explanation. When General Science was taught to students in Grades 6, 7 and 8, it was the most enthusiastically regarded subjects in the school curriculum, evoking a natural spontaneous interest in the student but all that the subject 'Integrated Science' has managed to do is foster a feeling of resentment and pathological hatred in the student.

An 'Integrated Science' at the Grade 6 level should be the General Science constitution of the very basic principles underlying the Physical Science, and not the so-

called Integrated Science (that is now being taught in Grades 6, 7 and 8) which is nothing but a haphazard collection of isolated and unrelated chunks taken out of the present G.C.E. syllabus in Physics, Chemistry and Biology.

II. Proposing to successfully Examine the vast expanse of Knowledge on the basis of only 10 question papers.

UNDER THE NEW SCHEME all the scientific knowledge so painfully absorbed after 4 years of assiduous study, the authorities propose to test in just one paper called "Science"—thus casting a crucial examination at the secondary level in a farcical light. Though every student is scheduled to be tutored in a wide assortment of subjects ranging from Integrated Science (comprising of Physics, Chemistry and Biology) to Social Science (History, Geography and Civics) very little of this array of topics is to be tested at the examination.

We respectfully submit that if the Department of Education intends to make an accurate assessment of this accumulated knowledge, it would seriously consider setting a minimum of 18 Question Papers per student at the N.C.G.E. examination reading as follows:

Science	1 Physics 2 Chemistry 3 Biology	2 Papers 2 Papers 2 Papers
Health Science	4 Health	2 Papers
Social Science	1 History 2 Geography 3 Civics	1 Paper 1 Paper 1 Paper
Mathematics		2 Papers
1st Language		2 Papers
2nd Language		2 Papers
Religion		1 Paper
Prevocation I		
Prevocation II		

THE NAIVE contention of the planners that pupil knowledge will be regularly tested terminally as well as annually in schools is hardly reassuring since this effectively invalidates whatever slim reasons existing previously to warrant the introduction of the N. C. G. E. Examination Scheme and renders questionable the necessity for creating such an examination at all since

three-fourths of students knowledge is scheduled to be tested in gradual stages over a long period of time (prior to the N.C.G.E. Examination proper) leaving only one-fourth of the sum total of knowledge (to be learned at that level) to be tested in Grade 9.

Further more it is doubtful whether the authorities have fully considered the following important points before launching the N.C.G.E. Examination Scheme:

- (a) Is there any necessity for a public examination at the level of Grade 9.
- (b) Given the proposed illogical mode of assessment outlined above, would any prospective employer accept the results of this Grade 9 Examination as being an accurate estimate of a student's scholastic capabilities?
- (c) What would be the qualitative value of a N.C.G.E. Certificate in comparison to the recognized G.C.E./O.L. Certificate particularly where employment is concerned? As it is the local Labour market has for many years been annually swamped with successive human waves of high school graduates, and the

**FOR NEWS
BEHIND THE NEWS**

read

TRIBUNE

regularly

ously spurning those unfortunate youths handicapped with the N.C.G.E. qualifications.

(d) In these circumstances, what would be the future of those who leave school after sitting the N.C.G.E.?

IN THE PRESENT G.C.E./O.L. system students graduate after undergoing an intensive two-year course of study in six or more specialized fields of knowledge, and the G.C.E./O.L. Examination system serves the following purposes:

(a) For the student who cannot afford, or do not wish, to continue their education at the University level, it provides a recognized school-leaving certificate which would enable them to successfully seek employment.

(b) It certifies that a high school graduate is intellectually fit to gain entrance to a higher educational institute either in Sri Lanka or abroad.

(c) As a single subject examination, it enables any person who may so desire to equip himself with a certificate testifying to his competence in one or more subjects of his choice to do so without procedural hindrance (as against the N.C.G.E. Scheme which makes no provision for private or single subjects candidates and indeed makes it impossible for any person not already a school boy or girl to sit for the examination at all, thus cruelly discriminating against adult citizens attempting to stage a come-back to their previously interrupted academic careers.)

MINIMALLY, any examination replacing the G.C.E./O.L. Examination must fulfil all these vital condi-

No Essential Vaccines Here

The pilot project initiated by the MOH's Office at Jaea is handicapped for want of vaccine for immunisation against small-pox typhoid, diphtheria, tetanus and whooping cough. While the triple injection vaccine is not available in any government hospital in the Jala-Ela electorate it could be purchased from private dispensaries and chemist shops. Surgical spirits and dressings too are not available at the MOH's office.

tions, and the N.C.G.E. Examination Scheme would only corrode our economy besides jeopardizing the collective futures of millions of students.

Whatever its short-comings the G.C.E./O.L. system provides the student with a Certificate recognized internationally and accepted unquestioningly as being equivalent to any examination at that level in most host countries where a Ceylonese may travel to in search of employment or further education.

On the other hand, the N.C.G.E. student, having learnt nothing in particular and having no valid certificate, could only expect humiliating rejection in our own country as well as anywhere in the world.

(To be Concluded)

C. M. E. A.

A Bank For Socialist Economic Integration

by

Prof. Friedmar John

Vice-President of the State Bank of GDR

The International Bank for Economic Cooperation (IBWZ) in Moscow has existed for more than ten years. It was founded on 22 October 1963 following an agreement between the member countries of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA).

Since then the bank has successfully contributed to deepening the co-operation between the CMEA countries.

It takes an active part in implementing the aggregate programme for socialist economic integration adopted in 1971.

THE FOUNDING of the bank was accompanied by the introduction of a new currency—the transferable ruble, the first collective currency in the history of inter-

national monetary relations. It makes it possible to conduct the external economic relations between the CMEA countries on a multilateral basis. That had become necessary at the beginning of the 1960s, because the foreign trade between the CMEA countries was expanding evermore and bilateral financial transactions no longer corresponded to the higher requirements.

The transferable ruble as a collective currency and the IBWZ, which undertakes the multilateral clearings between the member countries and grants credits for their temporary financial requirements, are thus important institutions in the management and planning of the integration process.

In the ten years of its activity the International Bank for Economic Cooperation has extended short term credits of about 22 thousand million transferable rubles with a clearing volume of 325 thousand million transferable ruble.

STATE SOVEREIGNTY IS RETAINED. The activity of the bank rests on the maintenance of state sovereignty and national interests, complete equality, mutual advantage and comradesly assistance. Irrespective of the amount of capital shares each member of the IBWZ has one vote in the Bank Council, and all countries have the same rights in the use of the collective currency.

The character of the economic relations between the CMEA countries guarantees that there were and are no so-called chronic creditor or debtor countries, as is a rule, for example, in the relations between capitalist countries. This is an expression of the profoundly democratic character of this international socialist credit institution, which makes it impossible for a country to become dependent on another or to obtain one-sided advantages for itself.

The GDR effects 70 per cent of its foreign trade with the CMEA countries. The stability of the transferable ruble and the activity of the IBWZ therefore contribute to a systematic and continuous development of the GDR.

U.S. OPINION SURVEY

The tasks of the IBWZ also include transactions in convertible currencies and the customary international banking transactions both with the member countries of the bank and also with banks in all parts of the world. Today more than 300 big banks throughout the world maintain business relations with the IBWZ. This expresses how the international prestige of the bank has grown in the ten years of its activity.

NEW TASKS IN THE SECOND DECADE. The second decade was introduced by an important event: the Republic of Cuba became a full and equal member of the international socialist bank.

The IBWZ is faced by extensive new tasks which are not least determined by the decisions of the 27th session of the CMEA, concerning the fulfilment of the aggregate programme. It is necessary, in accordance with the requirements made on the individual stages of the development of socialist economic integration, to perfect the clearing and financial instruments and in that way further strengthen the transferable ruble as a collective international socialist currency of the CMEA member countries.

Socialist economic integration takes place under consideration of the international division of labour and the expansion of world economic relations on the basis of peaceful coexistence between countries with different social systems. It is not its purpose to establish a closed autarkic "economic bloc". Important principles were adopted at the 34th session of the Council of the IBWZ so as to make use of the transferable ruble also in clearings between member countries and other countries. These principles are now being put into practice through the joint efforts of the foreign trade, financial and bank organs of the member countries.

Panorama DDR

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Isolationism On The Increase: Hope For The Future Less

by Leslie H. Gleb

Washington, June 15,

Over the last two years isolationism in the United States has more than doubled to a new high since World War II, and in the same period internationalist views among Americans have dropped 15 per cent to a post 1945 low, a survey of American opinion shows.

The survey was planned, financed and analyzed by Potomac Associates, Inc., a non-profit organization supported by foundations and other private sources, and the polling was done by the Gallup organization of Princeton, N. J. its conclusion: "There has been a pronounced tendency to turn inward" because of the shattering effect of the American experience in Vietnam on beliefs in "U.S. predominance in power" and, more importantly, because of preoccupation with increasing domestic problems.

And in a separate survey by the same organization, Americans characterize themselves and their country as worse off today and with less hope for the future than in previous polls. The findings of the poll on internationalist attitudes parallel the years of the Nixon Administration.

THE SURVEY were conducted this winter and spring. The poll of international attitudes was taken between Jan. 18 and 21, sampling 1,592 American adults and the other, on "hopes, and fears", was conducted between April 20 and 28 and sampled 1,806 persons.

The poll on international views showed that "total isolationists increased from 9 per cent of a sample polled in 1972 to 21 per cent of those interviewed this year. On the other hand, "total internationalists" declined from 56 per cent in 1972 to 41 per cent in 1974.

The dark views of those polled for their "hopes and fears"—where they are, what they expect

from the future—was interpreted by one of those who originated the survey as indicating a profound sense of disillusionment, even despondency over Watergate and economic conditions."

THE INTERNATIONAL FINDINGS will be published next week in a book, "A Nation Observed: Perspectives on America's World Role," edited by Donald R. Lesh. The "hopes and fears" finding will be published in the fall as the second in a series of books called "State of the Nation," edited by William Watts and Lloyd A. Free.

Mr. Watts and Mr. Lesh are former members of the National Security Council staff in the Nixon Administration, and Mr. Free is an expert on polling.

AN ESSAY based on the international poll showed the following:

● Isolationist sentiment is most pronounced in Middle America and among the poor and uneducated, as opposed to northeastern. "Establishment" America, as claimed by the Nixon Administration.

● Forty-two per cent of Americans—against 43 per cent who disagree—feel that it is no longer important for the United States to be Number One, "the world's most powerful nation."

● Most Americans see American power declining as other nations improve their power positions; most said they would be satisfied with "essential equivalence" with the Soviet Union.

More than half of those surveyed—excluding those who ex-

pressed no opinion—felt that too much was being spent on defense; 15 per cent advocated an increase in military expenditures.

A MAJORITY of Americans would not like to see their nation come to the defense of Japan; only 48 per cent would approve the use of military force to help Western Europe.

Mr. Free made a chart of internationalist — isolationist trends, showing a steady decline in internationalist feelings —65 per cent in 1964, 59 per cent in 1968, 56 per cent in 1972, and then the sharp drop to 41 per cent in 1974. Isolationism, on the other hand held constant from 8 per cent in 1964 to 9 per cent in 1968 and again 9 per cent in 1972 before rising to 21 per cent this year.

Where an individual was spotted on the chart depended on his answers to questions involving, among other things, support for the United Nations, taking the views of allies into account, defending allies, and letting others "get along as best they can on their own."

The last question expressed as a proposition: "We shouldn't think so much in international terms but concentrate more on our own national problems and building up our strength and prosperity here at home." Seventy seven per cent agreed with this, as against 14 per cent who disagreed and 9 per cent who offered no opinion. That 77 per cent in agreement contrasted with 55 per cent in 1964, 60 per cent in 1968, and 73 per cent in 1972. Again the major upsurge came during the Nixon years.

THE ONLY SOCIAL AND CULTURAL groups in which international sentiment reached majority proportions were the college-educated, 58 per cent; families with incomes of \$ 20,000 or more a year, 53 per cent and professional and business people, 54 per cent. The poor, the uneducated, the old and blacks fell into a grouping of 36 per cent or less.

The composition of the isolationist grouping was reflected throughout the population but was most advanced in rural areas and small communities, the Midwest and West, and among the young.

There was a striking decline in internationalism among people under 30 years of age—71 per cent in 1964 to 42 per cent in 1974, a decrease of 29 per cent.

THESE FINDINGS concur with public judgements by Nixon Administration leaders on the increase in isolationism. But the composition of the isolationist group contradicts assertions by President Nixon, Vice President Ford and Secretary of State Kissinger that the thrust is from the eastern foreign-policy Establishment.

Mr. Free concludes his analysis of findings with a warning: "The only prediction that can be made with some confidence is that the greatest complications in international relations over the next decade are likely to stem from violations of expectations; of what allies, friends, competitors, and former adversaries expect of the United States, and what Americans expect of themselves and the world as a whole."

Only the composite findings of the "hopes and fears" survey have been completed and made available to The New York Times. It is the third in a series that began in 1971.

IN ALL THE SURVEYS, the respondents were asked to grade themselves on a 1-to-10 scale, or ladder with 1 representing their worst fears, 10 representing their highest hopes. They were asked to indicate where they stood on the scale at present, where they stood five years ago and where they expected to stand five years from now. And they were also for the nation that way.

As of April, the pollsters said, the average American saw himself as having declined from 6.4 five years ago to 4.8 today and as expecting to be at 5.8 five years hence.

These results were new and different in two respects from precious polls: They marked the sharpest drop over, of 1.5. In such contexts, it was also the first time that Americans had considered their future bleaker than their past. In the 10-year span, Americans saw themselves as falling from 6.8 to 5.8.

As of late 1972, American self-perception ran in a such 10-year span from 5.5 to 6.4 to 7.6. In mid-1971, these figures were 5.8, 6.6 and 7.5. Mr. Watts, who is also president of Potomac Associates, sees the two separate polls as related. "The sense of decline nationally", he said, "is coupled with the sense of less world responsibility."

—Courtesy New York Times

Indian Ocean Meet in Delhi August 27-29

New Delhi,

An International Conference on "Indian Ocean-Against Foreign Military Bases and for a Zone of Peace" will be held on August 27-29 in New Delhi, on the initiative of the World Peace Council and the Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Organisation. The conference will have delegates from the littoral states of the Indian Ocean, from countries, which have bases, from socialist countries, from national liberation movements and international organisations. A national Preparatory committee consisting of leading parliamentarians, leaders of political parties and mass organisations, vice-chancellors and educationists, lawyers, scientists, social workers has been set up to prepare for the conference. In the preparatory committee are AICC general secretaries Chandrajeet Yadav and Aziz Imam, CPI national council secretaries Bhupesh Gupta, N. K. Krishnan and Indrajit Gupta, Youth Congress president, P. R. Das Munshi, AIYF general secretary C. K. Chandrappan, V. K. Krishna Menon. ISCUS president KPS Menon, vice chancellor K. L. Shrimali, B. D. Nag Choudhury and Shiv Mangal Singh Suman, UGC vice - chairman Satish Chandra and writers Mulk Raj Anand, Ali Sardar Jafri and Subhas Mukherjee.

RAVANA

The Demon King of Ceylon

by Nimal Sarathchandra

Stewart Wavell of the B.B.C. speaking on Ravana said "I can tell you how delighted I was when I came to Ceylon. I was sure that here in the very home of Ravana there would be an interest, interest to the oldest and greatest drama in Asian history. But there is not among the intelligentsia not in Colombo and not among the historians, but among ordinary village people." What Wavell said we have to endorse without comment.

It was only two years ago that a group of volunteers from Mawanella sought the assistance of the government to explore a cave, where Ravana's incorrupt body is supposed to be kept guarded by spirits and to procure it for posterity. Many historians not only rebuked the idea but entered into a controversy to establish that Ravana, Ram; and Sita were symbolic figures and that Ravana did not exist and that Lankaputra where he is believed to have lived is not Sri Lanka.

NOT EVEN curiosity, moved them to help the enthusiasts or join them in their expedition in search of Ravana's cave. Ravana, the demon king, who not only ruled Lanka but certain parts of South India as well, is regarded by many as a mythical or symbolic character.

The *Ramayana*, the greatest of all epic poems, containing over twenty thousands stanzas is based on a monumentous romantic story of Rama and Sita, the abduction of Sita and the ultimate downfall of Ravana.

Though many regard *Ramayana* as a allegorical epic, it is illogical to come to such a hasty conclusion, though certain mythical elements have intermingled with the main theme of the story.

Signor Casparo Corrisio, Professor of Sanskrit, in France (1808-1891) who was also the first translator of *Ramayana* into an European language says—"How upon a purely invention, a simple alegory could a poem have been composed about fifty thousand verses and relating with such force and power the events and giving details with such exactness, on a theme purely allegorical and there may be easily composed a short mythical poem on Prosperene or Psyche but never an epic so full of traditions and historical memories so intimately connected with the era of the people of the *Ramayana*."

Mr. Ananda Guruge's "*Society of Ramayana*" is based on this

epic poem. How could such a comprehensive book be written on a society if it was non existent.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL FEATURES as described in the *Ramayana* coincide so well with the features which exists in Sri Lanka even today, that we are compelled to infer that the war between Rama and Ravana did take place in Sri Lanka and that Sita was kept in captivity in this Island.

Place names such as Sita-Eliya, Sitawaka, Sthri Puraya, Kinniya, Roomasala, Unawatuna, Maha Ravana Kotuwa & Kuda Rawana Kotuwa, Laggala, Rassagala, ga'a, Olugantotoa, Rakwana, Raks has Kanda, Divurungala, Rawana Ella, Ravana Guhawa which are intimately connected with the episode are found in different parts of the Island.

The story in *Ramayana* was popular among the sinhala people during the Kotte period. In one of the Sandesa poems composed during that period it is found that the people were familiar with the story of Rama and Sita.

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රාම සීතා කතා නෙළ ලන්

Not only was the story of Rama and Sita known to the people of Kotte but mention is made of Sita in the *Saddaramarathanavaliya* written during the Dambadeniya period.

මේ වනෙහි වෘක්ෂ දේවතාවෙහි-
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පතිවෘත වීම නම.....

Mr. A. T. C. Jinadasa, the novelist describing Unawatuna, which is supposed to have been formed by a portion of the Himalaya being dropped by Hanumant while transporting it back to from where it was brought says—

බිම්බුණු රම් රවුට පෙර යුද කල
පෙරණ
සෙසුගනුවිය දගෙන යන හනුමා
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වටුන

Laggala which according to folklore was the capital of Ravana at one time or another is part of the Knuckless Range. It is believed that the pond with the dark waters is found at the top of the hill, whose water would rejuvenate the old and infirm.

සතරැස් පොකුණ සැදිලා ඇති ලක
මුදුන
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කියන
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ලක්ගල මුදුන බල සල කර දිය
පොකුණ

Spinnifex littores (Maha Ravana Revul) growing along the sea coast, gives a semblance of Ravana's beard.

"Sita Aggala", small, soft, circular rocks found scattered in the Nuwara Eliya region is being used by people even today in curing stomach ailments.

If Ravana was a symbolic character what symbols do his mother, sister Suparnaka, son Indrajith, brother Kumbakarna represent.

Vibishana, Ravana's own brother who betrayed him is edified and worshipped by the people as the guardian of Kelaniya.

Though the story of Rama and Sita spread to most of the South East Asian countries such as Indonesia, Vietnam and Malaysia etc. and this particular story is represented in the various dance forms of these countries, no other country as Sri Lanka has so much of material evidence to show that the war between Rama and Rawana took place in Sri Lanka and that Ravana lived in Sri Lanka and not in any other country in Asia.

EUROPEAN COMMON MARKET

Aid To Non-Associated States

by Derek Payton-Smith

Brussels, 18 July

What the British Development Minister, Mrs. Judith Hart, called an "important step" towards the formulation of an overall and coherent EEC aid policy was taken on 17 July when the EEC Development Council resolved that it would give financial and technical aid to non-associated developing countries as well as to associated states.

In its resolution the Council said that the amount and details of this aid to non associates would be fixed by agreement, and that it intended to give priority to financial commitments to be entered into in respect of the associations at present under negotiation (that is, with countries eligible to become associates following Britain's entry into the Community).

Mrs. Hart also expressed great satisfaction at progress made on the so-called air frame-work which she said was a necessary tool for coherent aid policy and financial planning.

THE PREPARATION of such a framework was first put forward by the British Minister on 30 April and the EEC Commission subsequently produced a draft which Britain and some other countries found unsatisfactory—not least because of the high proportion of food aid spending from 1976 onwards.

As Mrs. Hart told journalists, the British do not regard food aid as being developmental in the way the transfer of technical and financial assistance is. To the Council she stressed that the need of many countries in receipt of food aid was primarily for help in increasing their own production and productivity. She suggested that contrary to Commission proposals, food aid expenditure should be kept at present levels, which means that it would decline in proportion to total Community aid.

HOWEVER there is still disagreement within the Council on this

question of the role and value of food aid. But Mrs. Hart expressed satisfaction at the absence of opposition to the concept of an aid framework among Council members.

As a result of this week's discussions the Commission is now committed to do further work on the framework.

Giving her own ideas of how Community aid should be distributed globally, Mrs. Hart stressed that she did not wish to detract from prior Community obligations to countries which enjoyed, or would enjoy, preferential agreement with it. But the distribution in accordance with the fundamental criterion for aid-giving (that those developing countries in greatest need should receive most), would, she thought, be a 50-50 division of Community aid between the associates and non-associates.

But Mrs. Hart emphasised that she did not seek this balance of commitments between the two groups at the moment. Rather, the Community should make sufficient new financial commitments over the next five years in order to achieve a rough balance of disbursements between them.

CAN IT BE TRUE?

Cholera Cured By Coconuts

AFTER SEVERAL YEARS in which cases of cholera have turned up continually but on no massive scale in the Ganges delta and South-East Asia, the disease has this year appeared in several cities of Southern Russia, has hit South Korea and is also reported in the Lebanon.

Cholera is caused by a germ which irritates the intestine causing the body to lose water sodium and potassium. The treatment is to replace these, and this saves lives. If untreated, people with severe cholera can lose so much water that they become shrivelled up and so drowsy and confused that they cannot drink and have to be fed by injection into veins.

Dr. M. H. Jafary, now at the Hospital for Tropical Diseases in London, was a few years ago a member of a medical team which went to a group of villages in East Pakistan where cholera has broken out. They fed patients intra-

venously with coconut milk direct from the coconuts. It was all there was available but coconut milk in fact contains the right things for helping cholera patients to recovery.

People who get cholera catch it through drinking infected water or milk or sometimes through eating infected food. If irrigation water is infected, this can infect food crops; and if one batch on food in a market is infected, flies can take the infection to another.

The cholera germ is a delicate organism and does not survive long outside the human body. It needs the right conditions of temperature, humidity and so on. A person who caught cholera excretes the germ while he has the cholera symptoms and to some extent for a few weeks afterwards. What starts a cholera outbreak is typically the infection of the water supply by some person with the disease.

The main centre of cholera is the Ganges delta where there is high humidity, a high temperature and a big population and where the delta land is alkaline—the cholera germ does not survive in acid.

In 1958, Dr. Aidan Cockburn doctor from Newcastle who organised the vaccination of 30 million people—often with sewing machine needles—to quell a smallpox epidemic in East Pakistan, thought up a scheme for making use of the cholera germ, aversion to acid and ridding the Ganges delta of the diseases.

The scheme was later put off.

However, India, which once had annual cholera epidemics, has no had a major one for 15 years.

Britain has not had a case of cholera since the 19th century. One 19th century epidemic dis-reach Britain in 1832. (a later one which reached Russia killed the composer Tchaikovsky).

A factor in the latest outbreak of cholera is the 'El Tor' strain of the disease, first isolated at the quarantine station at Tor in Egypt in 1906. This a different strain from that found in Pakistan.

There was an El Tor epidemic in Hong Kong in 1960 and in the Philippines in 1961. Two or three years ago, it appeared in the Middle East which had previously been free of cholera for some time.

S. G.

IS IT TRUE?

Sherlock Holmes

* THE C. T. B.

IS IT NOT TRUE that one of the matters that the Government must rectify soon, if it wants grumbling and hostile criticism of the Administration especially in the rural areas, to be reduced to a minimum, is to ensure a better CTB service in the outstations? That in the city of Colombo there is at least some semblance of a reasonably good public transport service? That this is only in comparative and relative terms? That though there are enough buses in the metropolis to take people about without their hanging about too long in queues even at rush hours, it is painfully noticeable that most buses even in the city are rarely, if ever washed or cleaned? That buses break down all too frequently on the run thereby putting many passengers into difficulties? That in the outstations the buses are fewer and they are far more dirty? That it is a reckless adventure of the highest order to travel by bus in many parts of rural Sri Lanka? That if the workers organised in the trade unions were serious about demonstrating that a nationalised undertaking was superior to any other form of organisation the least they could do was to ensure that the buses were washed and kept clean? That washing is the most elementary act in vehicle maintenance? That if this simple requirement of washing and cleaning were done regularly the more sophisticated operations in vehicle-maintenance would be less? That the routine sophisticated systems of vehicle-maintenance should be strictly adhered to in the CTB is to ensure a good service as well as safeguard the operative life of the vehicle?

That on paper no doubt the CTB has set down all the rules that must be observed regarding washing and maintenance? That in spite of this it is a notorious fact that the majority of the buses are not washed or maintained? That administrators in the CTB frankly admit that

they find it hard to insist on discipline because any action to reprimand or punish defaulters is made a "trade union" issue? The such administrators are immediately branded as reactionaries, UNPers and the like and that they are taken to task by political higher-ups? That whilst trade unions rush to the rescue of workers who are pulled up for inefficiency, indiscipline and other misconduct, trade unions do not seem to pay any attention to the question of ensuring proper care and maintenance of buses and the efficient running of the service? That the only time trade union branches, administrators state, take an interest in the running and operation of buses is when they want to remove an administrator they do not like? That when trade unionists in the CTB are asked why they do not do something about making the CTB run better, they produce a long list of grievances about the manner in which they are being "exploited" by the management and are being "victimised" by reactionary administrators? That these CTB workers do not realise that they are the best paid and best looked after in the country? That the Government must make a major effort to transform the quality of thinking and logic which now seems to prevail among the CTB workers? That if worker participation in management is to be purposeful and profitable, trade unions must re-orientate their thinking in a way as to ensure not only proper maintenance of the vehicles but also the most meticulous observance of disciplinary rules? That unless this is done, the CTB will go from bad to worse in spite of millions of rupees dumped into the organisation, in spite of the thousands of new buses which are bought and in spite of the millions of old losses that are waived by an indulgent Ministry of Finance?

IS IT NOT TRUE that there is too much clock watching in the CTB?

That there is also too much tea drinking in the depots and also on the run? That to make up for the time lost in tea-drinking and idle dawdling buses are driven at reckless speed to maintain schedules? That if something were not done to improve matters, the UNP and other Opposition parties will be able to charge the government with inefficiency and humbug? That in a recent issue of *The Journal*, (25/6/74), the UNP paper had pointed out that the CTB should be able to put 6000 buses on the road every day? That instead "each day by 10 o'clock in the morning only about 3500 buses operate"? That the paper stated that when the UNP was defeated in 1970, the CTB had an operational fleet of 4500 buses? That in the last four years the CTB had bought 2500 buses? That at the same time it had taken off the road a similar number of buses, that is about 2500 buses? That these buses had been taken off because of bad maintenance and the lack of spares to repair them? That *The Journal* (UNP) estimated that with the number of buses available in 1970 and the number bought subsequently the CTB should be able to operate at least 6000 buses daily? That the paper also reported that the CTB had invested about Rs. 30 million in rupees, spares, raw material and the like during the last two years? That at the end of March 1974 there was a total of 1009 buses off the road requiring new units and sub-units? That of these over 600 were off the road for over 100 days? That some of them had been immobilised for period varying from 100 days 1103 days, 1143 days, 1230 days, 1080 days and 1506 days? That in between there were other buses which have been out of service for 969 days, 660 days, 733, days, 538 days and so on? That nearly 600 buses had been taken off the road because of gear box defects? That it was reasonable question to ask why so many gear boxes were damaged? That it might be due to bad manipulation by drivers who had not received adequate and proper training? That nearly 200 buses had been held up for want of spares in the depots? That it is obvious that the *Journal* is furnished with "inside news"? That if even some of these figures are little exaggerated and facts presented in a slanted way, there is no doubt that there is a great deal of truth in what is stated in the *Journal*?