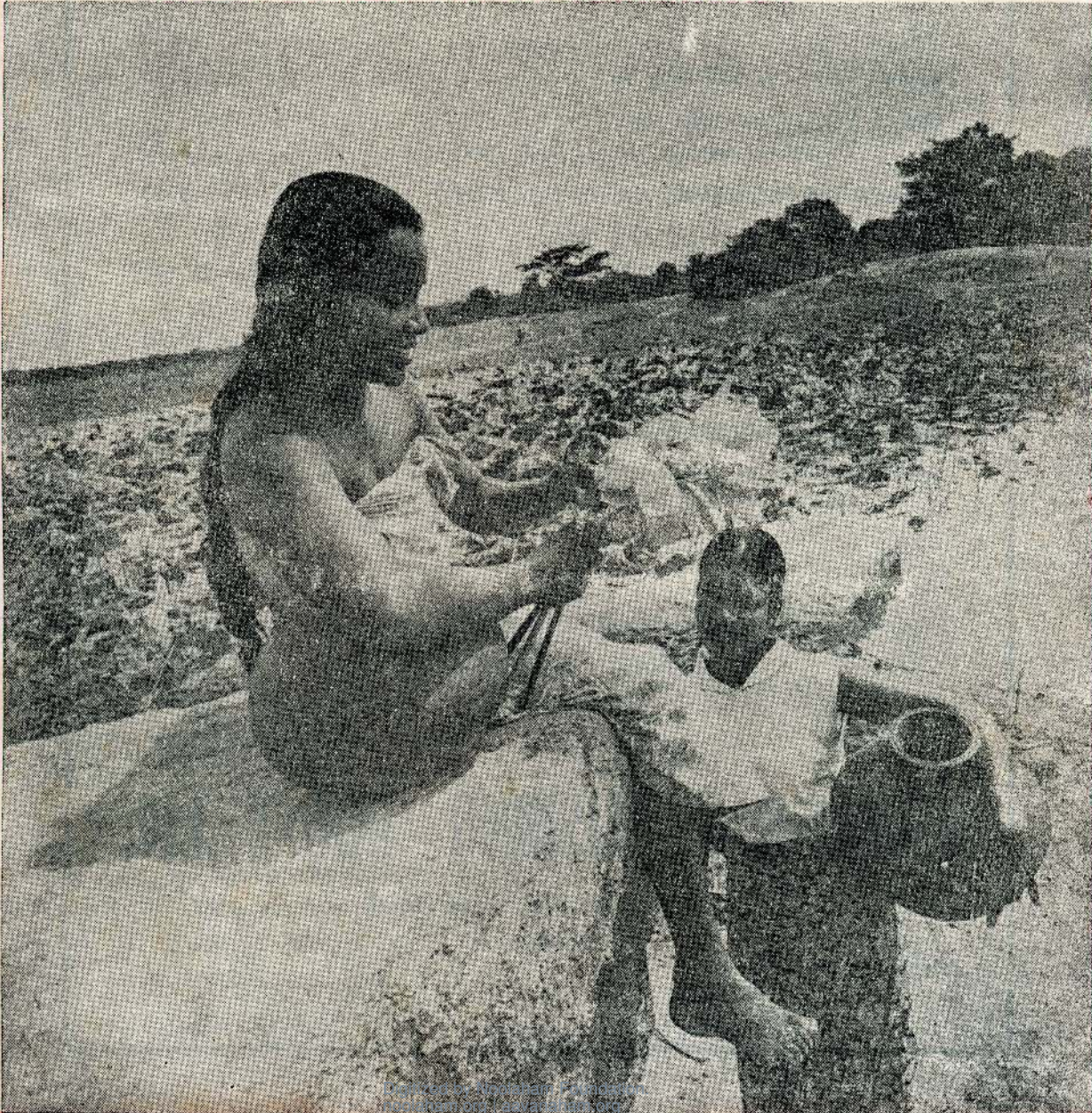


Vol. 24 No. 38 — March 29, 1980 — No. 2-50

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## Letter From The Editor

MANY IN SRI LANKA, even in high places, do not seem to realise that self-sufficiency in food is the basis of real freedom. This statement may appear an over-simplified cliché, but whichever way one looks at it, there is no doubt that unless a country is self-sufficient in food, it cannot really be said to be free. This does not mean that every single item of food must be produced locally, but it means that only a country that cannot be held to ransom—because of food—can be regarded as truly independent. Economists say that a country which imported 30% of its food requirements could not be regarded as “free”. Such a degree of dependency is quite sufficient for any desisting alien exploitative power to make that country a dependant satellite. Nationalism can flourish only when sufficient food is grown in any country. Foreign invaders finally succeed in consolidating their rule in any country only by making that country dependent on imports of food. This is especially true in the era of imperialism and neo-colonialism. Imperialism destroyed the native food production base to make that country depend on a monoculture of export crops for the world market. In the era of the Wastelands Ordinance this island stopped being self-sufficient in food and grew tea, rubber and coconuts for the world market. After Independence, an attempt was made to grow more food and though more was grown and though self-sufficiency was never attained, the economy had begun to acquire a new equilibrium and balance. Unfortunately, in more recent times the country has slipped into the dangerous belief that the mainstream of our agriculture (diversified into non-traditional items also) should once again be completely export-oriented and that it was more advantageous to import the food for people toiling to produce commodities for export than dissipate their energies by growing the food themselves. In pursuance of this theory onions, chillies, potatoes, wheat flour, rice, pulses, condiments, broiler chicken and an entire range of food items have been imported after 1977. Apart from paddy, local food production has dropped sharply, and very soon, if not already, the country will touch the danger levels at which exploitative interests can make this country a completely dependent vassal state. What is even more unfortunate is that farmers are switching from food crops for domestic consumption to cash crops for export—and that while the international price of such cash crops have slumped the price of imported food items have shot up. Countries like Sri Lanka will now have to export more and more to obtain diminishing amounts of food on worsening terms of trade weighted in favour of the rich food exporting countries of the West. Poor under-developed countries interested in New International Order strategies can no longer remain satisfied demanding more equitable prices for each crop exports—they must lay special emphasis on increasing food production in the poor countries.

# TRIBUNE

Ceylon News Review  
Founded In 1954  
A Journal of Ceylon  
and  
World Affairs  
Editor, S. P. Amarasingam  
Every Saturday

March 29, 1980

Vol: 24 No: 38

TRIBUNE

43, DAWSON STREET,  
COLOMBO-2.

Tel: 33172.

### CONTENCE

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK	
—Begging—Why Shout?	p. 2
COVER	
—Beauty	p. 5
THIRD WORLD	
—Technology	p. 10
PARTY PRESS	
—UNP, CPSL	p. 12
HAVANA DIARY—26	
—B sic Agreements-3	p. 15
GRAMA SASTRA-14	
—Education	p. 16
PAKISTAN	
—Dilemma	p. 17
ABORTIVE COUP	
—Against Zia?	p. 19
MILITARY MESSAGE	
—U.S. Mistake	p. 20
BANGLADESH	
—Shocking	p. 21
FILM FOCUS	
—Bangalore	p. 24
WATER	
—Letter	p. 24
THE WAYFARER	
—Poem	p. 24
CHRONICLE	
—March 10—15	p. 26
CONFIDENTIALLY	
—Misleading	p. 32

## Begging – Why Shout?

Colombo, March 25.

The Prime Minister in a recent speech, had stressed that it was necessary for people to bear hardship and austerity to have a good life a few years hence. This is new note in governmental speech-making. Finance Minister, Ronnie de Mel, had started stressing this point some months ago and had repeatedly pointed out that money was getting tight abroad and also in this country. The President, though he has spoken of difficulties, has always struck a more optimistic note. But most other ministers and MPs do not seem to be concerned with the matters that might undermine the foundations of a government that has adopted the IMF package for a market economy based on free enterprise. Minister Lalth Athulathmudili has, in recent months, spoken of the need to increase production—for local consumption and export—but he is not able to do much about increasing production.

Minister Ronnie de Mel in a speech at Galle last Saturday (Ceylon Daily Mirror, 22/3/80) said: "Increase of local production is the only way left to Third World countries to combat inflation. There is no other way and we must put local production on a war-footing in the next few years. We must also cut out unnecessary expenditure and waste." He said that wherever difficulties Sri Lanka may have to face, the government will continue with the programme of development to solve the pressing problems of the people. Through development, the Government hoped to increase employment and give the people a satisfactory wage on a satisfactory income to meet the increasing cost of living. "No government, in its proper sense, increases prices willingly. They do so only when compelled and only as a last resort. This Government had to take the most painful decision to increase certain prices, because, otherwise our whole programme of development and employment would have been jeopardised. Foreign aid is drying up and we cannot go on either printing money or begging for aid forever. We have to learn to mobilize our

own resources and to develop our country by our own efforts as far as possible. We must increase production of tea, rubber, coconut, rice, subsidiary foodstuffs and all manufactured goods in this country as far as possible. We must also export if we are to survive." Mr. de Mel added that there were many sectors in which waste still occurred in the country. There was no room for waste if the country was to be developed with its own resources. True Government received substantial aid in the past and will continue to do so. This will to develop depends on the people alone.

MR. RONNIE DE MEL had only recently returned from abroad after a begging bowl trip. Apart from a cryptic statement in Parliament that even rich developed countries were in the throes of financial difficulties, he has been silent on the outcome of his mission. This evoked a rather sharply critical article from *Mizara* in the *Weekend* of 23/3/80. We think it relevant to cite excerpts *in extenso* from this article—because it reflects what a section of the powerful groups behind the UNP now feel. The article also reveals some of the stresses and strains inside the ruling hierarchy:

"It is over a week since Finance and Planning Minister, Ronnie de Mel returned to Sri Lanka from his three week trip abroad in search of US \$ 400 million (Rs. 6,400 million). The Treasury has so far not come out with an official statement. The only hint of the outcome of his trip Minister de Mel made this week was in Parliament, where he said 'we cannot go about with the begging bowl in hand for foreign aid. Those countries too have their own problems and are unable to meet our requests'. And when newspaper men try to find out the official version to tell the people, they are at the receiving end of a verbal diarrhoea of rather unparliamentary lingo. What is it that is pinching?

"That will be dealt with later. It is a known fact that the Finance Minister has made over a dozen foreign trips since becoming a Minister and the background to this was for the finding of foreign money that would enable Sri Lanka to face the oil price hikes and the global inflation that is creating turmoil with local budgets. 60 percent of our development funds come from abroad. It was only about

two months ago when the Government decided to raise oil prices that Cabinet Ministers were given a rude shock that the Treasury was broke. On that occasion there were heated exchanges about long term projects which brought in returns too late. The Treasury first clashed with the Prime Minister's housing programmes and also showed its teeth when Industries Ministry officials said that the January local oil price hike could be in the region of 20 per cent and not necessarily 30 percent as it finally was. That was about the time when even ministers were beginning to realise that things were not as rosy as they once were. Galloping inflation it seemed, had set in, and the rose seemed to sugar for a carcinoma.

"That was the preliminary step taken by the Ministry of Finance and Planning to not only create an awareness among the leadership that hard times were ahead but also in letting the outside world know that the Sri Lanka government was no longer promoting a welfare state like in the past and that it was strong enough and popular enough to end subsidies wholesale and inject the funds into developing projects. More price hikes in other imported items were inevitable as ministers checked on their arithmetic with the eager assistance of the Ministry of Finance and Planning to review prices. The Post Minister was suddenly made aware of the low postal rates and the Food Minister was prodded on to compare flour and bread prices with those of the world market.

"Then, with all that calculated, but yet officially unannounced, Finance and Planning Minister Ronnie de Mel left Sri Lanka on a five-nation trip to Austria, England, United States, Sweden and Iraq. It fell on the poor Deputy Minister of Finance and Planning M. H. M. N Ina Marikkar to come to Parliament and matter-of-factly announce what amounted to 'a mini-budget'. The next day Food Minister S. B. Perath, the Karate expert that he is, jumped into the arena and in Black Belt style gave the numbing blow—increased bread prices. The stage was set and the news of these courageous acts was allowed to hum over the agency wires for the information of the world and its bankers. Meanwhile Finance and Planning Minister de Mel jetted with the confidence to meet Sri Lanka's creditors and

donors. The foundation had been laid back at home for a Minister to tell World Bank, IMF or anybody else, for that matter that Sri Lanka has had the courage to do away with the remaining few subsidies on essential commodities. Now we were 'creditworthy'—a favourite word in Treasury circles. While Finance and Planning Minister Ronnie de Mel was away from it all and 'Boeing-Boeing' from Vienna to London and on to Washington, Stockholm and exotic Baghdad, the remaining members of the cabinet including the President were compelled to go from Bulathsinhala to Baddegama explaining to the ordinary people of Sri Lanka why the government had no other alternative but to raise prices of essential food stuffs which hurt the people so much.

"Government members of Parliament and UNP branch cadre too had to brave the people's wrath in explaining why prices were raised to world market heights. So it was in this hard way that the ordinary people of Lanka were made aware of the economic term's 'inflation'. Again, during Finance and Planning Minister Ronnie de Mel's absence, his Deputy had to move Parliament to pass Rs. 1,000 million in Treasury Bills. The emptiness of the State coffers was further magnified by this move because, as SLFP's Anura Kumara Bandunayake showed in Parliament it was President J. R. Jayewardene himself, as Leader of the Opposition, who pointed out on July 21, 1972 when Dr. N. M. Perera asked for Rs. 500 million in Treasury Bills that: 'The more you have recourse to the Central Bank to finance your Treasury Bills, naturally the greater is the inflationary process that sets in.....' He also hoped that it was not a policy that would be adopted by any Minister of Finance. Of course, it goes without saying that at that time Finance and Planning Minister Ronnie de Mel was a back-bencher in the Sri Lanka Freedom Party and a member of the Coalition Government which introduced such a resolution. This time it was the UNP members defending to the best of their ability in Parliament and outside. They were reassuring those in Sri Lanka that there was no alternative while Minister de Mel was reassuring foreign donors that Sri Lanka was becoming self-reliant.

"Then, without much of the traditional

fanfare, Minister de Mel returned to the Island last Saturday. All Lanka was eager to know the outcome of his five nation trip. Even Ministers were interested in the absence of any official details from the Treasury. Did he, for instance, get sufficient money to get the housing programme back on its feet? The Treasury which usually makes much ado about the quantum of aid the Minister has obtained was for once silent. So when an alert reporter from this paper rang up the Finance Minister to ask him about the outcome of the onerous mission, he was not prepared for the verbal onslaught that he was subjected to immediately he introduced himself. The Minister claimed that his mission was successful and then began a long harangue. He accused this paper of writing nonsense. He accused newspapermen and editors of being stooges of the CIA. And, in unprintable language that would have done credit to a Dordra Head Amazon he vilified the directors and the management of this newspaper, but sparing a word as to the details of what he called his successful mission. A mission which, on the eve of his departure, was blown by the Treasury boys with a magnitude of a 'crucial' one that no Finance Minister before the Hon. Ronnie de Mel, had ever attempted.

"The Minister, himself, before his departure, said that his trip was crucial, and wanted Lankans to keep their fingers crossed and to pray hard. Now that Parliament has been told that we cannot go about with the begging bowl in hand for foreign aid because the countries too have their own problems and are unable to meet our requests, it is then obviously why there was a verbal outburst over the telephone. Fortunately, newsmen now know what treatment should be given to such outbursts, for Minister de Mel has spared nobody, repeat nobody, in the political arena with his outbursts in the past. According to Government sources, what Minister de Mel told his colleagues this week was also not as encouraging as Sri Lankans would have liked it to be.

"That the economy is precarious now is an accepted fact. The Central Bank is learnt to have informed the Government that the rate of inflation is around the Himalayan heights of 35 percent. That is a terrific rate by any standard, particularly when one considers the

maximum savings rate offered on fixed deposits by the National Savings Bank being at 12 percent. Sri Lanka which recorded a trade surplus of Rs. 170 million in the year 1976 has last year recorded an alarming deficit of Rs. 7,287 million. In other words, we are importing Rs. 7,287 million worth goods more than we are able to export. This is five times the deficit of 1978. Sri Lanka owes foreign banks and lending institutions Rs. 15,841 million (about 15 hydro-cracker projects). The Treasury's total public debt is Rs. 35,475 million. The Mahaweli Ganga Scheme will now cost Rs. 4,000 million more than what it was originally estimated to cost. The value of the rupee which is floating in a basket of international currencies is sinking, not floating. A few months ago one US dollar was a little over Rs. 15. Now it is a little over Rs. 16. Senior Ministerial sources indicated that there was very high level give and take about the question of devaluing the rupee to curb spiralling inflation.

"The Finance Ministry has naturally stepped on the coars of several other Ministers. They have been tight-fisted with the nation's purse. It has gone to such an extent that some Ministers are asking whether it is prudent to, merely because one has to please foreign donors give shock treatment to the people of Sri Lanka, particularly in view of the forthcoming by-election at Anamaduwa. SLFP stalwart and former Minister, T. N. Ilangaratne, known in the 1960s for the forming of the SLFP-LSSP-CP Coalition is reported in the LSSP organ *Janadina* as saying that the SLFP will join opposition parties in a joint May Day Rally this year. So far only the UNP and the SLFP and SLVB have announced candidates for Anamaduwa. What will happen if the LSSP and the CP throw their weight behind the SLFP candidate? And what about the JVP too?

"A high ranking US State Department Under-Secretary Mrs. A. Danin now in Sri Lanka to study local socio-economic conditions asked SLFP's Maithripala Senanayake what changes SLFP would effect in the event of their coming to power. They have not, like many UNP'ers, given up the SLFP as a lost cause. The Anamaduwa by-election is going to be fought on the cost-of-living issue and the Ministry of Finance and Planning ought

to realise that they must not only be reassuring foreign donors but local voters."

The latest Ronnie de Mel mission raises a few important questions. Must Sri Lanka continue to beg abroad? And even if she must borrow money—every country does—should there be a hue and cry about it? Many wonder whether all the publicity before the de Mel Mission for \$400 million was not devised only to justify an unnecessary trip? Dr. N. M. Perera, as Finance Minister, borrowed fast and furiously abroad, but he did it quietly. Is this not a good example for other Finance Ministers to follow? Why have a song and dance every time Sri Lanka wants to borrow? Must we shout from the house-tops that Sri Lanka is in the market for money?

### BROWN HOPPER PEST: A QUERY

Talking about increased production, it was announced last week that the Cabinet had authorised the Minister of Agricultural Development and Research, E. L. Senanayake to "take all action to control the brown hopper pest. It is estimated that the cost of spraying nearly 80,000 acres of paddy lands with pesticide will be Rs. 10 million."

Readers will recall that *Tribune* had sounded a note of warning about the Brown Hopper Pest in the issue of February 16, 1980. That at that time it was said that about 20,000 acres were affected? That now the figure has climbed to 80,000 acres? That *Tribune* inquiries as to where the 80,000 affected areas were situated has brought no satisfactory answer? That it has not been possible either to find out the "experts" in the Department who identified the pest and surveyed the extent of the area? That it is necessary to warn the Minister and the Cabinet that there are unscrupulous officers in the Department (some on extensions and some on the verge of retirement) who would be willing to certify anything to enable foreign firms that deal in agro-chemicals to sell Rs. 10 million worth of pesticide at inflated prices—and the kick-backs can easily top a cool million? That the Minister and the Government must take all precautionary measures to ensure that the country is not taken for a ride in the name of increasing production?

x x x

### COVER

## Beauty & The Beast

ON THE COVER this week we have a picture of two village beauties in an idyllic setting. For the lack of appropriate employment opportunities in rural areas, many of these young women seek work in and around Colombo—from the FTZ to Ratmalana where factories have sprung up. The public sector has stopped expanding and employment is today being provided by the private sector. The tourist industry—especially the hotels—offers limited opportunities; but there is a limitless field in entertainment and prostitution. Already the incidence of venereal disease has soared very high as borne out by statistical data which have not received the publicity they deserve. The oldest profession in the world cannot be totally eradicated, but it can be kept down to a minimum by the State refusing to encourage trades which spawn prostitution and also developing suitable avenues of employment that will prevent women from selling their bodies for economic reasons.

In this context a paragraph in the SLPF weekly, *The Nation*, of March 14 1980 (pp.5) entitled VINI, VIDI, VICI—MARINES' SHORE-LEAVE IN COLOMBO attracted our attention: "The UNP Government has agreed to permit the thousands of US marines from the Seventh Fleet in the Indian Ocean to have their shore-leave in Colombo. During the Vietnam War Bangkok served the same purpose. Certain areas in FTZ are likely to be made out of bounds to local residents, if permanent arrangements are made to provide US marines with land facilities in Sri Lanka. Certain UNP circles argue that they may help the Party tide over its economic and political misfortunes in coming months, like Marcos getting police protection from the Clark Base in Manila."

We do not know whether this story has any basis of truth or whether it is a SLPF kick-flying to damage the image of the UNP. Until the time of writing, there has been no official denial or comment. It is possible that government sources may think that the paragraph did not need a denial, answer or comment. However, if the government does take notice of it, a rejoinder may be forthcoming sooner or later.

In the meantime, Tribune is constrained to say that it is unlikely that the Government would offer facilities which many in the non-aligned world would regard as the thin end of the wedge to make Sri Lanka a base for the US military machine. The UNP Government has at every turn proclaimed that it has no intention of offering base-facilities to any power or superpower. Permitting Rest and Recreation (RR) facilities for the US Navy will be only an indirect way of circumventing this non-aligned policy and we cannot think of any good reasons the Government can advance for changing from this position.

Rest and Recreation facilities in Bangkok, Saigon and Manila only proliferated prostitution, promiscuity, illegitimate unwanted half-caste children and many other social evils. The shekels may flow into the pockets of those who organise the kind of amenities sailors want—and though thousands of young women may have a little extra pocket money, disease and heart-break will be their lot. The money inflow into the country cannot compensate for the socio-economic and cultural repercussions that will stem from such State patronage for fun and games for the US marines.

Apart from protests from purists and religious minded people, there will be even greater protests from women's Lib Organisations against granting such facilities to US Marines. Already loud protests have been raised against **SEXFLOITATION**. The **KANTHA HANDA**, a Sri Lanka's Women's Lib Organisation, has registered many protests. Not so long ago the *Ceylon Daily Mirror* warned: "Advertisers take note: A women's organisation is up-arms over a recent advertisement appearing in the press. Styling itself *Kantha Handa*, this organisation will strongly protest against this advertisement, has, called it 'vulgar and tasteless as well as insulting and offensive to women.' The advertisement which states 'packaging of any kind, any size', shows a woman in scanty attire, bound with ropes dumped in a packing case like merchandise, labelled *hande with care*. The organisation in a letter to the firm that displays the advertisement, with a copy to President J. R. Jayewardene, states that 'this type of advertisement forms part of a new unfortunate trend in advertising in Sri Lanka, where women are being

used purely as sex symbols to attract the eye of the reader. When women are achieving emancipation and are increasingly participating in the economic, social and political life of the country', the organisation points out many advertisers are projecting women's role in a degrading manner. *Kantha Handa* while expressing concern over the advertisement which depicts a woman, as a mere commodity—a combination of slave and plaything, has urged the firm to dissociate themselves from such irresponsible advertisements in the future."

But the *Kantha Handa* will not be the only organisation that will protest against providing US Marines with call girls, brothels, massage parlours, discos—even in a restricted area. The people of this country may accept unrestricted free enterprise in trade, industry and agriculture, but they will draw the line when it comes to wholesale free trade in female flesh. The *Kantha Handa* has also registered protests even against Beauty Contests. It had passed the following resolution on 24.3.79: "The *Kantha Handa* Women's Organisation would like to protest strongly against the *Pancha Kalyani* contest that has been recently advertised. We feel that beauty contests where young girls have to parade and are awarded prizes according to their beauty—are no more than cattle shows which degrade women. Such beauty contests are merely a gimmick to advertise some commodity—in this case a brand of talc powder. All over the world there are protests over such exploitation of women in the interests of commerce and the blatant use of women as sex objects in the advertising of products. Today women should be judged not by their physical characteristics but by the role they play in society. Women have shown that they can take their place equally with men in the economic, political and social life of this country. They are increasingly refusing to be relegated to a subservient status and are not willing to be mere *Pancha Kalyanis* or sex symbols. We urge the promoters of the *Pancha Kalyani* competition to forthwith cancel this so-called beauty contest and call upon other organisations to join us in this protest. We also call upon young women to refuse to participate in these degrading competitions and request the public to boycott such events."



IT IS NOT ONLY IN SRI LANKA that protests have been lodged against Beauty Contests. William Raspberry, who writes a syndicated column in Washington, recently had a piece entitled THE WHOLE IDEA IS UGLY: BEAUTY BOWS OUT OF PAGEANTS which appeared in the Los Angeles Times: "The people who run the Miss America Pageant decided to do their number next fall without Bert Parks' services. If it stands, it's a bum decision. They should keep Parks and get rid of the girls. The over-the-hill Parks is a far more appropriate symbol of the anachronistic nature of the annual pageant. No, I haven't been brainwashed by the National Organisation for Women. Yes, I like to look at pretty girls—even if don't always agree with the aesthetics of the sponsors and their judges, who strike me as unduly partial to tall, Southern-accented blondes. My problem with the Miss America thing is my problem with beauty contests generally. They run counter to two basic elements of my being: theoretical believer in human dignity and practicing dirty old man. There is (at least to me) something basically undignified about people parading their bodies like poodles at a pet show. It's worse even than being treated as a sex object. At least sex objects are individuals. Beauty pageants, on the other hand, don't deal with individuals, but with "batches of beauties." It also strikes me as a little strange to have contests to determine which of several entrants was born luckiest as to height, proportion and regularity of features. Why should they be rewarded for the luck of the genes?

"No, it is not like honoring athletes, who also are born with special advantages. We don't pay Kareem for being tall, or Earl Campbell for being big and fast. We pay them because they develop their natural gifts, apply them to specific endeavours, and perform superlatively in competition with other gifted people. That's a far cry from an annual look-at-me-parade. Even the Mr. America (or Mr. Universe, or whatever) competition is easier to take. I don't happen to like the look of overdeveloped musculature, but at least it is possible for a fairly average guy to build himself into one of these musclebound freaks, provided he is willing to invest the time and effort. Beauty contestants may do a bit of dieting

and rearranging, but the basic stuff has to be there to begin with. And never mind pointing out that the contests also include "talent" components. You know what would happen to the TV ratings if they kept the talent competition and dropped the bathing-suit segment. But if the contests do little for human dignity, they do less for lust. Maybe it's a peculiarity of mine, but I have trouble thinking of those long-limbed lovelies on the screen as real people, let alone sex objects.

"It's the same feeling that I got, early last year, when I wangled an invitation to a Hugh Hefner cocktail party. The 'bunnies' who mingled around the room with their cocktail trays were very pretty and enormously shapely. But I kept averting my eyes every time one came close to me. I found it embarrassing to look at a woman whose major function was to be looked at. Take the same women, put them in plunging necklines and slit skirts and invite them (and me) to your cocktail party, and I'll ogle and flirt like any other red-blooded male. When a pretty woman is a fellow guest, I can assume that she has a life unconnected with her looks. I can make no such assumption in the case of Playboy Bunnies and beauty contestants. They have chosen to identify themselves in terms of looks, which renders them (for me) about as sexy as the Venus de Milo. Obviously, my notions aren't the notions of America or the Miss America show would have died long ago for want of an audience. But if the 63-year-old Parks gets bored next fall and wants to look at some real women, he might give me a call....."

The Indian news magazine Link in its issue of April 15, 1979 had a commentary entitled BEASTLY CONTEST and though a little long we feel justified in reproducing it—it has many lessons for Sri Lanka: "One of the most bizarre aspects of growing urban culture is the emergence of beauty contests. The past decade has witnessed a frightening growth rate in this field, whatever the achievement of the economy may have been. In 1976 alone, there were 137 beauty contests held in India—ranging from the adolescent Miss Teen Princess to the glittering Beauty Queen races. Who sponsor or organise them, who participate in them and why? The contests certainly form an integral part of the

TRIBUNE, March 29, 1980

consumer drive, organized primarily by the Indian agents for foreign monopoly chains. A number of Indian agencies and subsidiaries collaborate with women's magazines, to promote the sale of products which range from exotic cosmetics and textiles to thermos flasks, air-conditioners, television sets and other luxury goods. The accompanying high pressure sales effort boosts such products, not always of the best quality, before, during and after the beauty contests.

"For the parvenu social climbers and their poorer imitators, success becomes something represented by the possession of such symbols of sophistication or chic fashion. To prod such people to fall for their wares, the promotion men resort to all kinds of enticing gimmicks. The female figure is fully exploited in beauty contests, fashion shows and advertisements. Through these contests the interlocking interests of manufacturers and traders reap rich rewards. Most beauty queens and the less fortunate runners up in the beauty contests are usually signed up by their sponsors to be available for modelling their products free of charges for a year after the contests. They of course also model for any gifts they may receive at the contest. Most big business houses, have learnt to glamorise their products through the 'fashion fairs' which are usually held after the beauty contest and promote what others advertise as a 'unique unmatched varied range of fine quality products.' In fact they may not be superior to similar products manufactured by other business houses. They misguide prospective customers with eloquent though not truthful campaigns: and when these products are either advertised or modelled by so-called beautiful women the masquerade is complete. These business houses have also learnt to use social pressure techniques to make prospective customers believe that those that use their products are modern youthful intelligent and beautiful 'top' people and that by joining them, they would be doing themselves a service. And wherever the political complexion of those in power, today as yesterday, high Government personalities, Governors, Chief Ministers or Chiefs of three Services or their wives are entirely ready to accept requests to serve as judges at contests and fashion parades organized to sell

expensive cosmetics, mill-made textiles and synthetic fabrics.

"But why do educated young women participate in beauty contests? Several perhaps hope simply to win a beauty and a substantial amount of money and valuable gifts. Others are led to believe that beauty contests can open up for them exciting new career opportunities where they can use their hour-glass figures and sultry looks to the best advantage—perhaps in the films. Some beauty queens have indeed become film stars—like Zeenat Amn, Prema Narayan and Nafisa Ali. Several fall by the wayside and end up in camouflaged fish ponds like beauty clinics and massage parlours. Like many other status symbols our so-called elite have acquired from western societies, the beauty contests have also come to us via America and Britain (and latterly Japan). The three major international contests today are the Miss World contest held annually in London to which girls go from over 70 countries. Miss International held annually at Tokyo and the US Miss Universe contest. These are much bigger affairs than those organised here. The new post-women's lib stress is of course on 'personality, poise and grooming' but the fact is that these high attributes are judged primarily through their near nude projection of young female flesh. While the same slogans are paraded by the Indian entrepreneurs, the stress on flesh is slightly subdued while the settings are more vulgar than elsewhere. Organisers of most beauty contests have also learnt to present 'fashion' shows—which some may regard as a part of an evening's entertainment but many don't. The social climber's desire to keep up with the Joneses is fully exploited by these shows. For the discerning, the beauty contests, fashion shows and other attendant trivia are nothing but a cover for much corruption, social and economic. A number of contest participants, even winners, have nothing but contempt for the manner in which the contests are conducted. Politics, nepotism and corruption quite often mar the fair selection of a beauty or a 'personality' queen. Several kinds of the corruption involved are so subtly practised that some of the young women winners tend to throw all caution to the winds and quickly find themselves ruined.

"The tragic death of Rani Arumugam points to the waywardness that envelops some winners of the beauty contests. An undergraduate student of the Queen Mary's College, Madras, Rani took part in a Miss India regional contest in 1970 and made it to the finals in Bombay. Ensnared by the tinsel glamour that is usually associated with such contests, she quit college, acted in a Malayalam movie, modelled for advertisement agencies and magazines in Madras and Bombay, moved among the rich and the influential and soon became a 'hep socialite'. But the end came too soon. On May 30, 1976, the 26 year-old glamour girl was found dead in her home. According to some newspaper report, Rani was an addict of pethaline and alcohols, had "boyfriend" problems and had got into the clutches of smart operators. She got into heavy debt and had attempted to commit suicide by swallowing an overdose of sleeping pills. She died two months later. But such examples have not discouraged other impressionable young women in our cities and towns. More and more of them tend to chase important dreams which demand a high price. College girls imitate the clothes modelled by beauty queens and those displayed at fashion shows presented by organisers of the beauty contests. Tight-fitting 'mod' clothes which emphasise the curves of the body, have provoked rowdies to try to take liberties with them. In recent months, several Delhi college girls have been teased, pinched and slapped by such men while travelling in DTC buses.

"It is therefore not surprising that the young women of Delhi University rightly and effectively protested against the holding of an annual 'Personality Contest' which has always been a cover for a flashy episode. Students of the Jawaharlal Nehru University took the lead in protesting against the contest organized by the Delhi University Students' Union (DUSU) a month back. To them as well as to other young women from other colleges who joined in the protest, such flesh contests only encourage vulgar exploitation of a woman's figure. It is a sight of course to see the women students of the JNU voicing their radical 'chic' protest through clouds of cigarette smoke. The contests, they say, are a waste of time, are not production-oriented and anti-Marxist in nature. The girls wear

no make up and go about in simple, casual clothes. To them the role of women is to work and make sacrifices for the ushering of an era when every citizen is provided full employment. Women should not allow themselves to be used as tools by industrial houses who adopt no holds barred techniques to sell their products. Whenever the soundness of their approach, they have a major achievement to their credit. Through determined and courageous efforts, they forced the abandonment of the DUSU's Personality Contest to chose a Mr. and Miss University on March 23, 1979. Aversion to beauty contests was well expressed by girls from Delhi University and JNU crowding the main entrance of the stadium at the Talkotar Gardens. Some of the posters they carried read: 'Don't Sell Women To Limca or Dev Anand' (Limca sponsored the personality contest)—'Beauticians to Judge, Dev Anand To Crown, is This Beauty or Personality?' Not more than ten women, including winner Maya Singh of Lady Sri Ram College, the runner up of the contest and Pinky Anand, the DUSU joint secretary attended the contest. The others, a great majority, preferred to stay out and vociferously voice their protest. That contest ended in melée. When Dev Anand arrived students crowded the podium. A group of rowdies then attacked the girls who wore protest signs against the contest and the police had to resort to a lathi charge. Dev Anand was hustled out of the podium and the contest came to an abrupt end. That was a good blow struck for the modern young woman. But much more than such protests are needed to expose the beauty contest rackets and discourage their holding."

Beauty contests are bad enough, but a Rest and Recreation (Fun and Games) centre for the Marines is something that will definitely subvert the religious, cultural and moral ethos of Sri Lanka more effectively than anything else that has come to this island after the advent of the Portuguese, Dutch and the British.



## TNCs & Technology

by Prometheus

THE LIMA DECLARATION AND PLAN OF ACTION on Industrial Development and co-operation had set the target for the share of industrial output of developing countries to be a minimum of 25 per cent by the year 2000. According to UN data, this share is now not more than 9 per cent, and the end of the century target appears unattainable. The past decade has seen the rich countries richer and the poor-poorer. The gap between the world's poorest and richest 10% is in the ratio of 1 : 31.

Third World countries hoped that TNC's (Transnational Corporations or Multinationals) would help them to restructure their economics, enhance the competitiveness of their industrial goods on the world market and satisfy fully their domestic needs. TNC's were considered the "engines of growth". Far from being so, it is clear that TNC's are not interested in the elimination of the economic gap between the centres of inter national capitalism—the United States, Japan and Western Europe—and the developing countries. In fact, if TNC's acted this way, they would be acting against their own interests. One of the chief causes of unemployment in developing countries lies in the particular industrialization process being utilized to bring about economic growth. Most of the technology in Third World Countries, come from and is controlled by Transnational Corporations. This technology transferred from TNC's to put it briefly, is "labour saving and capital using." Thus the TNC drug companies use a technology where only 3.4 per cent of total costs are due to labour. In an ILO analysis of Colombian unemployment it was shown that for 1957-1961 it took an average fixed investment of 45,000 pesos to employ one person in a modern manufacturing industry where TNC technology was used; during the 1962-1966 period, this figure rose to 100,000 pesos. In another study of 257 manufacturing firms in Latin America, it was found that TNC's use almost one-half the number of employees per \$ 10,000 of sales as do local firms. To

quote Muller:....."This, then is the employment contribution of the technology of the multinational Corporation to Third World Countries: TNC's are eliminating many more jobs than they are creating."

There are other sides of the financial activities of the TNC's which do tremendous damage to the young economies of the Third World Countries. Even UN specialised agencies have been forced to look into such practices. As stated in a report by the UNCTAD Secretary-General, "every effort should be made to reduce and, wherever possible, eliminate restrictive business practices, whether engaged by cartels, multinational corporations or foreign investors.....Action is urgently required at a national and international level.....".

HOW DO restrictive practices work? One is known as "assignment of prices" or "transfer of prices." This is widely employed by American, Japanese and West European monopolies. As a Professor of Business Administration stressed, ".....there is a problem of transfer of pricing: in a cluster of corporations (subsidiaries) controlled by the same top management, earnings may be changed at will by changing the charges for goods and services within the cluster." This means TNC's raise the prices for imports to their departments located in the developing countries, and lower the prices for the export goods they produce in those countries. This is how the American Caltex oil-Company operates in South-East Asia. That company artificially lowers the prices for the oil it exports from Indonesia to its branches in the region and raises the prices for the imported oil-extracting equipment. As a result, the Indonesian economy loses twice: on the oil currency deductions and on the difference between the market and monopoly prices on the equipment.

The mechanism of monopoly price formation is fairly simple. It is rooted in the unequal position of emergent states within the framework of the capitalist economy. Developing countries receive not the legitimate export prices but considerably more modest royalties. In Jamaica and Guyana, for example, the royalties were nearly twice as low as world prices. To shirk profit tax, they inflate the import prices and reduce export

quotations. Thus, the TNC's imported pharmaceutical components to Colombia raising their prices by the average of 136 per cent. At the same time, they exported peanut oil from Africa at half the price it was marketed in Europe. Since the sale of these goods constitute 40 per cent of the exports of crude materials, less oil, from the emergent states and 92-98 per cent of the export of finished goods of such Latin American countries as Mexico, Colombia and Nicaragua, these nations lose billions of dollars due to this non-equivalent trade. It is unadulterated exploitation. THE TRANSFER OF TECHNOLOGY is an argument bandied about frequently by many Third World politicians to justify the activities of the TNC's. They maintain that one sure way of the Third World gaining the technology needed for their own industrial growth is via the TNC's. This, they maintain is a benign process. This is far from being the case. In passing technology to the developing countries, the TNC's derive additional benefits from such factors as cheap local manpower and tax concessions often offered under local legislation to foreign investors.

It must also be emphasised that TNC's streamline their activities in the developing countries of Asia to suit local conditions, making every effort to change conditions in their own favour by influencing areas such as the structure of industrial production. Under TNC pressure, many developing countries have been compelled to set up "zones of free enterprise" or "free trade zones" on their territories, in which the national taxation law actually becomes invalid. The exploitation of local natural and manpower resources by the TNC's become particularly uncontrolled and cruel. According to some estimates, in the mid 70's, thirty-six developing countries had about 100 such zones in the aggregate. Though the enterprises located in these zones yield certain currency receipts for the receiving side, the role of these zones, on the whole, for economic progress is negative. The enterprises in these zones enjoy greater privileges and rights than national enterprises. Consequently, a new industrial monoculture is created with their full dependence on the world market preserved.

For the TNC's agreements on the transfer of technology mean economic exploitation

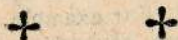
of developing countries. As has been admitted by one of the directors of the US Data Control Corporation, William Norris, the sales to the developing countries of obsolete technology is profitable also because the sale of modern technology might give rise to competition from goods produced with this modern technology in other countries. In Mexico, there have been numerous instances reported where TNC's have transferred to their subsidiaries second hand technology, which was declared as either equipment or valued at prices much higher than could have been obtained at normal or usual markets. The General Director of the Department for the National Economy of the Philippines complained particularly of the "inimidity" of the TNC's entrenched in the Philippines economy in expanding their products. The negative impact of overpricing of the handed-over technology has become widespread. The payments for the technology used in the machine-building and pharmaceutical industries of Argentina reached 10 per cent of the volume of sales, and the corresponding figures for Ecuador was 15 per cent. Very often, developing countries have to purchase, along with technology, also units, parts and semi-products in a system of tied purchases. The TNC's over-priced these units and parts in their deliveries to Colombia on an average by 19 per cent, to Peru by 20 per cent, to Mexico by 40 per cent, and in some cases, overpricing reached 300 to 630 per cent.

THE TERMS OF AGREEMENTS of TNC's with developing countries are also indicative of the kind of exploitation that goes on. Even at the initial stage of implementation, they envisage functions for foreign partners which have nothing to do with the use of advanced scientific, technical and industrial experience and, in most cases could be performed by the developing countries themselves. These functions include, for example, the choosing of construction sites, drawing up of blueprints and construction work. All this is required to be paid at inflated rates for engineering services.

The restrictions included in the terms of agreement discriminate against the developing countries. For example, no information received by these countries' companies from their foreign partners can be passed on to other

local companies. In some instances, countries in the developed capitalist countries even stipulate that information about new technology supplied to a local company should not be made available to any party in a third country. This results in the TNC's selling their know-how to several parties. The Indian scholar, K. K. Subramaniam, in his book *Capital and Technology* points out that 60 per cent of the 2,524 business agreements relating to Indian companies' co-operation with foreign partners involved the sale of technologies, two and more times. He cites the example of the same technological processes being sold 16, 17 and even 24 times. Patents owned by western monopolies in the developing states also promote such discrimination. As a rule, patents are used only for the protection of the imports of the West's own goods and are not introduced in the local industry. For instance, in Columbia only 0.3 per cent of foreign patents are used in local production. The figure for Tanzania is one per cent and for Peru, 1.1 per cent. Such policies amount to a "patent blockade" of the local industry. It provides a basis for the fixing of monopoly prices on imported goods and perpetuates the dependence of the developing countries on imports. Western Monopolies own about 85 per cent of all patents registered in developing countries.

The newly independent states account for a mere two per cent of the world's spending on scientific research. Therefore, it is obvious that the price developing countries have to pay for access to the scientific and technical achievements of the advanced capitalist countries is exorbitantly high. While at the end of the 60's, the annual payments made by the developing countries for using foreign scientific and technical achievements amounted to about 1,500 million dollars, by 1980 they are likely to reach 10,000 million dollars. It will be thus apparent that the developing world emerged from old time political colonialism to a neo-colonialism infinitely more disastrous to their economic well-being.



## THE POLITICAL PRESS

◦ UNP ◦ CPSL

### JAYEWARDENEPURA

The SLFP and those other parties unrepresented in Parliament have chosen as their point of attack the construction of the Parliamentary complex in Kotte. Their arguments range from rational to the ridiculous. Let us list the issues on which they decry the construction at Kotte as the seat of administration: They are: (1) The aim is to perpetuate the name Jayewardene; (2) During the drought the neighbouring areas are heaped with dust while during the forthcoming rainy season the area will be a muddy terrain; (3) while the Government is pruning subsidies, it is not concerned about priorities; (4) The Parliamentary complex is not a development project.

The charge that the government is turning the marsh-lands of Diyavannawa into a modern administrative complex to perpetuate the name Jayewardene shows the ignorance of the critics in the comparatively recent history of the land of their birth and the literature written by versatile monks. Kotte was not named Jayewardenepura after the kings who reigned in the kingdom of Kotte before the Portuguese. It was named by the kings and confirmed by the illustrious poet monk Ven. Sri Rahula, in his poem *Selalihiniya*. Even during the period when Kotte was represented by the former Speaker, Mr. Stanley Tillekeratne, it was not referred to simply as Kotte. The ex-Speaker himself was heard stating from public platforms the words Kotte Sri Jayawardenepura.

The other point is that President Jayewardene does not need such gimmicks to perpetuate his name. If he has earned a place in the annals of Sri Lanka like others, he, too, will be given his due place. Another absurdity paraded by the critics is that during the drought dust is heaped on the homes, trees etc., because of the earth carrying tractor trailers. They also point out that during the ensuing rains the roads of the area will be a quagmire. It is true that dust has become a nuisance to those living by the roadsides. And perhaps

the roads could be slippery during the next couple of monsoons. But is this an argument against the construction and reclamation of area long neglected? Within a period of two years, once the area is reclaimed, these two irksome problems will vanish and those residents will be the beneficiaries of all amenities that would follow.

The argument that this development and construction of the Parliamentary complex should not have the priority given it by the Government is also aligned with the argument that construction of Jayewardenepura is not development oriented. The City of Colombo today is the commercial capital as well as the administrative centre. In most countries, the two are separate. In Germany, Bonn is the administrative capital while Berlin is the commercial centre. Likewise, in India, the administrative centre went to New Delhi, in United States it is Washington. They are not commercial cities but only administrative centres. In Sri Lanka to ease out the congestion in Colombo, years back satellite towns were planned but the poor space did not show rapid results. It is not a mere Parliamentary building that is coming up in Kotte. A whole administrative complex will blossom. New railway lines covering the area, and extending to Athurugiriya and Ratmalana are included in this Greater Colombo development project.

Therefore, it would be best for those critics to study the project before they criticize the Jayewardenepura development plan. New transport facilities, housing projects, better sanitation, hospitals, schools—all these are development oriented. Even if it were a Parliamentary complex only, the previous regime also recognised that the present building which is housing the august assembly is inadequate. It drew up plans and even prepared the monument but was unable to go ahead because of its inertia in almost all fields.

—UNP Journal, 14/3/80

### ● ● ● UNP IN-FIGHT GETS ROUGH

THE IN-FIGHTING WITHIN THE UNP which is now the main topic of talk in political circles, seems to get more and more rough. Last week this column mentioned what the Jayewardene Mafia had done to a diplomat who is one of Prime Minister Premadasa's

chief proteges. One hears that the diplomat has replied with a sizzling document that, in turn, names and catalogues some not-so-pleasant and no-so-legal activities of some big shots among the President's cohorts. Will this document like the Wijetilleke letters, become the subject matter of inquiry by a future Select Committee? Only time (and may be the President and the PM) can tell. In the meantime, the heat that has been turned on against "our man in the UN", Mr. B. J. Fernando, gets hotter and hotter. Poor Mr. Fernando, a Premadasa, loyalist is in big trouble for crossing the Jayewardene line. Insiders say that it all started when the Iranians wanted B.J. to be Sri Lanka's member of the Commission that UN Secretary General Kurt Waldheim intended sending to Teheran—the Commission that many describe as "Jimmy Carter's Gang of Five".

Outraged, the Presidential Mafia let it be known that, if Sri Lanka was wanted, none other than the President's little brother Harry would go. But somehow or other (the Mafia say that it was sabotaged at our UN Mission in New York), the counter-proposal misfired and the nomination went to Bangladesh. This was hardly pleasing to the President or to his brother Mr. H. W. Jayewardene, Q.C. an unsuccessful but still hopeful aspirant for a seat on the International Court at the Hague. Once hears that our hot lines to Bangladesh started buzzing, reminding President Zia of "traditional" friendship, and inquiring whether it would not be possible to withdraw his nominee. When Bangladesh did so, the coast (and post) were free for Harry. So Mr. B. J. Fernando is now in the bad books of the big boys and unlikely to return to the UN. To clinch this, a 3-man, hand-picked Police team was flown to New York to search the office and safes of our UN mission there. Although Police sources say that they were merely following up some "information received" about lax supervision permitting the Mission to be misused to assist contraband activities, this version is generally discounted by those in the know. They point to the fact that the Police team consisted of Deputy Inspector General, Herbert Weerasinghe of the CID (leader) and Superintendent B. L. M. Fernando and Inspector S. Samarakoon, both of the intelligence Unit of the CID. Anti-smuggling

work, they say, is not usually handled by the Intelligence Unit of the CID or at such high levels. This rough treatment has already struck terror into those in government circles who, apparently unaware or uncaring about who is boss, have been demonstrating allegiance to the Premadasa camp.

Mr. Premadasa's undisguised ambition, his opposition to both the new economic policy and to the current attempts to strike a deal with the SLFP and TULF, and his steady build up of a caucus within Parliament and the UNP, have not gone unnoticed in the highest quarters where he is viewed with greater disfavour. One by one, his blue-eyed boys are coming under attack. The shot against B.J. was followed by an attack on another Premadasa loyalist, the Chairman of the Building Materials Corporation. The ammunition supplied, about cement transactions was too substantial and intimate not to have originated from sources within the government although it was left to opposition forces to hurl the bolts. Premadasa loyalists now look nervously over their shoulders whenever they meet, and wonder who will be next and when the sights will be raised to bullseye. The big question is what the Premier, who chaired the Select Committee that unanimously found Upali Wijewardene unfit to continue as Chairman of the GCEC, will do now that the President has apparently thumbed his nose at that recommendation by sanctioning an official visit by Mr. W to America and Western Europe do drum up new business for the GCEC.

ANOTHER OPPONENT OF THE "J.R. Strategy"—namely Minister Cyril Mathew, who opposes the current attempts to reach an understanding with the TULF or sections thereof—has also suddenly found himself in hot water. Mr. Mathew, incidentally, is one of those who has also been building up an independent power-base of his own—in his case, in the J.S.S., the UNP's storm troopers. The so-called "Wijetilleke letters", which contain very pointed allegations about the Minister in connection with the aborted Rs. 1600 million hydr-cracker tender, have been leaked to opposition circles and have now become the subject matter of a motion in Parliament calling for a Select Committee to inquire into them. What is interesting

about the "Wijetilleke letters" is that their contents had been known to the President for several months. Dr. L. Wijetilleke had set out his charges in a letter to the President dated 1st October 1979. Even earlier on 24 July 1979, as the letters reveal, Dr. Wijetilleke had interviewed the President and given him "details of the two requests made to me to help Sham Progetti, a bidder for the Hydrocracker project." What, it may be asked, did the President do about this information that was in his possession from July 1979 and which was repeated (and augmented) in writing by Dr. Wijetilleke, in his official capacity as Managing Director of the Ceylon Petroleum Corporation, on 1st October 1979? Dr. Wijetilleke has, according to the letters, not brought these facts to the notice of anyone other than the President, before setting them out in his letters of 6th and 8th February 1980, to Minister Mathew, giving the reasons for his resignation. A copy of these letters too, was sent to the President.

Is it pure coincidence, then, that photocopies of these letters should have begun to circulate in opposition circles (Incidentally this column, too, had received copies) just about the time when Minister Mathew had begun to get too big for his boots and to prove an impediment to the President's efforts to reach some "arrangement" with the TULF in his grand design of a united front of the capitalist class? One can't help noticing, too, that the revelations now being made about the behind-the-scenes activities concerning the hydrocracker tender are confined to those concerning Minister Mathew and Sham Progetti. But at the time, there was just as much informed talk about the activities of the local agents of other tenderers e.g., a maharajah-sized organisation and an ex-daughter-in-law of the President. It would be wiser of the Opposition not to confine their demand for an inquiry into the activities of the Minister and the local agents of one tenderer, but to ask that the whole affair of the hydrocracker tender and why it had to be dropped is probed.

—Forward, 15/3/80

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## Basic Agreements—3

by S. P. Amarasingam

A summary of the Preamble and the part relating to Africa in the Final Declaration have been published. This week a summary of the basic agreements on the Middle East, Latin America and the Caribbean is published. Next week, a summary of the Final Declaration on other miscellaneous matters and on Economic questions will be fully published.

THE CONFERENCE reaffirmed that the Middle East situation still seriously threatened world peace and security owing to the growing possibility of a new war breaking out as a result of Israel's decision to persist in its policy of aggression, expansionism and colonial settlements aided by the United States of America. Such support encouraged Israel to ignore the Palestinian people's inalienable rights and to refuse to withdraw from all the occupied Arab territories. It was stated that the Palestinian issue is at the core of the Middle East problem and is the fundamental reason for the Arab-Israeli conflict. The Palestinian problem and the Middle East question are one and the same problem and there can be no partial solution or settlement solely involving one of the parties to the conflict. It was considered that no just peace can come to the region unless it is based on Israel's total and unconditional withdrawal from all Palestinian and Arab occupied territories and leads to the establishment of an independent state in Palestine. The Palestine Liberation Organisation is recognized as the only, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

THE CONFERENCE took note that the United States, policy of alignment with Israel implies that the former has taken sides against the Palestinian people and their inalienable rights. Far from working on behalf of peace, the United States is seeking solutions favourable to Zionist goals. Hence the Conference condemned US policies and schemes in the region. The Conference denounced the stand taken by certain countries, particularly the United States that called for continued supplies of advanced weaponry to Israel, and it voiced its concern

for the escalation of Israeli military power, both in terms of conventional and nuclear weapons. The Conference also condemned the co-operation existing between Israel and South Africa and was grateful for the help given by progressive and peace-loving forces. The Conference voiced support for Lebanon's unity, independence and sovereignty and strongly condemned Israel's continued attacks and aggression in southern Lebanon, where it uses highly sophisticated planes and armaments supplied by the United States of America, killing thousands of innocent women, children and old people.

THE CONFERENCE noted with deep concern that, following the Camp David agreement between Egypt, Israel and the United States, Israel has stepped up its policy calling for the confiscation of Palestinian and occupied Arab territories. The Conference stated that the incorporation of Jerusalem under Arab sovereignty was an indispensable condition by achieving lasting peace. It urged the Security Council to meet its responsibility to make Israel subject to the sanctions provided under Chapter 7 of the Charter. Such measures should include the application of all the sanctions deemed necessary as well as the enforcement of an all-out boycott and the exclusion of Israel from the international community.

CONCERNING LATIN AMERICAN AFFAIRS, the heads of state or government noted that Latin America is one of the world's regions that has most suffered aggression at the hands of US and European colonialism and neo-colonialism. They singled out the admittance of four Latin American countries as full-fledged members and the incorporation of a further three as observers. This brings the number of Movement members and observers in the region up to 24. The Conference condemned the presence of foreign military bases in the Caribbean, like the ones existing in Cuba and Puerto Rico, that threaten the region's peace and security. It renewed its demand for the Government of the United States and other colonial powers to return to these countries the inalienable portions of their territories occupied against the will of their peoples and to close these bases. On the other hand, the Conference

voiced its support for the anti-colonial struggle of the Caribbean peoples, particularly in Puerto Rico, Belize, Guadeloupe, Martinique and French Guiana. The Conference condemned every attempt at setting up a so-called security force in the Caribbean that would perpetuate the presence of the metropolis in the region.

**THE CONFERENCE** reiterated its solidarity with the struggle of the Puerto Rican people and their inalienable right to self-determination, independence and territorial integrity. It exhorted the US government to abstain from carrying out any repressive political manoeuvre aimed at perpetuating Puerto Rico's colonial situation. The Conference congratulated itself on the importance of the victory of the unconditional release of the four Puerto Rican political personalities jailed in the United States for over 25 years. The Conference reiterated its support for the right of Belize to self-determination.

**IT VOICED ITS SUPPORT** for the right of the Republic of Argentina to exercise sovereignty over the Malvinas Islands. It likewise supported the Cuban people's claim over the land occupied by the United States in the Guantánamo base and condemned the unjust US blockade on the Cuban Revolution. The Conference denounced the United States' hostility pressures and threats against Cuba, which constitute a flagrant violation of the UN Charter and endangering world peace. The heads of state or government strongly condemned the blockade that the US government is still using to try to isolate and destroy the Cuban Revolution and demanded that it be immediately and unconditionally lifted.

**THE CONFERENCE** noted with pleasure the coming into force of the Panama Canal Treaty. The heads of state or government voiced their concern regarding the default of the Torrijos-Carter treaties on the part of the United States and voiced their hope that they will be faithfully adhered to by the United States. The Conference hailed the Government of Grenada's decision to join the Movement. It recommended the adoption of measures to speed up the reinstatement of democratic rights in Chile. The Conference hailed with satisfaction the victory won by the Nicaraguan people and their vanguard,

the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) and expressed how pleased it was that this country had joined the Movement. The Conference warned of the need to implement emergency aid programs for Nicaragua. The Conference backed Bolivia's claim to regain an outlet to the Pacific Ocean. The Conference strongly denounced the growing political, economic and military ties between Paraguay and Chile and South Africa. It similarly condemned the ties between Israel and Guatemala and El Salvador. The Conference voiced its satisfaction for the declaration that the Andean Pact countries issued in Havana.

## GRAMA SASTRA—14

—Scribbling On Uva Villages

### Education?

by Gamiya

THERE ARE TRICKS and tricks and tricks. I know of a lad from Nugagoda and one from Badulla, and one from Co'ombo, a lass from Borella, and one from Kandy, right here in this remote region of the island, slogging it off, painstakingly poring over free tomes, learning, learning, learning in order to get a provincial pass, more sure of course than a city pass in the Advanced Level. Let that pass. That is a way of circumventing "evil" in an "evil" manner. "Desperate problems need desperate solutions" said Rani, and laughed it off. I laughed too, but came back to the problem. The place is M— in Uva.

Let's take the case of a big government person who is in tow with a big seller of a type of wares or merchandise. What a "happy" wedlock seems to exist always between those in power and those who have the money, the fuse-strings! Really, unholy wedlock, but both sides suppress conscience and strut about turkey-like till the next election comes around. Or that fellow who knew no mason, nor masonry, except that a particular mason worked for him at the last elections, and then entrusted him with the building of a big cemetery wall which was estimated for a certain amount but which really spent an amount far less

than stipulated. Schoolboys wrote in reverent chalk the day the opening-tamasha ended: "Is this wall that came from so-and-so's surplus?"

OR TAKE that (for want of a name)—Musatha Vidyalaya—mobile in 1979, now with a certain headquarters and 8 teachers. Imagine, one is so clever that he "teaches excellently, Pure, Applied Maths, Physics; the other teaches equally well, Zoology, Botany, Chemistry". A crowd of fifty boys and girls attend classes seven times a week, rain or sun, weekday, Sunday. "Their charges are very reasonable, Rs. 10/- for entryfee and Rs. 30/- per month for 3 subjects." And the students are "assiduous at this private tuition which challenges them, covers much ground and shames the class-teachers and their native lethargy". Of course, about fifteen of the students have coughs and colds, "their studies so hard, resistance so low, that they get sick"—said the thoughtful participant.

Grade 12 of the Mahaposhya College (also for want of a name, but the facts are true)—thus gets much material in the afternoon and Sundays, and very little by regular teachers in the mornings of the school. Why, one boy was heard to say: "There's quite some gaming nearby. Our fathers rush there, and so do I want to. Unless you strike it rich now, there's no hope for us, the competition is so great, we have no time for what you people call 'vatnakam'".

And I heard a Colombo official speak disparagingly of village values, traditional Buddhist goodness with a dismissal that revealed an empty mind between his ears: "To hell with culture and values and 'vatnakam'". True, it seems, Dharmishta on the outside, and rapacious money-making on the inside in a systematic, organised, unbeatable manner but their end will be worse than anyone's because hypocrisy is written all over their schemes against the poor downtrodden villager.

Only one medico entered medical college from this Mahaposhya College last year, or so they say. (All names are fictitious, but facts are true).

x            x            x

## THE DILEMMA

### In Pakistan

by Shankar Narain

TO TAKE AID OR NOT TO TAKE IT is the question today before Pakistan's military leadership. If it takes US aid or aid from a consortium, Pakistan will have to carry the burden of America's current policies in this region. If it does not, it will soon go bankrupt. What choice will ultimately prevail depends on the wisdom of Pakistan's leadership. If lessons are needed to guide Pakistan of the folly of playing the American game in this region, it has had plenty of them.

*In 1954, Pakistan accepted US arms aid in return for support to US military alliances in the Middle East and South East Asia and was soon isolated in the Third World. Worse, it was defeated by India in two successive wars. Pakistan was fragmented into two states despite increasing US aid. Similar is Pakistan's eager involvement in the Afghan imbroglio from 1978 is no less disastrous. It created for itself new problems that it finds itself difficult to resolve.*

And yet the temptations are too strong for Pakistan not to take the wrong path. Its economy is in a shambles. Inflation has become alarming. It has an external debt of 7.397 billion dollars and in the first quarter of this year alone Pakistan has to pay one billion dollars as interest on long and short term loans to creditors. With increasing diversion of resources to the armed forces, Pakistan is finding it difficult to meet its international obligations. Expenditure on the armed forces and the bureaucracy is growing at the rate of 20 per cent each year, and defence allocation is already over 40 per cent of the national budget. The brass hats naturally expect from a military regime larger and larger allocations. In 1979 alone the armed forces got an injection of 1,100 million dollars. Another heavy burden on the Government of Pakistan is its prestigious nuclear programme which has already used up two billion dollars. The "consortium" of Pakistan's "friends" are fully aware of Pakistan's economic and financial problems, and they have been descending on Pakistan one after another to persuade it to team up with Egypt, Israel and Saudi Arabia in a new aj-

liance. Emissaries from the US, Britain, China and Japan have all visited Pakistan in the recent past in order to promote the new US policies.

What the US wants is to create a new alliance in this region with base facilities for its own 100,000 Rapid Deployment Force. To make it easy for Pakistan to provide bases within its territory, the US has worked out the strategy; first, US navy and air force will call on Pakistan ports and air bases; next, they will prolong their stay; and finally, the US will have the bases for good.

A year ago, in 1977, the US had cut back its economic aid to Pakistan by 40 million dollars as reprisal for Pakistan's nuclear ambitions. Today this has become a non-issue with the US Administration. Obviously, the US can lay down the law for the world and break it—all in its own national interest. The US arms aid to Pakistan has now come at a time when the revolution in Iran has taken a serious turn against the US "interests" and when the developments in Afghanistan foiled US-China plans to seize power in Kabul.

IN PAKISTAN ITSELF the announcement of US aid has stirred up questions which were never posed earlier. For example, the Pakistan daily *Jang* in an editorial entitled "Military Aid Against Whom?" said, "the aim of the Americans is not concern for Pakistan defence, but something different...US aid is obviously directed against somebody. Perhaps against the Soviet Union? But the USSR does not intend to capture Pakistan". But, for US strategists, this argument is immaterial. General Zia himself is reported to have said: when one lives in the sea, one must befriend the whales. Some sense this, no doubt. But Zia's claim that he wants to "buy security" does not add up to much enlightenment, though it does indicate that Pakistan's leadership has not yet taken to the path of a constructive role in this region.

Obviously, Zia's reference to the whales was to the Soviet Union. If Pakistan considers that it is in its self-interest to develop normal relations with the Soviet Union and other socialist countries this is possible. Only recently Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko said in New Delhi that the USSR would be happy to develop good-neighbourly rela-

tions with Pakistan. But this will imply that Pakistan will have to give up its earlier policies of military alliance with the West and China, which, according to Western declarations, was aimed against the USSR. It will also imply that Pakistan will have to follow a policy of non-alignment in a more sincere way and give up its extra-territorial ambitions.

WILL PAKISTAN BE WILLING to go this far? Will it give up its nuclear ambitions? Will it give up its postures as the arms manufacturer of the Islamic world? These apart, is the present leadership in Pakistan prepared for the socio-economic changes that would be called for once Pakistan cuts adrift from its moorings with the West and China? Above all, is it prepared to develop good neighbourly relations with its close neighbours, particularly India?

*One thing is clear: Pakistan today is at the cross-roads of its history. If it accepts aid from the West and engages itself in another adventure, it will open itself to unforeseen dangers to its own survival especially when the present regime does not carry Pakistan's diverse peoples with it. On the other hand, the pulls and pressures of the reactionary cliques, both political and religious, and of the economic vested interests of Pakistan, could well take it to the trap being laid by the US and China.*

However, it is also true that the saner elements in Pakistan are now coming to grips with the realities of the global situation and of their own country. They cannot ignore the anti-American developments in Iran just as they cannot ignore the anti-US stand of most Arab countries on the question of Zionism. They cannot also ignore the fact that Saudi Arabia itself is averse to providing the US with bases on its territory. And, above all, Pakistan can no more follow a policy of confrontation against India.

What course Pakistan will take is crucial to the peace of this region. All that one can say is that 1980 is not 1954. American power is no more supreme as it was in 1954. The Socialist countries and the Third World countries have other perceptions on how the world should be ordered. And Pakistan itself has the lessons of the past over a quarter century before it to avoid the temptations—whatever they be. Patriot, 12/3/80

## Behind Abortive Coup

by Dewan Berindranath

HAS GENERAL ZIA - UL HAQ fallen out with Washington? This question becomes relevant following the rejection of "peanut arms aid" by Pakistan military junta. It is another thing that the General has rejected only the 'peanuts' and may opt for pistachios' as and when it passed around. The rejection may just be temporary and a device to increase Islamabad's bargaining position. This rejection and the move to open up not only towards India but also Moscow is a development which cannot be dismissed lightly or in a cynical vein. Regardless of the objectives of Islamabad's present stance, it needs to be welcomed if only because it is a vindication of the policy India has been advocating all along on issues affecting southern Asia.

Another significant development is the coup attempt close on the heels of General Zia-ul-Haq's rejection of the arms aid from America. Although the report has been expectedly contradicted—all unsuccessful coups become non-events any way—the close association of Lt. General Iqbal, who is reported to have been arrested for the abortive coup, with the extreme right wing in the military junta should not be over-looked. General Iqbal has earned reputation for being the strong man of the set-up and was supposed to be the ideologue of the fundamentalist Islamic philosophy sought to be introduced as a political system by General Zia-ul-Haq. It is equally well known that General Zia and General Iqbal have not been seeing eye to eye with each other in recent months. It was alleged that General Zia did not like the popularity General Iqbal had earned during the anti-Bhutto agitation through his reluctance to permit the army to fire on the protesters.

*It could well be that the coup report was premature, or that in view of the peculiar balance of power prevailing in the country, both Zia and military may try to patch up differences. Both sides may decide to lie low and postpone frontal confrontation. Knowledgeable Pakistani circles in London feel that the White House is not very happy with General Zia-ul-Haq.*

The General had gone with the US—only up to a point. He seems to realise that US arms commitments do not save him from the massive discontent growing among his people.

Neither could these arms be of help in fighting threats of secessionist movements in Baluchistan and the NWFP. In fact, if anything, US military aid would further alienate anti-regime elements in the two minority provinces. It is only through a peaceful approach to bilateral problems with Afghanistan that Pakistan can hope to settle its own problems in Baluchistan and NWFP.

PAKISTAN'S ECONOMIC PROBLEMS have become so intractable that it has to have massive doses of financial aid from oil-rich countries like Saudi Arabia. It is now doubtful whether even Saudi Arabia would underwrite the economy of a regime headed by a person who has earned the stigma of being an American stooge. Washington continues to be the most unpopular power in the Islamic world. No administration in any Muslim country can hope to survive having an alliance with the US, which continues to threaten aggression against Iran, and is identified as the real power behind Israel. As pointed out in these columns as early as the middle of January, General Zia was reluctant to accept direct American arms aid, from the beginning of the Afghan crisis. It may be he has finally decided that it is not worth his while to earn the odious 'distinction' of being the only ally of America in the Islamic world.

This provides the context to analyse the reports of an attempted coup in Pakistan. Pakistani circles in London have hinted for long that Washington may well be trying to replace the present military outfit in Pakistan with another set of military generals who may be more submissive to US arms-twisting. There have been reports that Washington had established high level contacts with a powerful section of the leaders of the Pakistan People's Party.

The PPP, which is still banned in Pakistan, has undoubtedly emerged as the most important political force in that country. Significantly enough, the party has denounced US aid in no uncertain terms. It has also taken a stand totally opposed to General Zia-ul-Haq's

policy against Afghanistan. This stand of the PPP mirrors genuine public opinion across the borders. Yet it is well known that a section of the PPP itself is essentially right-wing in its attitude and may ultimately prefer some sort of an arrangement with the US—if for nothing else, then at least to get rid of the present Government. This explains the speculation in the Pakistani immigrant press in London that while the US apparently has been backing General Zia-ul Haq, it has simultaneously been trying to mend its fences with the PPP leaders, particularly the ex-Governor of Punjab, Mr. Musajfa Khar, who is in London for the last two years....

—Patriot, 16/3/80

## MILITARY MESSAGE

### A Mistake

by Gene R. La Rocque

Washington,

The temptation to right irrationality with irrationality is strong. Hostages in the US Embassy in Teheran and incredible increases in the price of oil have shocked many Americans. The massive Soviet military invasion of Afghanistan has added to our concerns. We know that we are a powerful nation, but the inability of our government to solve these problems makes many wonder whether we are powerful enough. Demands grow for more military spending, more weapons for intervention, and a tougher international posture. The call is for America to speak loudly and carry a bigger stick. And the Government responds. But a military response to the Impasse in Iran and the oil crisis would be a mistake. Beefing up our armed forces and talking tough are ineffective and wasteful responses to the difficulties that we face. The search for the chimera of military solution to domestic turmoil in foreign countries and the restructuring of international economic relations can only distract us from the search for more appropriate means of preserving our interests.

In the case of the American hostages in Iran, it has been clear from the beginning of this episode that there were no military means by which the United States could achieve the

freeing of our citizens. More U.S. Marines in the Persian Gulf and more US aircraft carriers in the Arabian Sea will make no difference. Not only is it true that Minuteman missiles mean nothing in the Middle East, but additions to our already substantial capability for military intervention around the world will not prevent or resolve future hostage situations. For the immediate purpose of obtaining the release of the American hostages, the threat of future military reprisals by the United States is precisely the consideration that will most inhibit the Iranians from releasing them. Neither our allies in the Middle East, such as Saudi Arabia nor our friends in Europe and Asia are calling for US military intervention or even expanded military presence. Most of our allies seem to believe that US military actions will do more harm than good. The US military could readily defeat the armed forces of any Middle Eastern country or oil producer.

But such a military victory could only bring disaster in its wake. Our own economy and those of our allies in Europe and Japan could not rely on supplies of oil in the face of inevitable widespread sabotage and reprisal. Unstable pro-Western governments in the Middle East would face revolution with the upsurge of outraged Islamic public opinion. Alleged inadequacies of US military power are not the cause of international instability.

We could double our military budget and still have a continuing stream of unpredictable and unmanageable events. The Soviets have nothing to do with the rise in the price of oil. They have nothing to do with the recent trend of events in Iran, no matter how hard some search for the hand of the Kremlin. Their invasion of Afghanistan did not occur because of their perception of US military weakness.

It is time that we face the harsh truth. The United States, which for many years was the most fortunate of nations, has come to be more like other countries. Our former invulnerability and position of privilege have been replaced by substantial military and economic vulnerability that we can do little or nothing about. Other countries, including the Soviet Union, are at least as vulnerable as we are, and at least as fearful of possible future disasters. We are far from being alone

in facing great uncertainties. Our enormous and growing nuclear and conventional military capability plays only a small role in the unfolding of world events. If in fact the expansion of military budgets and the threat of military attack served a useful purpose for the United States, one might want to embrace this return to traditional attitudes. But we have no reason to believe that more military activism is going to work. The declining utility of US military power is not a mere slogan from the old days of the Vietnam War. It is a reality that no amount of bluster and budget appropriations can obscure.

—Los Angeles Times

Gene R. La Rocque, Rear Admiral USN (Retd.) is the director of the Center for Defense Information, a nonprofit research organisation in Washington.

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## BANGLADESH

### ● Unfinished Revolution

London, March 15.

A book recently published by the up and coming publishers ZED Press called BANGLADESH: THE UNFINISHED REVOLUTION has created a mild sensation in political circles. The author Lawrence Lifschultz was the South Asia correspondent of *Far Eastern Economic Review*. During 1974 he was the resident representative of the *Review* in Bangladesh and in 1975 moved to New Delhi to cover the entire sub-continent from the Indian capital. He has also written on South Asian affairs for the *Guardian*, the *Washington Post*, *New Statesman* and the BBC. He is currently doing doctoral research at Kings College Cambridge. The book consists of two parts: Part I, *Taher's Last Testament*, by Lawrence Lifschultz had originally appeared in the *Economic and Political Weekly*. Part II *The Murder of Mujib* was written with the assistance of Kai Bird, Assistant Editor of *The Nation* (New York). The second part was partly financed by the *Fund For Investigative Journalism*, Washington.

*Bangladesh: The Unfinished Revolution* takes the lid off hitherto unknown facts about Bangla-

desh's turbulent political history since 1974. Its author, a skilled and experienced journalist tracks down the facts of the overthrow of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the founding nationalist leader of Bangladesh, and of the execution a year later of Colonel Abu Taher. Part I tells the moving story of Taher, one of the leading military figures in Bangladesh' War of Liberation in 1971, and at one time a close colleague of the country's current head of state, Major General Ziaur Rahman (Zia). On 7 November 1975 a general uprising shook Bangladesh and set off a broad mutiny inside the Bangladesh Armed Forces. This is the story of that uprising and its betrayal. Eight months later, Abu Taher was secretly tried and executed by the former friend, whose own life Taher had saved on November 7. Zia and Taher broke over an issue critical for the entire Third World. What would it be? Revolutionary socialism in one of the poorest countries on earth, or a path of capitalist development based on the largesse of the U.S.A. and the plans of the World Bank? Part II presents the first exhaustive investigation into the overthrow of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman who died in the coup of 15 August 1975. Working jointly with Kai Bird, Assistant Editor of *The Nation* (New York), Lifschultz has unearthed a story which reaches back into the clandestine history of more than a decade of South Asian politics. Their careful work shows how a cohesive group of conservative Bengalis, who rose to prominence in the Pakistan period and were swept aside by Mujib after independence in 1971, finally staged a coup in alliance with a faction of Mujib's own party and reinstated themselves in power. The investigation traces the history of relations between these circles and the United States. It is a complex story reaching from Henry Kissinger's obscure animosities, to covert contacts in the midst of Pakistan's civil war, to a time bomb inside the Mujib regime's own national intelligence organisation. Lawrence Lifschultz's unique sources encompass over 200 interviews conducted in the United States, Europe and Bangladesh, together with US government documents obtained under the US Freedom of Information Act. He also reproduces in a series of remarkable appendices the court record of the secret trial of Colonel Taher; the author's own in-

interview—the first of its kind—with the CIA's Station Chief in Dacca at the time of Mujib's overthrow; a summary of a confidential study by the Washington based Carnegie Endowment on American foreign policy in the midst of Pakistan's civil war; and a careful account of the long-standing relationship between the East Pakistan (Bangladesh) Security Services and the US office of Public Safety.

IN THE INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER, Lifschultz pointed out: "Just over two centuries ago a contingent of 800 European irregular soldiers faced an army nearly 50,000 troops from the Nawab of Bengal's standing forces. Not only was there numerical superiority on the Bengali side, but in this instance artillery and technical supremacy were also against the European force. Nevertheless, in 'the most miserable skirmish ever to be called a decisive battle', the Europeans walked off with a victory which would change world history. This was the Battle of Plassey. The date was 23rd June 1757. 'All sorts of racial, national and historical myths developed out of this event, but the story of the conquest of Bengal was no mystery. In the modern parlance of the Western intelligence community, what happened was a classic 'covert operation' carried through with great clandestine success. There never was a military defeat of the Nawab of Bengal's army. The method of victory was much more simple; the Commander of the Nawab's armed forces had secretly been bought off by the British before either side had ever reached the mango groves around Plassey...." "Through an astute and subtle understanding of the political factions with the Bengali leadership and ruling class; by carefully distinguishing the patriotic from the corrupt; and through the unabashed capacity to buy and sell comprador loyalty from those who deal in their own ambitions for power, the small British expeditionary force under Robert Clive secured its military triumph by a neat gamble on a prior political arrangement. From the incident at Plassey onwards, 'the British waged more or less continuous warfare against the Indian people's consolidating their power in India and the conquest of other regions, breaking up the old system of self-sufficient and self-perpetuating villages, and supporting an elite whose self-interest would harmonize with British rule.....'"

Then again, he explained: "It was during this interim period between December and June that Clive set up what turned out to be possibly the most important intelligence coup of British imperial history. At the time it seemed quite an ordinary matter. Through their previous links with the royal pretender, Shaukat Jang, by then dead, the English were aware that secret contacts had existed between Shaukat and certain of the most senior generals of the Nawab's Army. It was known that these military men were prepared to betray Siraj-ud-Daulah, if it could be made clear that there was gain and power in it for them should they co-operate with the English. As the Nawab prepared to march against Clive's forces in Calcutta, Clive concluded a secret treaty with the Commander-in-Chief of the Nawab's Army, General Mir Jafir. The go-between for the covert pact were two Calcutta financiers, Jagat Seth and Amin Chaud, who were each guaranteed a percentage. The secret agreement was finalized on 10 June 1757, a fortnight before the impending battle of Plassey. In a formal document, according to Spear, 'Mir Jafar promised to confirm the Company's privileges, to pay a million pounds as compensation for the loss of Calcutta, and half a million more to its European inhabitants. By private agreement, there were to be a large consolation for the Chief Company officers. In return the English offered their backing for Mir Jafar's ambition to become the next Nawab of Bengal. The outcome of the Battle of Plassey had been carefully pre-arranged two weeks before the armies even saw each other.....'"

Mir Jafar was made the Nawab five days after the "great victory", but he did not last long. The British chose another puppet.

IN THE SECOND PART, on *The Murder of Mujib*, Lifschultz, made a significant point. "Other, more neutral, observers during that summer of 1975 could not have imagined a more absurd noment for the United States to have covertly involved itself in the overthrow of a regime such as Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's in Bangladesh. It was the summer the world was watching Senator Church's hearings unfold on the details of American involvement in the assassination of various foreign leaders. Thus, that August nearly the entire foreign press corps in New Delhi,



Including the present writers, instinctively rejected the notion of an American link with the fall of Mujib, as simply specious propaganda from Indira Gandhi and the Moscow-oriented Communist Parties of India and Bangladesh. These conclusions made in the summer of 1975 must now be completely re-examined. According to new information obtained from interviews with senior US officials present at the American Embassy in Dacca and from well-informed Bangali sources, it appears that not only did the United States have prior knowledge of the coup which killed Mujib, but the American Embassy personnel had held discussions with the individuals involved in the plot to overthrow Mujib more than six months prior to his death. These discussions were held with the purpose of determining the attitude of the U.S. government towards a political change in Bangladesh if a coup d'etat were actually to happen. On the basis of investigative work which has spanned two years and over two hundred interview we are prepared to outline in detail the story behind the men who killed Mujib. It is an intricate and complex story. ...."

**THE TREACHERY AND THE DOUBLE-CROSSING BY MIR JAFFAR** that enabled Robert Clive to conquer Bengal and the British to conquer India still haunts Bengal. Enemies and critics of Ziaur Rahman call him the modern Mir Jafar, and that the place of the British has now been taken by the Americans and the C.I.A. Lifschultz's book makes it clear that the American tactics centred around in the penetration of the ruling party, the BNP (the Bangladesh Nationalist Party), the stirring up of chauvinist elements in Moslem parties, particularly in Jamiat-ul-Islami, Islamic Democratic League and Democratic League (the last two parties are allegedly financed by American organisations). With this went the activation of left extremist movement and the infiltration into progressive parties and organisations.

Lifschultz's book is now a little dated. Information on the latest developments in Bangladesh come from a Bangladeshi Nationalist group in exile in London. They publish a monthly journal called *Sunrise*. Like Lifschultz, this group also maintain that the murder of Sheik Mujibur Rahman was planned over a

period of time by the collusion of what *Sunrise* calls "the domestic reactionaries in alliance with the forces of international reaction." Sensational revelations, documented and backed by an array of tabulated evidence, have been brought to light in *Sunrise*.

Among some of the most sensational matters revealed are allegations of Americans winning over leading members of the BNP particularly such members of the party leadership like Ahmed Moudud, former deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Water resources, Habibulla Han, Minister of Information and Nural Islam, Minister of Agriculture and Forestry. Ahamed Moudud had been sacked in 1977 from the Cabinet on the grounds that he was suspected to be an American agent. It was also alleged that K. A. Hamid, Minister of Youth Affairs, had close relations with the CIA in Dacca and that R. Choudry, who worked in the President's Secretariat was sacked in 1974 for his association with American businessman who was suspect of an covert activities under deep cover.

The *Sunrise* group have also pointed out the recent American interest in San Martin Island off the coast of Bangladesh was ominous. It was also alleged that the US had made persistent attempts to persuade Ziaur Rahman to lease the island to the USA where the Americans wanted to create a naval base and a transshipment point for its rapid deployment forces. The question has been asked whether the visit of the Commander of the US Sixth Fleet to Bangladesh in 1978 was for the purpose of clinching the San Martin Island matter.

Bangalis whether Hindu or Muslim, are emotional. One folk legend that is dear to every Bangladeshi is the story of Kidiram Bose, a hero who fought for national unity and freedom. It is said that Kidiram Bose is still alive and that he rambles through cities and villages appealing to the nationalist sentiments of the people. His image is being revived in the current barking back to the Mir Jafars and Robert Clives of modern times.

**E.T.S.**

## At Bangalore

by James N. Benedict

**FESTIVAL**—The fourth of a non-competitive film festival titled Filmfest 1980, was held at Bangalore in early January this year and was spread out for a fortnight, when world cinema at its erratic best was the "menu" served for the occasion. Although the local secular press did not give much publicity to this event, the Chairman of our State Film Corporation, Mr. Anton Wickremasinghe, attended this festival, but it is not certain that any of our Sinhala films were screened there. If so, this was an instance, where our cinematic bodies could have co-ordinated with purpose and exhibited the cream of our cine creations. A detailed report of this event, described by A. S. Raman of the Screen Magazine, as the best and the biggest in class, scale and style, has come my way and I would like to pass the following passage in particular to Tribune readers: "Splitting the cinema into the commercial, the elitist and the relevant, however, leads one nowhere. There is only one type of cinema and that is cinema that interests the largest number of people and its quality depends on the quality of the people who see it. For it is the people and not the critics or the invitees who sustain cinema. Even Sreyjit Ray had to concede at his press conference that ultimately people decide what films should survive and what films should not." Ray, a reputed film maker of India, had 26 of his cinematic efforts screened on this prestigious occasion and his comments should receive the respect of our cine creators, who are tempted at times, to sit cosily on the artistic alone and ignore the people altogether.

**THE LOVES AND TIMES OF SCARAMOUCHE (ENGLISH)**—Scaramouche of the Napoleonic era was a fine combination of Don Juan, Casanova and Don Quixote, and he moved about with great gusto in that period with jealous husbands on his heels—the heel that he was on the hearths of many a happy home. Quite naturally his bawdy life lined with barnyard morals, had to catch the cinema sooner or later and is presented in this colourful film in light comedy style. By and by this

vagabond lover, conquers Josephine, while Napoleon is tearing his hair over the Austrians with whom he is at war, and the Russians who want to make it a tripartite conflict. Napoleon's domestic Waterloo, is hilarious while Ursula Andress—as Josephine—undresses at every drop of 'Scaramouche' hat. Those who believe in the quote that "Many reasons have been put forward to account for Napoleon's fame, apart from those put forward by Napoleon himself" would attain all the light hearted conviction they need from this film, which runs with gay abandon from the word go.

**SILVA**—(Sinhalese)—All one needs to sow a little trash and pass it on for good Sinhala cinema are a few big stars, a little double entendre, and hey presto the unwary box office is bursting at the seams. Silva's one such slow moving movie, which in spite of Malini Fonseka, will tranquillize you into a deep slumber, if not for the catchy songs that are squirted at intervals. The film is both a bore and a time killer as it meanders on and on aimlessly, packing a few sniggers for nearly 3 hours.

**BADGE 343 (English)**—Robert Duvall is the bald and paunchy cop, who collects suspension, and minus his badge, goes for the killer of his best friend to break open a Puerto Rican Connection. His story is built around the true exploits of a Super-Cop Bodie Egan and the film in colour is well worth a visit when it comes your way.

## LETTER

### WATER

Dear Sir,

I have to draw reference to the letter of Mr. Shelton L. Perera appearing in the Tribune Issue of March 15, 1980 under the heading "Water, Water, everywhere, but not a drop to drink."

Mr. Perera recommends the pumping of water from Kelani Ganga into Kalatuwawa and Labugama reservoirs. Existing treatment plant capacity at Kalatuwawa is 32.5 million gallons per day. The carrying capacity of the pipes of water from Labugama and Kalatuwawa is also 32.5 million gallons per day.

The supply of water from Kaltuwawa and Labugama even during the drought period has been kept to the maximum capacity and was never cut down.

In order to increase the supply of water from Labugama and Kaltuwawa additional treatment capacity has to be installed and also additional pipe lines for a distance of 30 miles will have to be laid. Instead, it would be cheaper to the Government to pump the water direct from Ambatle itself into the Colombo reservoir by installing the treatment plant at Ambatle and laying pipes for a distance of 7 miles. This is what is now being done and is expected to be completed shortly.

General Manager,  
Water Supply & Drainage Board  
Water Supply & Drainage Board,  
Ritmalana.  
March 17, 1980.

POEM

The Wayfarer

1. As the shadows of twilight lengthen and evening breezes sigh  
a lone young wayfarer rests along the way. A long black beard, a dreamy gaze and a far away light in his ebony eyes he stares unseeing.... past the comely village lasses with water on their heads the shrieking little children playing their evening games or the tall and stalwart men with sickles in their hands

2. Of what do you muse wayfarer, so quiet and alone of distant lands with shining skies where once you knew unbounded joy? Do you long for a wench with

raven hair whose love sustained your life or all the loads you had to bear as you walked along the way? Else of dreams which saw no end hoping the future may compensate all the might-have-beens-

3. Then tolls the temple bell heralding the hour of prayer and scents of incense and sandalwood permeate the air. Yet he sits unseeing.... I approach, sit near another wayfarer on this long and arduous road and see the anguish writ in his coal black eyes. A dreamer whose heart was once a searing flame, a vital throbbing pulse now grown cold bedimmed, subdued with disillusion and despair

4. Lament not wayfarer, all is not lost for while there is life there is joy and hope. The flame that once burned bright has not yet died for the embers still smoulder in your eyes and glimmerings of longing even now reside. Time will be a salve to soothen all the wounds and kindle anew the spark into a mighty blaze which burns away all grief and pain giving you a chance to resuscitate.

5. Do not ask too much of men nor grieve at what

you find amiss in them. The secret  
of success in  
life lies within your grasp, inside yourself.  
Like exquisite  
melodies brought forth by the harp will the  
depths of your  
Soul produce joy to fill your heart.  
You will soar  
again like a bird in the air, ramble  
wild through untamed  
fields and sail across the seven seas.

6. Rise wayfarer, shake off your grief  
take heart, start  
afresh there's a long way to go.  
Keep walking on  
the winding path strewn now with  
weeds and now  
with flowers. By mossy streams and shady  
trees through gardens  
of roses drenched in dew and forests  
and oceans through  
valleys and hills till some day you  
reach Arcadia  
the Land of Dreams.....

Vinodini Amarasingam

SRI LANKA CHRONICLE

March. 10 — 15

DIARY OF EVENTS IN SRI LANKA AND THE  
WORLD COMPILED FROM DAILY NEWSPAPERS  
PUBLISHED IN COLOMBO.

CDN—Ceylon Daily News; CDM—Ceylon  
Daily Mirror; CO—Ceylon Observer; ST—  
Sunday Times; SO—Sunday Observer; DM—  
Dinamira; LD—Lankadipa; VK—Virakesari;  
ATH—Aththa; SM—Silumina; SLDP—Sri Lanka-  
dipa; JD—Janadina; SU—Sun; DV—Davasa;  
DP—Dirapathi; CM—Chinthamani; WK—  
Weekend; RR—Riviresa; DK—Dinakara; EN—  
Eelanadu; IDPR—Information Dept. Press  
Release.

**MONDAY, MARCH 10:** The Sri Lanka  
State Flour Milling Corporation in collaboration

with the Food Department will set up a mo-  
dern bakery in Colombo to compete with  
private bakeries; Corporation Chairman Cap-  
tain H. yward Fernando said yesterday, the  
bakery would use modern baking techniques  
and its purpose is to prove that a wholesome  
loaf of bread could be baked economically  
at current prices. Four foreign gemmologists  
now on a visit to Sri Lanka predict a very  
bright future for the country's famed blue  
sapphires; the four gemmologists are here to  
arrange for a new deal for Sri Lanka's sap-  
hires. The target year now set for the country  
to be self-sufficient in rice by the agricultural  
authorities is 1981, a spokesman for the Mi-  
nistry of Agricultural Development and Research  
said. Cabinet has approved the settling up of  
a multi-million rupee rice flour milling plant  
at Mutwal with initial processing capacity  
of 500 metric tonnes a day, informed sources  
said yesterday. A top level Korean delegation  
of economic and foreign affairs experts led  
by Foreign Minister Mr. Ton Jin Park will  
arrive in Colombo on Thursday March 27 on a  
three-day official visit. The Ceylon Electricity  
Board has appealed to the government to  
disallow all carnivals and funfairs till the cur-  
rent power crisis improves—CDN. Sri Lanka  
Navy personnel yesterday located the boat  
carrying 30 passengers and four crewmen  
reported missing on Saturday in the northern  
waters; passengers and crew were found safe  
aboard. The new secretariat for the Indian  
and Pacific Ocean region on Fisheries is to  
be set up shortly in Sri Lanka, according to  
an official of the Ministry of Fisheries; this  
decision was taken at the FAO Conference  
held in Australia—CDM. Surrounded by  
the Naval flotillas of India and Sri Lanka, the  
tiny Indian Ocean Island of Kachchativu be-  
came the centre of busy trading activity as  
devotees from the two countries converged  
for the annual feast of St. Anthony of Padua.  
Lanka's paddy production last year reached a  
record level of 91 million bushels—said to be  
the highest for the decade—despite the severe  
drought during the yala cultivation, according  
to the latest statistics compiled by the Ministry  
of Agricultural Development; a senior  
ministry official said the Government had  
feared that paddy output might be badly affected  
due to the six month drought—SU. The Gov-  
ernment is now exploring the possibilities

of introducing "social welfare" schemes, instead of the financial tax and leave incentives now given to those practising family planning through female and male sterilisations; a recommendation to this effect is now before government for consideration as an alternative to monetary incentives and a more effective way of promoting family planning—CO. A joint committee of trade unions has decided to observe a day of protest against price increases; they also decided to ask for a salary increase of Rs. 300/- to contend with the high cost of living; many youths in the upcountry areas have expressed disappointment at their not getting jobs despite having applied through job banks and having appeared for interviews—VK. The government is considering a plan to streamline the process of taking disciplinary action against public servants. The C.O.L. has gone up by 14.2 points in February compared to the January figure of 278.3 points.

**TUESDAY, MARCH 11:** Foreign investments outside the Free Trade Zone are striking a high tempo with approvals in January and February this year alone granted to proposals involving investments of Rs. 900 million a Finance Ministry source said yesterday; total investment proposals approved for 1979 amounted to only Rs. 2000 million, he said. Police riot squads from a number of city police stations rushed to Buddhiloka Mawatha following a clash between two factions last evening near the D. S. Senanayake school; police said some people were injured and treated at the Accident Service of the Colombo General Hospital. Colombo's first underground car park is now taking shape in a shopping and office complex in the Pettah—on the site formerly occupied by the Fire brigade; this is a Rs. 50 million complex, the first stage of which will be completed by August this year. The United States of America has increased its current aid to Sri Lanka by about Rs. 140 million (U.S. \$ 9 million) of which Rs. 100 million US \$ 6.4 million) will comprise loans and Rs. 40 million US \$ 2.6 million) grants. The Sri Lanka Freedom Party giving evidence before the Delimitation Commission yesterday asked for the retention of the present 24 electoral districts with certain changes. Switzerland will give Sri Lanka an outright grant of Swiss Francs 1,650,000 (about Rs. 15.5 million) for animal husbandry and dairy develop-

ment projects, according to an agreement signed yesterday. Australia will give Sri Lanka assistance to the value of Australian \$ 204,000 (about Rs. 3.5 million) for strengthening plant quarantine services in the island, according to an agreement signed yesterday—CDN. Ten percent interest will be paid on all mortgages payable as compensation for all categories of land taken over by the state; the period covered in the computation of interest will be from the date the lands were vested with the Land Reform Commission to the date of payment. A mob of over 100 persons attacked the school buildings of D. S. Senanayake Vidyalaya yesterday around 5.30 p.m.; ten school children, two teachers and the parents of two students were reported to have been treated at the Accident Service yesterday. Six army officers who had been compulsorily retired by the previous government, resumed duties at Army Headquarters yesterday. About 1,050,000 of the 3,000,000 school children suffer from malnutrition according to statistics of the Ministry of Education. Mr. E. P. de Silva former Editor of the *Daily Mirror* and *Sunday Times* died on Sunday evening after a brief illness; he was 53 years old—CDM. The Sri Lanka Freedom Party has expressed total opposition to the proportional representation system of elections; however, it is the only system that provides representation for the community interests, a party delegation led by Mithripala Senanayake told the Delimitation Commission yesterday. The Government Medical Officers' Association has requested the Government to abandon the UN voluntary doctors scheme in Sri Lanka. Customs yesterday blew the lid off yet another contraband racket involving goods consigned to diplomatic missions here—SU. Despite deposits in both the National Savings Bank and the commercial banks going up, the proportion of national income now going into savings is dropping, a study undertaken by the Central Bank reveals. Nearly a fourth of the public service accountants posts remain unfilled, the Sri Lanka Accountants' Service Association has told President J. R. Jayewardene. "Everything is very quiet" said a Police spokesman about the D. S. Senanayake Vidyalaya affair while armed policemen stood guard over the school which was transformed into a battle ground yesterday—CO. The President

is convening a meeting next Friday to ascertain the problems of wages, housing etc., of plantation workers and to find solutions; opposition trade unions too have been invited to attend—DP. 11 Indian nationals who landed in Sri Lanka illegally after the Kachchativu Festival have been kept in preventive custody—EN. A survey conducted by the Ministry of Plan Implementation has revealed that the living standard of the lower income group has gone down sharply; the main reason for this is because of the down fall of the production of subsidiary food crops; this has led to a food shortage and therefore the lower income group is unable to consume their minimum requirement of protein—DV. The Ministry of Housing & Construction is to launch a new program under which one village will be selected from each district and will be provided with the basic comforts—LD. Onions will be cultivated in 24,000 acres of land in different districts to face the expected shortage of onions in the near future—DM. The government is considering closing down the Job Bank which was set up with the hope of solving the unemployment problem; only 30,000 have found jobs through the job bank up to date while 325,000 applicants are yet to be found jobs—JD. Rs. 7 million worth of modern printing machinery imported by the government-owned Times Group of Newspapers is lying idle; these machines will be seriously damaged as they are not stored according to specifications—ATH. The unprecedented drought throughout the country has destroyed crops and animal husbandry all over the island—DK.

**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 12:** Police yesterday claimed that the anti-Iranian posters which came up on walls at several places in the City on March 5, had been printed abroad and smuggled into the country. A total of 123 doctors from India, the Philippines and Burma are now here assisting the country in its hour of need; ninety per cent of them have been detailed to work in remote areas where medical needs of the rural folk had been neglected; Health Minister Gamani Jayasuriya said yesterday. The Water Resources Board (WRB) has cautioned people in the Jaffna Peninsula to be more careful in extracting ground water for domestic and agricultural purposes,

as it has been found that soft water resources in the area are being over-exploited. Bonn's Minister of Economic Co-operation Hiner Offergeld will pay an official visit to Sri Lanka from March 27 to April 1, at the invitation of Mr. Gamini Dissanayake Minister of Lands and Land Development and Mahaweli Development. Production on some 500,000 acres of prime tea, reeling under scorching drought conditions, plummeted to below 50 per cent of the estimated crop of approximately 18 million kilograms last month, spokesman for the Janatha Estates Development Board, State Plantations Corporation and Tea Small Holdings Developments Authority said yesterday. The Ministry of Education will shortly set up five Sinhala schools in the Northern and Eastern Provinces to cater to Sinhalese and Tamil children who wish to study Sinhala—CDN. The private non-fee-levying schools, which this year were granted State aid for the payment of teachers' salaries have decided to drastically reduce the donations paid by parents in lieu of school fees. Sri Lanka has qualified to receive a special loan of over Rs. 600 million from the International Monetary Fund; she is one of 41 countries qualifying for loans this year—CDM. The import of cars into Sri Lanka has declined sharply in view of the rising cost of fuel; car imports during last December numbered only 468 cars and station wagons worth Rs. 17.5 million, according to latest statistics released by the Customs Department; the comparable number of December 1978 was 962 cars worth Rs. 29 million. D. S. Senanayake Maha Vidyalaya has been closed indefinitely following a directive issued by the Ministry of Education yesterday. A top level police team led by Deputy Inspector General Herbert Weerasinghe of the Criminal Investigations Department has conducted a full search at the office of Sri Lanka's diplomatic mission to the United Nations in New York. The heavy shower of rain experienced over the city yesterday ended the four month long severe drought which prevailed over Sri Lanka—SU. Minister of Land, Land Development and Mahaweli Development said yesterday that the Mahaweli water will be taken to the north and schemes to implement this are being undertaken at present. 46 persons including one woman have been arrested so far in connexion with the incidents that took

place last Monday at the D. S. Senanayake school—DP. Minister of Trade and Shipping Lalith Athulathmudali has revealed that the policy of the government in regard to the distribution of essential foodstuffs would be on a policy of "no profit and no loss"—VK. The Ministry of Agriculture is to give high yielding paddy seeds free to farmers; the best farmer in the area will be supplied with paddy seeds to be cultivated and farmers will get their requirements from him; it is hoped that the paddy harvest will double if this project is successful—LD. It has been found out that top officials in some public departments and institutions are engaged in private enterprises in the working hours; this is one of the reasons why departments are not working efficiently—DM. The Textile Corporation is to sell the Palkelle Power loom factory for Rs. 9 million and the Nalhatta diya Powerloom factory for Rs. 7 million to the private sector; the 2 factories were estimated to be worth Rs. 11 million and Rs. 13 million respectively—ATH.

**THURSDAY, MARCH 13:** Public officers will in future be able to study abroad or be employed for a period of five years on no-pay leave; three of the five years' no-pay leave can be taken continuously, the respective Ministries have been empowered to formulate their own scheme of releasing officers in their employ and will do so taking into consideration the exigencies of service. Representatives of two major plantation workers' trade unions will place problems confronting their unions before President J. R. Jayewardene at his office today. Finance and Planning Minister Ronnie de Mel now in Iraq as a special guest of the Government of Iraq has had several rounds of talks with Thamar Razo'ki, Minister of Finance and Taha Yassin Ramadan, First Deputy Prime Minister and Member of the Revolutionary Command Council—CDN. The Government is planning a scheme to fix certain maximum prices for various flour-based food items and cups of tea sold in restaurants and eating places in view of the big profits made by the eating houses and hotels. A voluminous report on transport reforms submitted by the Minister of Transport M. H. Mahamed will be studied in detail by the Cabinet at its next meeting—CDM. Social Services Minister, Asoka Karunaratne yesterday submitted

a revised draft bill regarding the administration of voluntary social service organisations to the Cabinet. Government yesterday accepted a proposal by Lands, Land Development and Mahaweli Development Minister Gamini Dissanayake to employ Indian engineers in the River Valleys Development Board—SU. A deputation from the Police Officers' Welfare Association met President Jayewardene last evening; grievances such as inadequate pay, housing problems etc., were discussed and the President promised redress within 2 months—VK. It was decided at yesterday's Cabinet meeting that a electric railway service will be started soon—DP. The charge against Mrs. Bandaranaike put forward to the Presidential Commission has not been released to the press; in the earlier cases the charges were released without any delay. A top level C.D. team has investigated Sri Lanka's UN office in New York; this is said to be connected with the investigation against the conduct of a top diplomat—ATH. The committee that considered the working hours of public servants has recommended to the government that the working hours should be from 8.30 a.m. to 4.00 p.m. with a half-hour lunch break—DM. The Government has decided to reduce allocations for constructing new buildings and roads under the decentralised budget and increased the allocation for agricultural and irrigation work; in some cases 10% of the decentralised budget has been spent for ceremonies and other Tamashas—DV. The Government has decided to appoint a new committee to investigate allegations of corruption against top politicians close to the government; the committee appointed earlier has not produced results as the members of the committee were hard core UNPers—JD.

**FRIDAY, MARCH 14:** The Government Medical Officers' Association which met President J. R. Jayewardene at President's Office yesterday assured its fullest co-operation to the government in the establishment of the Post-graduate Institute of Medicine; President Jayewardene referring to the recent sick-note campaign told the delegation that doctors should not keep away from duty. The Court of Appeal yesterday directed that notice be issued on Mr. Cyril Gardiner, Chairman and Managing Director of the Galle Face Hotel

Co., Ltd., and its other directors to appear in Court at 10 a.m. on Monday to implement the order of the Supreme Court in the contempt matter against them. The Ceylon Electricity Board said yesterday that wasteful and unwarranted use of power by the public and corporation, industrial and private sector consumers had aggravated the present power crisis. The Cardiology Unit in Colombo will be expanded by the addition of a three storeyed wing at a cost of Rs. 3 million to be borne by Messrs Jafferjee Brothers Ltd., of Colombo—CDN. President J. R. Jayewardene took positive action yesterday to put the tea, rubber and coconut estates of the country on an economically sound footing and to eliminate losses, mismanagement and corruption; as the first step he agreed to the appointment of a Committee to formulate a Collective Agreement between the management agencies and the two major trade unions, the Ceylon Workers' Congress (CWC) and Lanka Jathika Estate Workers' Union (LIEWU) both of which together have a membership of nearly 800,000 estates workers. The government yesterday authorised several businessmen to import flour from India; this is the first time since independence that the State monopoly on the import of flour has been ended—CDM. The Supreme Court delivering a judgement on a language issue, yesterday directed the Additional District Judge of Colombo to accept pleadings in Tamil in a rent and ejectment case. An abandoned quarry at Ritmalana has been selected as the dumping ground for the burnt stock of malathion now lying at a Panchikawatte storeroom. The Court of Appeal comprising Justice Abdul Cader and Justice Victor Perera yesterday issued notice to the entire directorate of the Galle Face Hotel to appear in Court on Monday March 17 to carry out the order of the Supreme Court. The Police Inspectors Association has urged President J. R. Jayewardene to appoint a Police ombudsman to hear grievances of all ranks of Police officers—SU. The SLFP and the LSSP which have been politically poles apart in recent times may hold their May Day celebrations together; talks in this connection are being held between the high ups of both these parties—VK. Paddy cultivators in the Polonnaruwa district are to decide to boycott paddy cultivation in the coming cultivation season

unless the guaranteed price for a bushel of rice is increased to Rs. 70; the cultivators have already informed the President of their decision—JD. The Minister of Agricultural Development E. L. Senanayake has decided to reduce the acre tax paid by farmers by half and increase the share of the land owners by 3 bushels—DV.

**SATURDAY, MARCH 15:** The tremendous interest shown in Sri Lanka by the international business and banking community indicated the success of the economic policies of the Government. Acting Minister of Finance and Planning M. H. M. Naina Marikar said yesterday; in the past two years there had been a very steep increase in the inflow of private capital to Sri Lanka apart from substantial aid from donor countries and international institutions, he said at the opening of the Colombo branch of American Express International Banking Corporation. The Independent Medical Practitioners Association has offered its services to the Health Ministry to tide over the present difficulties created by a shortage of doctors in the Colombo group of hospitals. Seventeen Science students of Royal College, Colombo, obtained distinctions in all four subjects at the last August GCE A-level examination, according to the results of the examination released by the Examinations Department, yesterday—CDN. Admissions to the Universities this year on the results of the two different GCE (Advanced Level) examinations will be made on a ratio basis. Several travel agents will be black-listed by the Tourist Board for being directly or indirectly involved in helping tourists in drug and gun smuggling. The government has ordered the import of 100,000 tons of cement to meet the accelerated construction programme in the government and private sectors. The revised higher inland postage rates comes into effect from Monday March 17—CDM. Amidst increasing concern by Government over the obstacle to economic growth caused by tremendous wastage of resources, a Sun investigation has revealed a shocking scene of wastage and mismanagement in a dry zone rural development project resulting in losses of several million rupees. The Government yesterday agreed in principle that all travelling expenses of representatives



under the Indo-Sri Lanka agreement be borne by the State. Sri Lanka's population growth rate has risen significantly during the past two years, with more people marrying earlier due to greater economic security.—S.U. A Sri Lankan youth has found a powerful TV 'converter' and a converter with which one can view TV programmes televised from as far as Russia; the feature of this converter is that it has to be only 3 feet above the TV set; the converter has cost about Rs. 1500 to produce—DM. The government is considering increasing allowances of MPs to reduce the burden of the increased prices—ATH.

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**Govt.  
Notices**

**Notice Under Section 7 Of The Land Acquisition Act (Chapter 430) As Amended By The Land Acquisition (Amendment) Act No. 28 Of 1961.**

Reference No:- 11/7/4/55

The Government intends to acquire the land described in the Schedule below, for a public purpose. For particulars please see Part III of the Gazette of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka No. 82 of 28-02-1980.

**Schedule**

District : Anuradhapura  
D.R.O.'s Division : Kalgam Palatha South  
G.A.'s Division : No. 51  
Name of land : Dambagaha Akkare, Kalgawatta etc.  
Plan No. : F.V.P. 1096  
Lot No. : From No. 46 to 77  
Name of the Village : Duniyagama

**C. H. J. Fernando**  
Acquiring Officer and  
Anuradhapura District Land Officer.

The Kachcheri,  
Anuradhapura,  
12/03/1980

My No. LA/1586  
The Kachcheri,  
Jaffna,  
07 March, 1930

**Land Acquisition Act (Chapter 430) As Amended By The Land Acquisition (Amendment) Act No. 28 Of 1964.  
Notice Under Section 7**

The Government intends to acquire the land described in the schedule below for a public purpose. For particulars please see Part III of the Gazette of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka No. 82 of 28-03-1980.

**Schedule**

Name of Land: Mission Valavu Assmt. No. 69 & 75, Chemmany Road.  
Name of Village: Nallur (Ward No. 12 Nallur within the Municipal limits of Jaffna)  
D.R.O.'s Div./A.G.A.'s Division: Nallur  
Lots No.: 1  
Plan No: P. P. Ya 1449

**M. Panchalingam**  
Additional Govt. Agent &  
Acquiring Officer,  
Jaffna District.

My No. LA/1606  
The Kachcheri,  
Jaffna,  
07.03.1930

**Land Acquisition Act (Chapter 430) As Amended By The Land Acquisition (Amendment) Act No. 28 Of 1961.  
Notice Under Section 7**

The Government intends to acquire the land described in the scheduled below for a public purpose. For particulars please see Part III of the Gazette of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka No. 82 of 28.03.80

**Schedule**

Name of Land: Urimireesankoodal  
Name of Village: Tellippalai North West  
D.R.O.'s Div./A.G.A.'s Division: Valikamam North  
Lots No: 1  
Plan No: P.P./Ya 1457

**M. Panchalingam**  
Addl. Govt. Agent and Acquiring Officer,  
Jaffna District.

# Confidentially

## Misleading Statistics

IS IT NOT SYMPTOMATIC that the Ceylon Daily News should have a front-page lead story on March 17, 1980 entitled ESSENTIAL ITEMS: LANKA PRICES LOWEST IN ASIA? That the report stated that a research organisation (not named for some unknown reason) "has concluded that prices of essential commodities in this country are lower than other third world countries in Asia?" That the organisation had, it was said, monitored prices of commodities in eight Asian countries and had found that, despite the recent withdrawal of subsidies, essential food items were still cheaper in Sri Lanka than in most other Asian countries? That whilst bread was freely available to Sri Lanka at Rs. 2.05 per lb, bread cost as much as Rs. 8.40 per lb. in Burma, Rs. 8.10 per lb. in the Philippines, Rs. 7.70 per lb. in Thailand and Rs. 7.50 per lb. in Indonesia? That, in Malaysia, bread cost Rs. 4.74 per lb, Rs. 2.83 per lb. in Singapore and Rs. 2.41 per lb. in Pakistan? That, even in India, bread at Rs. 2.27 per lb. cost more than Sri Lanka? That a pound of bread in Australia—which is a wheat-growing country—cost Rs. 9.03 a lb? That sugar which is freely available in the open market in Sri Lanka at Rs. 4.50 a lb. cost Rs. 5.90 per lb. in India and Rs. 5.40 per lb. in the government shops and co-operatives in Burma? That the open market price of sugar in Burma is Rs. 13.03 per lb? That flour cost Rs. 2.37 per lb? in Sri Lanka, Rs. 8.92 in Burma, Rs. 6.44 per lb. in the Philippines, Rs. 4.83 per lb. in Singapore and Rs. 4.73 per lb. in Thailand? That whilst full cream milk powder was available locally at Rs. 8.50 per pound, the prices in all other third world Asian countries are much higher—Burma Rs. 43.21 per lb., India Rs. 30.45 per lb. Pakistan Rs. 29.60 per lb. Indonesia Rs. 28.40 per lb., Thailand Rs. 27.70 per lb., Philippines Rs. 24.81 per lb., Singapore Rs. 21.33 per lb., and Malaysia Rs. 16.30 per lb.? That in regard to oil prices apart from Indonesia which is an oil-producing country (it is a member of OPEC) and where

petrol is only Rs. 11.37 per gallon, the prices of petrol in other Asian countries are about the same as the Sri Lanka price of Rs. 37.50 per gallon? That, in the Philippines, super petrol cost Rs. 42.96 per gallon, in India Rs. 41.55 per gallon, in Thailand Rs. 34.42 a gallon and in Singapore Rs. 33.46 a gallon? That kerosene which is freely available locally at Rs. 13.68 a gallon is Rs. 23.41 a gallon in Thailand Rs. 24.00 a gallon in the Philippines and Rs. 22.73 a gallon in India? That in Singapore, the wholesale kerosene price alone is Rs. 28.37 a gallon? That the research organisation had added that these figures bear out a recent UN survey which lists Sri Lanka as the cheapest country to live in?

THAT ALL THIS RESEARCH is excellent, but the organisation has not provided the one vital information that will give flesh and blood to these prices? That unless one knows the wages (and the real income) in the respective countries and the purchasing power of the respective local currencies, the prices cited will have little or no meaning? That as they stand, they are most misleading? That it would be sufficient for the moment to cite figures given in the GCEC advertisements spread out in prestigious papers in the major capitals of the "free world?" That one such advertisement in the Wall Street Journal in New York stated that "Labour rates are the most competitive in Asia? That the average monthly wage in manufacturing industries in Sri Lanka is only US \$ 31 a month, compared to US \$ 142 in Singapore, US \$ 143 in Korea and US \$ 836 in Japan?" That it will be seen that the wages earned are the lowest among the countries mentioned and that the prices of commodities monitored by the research organisation are those that obtain in the countries where wages are far higher than in Sri Lanka? That, what is more, is that the real value of Sri Lanka rupee is less than the Singapore or Malaysian dollar, the Indian rupee and the other currencies mentioned? That to refer to the price of bread in Australia is absurd when wages are ten to twenty times higher than in Sri Lanka?

\* More Statistics Next Week

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So said the Honourable Deputy Minister of Trade and Shipping Mr. M. S. Amarasiri speaking at a Seminar on "The Liberalised Trade Policy of the Government and Insurance" conducted by the Post-Graduate Student's Association of the Insurance Institute of Ceylon at the University of Colombo on Saturday, 1st March 1980.

Founder Director of the Insurance Institute of Ceylon, Dr. Linus Silva emphasised the importance of this unique occasion where the Post-Graduate Students of the Science of Insurance together with the published literature in Sinhala on the subject, the three Executive Heads of the Insurance Industry in Sri Lanka and the Honourable Deputy Minister under whose Ministry the three Corporations came are assembled together today on the same platform.

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