

TRIBUNE

CEYLON NEWS REVIEW

Vol. 19, No. 43

March 8, 1975

Cents 75

Suicidal Complacency About Food

THE COMPLACENCY ABOUT THE CURENT FOOD CRISIS which seems to envelop important sections of the ruling elite in this country, especially the pseudo-intellectualised arrogant demagogues and the insensitive bureaucrats, safely enthroned in comfortable armchairs in the big cities and in government offices in rural centres, compels us to return to the topic we had dealt with last week, namely *Food, Famine and Triage*.

Many of these elitist people are still able to get much more than their rations: (only few of the elite have to stand in queues to obtain them—they get it either through the backdoor or through domestics whose only occupation is to move from queue to queue. Sri Lanka has a new class or caste of professional, semi-professional and even amateur queue-standers who, though able-bodied are no longer

in a position to participate in any productive or purposeful economic activity and many of the younger and comelier queue-standers are being drawn into the minor and major vices which increasingly afflict our society, viz. bidi-smoking, narcotics, kassipu, pickpocketing, petty thieving and prostitution).

What is distressing is that this elite continue to work and live in the belief that a paternalistic government will "somehow or other" find the food if we do not grow enough ourselves. The grow-more-food programme, whether crash or otherwise, is only one more forum on which they can draw the attention of the leading and presently influential members of the Establishment to their loyalty and usefulness by shouting slogans of a pseudo-marxist character to show that they more radical or more progressive than others vying for the patronage of the ruling elite.

Unless something is done to remove this kind of complacency the programme for growing food will become another gimmick and keep the people of this country moving from one mirage to another.

It is not difficult to mouth slogans. It is not difficult to pretend to be loyal enthusiasts about the crash food growing programme. But what is needed is an awareness that we are virtually on the brink and that unless something was done in a purposeful and meaningful way, total disaster will overtake this country—a disaster which neither demagogic politicians nor doctrinaire pundits will neither be able

MEDIA STANDARDISATION DISTRICT QUOTAS SELECTION

THE KEUNEMAN-CHAired SECTORAL COMMITTEE, which has been entrusted with the work of examining the consequences of the schemes hastily adopted by the insolent (and therefore ignorant) bureaucrats of the Department of Education (who have already reduced education in Sri Lanka to shambles through ill-conceived experiments to satisfy pet theories) to determine admissions to the University, has invited representations about the havoc that the departmental decrees on media standardisation and the district quota system have wrought on the body politic of this country. Well-reasoned memoranda from responsible organisations and individuals, qualified and competent to speak on the subject, have been submitted and summaries of many of these memoranda have found their way into the daily press. It is to be hoped that the Keuneman Sectoral Committee will recommend changes which will minimise and, if possible eliminate, the damage already done by three to four years of media standardisation and one year of district quota selection. What is distressing is that the mechanics of standardisation and district quota selection were cleverly weighted and contrived in order to discriminate against a particular community, but such discriminatory devices usually boomerang in the most unexpected manner and this is just what has happened in this case. A smokescreen about egalitarian equality, overlaid with pseudo-scientific jabber about genetic upliftment of the slum dwellers through university education, was spread to push this retrograde method of university selection to complete implementation. What many politicians do not seem to realise, as *Tribune* had pointed out in its issue of February 22, 1975, is that media standardisation and district quota selection will perpetuate separatist sentiments and secessionists politics in a way that no chauvinist jingoism can ever hope to do.

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to prevent or even comprehend. This is true of nearly all aspects of life and living in Sri Lanka today, but the tragedy which has begun to darken our food situation is one that must be examined very carefully if Sri Lanka is to minimise the adverse consequences of the food crisis already in our midst.

All those who have anything to do with this matter are complacently happy that the benevolent Government has already obtained the amount required for the minimal rations for this year through imports. With this done, they are waiting for the rains: they are waiting for someone else to sink wells and lift groundwater: they are waiting for the other man to grow the food: and they think that the farmer has been offered sufficient incentives—land reform, guaranteed prices, ceiling on incomes and what-have-you to make him plunge headlong into the crash food programme to make this country self-sufficient.

What do these gentlemen (and ladies) know about the plight of the ordinary farmer? Is agriculture profitable to the average farmer? Are the guaranteed prices (higher than what they were) enough to make the farmer slave and sweat to produce more food?

OUR ELITE IN THE ARMCHAIRS still pin their faith in the bogus and semi-bogus statistics that are put before them by underlings who know the kind of statistics and information that will please their immediate superiors and the higher elite who exercise remote-control (through the post, telephone, radio and expensive circuits in luxury limousines.) But have these statistics kept pace with the real and steep increase in the cost of inputs and labour (in spite of land reform the cost of labour is still important)? On the basis of high prices for farm commodities now prevailing in the country it is easy to conclude that the farmer was having a heyday. Recent advances in agricultural research and the availability of High Yielding Varieties (HYV) and the success stories about ventures utilising such innovations lend support to this view. For the urban dweller, the farmer is one who has enough food, a homestead with plenty of fresh

air and water, and also far less commitments in the form of unfruitful expenditures inevitable in towns.

What has the farmer to say to all this?

There is no doubt that a farmer usually paints a dark picture about his plight, just as much the urban resident (especially the unionised suitably indoctrinated about the role of the urban working class) thinks that all is well with the farmer. The simple fact is that a true picture about the plight of the farmer rarely emerges because there are no correct or up-to-date information about his income from the land, his investment in cultivation and the extent to which he supplements his earnings from other sources. It is true that data on the cost of cultivation and possible net income from some of the major crops in selected areas have been collected in respect of units where intensive agricultural development programmes have been tried out in state experimental farms and a few other places.

But can these statistics apply to the average farmer? What does the average farmer say about his "plight"?

He feels that neither the results of the intensive research programmes nor the green revolution have taken the average farmer anywhere near prosperity. The fact is that the crippling effect of the rising costs of cultivation and the difficulty in obtaining many essential commodities for his household, even at exorbitant prices, had widened the gulf between him and affluence. But what is worse is that the government organised marketing machinery to purchase farm produce and sell them in towns and urban areas is not adequate. Whilst vegetables are rotting without buyers in rural areas, the same vegetables are sold in towns at ten to twenty times the price paid to the producer. Farmers throw away *bandakka* and other vegetables because they cannot get even five cents a pound whilst these vegetable fetch anything from 80 cents to one rupee (at the moment) in Colombo. The corruption and inefficiency of the marketing machinery of the government, at a time when the private trader has been pushed into the unknown fringe of the blackmarket, is something simply appalling, but true. The same

distributive systems of the government provides the most erratic supply position in the villages (whereas in the towns the position is better) adds to the problems of the farmer.

Even the most cursory survey will show that many, if not most farmers, have to get a supplementary income apart from what they get from the land in order to "keep body and soul together" (still a useful cliché). Poor farmers make up for this shortfall in their family budget by working in other farms or in government relief schemes. Many farmers try their luck in shopkeeping and other occupations, and it is not rare to find farmers divert part (if not the whole) of their crop loans or medium term loans provided by the banks and other institutions to procure bare necessities for the family or to pay for the education of one or more member of the family in Colombo in the hope that they will soon become wage-earners deriving a steady income from the Government.

It can be argued that much of what we say is guesswork. It is. But this guesswork is better than some of the statistics available or the total lack of such statistics. If farming has to be put on a footing a great deal of work has to be done, with objective honesty, and not with a desire to establish that certain policies of a particular Government in power had performed miracles whilst at the same time seeking to establish that the policies of a predecessor government had played havoc.

Agriculture is no longer a matter of just two bullocks and a plough even for a small farmer. What many people, who should know better in Sri Lanka, refuse to know, is that farming needs heavy investment. A proper study will reveal that the per-acre investment, excluding the cost of the land, for the small holding will be the highest of the different categories of farms that may be examined. These costs must include buildings and permanent improvements, livestock, fodder and crop nutrients. In contrast, it will be found that larger units require smaller investments unless unnecessary overheads such as are inevitable in gov-

ernmental or co-operative undertakings make some of these large units uneconomic and lopsided.

There is much that our Institute of Agrarian Research can do, but there is a suspicion in knowledgeable quarters that research at the moment is subordinated to a desire to justify programmes and policies of the most ephemeral and questionable nature. One of the most important questions that must be solved is; which is the most profitable—the small farms (how small?) or the large units (how large?) This question should not be approached from the angle of arithmetical land ceilings and colonisation land allotments already arbitrarily adopted in Sri Lanka under various pseudo-learned excuses but from the point of national interest? Although politics is involved in the matter, the important question today in the food crisis we are buried in, is what is the best size for a farm—in the wet zone, in the wanni, under an irrigation tank, by a river, in the marginal lands, in areas where surface wells are feasible, in areas where tube wells can be sunk, and so on and so forth. Additionally, we must know what crops do best in small units and large units, area-wise, water-wise and the like. For instance it is accepted in most countries that smaller units provide better scope for earnings from vegetable farming and dairying. What is essential is honest-to-goodness surveys about the manner land can be best utilised without being inhibited by political imperatives of the most transitory nature. It must be remembered that unless we approach land utilisation, agricultural production and farming from a primarily economic angle (rather than a sectarian political viewpoint) this country will not be able to effect a breakthrough into food self-sufficiency.

ENOUGH WARNINGS have been given about the grim food situation, abroad much more than here. It is not enough to demand that people should "cultivate every inch of land." This cannot be done unless people know how it is to be done. And this where Sri Lanka is sadly lacking in a concrete programme. We have highly qualified scientists, agronomists, plant biologists, etc. (even after the brain drain), and though they write learned

these and produce excellent results in experimental plots, they are not able to persuade the farming community to involve themselves in the work of food production in a manner that will be fruitful.

The complacency which has gripped the higher echelons of our bureaucracy (and they lull to sleep the politicians and political authorities who eat out of their hands, literally and metaphorically) is suicidal in the national interest.

Even the recent warning given at the ESCAP Conference in New Delhi that there was "death for millions of people" in the coming years unless there are fundamental changes in government development strategies, has left our ruling elite and the ruling bureaucracy untouched because they are also lost in the complacent thought that "this cannot happen in Sri Lanka under the magic of the United Front-Policies" which are expected to make Sri Lanka the "richest nation in Asia before long."

It is good to remind ourselves that ESCAP (UN's Economic Commission for Asia and the Pacific) in its survey for 1974 presented at the sessions which concluded in New Delhi this week presented a bleak of the prospects for growth targets set for the Second Development Decade (1972-80) in many countries in the region.

The Report stated that the long term problems of the region call for fundamental changes in development strategies, and in particular for planning for the masses. The survey also stated that "almost all developing ESCAP countries fell short of the 4 per cent target set for growth of agricultural output, with negative rates recorded in a few countries. The region's food supply situation has been made worse by the global nature of the food shortage, raising prices and inhibiting imports. Populations and labour forces have continued to expand at alarming rates."

The survey pointed out that on current estimates the developing countries of the ESCAP region, by the middle of this year, will have around 2074 million people or 73 per cent, of the population of the world's developing countries as a whole. It is further estimated

that by the year 2,000 "the staggering figure" of more than 1,500 million will be added to the region's population, indicating an increase of about 60 per cent.

Underlining the impact of inflation on development prospects the survey noted that "in general rates of inflation in the region have become higher than in developed OECD countries. Both domestic and international causes are involved, but the main elements



Founded in 1954

A Journal of Ceylon and World Affairs

Published Weekly
Every Saturday

MARCH 8, 1975

Vol. 19 No. 43

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

One Year	Rs. 37-50
Two Years	Rs. 62-50
Three Years	Rs. 87-50

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Post Free in Sri Lanka

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43, Dawson Street,
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Telephone: 33172

TRIBUNE, March 8, 1975

in the over-all price rises have been food, raw materials and imported industrial commodities."

The survey however, added that existing approaches to development planning had shown themselves no match for the acute problems facing the region. In some countries, a staggering proportion of the population involving hundreds of millions of people, was on the margin of subsistence as the situation could easily deteriorate as population grew unchecked and crises continued in food supply and other areas.

It described the situation as 'desperate' and called for urgent and radical solutions involving a drastic orientation of development strategies and policies.

It warns that otherwise "this will cause further appalling deprivation and for millions of people death."

While suggesting radical changes, the survey cautioned that some targets set for the United Nations Second Development Decade might need revision "in the light of widespread poverty, food shortages and recent international developments."

What is it that we can do about this Sri Lankan complacency which is hidden under a smokescreen of screeching slogans? How long can we continue to be lotus eaters?

Tribunania

- The Press
- Ambassador Nishanov
- Janavegaya

ONE OF THE MAIN REASONS put forward for taking over *Lake House* was that the readers were not getting a square deal. For a long time, it had been pointed out that the private owners of the *Lake House*, *Times* and the *Dawasa* group of newspapers were more concerned with advertisements rather than news coverage or reading material for the public. One of the main matters that that was urged before the abortive Press Commission of the early

sixties was that the ratio of advertising to the total columnage should be kept around 25%—and that this would not only make the newspapers viable but also provide the readers with their money's worth.

What is the situation today?

The Government controlled *Lake House* newspapers contain anything from 60 to 70 percent of advertisement matter in every issue. If any particular issue has less than 60 percent (the only exception is the *Observer* whose circulation is not as high as that of the *Daily News* and where advertisements are limited), subsequent issues will cover the shortfall.

The people who talked loudest about the private newspaper owners making unconscionable profits through an overdose of advertising are the most silent today. The overheads in *Lake House*, it would appear, have increased since the days of the Wijewardenas, but this is no reason why readers who pay three to four times more for each copy (increased prices owing to increased newsprint prices) should not be denied reading material.

This is a matter which the Press Association of Sri Lanka should take up with the Government which claims that it is anxious to set high standards in newspaper ethics and production.

WORTH WHILE INNOVATION. Last week, the Press Association and the Foreign Correspondents' Association jointly sponsored a programme which was both interesting and worthwhile. These Associations have decided to invite Ambassadors and Envoys of different countries with missions in Colombo to address joint meetings of the two Associations on current topics intended to explain the policies followed by their respective governments. Questions were to be asked and be answered at the end of the talk in the manner and style of a Press Conference.

The ball was set rolling last week when Ambassador Nishanov, USSR's envoy in Sri Lanka, addressed the Press Association and Foreign Correspondents' Association on the subject of *The Soviet Union and the Developing Countries*. The full text of the speech, in which he set out the aid the USSR has rendered

the developing countries, has been published in many of the daily papers. But the most interesting part of the proceedings was the question and answer session that followed. The topics on which questions were asked were: the Soviet Asian Collective Scheme, Sri Lanka's Peace Zone Plan for the Indian Ocean vis a vis the Soviet Collective Security Scheme, the Indo-Soviet Treaty, Soviet Arms aid, the general ethics of foreign aid, and Soviet Aid in Food.

It was perhaps the first time that a resident envoy of the USSR has met the local press in this fashion and it must be said that Ambassador Nishanov dealt with the questions in a deft manner. He answered the questions directly, without appearing to evade any of them, but without falling into pitfalls which an inept answer would have landed him. One of the best examples of tightrope walking in which he gave nothing away was when a questioner, after he had elicited the answer that the USSR gave arms aid only for defensive purposes had proceeded to ask whether he thought that when Egypt had also sought arms from France whether Egypt was now seeking arms for aggressive purposes. Without any hesitation he had answered that he thought that Egypt was no doubt asking France for arms also for defensive purposes. Any other answer would have led to other questions of a nature that would have not only the involved USSR but also Egypt, and when the questioner persisted in trying to probe Egyptian intentions through Ambassador Nishanov he had gracefully suggested that the question should be asked of the Egyptian Ambassador when he came before the Association.

Many of the questions revolved around the Asian Collective Security Schemes, and it was the Ambassador's position that the Sri Lanka Plan Peace Zone proposal and the Soviet Collective Security Scheme were not antagonistic to each other but were complementary. What he said was not new but the most interesting answer was in reply to the question about the number of Asian countries which had agreed to support the Soviet proposal. He stated that this proposal could not be reduced to arithmetical exactitudes and he went on to

reveal that the Soviet Scheme was based on a large number of Asian documents like the Bandung Declaration.

He was cautious and circumspect when he answered questions about the lifting of the US embargo on the arms sales to Pakistan, but he finally admitted that, if this step led to an increase of tensions in the area and the subcontinent, it had to be condemned. About China too he was careful not say anything which might appear to be critical, but he deplored the fact that China was so hostile to the Soviet Collective Security Pact for Peace and indicated that the theory of the two "super-powers" was not correct.

But the most important thing he revealed which was of interest in this country (when he was questioned about the food aid the USSR had given Ceylon) was that our Government had recently summoned the envoys of all countries with missions here and had asked them what help they could extend to support the Prime Minister's Crash Food Programme. His own government, Ambassador Nishanov had revealed, was now preparing a list of items which might prove useful to the crash programme and very soon negotiations would be initiated on this matter.

The Nishanov press conference was altogether an interesting exercise. The next invitee, who had agreed to address the journalists was the Ambassador for Pakistan. The date fixed is Match 15. With the developments in Pakistan and its relations with India and Afghanistan the meeting was bound to be interesting.

JANAVEGAYA-JANAVEGAM. On March 10, the Vinhalase weekly *Janavegaya* will celebrate its second anniversary and the Tamil weekly *Janavegam* its first anniversary. These two weeklies associated with Kumar Rupasinghe have made a major mark in local journalism and also in Sri Lanka politics. Whether one agrees with the views and politics of these papers, there is no doubt that they represent distinctive trends in thinking in this country which have significance. The two papers stand solidly for the SLFP and the UF, but they take a stand on socialism without any

reservations. They can therefore be said to be papers which reflect socialist traditions and trends within the SLFP.

The *Janavegaya* was the first SLFP paper which had openly claimed to follow socialist logic. At one time, it was thought that it tilted to one bloc in the socialist camp more heavily than an SLFP paper should, but this trend has long since been corrected in its columns. Apart from the weekly paper, there is now a group called the *Janavegaya Group* and they have shown themselves to be good organisers and activists at meetings and rallies.

One of the most important aspects of the *Janavegaya* was that it had set out to bring about Sinhala-Tamil unity. Even those who may disagree with the concrete solutions the *Janavegaya* may have envisaged to bring about better relations between the two communities, there is no doubt that the fact that an SLFP paper had for the first time in recent history actively canvassed for a solution of the Tamil problem, is of great significance.

In pursuance of this objective, the Tamil weekly *Janavegam* had been launched a year ago. But though this Tamil paper had started with a great deal of promise, it has now slipped into the mid-thirties jargon of leftwing Tamil socialists and thereby restricted its usefulness. The *Janavegam* is today read only among the chosen, the initiated and the committed, but it has no impact on the others, many of whom read it to see what the *Janavegaya* wing of the Establishment has to say on any matter. *Janavegam* is stereo-typed and falls back in old-time formula to analyse and answer any question and this leaves Tamil readers cold. Tamil political journalism even of the left has changed so much in recent years and unless the *Janavegam* is able to grow of its infantilism not only in writing but also in thought and logic it will not be able to fulfil a role it easily can among the Tamil masses.

INTERNATIONAL-AFFAIRS

BY ARIEL

Europe, Middle East Pakistan, East Asia

EVENTS HAVE MOVED FAST in many parts of the world.

In Britain, whilst the Labour Party has endeavoured to edge more and more to Left in a bid to keep the Trade Unions happy and at the same time solve the serious economic problems facing the country with gradual doses of state control which could be passed off as "socialism", the Conservative Party has broken with conservative British tradition and has elected a woman, Mrs. Margaret Thatcher, as its leader, primarily because (apart from the charisma she exudes) she has consistently over the years expressed strong views about saving Britain from creeping "socialism". She has now declared that she will do everything to save the country from being pushed over the brink into socialism. In the meantime, Premier Harold Wilson has paid a state visit to the Soviet Union, being the first British high-level visit in seven years. When Labour had been in power, good relations had been established with the USSR, but when Heath had become Premier with Douglas Home in charge of Foreign Affairs there had been a sharp reversal in Anglo Soviet relations when Whitehall had thrown out over a hundred Russian diplomats as "spies". Wilson has now set about about mending the fences and if what he hopes does happen Britain will gain immensely in trade. Brezhnev made his appearance after seven weeks, after an illness, to confer with Wilson, and an agreement was signed under which Britain will extend £ 1 billion in credits at low rates of interest to finance British exports to Russia. According to *The Economist*, Mr. Wilson had encountered in the House of Commons "some understandable scepticism about the merits of this seemingly open-handed commitment of resources at a time when, as Mr. Thorpe pointed

out, Britain is having to borrow (at higher rates) from Iran. His main line of defence was simply that all western countries have found that they can expand trade with Russia only if they provide credits (of which Britain is offering somewhat less than what France did last December). He might have emphasised—but for his own good reason did not—how unlikely it is that anything like the full credit offer will be taken up." In Moscow, moreover, Wilson had also discussed some of the intricacies of the long-drawn out 35-nation Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE), but not much is known about this.

In Europe whilst the ECM is strengthening itself on a global scale as a powerful economic unit, and whilst understandable haggling goes among its more powerful members (with Britain getting ready for a referendum promised in Labour's election manifesto), NATO—the military alliance of the western and Atlantic nations—has suffered many reverses. Portugal has become a major question mark with the strong communist participation in the new Government which has come to power in the wake of last April's almost bloodless left-inspired military coup. Elections are due in Portugal on April 12 and unless the Western Powers are able to exert some pressure there is no doubt that the Communists (with strong ties with Moscow) will have an important position in the new Portuguese government. With such uncertainties hanging over Portugal, NATO's western flank in Europe, (and which had provided bases, especially on off-shore islands, to link the two sides of the Atlantic), has become unhinged. And, ever since the Turkish adventure in Cyprus after the changes in Greece, the South-eastern flank of NATO has been disturbed. When the USA seemed to accept the *fait accompli* engineered by Turkey, and the NATO countries had done nothing to bring back the *status quo* immediately, Greece had quit the NATO and has sought to downgrade and rundown NATO and American bases in that country. International public opinion which manifested itself in the UN had secured the return of Archbishop Makarios, but it was not enough

to ensure the departure of the Turkish invading force. And when the Turks found that the trend of world opinion was against the kind of solution Turkey and the Turkish Cypriots wanted Ankara took another unilateral decision and helped the Turkish Cypriots to formalise the area already under Turkish army occupation by declaring it as a kind of "special area"—not quite a separate state but an amorphous one until the kind of "federation" which Turkey wanted in Cyprus was accepted by Greece, the UN and the rest of the world. The USA was naturally upset because Turkey has been long a satellite of the USA and was dependent upon it for aid and grants. In an attempt to bring Turkey to see some kind of sense, the USA after several warnings took a decision to cut off all aid to Turkey. This toughened the headline attitude of the Turks, and the Ankara government has served notice on NATO that it would be out of NATO unless its rights in the area were recognised and unless the Turkish Cypriots were given a two-state federation in Cyprus. Turkey has also threatened to shut down NATO and American bases if a settlement was not reached. The European partners of NATO have sought to pour oil on the troubled waters of US-Turkish relations by offering such arms and aid to Turkey as she might require, but whether this offer will heal the breach is yet to be seen. This NATO offer to Turkey, however, has incensed Greece even more than the Turkish unilateral declaration about the formation of separate Turkish Cypriot state (this has been expected for sometime), and Greece may want NATO bases in its territory shut down much sooner than had been expected.

THIS WEAKENING of the eastern Mediterranean flank of NATO has also weakened Israel's military pre-eminence in the region. And the Arabs are in a much stronger position than they were ever because of the current power wielded by OPEC. The USA is, however, strong enough, in spite of diplomatic and economic reverses in the oil world, to exert pressure of various kinds on the West Asia region. On the one hand, Kissinger and other Americans had set in motion a chain reaction of strong

feelings with calculated talk about occupation of certain Arab oil-fields in the Persian Gulf region, and on the other, Kissinger has revived his step-by-step solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict. This time he seems to have secured a limited agreement from Moscow that he will have a free hand for his step-by-step diplomacy if the Geneva Conference was reconvened within a specified period to bring about a final settlement of the Arab-Israeli confrontation. It is not known how much time Kissinger has before him in order to pull off a Middle East Peace Agreement (to be presented to the Geneva Conference), but his task will not be easy. "He will face two major obstacles when he returns to the Middle East next month (early in March) to start the bargaining process as opposed to last week's exploratory exercise. The lesser of the two is the gap between Israeli and the Egyptian positions; the greater is the determination of other Arabs to prevent a sequence of events what might effectively and prematurely take Egypt out of the equation. The Israelis, in particular the prime minister, Mr. Rabin insist, that an agreement with Egypt is the first and essential step towards peace. But there is another way of seeing this, which is that, if Egypt is pacified, the other Arabs whose land Israel now occupies won't stand a chance—or, they would add, any chance at all—of regaining their land. The gap between Israeli and Egyptian positions over the next Sinai deal is not unbridgeable. Mr. Sadat insists that Israeli should withdraw to the East of the two Sinai mountain passes and from the Abu Rudeis oilfield on the Gulf of Suez. Mr. Rabin has said that this might be done but only if Egypt in return explicitly renounces its state of belligerency..." (The Economist, 22/2/75)

President Sadat, according to all reports, seems inclined to accept this—if Israel withdrawal from Sinai was guaranteed by the USA, and "Mr. Kissinger, for his part, has let it be known that he is studying the feasibility of an American guarantee." The other Arabs are naturally perturbed. According to Damascus reports the Syrians felt that President Sadat had moved a long way from

his earlier demand that settlement on the three fronts—Sinai, Golan Heights and the West Bank—should be negotiated simultaneously. Sadat now accepted the Kissingerian strategy of one-by-one and shared Rabin's view that Sinai must come first. Indications are that the Palestinians (PLO) and Syrians will resent this very much and already Egyptian-PLO tensions have mounted to the highest pitch ever. According to *The Economist*, Mr. Kissinger now seems convinced that "a separate Israeli-Egyptian deal could cause more problems than it solves. The purpose of his present exercise is to defuse the situation before the broader and more important problems are tackled in the Geneva Conference." PLO's Yasser Arafat has now started on a round trip of Arab capitals and will also visit Moscow—probably before Kissinger starts his next round. Pan-Arab sentiment seems to be against Sadat on this matter of a separate Sinai deal and Kissinger will most likely tread warily when he next journeys between the different Middle Eastern capitals.

AMERICA'S GLOBAL INTERESTS have now brought its presence actively into the Indian Ocean region. The US position was set out most clearly by the US Defence Secretary, Mr. James Schlesinger, when he declared that the US Fleet would continue periodic visits to the Indian Ocean and the Persian Gulf. In his annual strategy review he also defended the concept of building up "modest" base facilities on the British-owned Diego Garcia island in the Indian Ocean, saying that the expansion of facilities there had "become a source of some misunderstanding". Periodic visits to the Indian Ocean and the Gulf would be dictated, he said, by diplomatic interests.

Mr. Schlesinger asserted, according to an AP report, that if the US was to maintain a position of strength in Europe, West Asia and Asia, there was no alternative to keeping a fleet of roughly 13 carrier task forces. Borrowing from one of Sir Winston Churchill's most famous wartime phrases he described the Soviet Navy as a force that is to some degree a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma.

"While the problem is not yet of alarming proportions, a Soviet force is in fact in the Indian Ocean

and has been there since 1968" he said. With the reopening of the Suez Canal, maintenance of a larger Soviet force will become feasible. Under the circumstances, it seems only prudent to observe the situation in the Indian Ocean and to demonstrate from time to time that the US can make its presence felt there should our interest, and those of our allies, be jeopardised.

With respect to the oil rich Gulf region, he said: "Not only the US but the Western Europe and Japan as well, have rather considerable interest in the area of the Persian Gulf and access to it. Surely no one needs reminding that the area of the Persian Gulf with its large oil reserves, has become a matter of the keenest possible interest to a number of powers, including the USSR. And surely we should not simply ignore the Soviet presence in the Indian Ocean and Soviet efforts to obtain base rights of various kinds in the Gulf itself and along the horn of Africa.

Both North East and South East Asia would continue to be areas of concern for the US from the standpoint of collective security Mr. Schlesinger said. "The importance of Japan, and the special nature of our mutual defence relationship, make it important to maintain forces sufficient to give visible evidence of the seriousness of our commitment to the stability of the region and to provide a credible ability to respond quickly and effectively to unforeseen events" he said.

The Defence Secretary said that economic troubles caused by the price of oil must not upset relations between the US and its European allies or jeopardise their military power. He suggested that America could ease the Jackson-Nunn Amendment—a law that insists that US troops in Europe are kept at a level where their cost is offset by the allies. He did not, however, actually urge its repeal.

Mr. Schlesinger offered the Russians a swap—US restraint in developing advanced missiles in return for Soviet restraint in deploying a powerful new family of missiles. "They currently have the initiative and it is up to them to decide how much additional effort the two sides should put into these programmes," he said. At the

same time, Mr. Schlesinger warned the Russians that the US would not allow them to win a missile race if the Soviets chose that course.

About the Chinese strategic forces programme, the Defence Secretary said it "appears to be losing some of its momentum" as a result of "some technical difficulties", China would not mount a long-range missile threat to the US for about ten years.

Such being the thinking of the Ford Administration, it was only logical to expect it to change its policy about arms sales in the Indian sub-continent. From the time of the 1965 Indo-Pakistan war, the US had an arms sales ban in respect of both countries. Ten years have gone by and in that time India has become the dominant military power in the region. India has developed close ties with the Soviet Union which has helped India to set up a reasonably sophisticated indigenous arms industry. India has also exploded an atomic bomb last year. Pakistan, which has always been an ally of the USA and Western Powers, had also been considerably weakened by the loss of its eastern wing which is now Bangladesh. At the moment, Pakistan is threatened by secessionist demands by the Paktoons and the Baluchis. It was at a time like this that the USA decided to lift the ban

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on the sale of arms to Pakistan and India on a cash and case-by-case basis. In effect, it will help Pakistan considerably to acquire sophisticated arms because Saudi Arabia is said to have pledged \$ 100 million for the purchase of arms from the USA for Pakistan. The State Department had declared that the modification in policy brings the US in line with other major Western arms suppliers, such as Britain and France. The statement declared that "we have no interest in upsetting the strategic balance in the sub-continent or resuming our pre-1965 role as a major arms supplier to the region." The statement added "we do not think it will stimulate an arms race." The Department declared that very good relations are enjoyed with both India and Pakistan at the present time.

The Department had also released figures which claimed that India between 1964 and 1973 had received \$ 1273 millions in arms aid from the Soviet Union while Pakistan received only \$ 24 millions from Moscow. During this same period the US supplied Pakistan with \$ 160 millions in arms and India \$ 88 millions. China provided Pakistan with \$ 312 million. Over the 10-year period, India received \$ 1,697 millions in arms deliveries while Pakistan obtained \$ 851 millions, it claimed.

The statement, which ended a period of active consideration by the President, Mr. Gerald Ford, and the Secretary of State, Dr. Henry Kissinger, was read by spokesman, Mr. Robert Anderson. "I should emphasise that this is a cash only policy", he said "We are not planning to provide any equipment on a great military assistance basis or on credit." He said that in considering individual export requests a number of factors would be taken into account including "the high importance the United States attaches to continued progress toward normalisation of relations between India and Pakistan and the effect any particular sale has on regional peace and stability." Other factors will include the relationship between US sales and those of other external arms suppliers and also the relationship to legitimate defence requirements and the level of armaments in the South Asia region.

This has expectedly caused an adverse reaction in India. The staid and moderate Madras Hindu in an editorial on February 26 set out the Indian position. Much stronger sentiments have been expressed in other quarters. "The embargo on the sale or supply of arms to Pakistan and India was imposed by the United States in September 1965 in an effort to damp down the war in the subcontinent. The ban was briefly lifted in 1971 to enable Pakistan to obtain fighter planes and personnel carriers, but this was called a "one-time exception". And it has now been lifted altogether at the request of the Pakistani Premier during his recent visit to President Ford. While it was not to be supposed that the embargo would last forever the State Department's present decision, despite the assurances that hereafter arms will be available (to both parties) on dollar payment only, is undoubtedly most ill-timed. It comes at a time when relations between India and Pakistan have been improving in the wake of the Simla Agreement and, worse still, when India and the US have just begun to bury all the misunderstandings of the past. And it has cast a shadow on the arrival of the new Ambassador, Mr. Saxbe, who has frankly stated that he opposed this phase of policy.

"The Government of India has made it clear to the US that its decision to supply arms does not square with the assurances, which Dr. Kissinger gave New Delhi during his visit here last year, that the existing balance would not be upset. But even at that time the US Secretary of State had changed his position somewhat and spoke of his country's obligations towards its allies, though pointing out that there was no intention to provoke an arms race in the sub-continent, which led one to the conclusion that the embargo on supplies would be lifted but the nature of the supplies would be well within certain limits. Meanwhile, Mr. Bhutto has been saying that he is in the market for defensive weapons only. The point is that all these assurances do not carry much conviction in India in view of bitter past experience. An arms race is bound to be set in train if the US sells to Pakistan highly sophisticated weapons of the type it has recently supplied to Iran and Saudi Arabia. And a new situation, very favourable

to Pakistan, has developed recently, namely that its oil-rich neighbours are in a better position than ever before to help it with all the hard cash necessary for purchases of the latest type of arms. A very watchful eye has to be kept on the development in the next few months."

It is significant that the US announcement was made when the Soviet Defence Minister Grechko was in India. If the announcement was made to deter closer Indo-Soviet ties, it possibly has had the opposite effect. Indo-Pak tensions have now begun to rise again because Mr. Bhutto has objected most vehemently to the settlement reached in Kashmir between Mrs. Indira Gandhi and Sheikh Abdulla. Whilst the possibilities of normalisation on the subcontinent are now becoming more distant, China has opened a new chapter in ping pong diplomacy in India. China swept the World Championship in the Meet held recently in Calcutta and visiting dignitaries dropped abundant hints that China was willing to open a new dialogue with India. India, however, does not seem anxious to take any initiative in the matter.

IN EAST ASIA, Vietnam and Cambodia have given the Ford Administration a serious headache. The Lon Nol government, encircled in the capital, is on the verge of total collapse. The Saigon government, though it had a little more elbow room for manoeuvres, was in no better position. North Vietnamese forces and the Viet Cong have captured important positions and they seem to be in a position to take over South Vietnam completely. The Catholics too have become disillusioned with Thieu and a strong Catholic movement against the Thieu government has grown up. The only thing which seems to hold the hands of Hanoi and Vietcong is that they do not want to be accused of violating the Paris Agreement completely.

It is two years now since the Agreement was signed, and all parties to the Agreement have accused the "other side" of violating the Agreement. It was no doubt because the US felt that Hanoi was more guilty than Saigon of violating the agreement that the Ford Administration had asked the US Congress for \$ 622 million in aid (\$ 400 m for South Vietnam

and \$ 222 m for Cambodia) for the Indo-China war. But the Democratic majority in Congress has been reluctant to vote this amount. It had sent out a fact-finding mission to Cambodia and Saigon, in spite of the urgent appeals for immediate approval of such aid by the President. The Congress has also gone so far as to suspend temporarily all US aid programmes —no doubt to check the Administration. In the meantime, the fact-finding mission has recommended to the President to instruct Secretary of State Kissinger to initiate diplomatic talks with Hanoi to bring about a solution.

Washington still seems to have illusions about what US aid can do in Indo-China. Can the US hope to continue to call the tune in this region as it has done in the past? But even though it has done so it is not likely to have the old impact any more.

A despatch from Washington by James Laurie in the *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 21/1/75, concluded thus: "In both Vietnam and Cambodia, the Ford Administration, like its predecessors clings to the belief that the rights of the Vietnamese and Cambodians can best be preserved with continued support from Washington. Further, the Administration seems convinced that just a little more aid will fortify Saigon and Phnom Penh enough to make negotiation and peace a real possibility. The opposing American view advocates serious new American diplomatic initiatives to bring peace. It is convinced that reduced aid will lower the level of violence: 'coalitions' must replace Thieu and Lon Nol. There is only one attitude that seems common to both views —it prevailed in the tenor of speeches at a January 27 Washington peace rally and at the Pentagon and the State Department: That the United States can still alter the destiny of millions of Asians in Indo-China. Either by retracting or providing aid, by supporting or denouncing governments, the US can control events in Vietnam and Cambodia. It is a familiar theme..."

But current events have created many new problems in Indo-China. In the same issue of the *Far Eastern Economic Review* 21/2/75, the following comments indicate that an

over-simplistic approach can lead to many pitfalls. Just as tensions are inevitable in any region or continent, the world must be prepared to see new problems arise in East Asia. This is what the FEER stated.

"North Vietnam is beginning to feel increasingly uncomfortable about relations with its giant Chinese neighbour. The root of the problem is Peking's demands that all the parties—including Hanoi—stick to the letter of the Paris Peace Accords and the various secret agreements made by the various Indochinese communist parties. The Chinese Government has remained faithful to its secret pledge to Prince Sihanouk not to permit Cambodia to become a North Vietnamese satellite, a promise which Hanoi's Premier Pham Van Dong also made at the height of the Anti-American resistance. In addition, Hanoi is piqued because the communist administrations in both Laos and South Vietnam are now receiving the non-refundable aid donations which propped up Hanoi's economy during the hostilities. Hanoi believes that the Soviet Union will prove a generous ally. However, the Kremlin is unhappy about the extent to which the North Vietnamese authorities have been forced by similar, economic, cultural, and social conditions to imitate Chinese experience, particularly in the field of agricultural reforms.

"A three-way split in Asia's communist world is brewing up over off shore oil deposits. North Korea and North Vietnam have failed to respond to Chinese invitations to de-limit national exploitation Zones on the continental shelf. The Chinese publicity over its drive to strengthen its position physically in the Parcel Islands (where Chinese and South Vietnamese troops clashed last year) is intended as a direct warning to Hanoi. However, the dispute potential in the Yellow Sea separating the Shantung and Korean peninsulas is mounting as China's capacity to undertake significant offshore prospecting for known petroleum resources in the area steadily improves. Nevertheless, the Chinese Government has no wish to spark an open confrontation with North Korea since such a dispute would strengthen South Korea's position in the current propagandist battle over re-unification."

Similar sentiments were expressed in the pro-western ultra-nationalist Indian daily *Motherland*, 16/2/75, in a series of articles on China's relations with its neighbours. It was alleged that in the second half of 1974 Chinese forces had intruded into the territory of North Vietnam especially in the Langshon Province. This had perturbed the Hanoi authorities and on the action taken by them, the Chinese had withdrawn inside their own border. These incidents are said to have touched a sensitive spot in the Vietnamese who seem to be sore about the Chinese takeover of the Parcel Islands which had been earlier regarded as part of South Vietnam. Hanoi had no doubt entertained hopes that with the re-unification of the North and South Vietnam, these Islands (with the oil-rich and mineral-rich continental shelf) would become part of the united Vietnam. The *Motherland* has also hinted that the Chinese pressure on North Vietnam was probably intended to warn Hanoi not to violate the Paris Agreement, but China has always claimed that it stood four square by North Vietnam and the Vietcong. There is no doubt that China, together with the Soviet Union, have rendered the greatest aid to the liberation forces in Vietnam. But in the modern world of clashing geopolitical national interests it is difficult to envisage the twists and turns of contemporary history. Will China permit Hanoi and the Vietcong to take over Saigon and South Vietnam? Or will China want North Vietnam to play the game according to the Paris Agreement (the way Kissinger wants) although the Paris Agreement has been violated in so many ways that it cannot be regarded with any degree of sanctity?

IN THE FAR EAST, the cold war between China and the Soviet Union has manifested itself in the negotiations between China and Japan for a peace treaty and also the peace treaty as between Japan and the USSR. It would appear that China is likely to conclude favourable a Peace Treaty with Japan in the near future, and thus beat the Soviet Union to it.

A despatch from Tokyo in February by K. V. Narain, the correspondent of the *Hindu*, sets out the current position:

"Japan and China are virtually certain to conclude their treaty of peace and amity, which they are now negotiating, before April 25 next. Prime Minister Takeo Miki has asked the Foreign Minister, Mr. Kiieji Miyazawa to submit the treaty to the current session of the Diet (Parliament) which will end on May 25. For this, the Government will have to try to have the peace treaty approved by the lower House by April 25 at the latest. In that event it will be automatically approved by the upper House also, even in case of no action or resort to dilatory tactics by that chamber.

"Mr. Miki also seems to be determined to have the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and the Continental Shelf Treaty with South Korea passed by the current Diet before it adjourns. Earlier, there had been some hesitation on the part of the Foreign Office to rush the NPT through, since negotiations with the International Atomic Energy Agency on safeguards were still inconclusive, but this bottleneck has since been removed.

"Preliminary negotiations on the Sino-Japanese peace treaty were resumed in Tokyo on February 14. The only major hurdle in the negotiations was whether to include any reference to both sides, opposition to hegemony in the Asia-Pacific area by third countries—an unambiguous Chinese broadside against the Soviet Union. Japan is opposed to its being included in the text of the treaty. Mr. Miki's optimism on the talks indicates that China has given enough evidence that it would not insist on its inclusion and thus delay the signing of the treaty.

"There is also other evidence to indicate that China is very anx-

ious to have the peace treaty speedily concluded and thus open the way for securing Japanese economic co-operation in areas which are of importance to it. One is joint exploration and development of underwater oil deposits in the South China Sea. Both sides are conveniently skirting the issue of mutual claims to ownership of the uninhabited Senkaku islands in the South China Sea whose offshore waters have been judged to be potentially rich in oil deposits."

A Peace Treaty with Japan will no doubt be of immense advantage to China because it will be able to strengthen its industrial and technological base with Japanese know-how. Among other things China will also be able to extend and increase its production of synthetic rubber and thus place itself in a favourable bargaining position vis a vis natural rubber producers like Malaysia, Indonesia, Sri Lanka and Thailand. A Chinese Japanese Peace Treaty will bring about a major change in power alignments not only in East Asia but throughout the whole of Asia, giving a new dimension to China in importance and growth.

Though the Soviet Union had started discussions about peace treaty with Japan much earlier than China, negotiations had foundered because of a territorial question. Japan maintains that Kunashiri and Etorofu, located in the Southern tip of Kuriles, and Habomai and Shikotan, of the eastern end of Hokkaido, which have been under Soviet occupation since the end of World War II, are Japanese territory. Reversion of the islands to Japan was a basic pre-condition, so far as Japan was concerned, for concluding a Treaty. The Soviet Union however has taken up the

position that the territorial question had long ago been settled and these Islands were now part of the USSR. The Soviet Union, to by-pass the territorial question, had suggested that a treaty of friendship should be concluded between the two countries before a Peace Treaty leaving the territorial issues untouched. But Japan has not been willing to accept this suggestion.

The political forces inside Japan are complex and cut through several levels of party loyalties and affiliations. The pro-Taiwan lobby is very powerful and it does not want a quick treaty with Peking, but China has not insisted on any reference to the Taiwan issue in the Peace Treaty.

Japan is undoubtedly in a fix, in a dilemma. If it concludes a treaty with China first, especially if it contains an anti-soviet hegemony clause, it will sour its relations with the USSR and bring difficulties in the way of the proposed massive economic-co-operation in Siberia. Nor can Japan afford to sign a Peace Treaty or even a Treaty of Friendship without some settlement about the territorial question without unleashing forces inside Japan which can threaten the very existence of the Government. On the other hand, a Peace Treaty with China alone which will disturb Japan's relations with the Soviet Union, and this will be seized upon by many Japanese, who think that it is in Japan's interests to maintain a balance between China and Soviet Union in the Far East and elsewhere, to attack the miki government.

CHRONICLE

FEBRUARY 20—26

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

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 20 The Education Minister Dr. Badi-ud-din Mahmud gave an assurance yesterday that if any student had been affected by the district quota system of admissions to the University, he would review the case in a fair and just manner: the Minister further said that he fully supported the re-examination

of the scheme by the National Planning Council Sectoral Committee on Social Overheads, Mass Media and Transport and he would make his own recommendations to the Sectoral Committee at the proper time—CDN. The Government has decided to launch an extensive sugar cane and jaggery production crash program in Uva to meet the minimum calorie requirement of the population and combat the sugar crisis—CDN. Education Minister, Dr. Badi-ud-din Mahmud at a top level conference held yesterday ordered that the entire security staff at the Vidyalankara Campus of the University of Sri Lanka, be dismissed: this order follows a recent incident where a number of graduate teacher trainees were indecently ragged—CDM. The Director of Economic Research of the Central Bank has said that efforts to reach early self-sufficiency in rice and sugar

alone would help the country both to save as much Rs. 1,500 million on its import bill and also to effectively step up the gross National Product—CDM. Mr. Yassar Arafat, Leader of the Palestinian Liberation Organisation, in a letter to the Afro-Asian Solidarity Association of Sri Lanka addressed to its General Secretary, Mr. A. Azeez, has thanked the Prime Minister for backing the rights of the Palestinian—CDM & CDN. The Ceylon Petroleum Corporation is now making arrangements to obtain three more rigs for an accelerated drilling program to begin in the second half of this year—CDN.

Israel Defence Minister Shimon Peres said that Libya had transferred to Egypt planes and other weapons obtained from the Soviet Union: he said that the weapons included tanks and ground-to-air missiles. The Asian Development Bank is raising the interest rate on loans from ordinary capital resources from 8.25% to 8.75%.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 21 Sri Lanka will import an additional quantum of 100,000 tons of wheat flour shortly to replenish the stocks: the Additional Secretary to the Ministry of Foreign and Internal Trade flew to Australia on Monday to negotiate the purchase—CDM. The Vidyalankara Campis of the University of Sri Lanka will be closed in a day or two: the Campus is expected to be kept closed until such times the names of all students responsible for the ragging of Maths teachers were ascertained—CDM. Milk with over 25 per cent water, coffee powder without coffee, chillie powder with poonac and even sand, vinegar with formic acid and butter without milk fat are among adulterated food items which were discovered on sale in Colombo last year: according to the enforcement units of the Food and Drugs Act, from the provinces too there have been mounting complaints of adulterated food items exposed for sale: as many as 196 out 361 food samples analysed by the City Analyst last year were found to be adulterated—CDN. Plantation workers will not be denied a wage increase which employees of other sectors will be entitled to, Minister of Plantation Industries, Dr. Colvin R. de Silva told the National State Assembly yesterday—CDN. The Chairman of the Cement Corporation has said that there is no shortage of cement in Sri Lanka now except for the Galle region, the rest of the country is well supplied—CDN. The Education Minister yesterday appointed a National Advisory Committee on student affairs to plan and implement projects and programs that would demonstrate the benefits of the current educational reforms—CDN.

Pakistan and the United Arab Emirates have agreed in principle to spend dollar 30 million to set up a farm in Pakistan to supply the UAE and neighbouring countries with meat and other produce. Doctors tending ailing Greek shipping magnate Aristotle Onassis said yesterday that an operation for the removal of his gall bladder ten days ago could now be considered successful. The International Development Association (IDA) has granted a 33 million dollar interest-free loan to Bangladesh to help build a Nitrogen fertiliser plant.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 22: The Government's decision to grant an additional allowance of 10 per cent only to manual workers in the private sector has led to considerable resentment in pro-Government trade union circles: according to the Government's decision this ten per cent increase to manual workers will be subject to a maximum of Rs. 25 per month as an additional allowance—CDM. Sri Lanka's historic

narrow gauge "Kelani Valley" rail line is to be scrapped: in recent years the C.G.R. has suffered an annual loss of Rs. 10 million to keep this service going: now the Government has ordered that it should be scrapped immediately—CDN. The Government with the assistance of the United Nations and the U.S.S.R. is exploring the possibilities of further industrial processing of ilmenite concentrates in Sri Lanka to yield products with added value—CDN. The President of Sri Lanka, Mr. William Gopallawa, and Mrs. Gopallawa who is in New Delhi enroute to Khatmandu for the Coronation of the Crown Prince of Nepal were met by the Indian President and Mrs. Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed on arrival at the air port: the Indian Premier and the Foreign Minister were expected to pay a courtesy call on Mr. and Mrs. Gopallawa—CDN. The Government Medical Officers Association has made a scathing attack on the attempts made by the newly set up Post Graduate Medical Institute of Sri Lanka to replace overnight the present system of granting medical officers no-pay leave for post graduate training abroad with training and diplomas of the Institute—CDM. An agreement was signed yesterday between Sri Lanka and the Federal Republic of Germany providing Sri Lanka with D.M. 12 million for the expansion of Embilipitiya Paper Mill project—CDM.

Pakistan's Interior Minister has reiterated Pakistan's position on Kashmir saying that it would not accept any deal between Sheik Mohammad Abdullah and Indian leaders. Richard Nixon's three closest aides were yesterday sentenced to at least 30 months in prison each for their role in the Watergate cover-up. Heir to the British Throne, Prince Charles, arrived in India enroute to Nepal for the Crown Prince's Coronation.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 23: Instructions from the UNP hierarchy have gone out to all party branches in the electorates to get women to spearhead the campaign for a general election at the end of the five year period of the present United Front Government—ST. Mr. Anura Bandaranaike, Chief Organiser of the SLFP and Youth Leagues and the son of the Prime Minister, has been appointed Adviser (Youth Participation) to the Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs, with immediate effect: he has refused to accept any remuneration for his services—CO & ST. The Minister of Foreign and Internal Trade, Mr. T. B. Illangaratne, is confident that queues in co-operative retail shops can be done away with by adopting the novel method now prevalent in such retail shops of the Colombo North Co-operatives where coupons are cut, bills written, and cash collected in one clerical operation and there are two issuing points where rice only is issued at one place and all other sundries at the other point—CO. Within two hours of opening the new branch of the National Savings Bank at Moratuwa—the 20th NSB branch, a record figure of Rs. 2,050,000 was collected as deposits from 2,800 accounts—CO. According to informed Government sources the take-over of the Colombo Gas and Water Company by the Government is on the cards—CO. Vijaya Tiles, a leading tile manufacturing organisation, has been vested in the Government owned Ceylon Ceramics Corporation under a competent authority named by the Minister of Finance—ST.

Vice President of the Bank of Tokyo predicted that Middle East countries oil revenues might disappear

by 1980 if they continue to spend oil dollars at their current pace. The Soviet Union indicated that it had shot a Russian for treason and spying for a foreign intelligence organisation. Uganda has agreed to pay compensation to 20 Indians expelled from Kampala two years ago: President Idi Amin has conveyed this to the Indian High Commissioner.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 24: The Government has decided that all legal representation of corporations and public bodies and institutions will in future be undertaken by the Attorney-General: this follows a recommendation of the Minister of Justice and Minister of Public Administration, Home Affairs and Local Government, Mr. Felix Dias Bandaranaike—*CDN*. The marine seismic survey so far carried out by the Russian oil exploration team has revealed the presence of four promising oil-bearing structures under the sea-bed in the Palk Bay area: the survey which was started in November last year has so far covered the Palk Bay area starting just above the Mannar Peninsula area going northwards covering about 800 kilometres—*CDM*. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has now decided to revert to the former system of issuing cartridges to licensed gun holders through private traders—*CDM*. University marshalls who have been the guardians of the law inside the campuses since the inception of the University will soon be replaced by a University Security Service: after the alleged rumpus at the Vidyalankara University Campus the Minister of Education has ordered for the new system of security—*CDM*. A special session of the UNP to discuss and approve the decision of Mr. J. R. Jayewardene, Leader of the Opposition, and the UNP to resign his seat in the NSA will be held at the Sri Kotha on March 1—*CDN*. Bakeries which send bread beyond areas allocated to them will not be issued their quota of flour, the Ministry of Foreign and Internal Trade announced yesterday—*CDN*.

Unless there are fundamental changes in Government development strategies a grim "death for millions of people" is forecast in a major report released by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP). The Chinese Ambassador to East Germany walked out of a gala ceremony marking the 57th anniversary of the Soviet Army held in East Berlin when the GDR's Deputy Defence Minister made an indirect reference to Chinese divergence from Soviet Communism. Floods in Egypt killed 15 people and left 10,000 homeless in more than 20 Nile villages between Cairo.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 25: On the recommendations of the Ministry of Defence and External Affairs, the Government has decided to set up a Security Board: the primary work of the Security Board will be to undertake the security work of the public bodies, mainly state corporations—*CDN*. The Minister of Industries and Scientific Affairs, Mr. T. B. Subasinghe, has disclosed to the press that the Government's decision to take over the Colombo Gas Co. Ltd., was because the Company started to sell its shares which are mainly British owned—*CDM*. A Bill to provide for a new irrigation law, for the regulation of and construction and maintenance of water supplies under irrigation schemes, will be tabled shortly in the National State Assembly by Mr. Maithripala Senanayake, Minister of Irrigation and Power: one of the salient features of the Bill is the harnessing of the underground water resources and

control of their tapping—*CDM*. After the ragging of 65 young teachers who attended a new mathematics diploma course at Vidyalankara Campus of the University of Sri Lanka the authorities have cancelled the course because the victims have failed to identify their tormentors—*CDN*. Holland will step up its Aid to Sri Lanka this year, on the basis of mutual collaboration in a number of educational, cultural and travel promotion projects—*CDN*. Many of the proposals contained in the White Paper on Ayurveda will be implemented during the course of this year: The Ministry of Health will shortly have discussions with the Ministry of Education regard to the upgrading of the Ayurveda College of Medicine to University status—*CDN*.

United Nations Security Council members were reported to be making little headway in efforts to find a formula for the resumption of negotiations between the leaders of the Greek and Turkish communities in Cyprus. U.S. State Department's top Middle East expert said the United States was not considering a defence treaty to guarantee Israel its survival.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 26: Sri Lanka has so far expended a sum of little over 136 million US dollars on the imports of rice to be given on the ration during this year: last year the country had to spend as much as £ 60 million for imports of rice—*CDM*. The basis of admissions to the various campuses of the University of Sri Lanka will in future be made on the availability of courses and residential proximity of the student—*CDM*. Owners of rubber-plantations who do not develop their estates and who do not comply with instructions to do so will have their lands taken over by the Government: this would apply to both locally and foreign owned estates: this deterrent is being introduced by the Government to ensure that one of the country's chief foreign exchange earners does not suffer as a result of neglect and that Government subsidies are profitably used—*CDN*. The Government Medical Officers Association has threatened trade union action unless the Government assures the association that 'the setting up of the proposed post-graduate medical institute will not interfere with the present scheme of post-graduate leave abroad'—*CDN & CDM*. The Keuneman Committee on mass media meets on March 4 to initiate an inquiry into the workings of the SLBC and the Government Film Unit: the investigation of the working of the state radio will be taken up first and SLBC officials will be summoned as an initial step—*CDN*. Sri Lanka has defied the international trend in the tourist industry by continuing to push both tourist figures and earnings despite the oil crisis, world commodity price hike and their adverse impact on international tourism—*CDN*.

The United States said that it would provide 850 million to 900 million dollars worth of food in aid this year to developing countries hardest hit by the world economic crisis. King Birendra of Nepal was crowned in Katmandu with pomp, pageantry and mystic rites dating back many centuries. Zambian Foreign Minister has told that the world press should portray Ugandan President Idi Amin as the 'Hitler of Africa'.

Inania of this, that and the other

UP AND DOWN

BY INNA

QUEUE comes from the French word "queue" (ko) meaning tail.

Ever since the 2nd World War we have been used to queues: for meat, for fish, for bus-tickets, train-tickets, and for what-have-you. One sees irate people in queues, eager people outside queues, frantic people missing this bus and (o horror!) the next bus and yet having an adamant belief that once you are in the queue everything will be all right.

I watched this once in a hill-country bus-stand.

The current rumour was that from the town of B, up to the town of "also B", the last bus was at 9.45 p.m. "Let it come," said some, "and we'll be all gone from here, for it is only seven-thirty p.m. and we can make it." The name of the bus, in quiet feminine scrawl, was 'Lalith' and the driver had fortunately, or not, known someone who had known someone else who had (of course!) known someone else of the two girls who just walked in outside the queue. Big, buxom girls who were friends of Virago and relatives of Amazon, if you get what I'm saying. There was a whimper in the queue, then a snicker of reference to "us who have been long-standing patrons of this queue." Then there came in two long-robed ministers who, of course, must get a seat, and this there were two, and so, two seats of the hard-earned blood, tears, sweat and toil of the queue-holders (sometimes holding a queue makes you feel involved in land-tenure, for it takes a long time for a bus to come this hilly up-and-down way) were sacrificed for them.

Why are religious ministers always preaching justice and equality, and when it comes to doing something practical to show that all of us must get to the kingdom, then they use the long-robe for a passport to glory. This baffles the rank and file of people. Well, any way, these two damsels in distress got in, socialism or no-socialism, and the others had to stay behind and what a staying behind that was.

Then came the bus. A solid wall of humanity produced in a few minutes, got into that bus; it was creaking and straining at the seams. All inside the queue got into the bus, and when the bus was loaded to capacity and spilling over, full measure, pressed down into every body's bosom, it chugged away, leaving the same amount of rueful, queue-ful humanity behind. Somebody said we have the best education in the East, the best religious amity, the best food programme, and now, it's about time to say, the best transport system the world has ever seen.

Then came something curious. Large as life, in front of me was a board with a half-hidden light-and-shade fellow and the words: **Smoking is prohibited.**

Good enough.

Next, to it was the Tamil and the Sinhala: "Dumbeemer thahanam" or some such thing.

And what do you think, an official of the CTB chattily took out a cigarette lit one for himself (after a hard day's "night", nerves, if you please!) then lit one for his friend the driver, and in that bewildering smoke-screen went up past this estate and that, on the snaky road flanked by tea and no tobacco.

Come with me the next time, CTB Bd/Hq, and you'll see.

SHAMBA

NEARING THE END

by ANATORY BUKOBA

January 13,

Passed midnight, it was, when I arrived here this morning. Lucky was alone, here and he had brushed off any temptation he may have had, and an invitation, to go and sleep with the family in the other house; Major, used to do that and take the tools with him, and when I arrived at night, he would come back here with his mat at once to keep me company. When I got back, Lucky, got up and made tea. Everything was in order. He had done no work, to speak of while I was away, but I was happy that I found him here at all. He had had no food at all,

all day, and he was out of lamp oil and matches. He did not even have jaggery for a cup of tea. There is an all-night tea boutique around here; I was sent off for jaggery. I also brought back the lamp oil and matches. Tonight it was the same; I had occasion to go off, after lunch, to our nearest town, and this time I returned just before midnight. On both occasions I found Lucky armed; that pleases me, too, for no man is going to sleep armed unless he wants to, and can, sleep lightly. A man who sleeps heavily, and most people do in my experience, is quite useless. That Lucky could go hungry and he happy, and not desert his post, was a feather in his cap. I do not think any one of the lads, who were here before, would have done it except the first man of all, who was here a fortnight; we lived on bread and plantain as we had no time to cook until near the very end of his stay. This time the family helped Lucky out with food, except on that last day when they themselves had no food as it was a holiday.

My feet are freezing as I write this, and I have covered them up. It was cold getting off the bus, and jolly cold walking down here. An interesting day I had. I had word that that married man is not coming after all, but he may change his mind. Then, a lad, prior to this said he would come tomorrow. Then after this, three lads from another house all said they would come tomorrow, if they can get parental permission. These last three will not come empty-handed. All this started by my going to see Lucky's friends in town. The particular lad was away, his father said he would bring him along. Before I had even left our village, and thanks to my missing a bus, a man found me and said he had not eaten for days. I gave him something quite inadequate and I told him to meet me here tomorrow. My mind had started to stall, and I have just lain back and slept a little to clear my mind and steady my hand. Heaped I what was left undone at the far end of our live jungle. I had no time to do any more because of the journey I had planned, and it was with much reluctance that I went. A thing happened today that had never happened before, and that was that a tourist car with tourists

stopped to pick me up. It is time I went to bed.

January 14,

There is always the oppression of those who fail by those who succeed. These are words of St. Augustine, born A.D. 354 in Africa, and as translated by a panel of men. This should give enough thought to all our politicians, philosophers and wise men, for years. My excuse for quoting them at the beginning of the day, for it is not yet 9 a.m., is that it is *Thai Pongal*, a holiday for all Hindus and a holiday in Ceylon. Yesterday I met a woman, and a very charming one, who thought that a little bit of communism is necessary. She meant, by this, a little coercion, failing, or falling, or fallen, human nature being what it is, just that. I could not disagree with her more, for this means oppression, for ultimately the state represents those who have been successful. When other people talk of communism, they do not mean coercion, but a sort of blissful society which should really go by the name of Christendom. It is a confusion of terms. Unless the spirit moves me, I shall leave the rest until this evening. Both knives and the *Katha* were sharpened by the blacksmith today. The big knife and the *katha* had to be done today as *Major* had knocked chunks out of the blade. I wonder how he did it. I learned my lesson long ago, and I now use the big knife in the air, I used to chop everything up on the ground. The small knife has been quite blunt for a long while.

Strange it is being here this evening; almost eerie. I had forgotten what it is to be in the country at this time of the day. The last time I was here was the day *Major* left. So that was an unusual evening anyway. Last night I was in town; so I had seen the *Shamba* by daylight and not in the evening. In a little while, night will have closed in, and *Lucky* and I will be in this house, and the housewife in the other. If it is strange for me, it must have been even worse for *Lucky*. He was here alone for a few nights. In spite of the proximity of the two houses, we have little in common when it is dark. I have almost forgotten what it was like when there was only one house here. Dinner is ready, and

Lucky has gone out, so I write this while there is still daylight to do so. I can see the front of the other house from here and now and again the housewife appears in the doorway. It is a silent house just now over there. I wonder if the three-year old is asleep. My colleague is not back from his work. There is a black ball being driven across the *Shamba*. There comes *Lucky*. His friends have not come today. Being a public holiday, they could not have come any way. Perhaps the parental permission was not forthcoming, or they may have changed their minds. The starving family man did not turn up; nor has that solitary lad I felt certain might. Perhaps the very fact that he was alone precluded him.

January 15,

Lucky has gone off to the *kadday*, and so I write this although it is only five o'clock. We have just had four people in, all young men, and a fifth, a regular visitor came while they were here. The four said they would come again on Saturday and Sunday, but I shall not be here; it will be company for *Lucky*.

Last night, after a session at *Swahili*, I felt too tired to do any more and went straight off to sleep. Warmer it was. I am still on the bare earth, with *cadjans*, old ones for my bed, and some material that was given me for a shirt, I use as a sheet. I happened to be, at what amounts to our town, where the post office is, when the government apothecary was there, too, and we met, and so it was an occasion for him giving me some medicines after presenting him with the customary twenty-five cents stamp. I was given several medicines, and it seems in time, because I am certainly no better although still on my feet. In fact, I was working outside when these lads came. Two of them thought I had a slight temperature. Without those medicines I might have been in a bad way. It was lucky my meeting the apothecary; it is his regular day.

The place looks different after today's work. Real thorn, unlike where I was working when *Major* left. That was more staid; a problem certainly, but nothing like the cluster of thorn we have in this new place. *Lucky* attacked it well. The place lies between our house and

the furthest corner of the *Shamba* along the approach road, the old tarred road in these parts. It is where our paddy fields will be if we get that far with our work. While *Lucy* cleared, I worked with big knife and mammy, and I tried to get some order where *Lucky* has worked two days. From the old house now, there is a clear view across rolling country.

A new *katha* do we have. A light one. It was the tool *Lucky* is using today. The blacksmith drew it for me yesterday on sand. He said it would be twenty rupees and I collected it at noon. As I have not used it yet, there is not much I can say about it. *Lucky* says the new *katha* is a great improvement on the old one for the work he was doing this evening. My colleague has found regular work, but he was without money this evening. He said the lack of lamp oil worried him most. I helped to the extent of one rupee towards this and their food. Before this happened, *Lucky* gave the housewife some flour, chilli, red onion, saffron, coconut oil and pepper to make us some patties which she did. Her reward was four of the nineteen patties she made us I hope this was not extortionate on our part.

January 16,

Dark, it is, and I had not the time to see what *Lucky* did today. He says he cleared by the road. Away was I trying to get one of his friends to come here to keep him company while I am away a few days, and I returned with a lad who will stay on here after I return, if he likes it. The family again were unable to draw any money, but they have managed to eat. When *Lucky* returned from the *kadday* last evening, he stopped to pick some *katu koorra* and *girra palla* which both grow by the river, and we had these as vegetables with our rice. Tonight it is *koor orpalla*, one vegetable, which is neither of those we had yesterday. It also grows by the river. The light by our lamps was too poor to see what I was eating 'ast night, but it tasted all right. Dinner is just ready, and so I do not know what the new vegetable is like yet. I hear *katu koorra* grows everywhere, and also *koora*, but *girra palla* is found in paddy fields. People eat these vegetables, but

they are too common to be sold. I hope I am not talking through my hat. *Mugunuwenna* is sold, and that grows on damp ground. Just eaten have I, and the vegetable was great, really nice. My two companions have gone to call at the housewife's for they have not yet met her husband.

January 17,

Lucky is keeping a note of every penny spent. He has bought a stout book for this, and in it goes not only what he buys for the house, but what I spend on my own for the *Shamba*, and the record goes back to a while before he came. *Amicus*, our companion, helps him in this. There are three parts to the accounts; the money received from me for whatever purpose, what is spent on our upkeep, and what on the *Shamba* itself, the work. It is all Lucky's idea, started without reference to me, but I think he got it from my example years ago, when I kept meticulous records of every cent spent. We three were out clearing up this morning. I took out the mammy, the new *katha* and a knife. Then *Amicus* brought the old *katha*, and Lucky took charge of the new. The head of the last kept coming off, but he fixed that. The heavy knife did not cut at all, but I was told it was up to us to put a fine edge on it. I am getting careless; I took the skin off my with the mammy; there was no excuse for this kind of accident. If I was a soldier, I ought to have been shot.

My colleague is still out of money, but at least he can look forward to a little pile of it coming to him. So it was a case of another rupee for him, it meant tea, and we also sent over a little bread to his wife earlier. They all look happy. Their bread and butter, or rather lack of it, never worries them. In my reading, Augustine eulogizes God's creation of the world, his providential governance of it, virtue, patriotism, parental honour, good works and morality, all in a sentence. His writing is easy and very much to the point.

January 21,

Returned I from the North at dusk, and what has been done while I was away must wait till tomorrow. All seemed in good heart; yet the family were without

lamp oil for the night. We had to have *cander* for our dinner; not what I would have chosen.

Kankesanturai was a sleepy place; fine pieces of coral could be found inland from the sea, and together as one would find them on the beach. Coral weighs light, and I picked up five pieces to bring away, small but of interest. Jaffna I found to be a miniature Colombo, in size and lay-out, a fort or shopping area spreading out into suburbia. I use Fort in the sense that we in Ceylon use it, as of a shopping area or centre. I used to think of the peninsula as being intensively cultivated, but this I not so; there is much waste land in places. There was really heavy rain lasting many hours while I was sure, but it was not evenly spread everywhere, and I was told it broke a drought of two months. A drought does not affect cultivation much because of irrigation from wells. I thought the waste places might have been used if there had been surface irrigation, for instance. Water brought by pipes from a long way away. If oil pipes across the desert, why not water pipes from Kandy to Jaffna? I read in a daily about Keuneman's idea for restoring the canals; this is for transport. It must be his Burgher blood that gives him energy in this line. The mosquitoes are bad tonight; there has been some rain here. Lucky and *Amicus* are poring over a map in bed while I write this. As the time is ten o'clock I wonder if I should go on. About KKS, all say the TUF candidate will win but they disagree about his majority. The Catholics are cautious and say it will be smaller; the Hindus that it will be a landslide; or that was my impression. The prestige of the government candidate is high; people like him, so it is like a tussle between person versus party, because the other chief candidate is personified with his party. By the time this is printed, we shall know the results.

Kilinochchi seems to me to have grown vastly. What building there has been done, looks to have been done well. I do not think the Survey Department and its maps are keeping up with developments in these parts. The current maps were already out-of-date five years ago. In some places in the Jaffna

peninsula the cost of food in the *kaddys* was reasonable, and nowadays was it exorbitant, as it is in our parts. It was fair, too, along the main arterial road to the North. I found the *kaddys* were reasonably clean, and in places good. The idea of carrying water from the Mahaveli to Jaffna, to serve an industrious people, was not mine. Mine may have been the idea of piping it; it will save evaporation. In what is known as the Mahaveli Scheme, the diverted water peters out to the South of the lagoon. If the water is piped, there will be no need for a diversion. The men of Delft, that famous island, are ubiquitous, as I am beginning to learn. One of the foremost Tamil scholars is from Delft. I wish their ponies were as prolific or ubiquitous, whichever way you look at it, as the men of Delft. It would help solve the transport problem for persons, as the canals will for goods.

A recruit I might have had today, a man who had been with the family some time, and who knows me in rather different physical circumstances. He wanted to come, and I was sorely tempted to take him. Pay he did not want and would not have had, until we are all self supporting, in which case he would have to call it by a different name, income? Financially, he promised to be a sound proposition, but there was the anxiety that just taking him on would cause. It would have strained my purse once again, and my nerves. So I let someone else decide. The man even went so far as to say that he did not mind if I did not feed him, so long as I let him stay. Anyway, he has my address and I hope he turns up. I asked him to get some money together, earn it, and come and support himself together with us, and cultivate the land together; a tall order, if I can call it that. I decided to abide by my voice of conscience, the third or other party, and so I threw the burden of a final decision on to the lad. The last time I did this, I appear to have been robbed; I was certainly a loser on both money and goods, but some work was done. This time, if the man comes regardless, I hope he turns out differently. If he comes, I could just wait long enough to see how he fits in, and then I could depart to leave him

to feed on what I would have used or spent on myself; and I would have trusted that when I returned next month, my company would be much nearer to being self-supporting than if I had stayed. That would be a feather in my cap: justification for my two years here. It is after midnight.

BUILDING A VILLAGE HOUSE—23

PIGGY: A GOOD DOG

By Herbert Keuneman

I MUST ABANDON, for today the more or less chronological pattern of series—perhaps, indeed, it is time I did so; for, although there is much work left before The House achieves the form in which I have grown to envisage it, its building is to practical intents and purposes done—but today I must abandon chronologicality; because an event has occurred that has altered my household and bereft it of a certain richness. The dog Piggy is dead.

I dislike the anthropomorphization of pets, even pets of such unique accomplishments and—above all—personality as Piggy. But the fact remains that he was one of the household of three (myself, my wife, and our very greatly loved dog) that Fate first transplanted to Ehetuwewa fifteen long years ago, and I am the only transplant now left, and I wish I were not.

Maybe, this sounds exaggerated and over-sentimental. And, maybe, my desire to celebrate our Piggy is a form of abreaction I have no right to inflict upon a reader. But anyone save a commercial kennelman will know what it is to have had a dog—especially an extraordinarily intelligent and affectionate dog—born in one's home and become a rightful partner of it for sixteen and a half years and then watch each faculty, of sight and scent and hearing and strength irrevocably fail until the disintegration finally gained its ineluctable momentum and there came at last the too-long-deferred benison of death.

There are doubtless those who will blame me for not having 'put the poor animal out of its misery' long ago. But Piggy was desperately

ill (it seemed) soon after we arrived in Ehetuwewa for our final stay and many offered me this advice; yet he made a complete recovery, he sired another generation of puppies, who would be the better too for their inheritance of something of his happy, faithful, indomitable spirit—a duty which at each season it was his very greatest pleasure to perform! It is true that, this time, his illness was more obviously incurable: he died of cancer. But why would I—why would anyone that could find the moral resources and the fortitude—yield to an animal a mercy forbidden him, if not . . . so by him denied, to a beloved human being?

If you share any of such feelings you may care to read on. If not, to read, on may prove nothing but vexation. You have been warned!

Certainly there are very few in a village to whom any such deep attachment to a dog—or any animal but particularly to a dog—is not only inexplicable but may be offensive.

I MET LONG AGO an old couple in a village near Anuradhapura who believed their dog was the re-incarnation of their son. To the rest of the village this was so offensive as to be actually scandalous, the equivalent of both admitting and publishing their ascription to their son of a dog's nature while he lived; and such un-parental behaviour had caused the neighbours to boycott them, almost. But the old woman, at least, was not ashamed. Her little dog was an attractive creature with more than a strain of Scottish Terrier in him, so that his name was predictably Bull—*bool* (Sinh.)—*wool* (Eng.) which accounts for the somewhat startling announcement once made to me by an excited small boy: 'Mr. Keuneman! Mr. Keuneman! Our dog put two dogs, and one is a bull—but he snarled at me, perhaps the villagers had conditioned him, when I put out my hand to stroke him. I said to Bull in mock sternness: 'Stop that nonsense and come here!' Whereupon the old woman protested: 'That's not the way to speak to him' and she called: 'Bula, puta!' and wriggling with delight the dog ran to her and licked her hand. I also knew—during our first Ehetuwewa stay—a mighty hunter known as Te-kola Baas, between

whom and his dogs a deep bond existed and the two of them would ride out to a shoot on a special plank extension attached to Te-kola Baas' bicycle carrier, leaping to their places after Te-kola Baas had mounted; and this was a relationship the village found it easier to support, because dogs and master shared a purposeful activity.

But the fact is the villager still counts the dog as, at best, a guardian of the house in exchange for the leavings of the kitchen and vegetarian leavings at that, or more conventionally as a mere eater of carrion. 'Let him be reborn as a dog or a crown' was the conventional Sinhala anathema. And a *balu-kaputu dana* is the favourite Meritorious Act of the village child in training for the more discriminating meretorious deeds of adulthood, yielding its child's ration of Merit wholly because of the utter worthlessness of its recipient.

I think the relationship between my wife and me and Piggy rather baffled Ehetuwewa. They could not understand positive affection for him on our part. They took great delight in, and offered Piggy his full meed of praise for, the few tricks we had taught him or which he had learned himself; but when he insisted on climbing into the lap of one of us when he felt he was not being taken sufficiently affectionate notice of, you could see them visibly shrink as I confess I might do if a friend took to cuddling a Malabar Hill vulture from Bombay! And that, of course, is in fact of the on of the prejudicial associations against the village dog; he, with the jackal, was the traditional scavenger of the village cemetery. Up to not so long ago, many corpses were not buried: only some affluence or other sources of special respect secured burial, still less cremation; the corpses of the poor and humble were abandoned unburied in wild and, usually, stony places—which is why such places are still held in dread as the haunt of the gigantic ghouls Mana Sona—and dogs and jackals and wild boar (the flesh of which latter the villager nevertheless, greatly esteems) disposed of them. In the end the majority of villagers settled for regarding our conscious and active

love for Piggy and his for us as just one more of the aberrations of the *suddha* as which the village persisted in regarding us.

A FEW of our small adopted ones and daughters, however, could only explain it to themselves sufficiently by investing Piggy with some more-than-merely-canine status. I still remember little 10-years-old Bandara Menika's embarrassment and distress when she she momentarily addressed Piggy as she might any other dog (or several classes of human beings of inferior status) and, intending to offer him a titbit, commanded: 'varen!' ('Come!') Then, conscious of her *faux pas*, turning to Rum she enquired anxiously: 'Will they be angry I said "varen" to him Should I have said "enna"? I also remember that Vije, then only 8 years old, taught us, too, a possible lesson. One of Piggy's own tricks was to stand straight up on his hindlegs to attract our attention when he wanted a treat; and from this position, again self-taught, he would leap in the air and catch a biscuit tossed to him. We were so proud of his accomplishment that we, as we thought, 'improved' upon it and taught him to beg for his treat with paws together, as a true suppliant. But Vije, seeing this, objected. 'It is not good for his pride', he said, 'to make him beg like a *rodiya*! It took a long time to un-learn Piggy of that trick; but he and we did un-learn it.

Even the village dogs seemed not to know quite what to make of Piggy. The Village dogs run in packs which, on the whole, are incredibly loyal to each other. Even when there is food to be shared, as when a calf has died or a buffalo hamstrung by an enemy of its owner starves to death, and even in the Dog Days, the pack hangs together and there is seldom bickering amongst them so long as the 'pecking order' (to employ Konard Lorenz' useful barnyard term) is not challenged. I suppose it was Piggy's trouble that he never was hungry enough to share a hunt or ask to scavenge a mouthful and that, on the other hand, he insisted on being first in the packs' other prime activity (and he was 'a bonny fechter') that set him apart. It could not have been that he, too, in his world, was regarded as a kind of *suddha*?

Whatever the reason, no pack ever adopted him; and save the puppies adored him and he adored puppies, whom he would take over and train with the devotion of a Scoutmaster as long as they remained puppies but cow into instant submission when they ceased to be, and save that he was one dog I knew that the bitches sought out no less than he sought them out, he had no dog-friends at all. BUT..

One day there was a gang robbery in the *kadamandiya* when robbers broke into the Ate-kanuwa *mudalali*'s house by night, held him up at the point of his own gun and ransacked the place of cash and valuable loot. (This was, I think, 1964). The police were called in; and they brought with them a Police Dog, a large conceited German Shepherd. But a fat lot of police work he did! Loyal as the Ehetuwewa packs were within themselves they were internecine between each other. On this occasion they recognized a common enemy. All the packs ganged together; they co-opted Piggy as well, and he was more than willing to join in; and they tore that German Shepherd to such shreds that he had to be sent to hospital to be patched together again. (I do not remember that the robbers were ever traced, after all). But after the excitement the packs separated as strictly as before and Piggy was re-relegated to his village role of lone wolf.

I WISH I could evaluate without sentimentality how near to human understanding Piggy could come. Certainly I never knew a dog more sensitive to our own moods. Were I angry, he would never skulk out of the way as a lesser dog might have done in self-protection, but he would never intrude. If my wife and I were sad he would come and nuzzle our knees or lick our hands, all the while 'waving his wonderful tail' and with a look of devoted sympathy, what could it have been but sympathy? in his liquid brown eyes. (If you want to know exactly what Piggy looked like, see the magazine TIME: the cover for December 22, 1975). When we went away for any length of time and could not take him he seemed to become aware of this long before two so much as started to pack; and when we left, no persuasion

would bring him to the door to see us off.

I am aware that none of this is unique in dog behaviour. I know, for instance, other dogs that shared with Piggy the ability to smile. I mean smile: not a mere gleam in the eye or a contortion of the lip, but an alteration of the whole mask in an entirely appropriate manner and for an entirely appropriate reason. Piggy's smile was invariably an apologetic and sheepish one—it was a rather terrifying grimace with one side of the mouth only, rather like Humphrey Bogart registering a particularly sinister mood—but it was a smile or grin beyond all possible doubt and only appeared when Piggy acknowledged and deprecated a small fault, such as delaying to come to heel when was called, but suggested that the matter be now made no more of. Meanwhile, the white tip of his tail waved a truce as wholeheartedly as any beleaguered sheik in an early 'Desert' film waved to the Foreign Legion!

Again, though not uniquely (for his own mother used to have the same trick) he would express extravagant delight such as anticipation of a drive in the car by chasing his own tail round and round and around until one long curved dog seemed to form a whole blurred circle. But then he would do something I have not noticed any other dog do: he would follow a clockwise spin by an anti-clockwise one and not merely lie or sit or stand still until the dizziness passed off. I wish I were Konrad Lorenz and could determine whether this betokened intelligence applied human-wise.

AT ALL EVENTS, Piggy knew more about human beings than the average villager knows about dogs. His terminal illness lasted three days of agony: with haemorrhages and paralysis and convulsions. But on the last day he seemed to rally wonderfully and walked a little and lay in the sun and early in the morning even wandered as far as the edge of our drought-diminished tank: apparently to lap water which—to say nothing of food—he had consistently refused the two days before. And then shortly after noon he staggered down to the tank again. Banders' wife Dinga, who had been

watching with him, called to me to cheer me: 'piggy nanava! (Piggy's bathing his head!) He's well now: Piggy vava nanava!'

Needless to say he was doing no such thing: he had had a fit while he stood in the shallows, and was struggling not to drown. I rushed down and carried him back—he was only a small dog—and laid him in the sun. Two hours later, in one final dreadful convulsion, he died.

We buried him under the *ruk-attana* tree which gives our garden its name. As we stood—about twelve of us who either loved Piggy or had learned at least to respect him as a personality—placing him in the box that served for his coffin a very large Russel's viper that had come from no one knew where passed through the small crowd, within inches of everybody's feet, and went straight on. By the time someone had found a stick and Pinhamy had got in one ineffectual swipe at the creature it had disappeared into thick grass. A few minutes later it passed within a couple of feet of a woman bathing at the edge of the tank and, with its head reared above the water, swam straight across! (There was no doubt at all amongst those who saw it that was a Russel's viper, one of the commonest species in the area.)

I asked Pinhamy's wife if anybody had ever seen one in our garden before. She said never once in more than twenty years. 'You see,' she comfortingly explained, 'deadly snakes never come where the scent of the *ruk-attana* blossom can blow.'

'But one's just been,' I protested. 'yes', she argued with village logic, 'but it went away again!'

Piggy, too, had been — 161/2 years—and had gone away again and had showed no more malice at any time. Except his one mouthful of Police Dog.

I am making a stone for his grave; a simple slate of cement;

PIGGY

a Good Dog

Welikadawatte (Oct. 1958)

Ehetuwewa

Hammenhiel

Nilambe

Ehetuwewa (Feb. 1975)

THE BEST THING WE EVER OWNED

Doreen & Herbert Keuneman

THINKING ALOUD

Our Economic Problems

By Appapillai Navaratnam

Regional Manager, Northern Region,
Bank of Ceylon

Being a summary of an address to the North Ceylon Chamber of Commerce and Industries.

SRI LANKA is essentially an agricultural country and any development strategy and development expenditure will necessarily have to give first place to agriculture. Industrial development will therefore automatically take a second place. One of the major constraints in the development effort is the want of foreign exchange. Britain after the Second World War in 1945 was in a similar quandary the reason for their straits was of course different—the war debts. Britain was indebted to several nations to the tune of millions of sterling. If they were to begin to pay all these foreign debts in their devastated state of the economy, it would have meant further hardship to the British immediately after the war years; it would also have meant that Britain could not have revamped her economy in a hurry and resumed her pre war export-import trade. Britain successfully negotiated with all the nations to whom she was indebted for a repayment holiday for some years until the country was able to revert from the war economy to peace-time economy. This gave Britain all the financial advantage required to regain her economic dominance in the world.

We have as at last year foreign debts amounting to a little over Rs. 2,500 millions. These foreign debts are due to foreign credit like the I.B.R.D., Asian Development Bank, International Credit Association, Development Loan Fund etc., and to nations like Canada, Britain, Australia, Japan, United States, Soviet Union, China etc.

It appears to me that we could with advantage negotiate with these Credit Institutions and nations to give us a repayment holiday for say five years in order that these monies could be diverted for development work. In addition to this we

should be able to get some financial aid from the new oil-rich countries in the same way the Prime Minister was able to persuade the Shah of Iran to assist us with substantial aid.

I have said agriculture is the *prima donna* in our economic strategy. Once foreign exchange released in the above mentioned manner becomes available I suggest that rethinking be done on the present land alienation policy of the Government.

INSTEAD OF ALIENATING UNDEVELOPED JUNGLE LAND, let a separate body called say the Agricultural Development Board be formed to look after the affairs of land alienation and land development. This body should map out the areas for development after examining the water resources. Water supply could be, apart from major irrigation schemes, from three sources viz. tanks, tube wells, and ordinary wells. Having mapped out the land for development and determined the nature of the crop to be cultivated, the Board should proceed to clear the land and provide the necessary infra-structure. The land could be blocked out into suitable extents. Tank-fed and tube well lands could be alienated in larger extents; the lands depending on ordinary wells for water supply should not be more than an acre or two. Lands should be alienated only at this stage, when the land is ready for production. In the case of long term crops like cadju, I would suggest that the Board should proceed to plant high yielding cadju and grow them for about three to four years and alienate them only when the plants are ready to yield. Valuation may be made of all the lands thus alienated and Banks should be called upon to grant loans for payment to the Agricultural Development Board, the repayment to be spread out from ten to fifteen years after an initial holiday period of say three years to give time to the new farmers to settle down and adjust their finances.

To whom should such lands be alienated?

The unemployment problem in this country could be solved mainly through the agricultural sector,

industrial sector however labour intensive the industries may be, cannot absorb more than a very small percentage. I therefore suggest a national plan to attack the unemployment problem. The country has planned for 438 Agricultural Productivity Centres all over the island. Of these already close upon 200 Centres have been opened. The Agricultural Productivity Committee at these Centres, from income generated by their manifold production activities and assisted by some grants could be persuaded to put up an Agricultural School at these Centres to accommodate an intake of say 50 unemployed youths to go through a training course including training to repair water pumps and tractors for a period of 6 months; so that the schools should be able to send out every year a 100 youths trained in the modern methods of agriculture. The 438 Centres should be able to train 43,800 youths per year.

These youths should be given the developed lands in their own districts or at least in the adjoining district immediately they pass out of the school. The foreign exchange component of the expenditure, machinery and equipment for the development of the agricultural land and for the construction of tube wells, in short for all infra-structure expenditure could be met without difficulty from the foreign loans repayment holiday suggested to be negotiated.

THE PALMYRAH COUNTRY has been given a golden opportunity in the context of the scarcity of sugar and its high price. I expect some of you to give the lead in starting the manufacture of sugar as a cottage industry. There are seven million palmyrah palms in the North according to the Palmyrah Committee. We will not think of the millions of palms. I am thinking of the few palms that are usually there in the compound of a villager in Jaffna. The palmyrah palms including both the male and female palms could be tapped for about eight months of the year. A tree could yield 1 1/2 gallons of sweet toddy per day. What you require in every home is a furnace which will cost about Rs. 1,500/-. 1 1/2 gallons of sweet toddy from one palm could be processed into nearly a pound of white sugar.

With every home in the Northern villages having one or two furnaces and processing sweet toddy from say 15 palms could produce fifteen pounds of sugar a day at a cost which will be in the region of about Rs. 3/- per pound. If the sugar is sold at a reasonable price of Rs. 4/50 per pound there will be a clear margin of more than Re 1/- per pound—in other words for every palm tapped and processed into sugar there will be a sure profit of Re. 1/- per palm even placing the selling price at Rs. 4/50 a pound. A family processing sugar from sweet toddy tapped from 10 palms in their compound or from the palms in their "palmyrah garden" is assured of Rs. 300/- a month for eight months in a year.

This type of endeavour would not have been possible when sugar was available at Rs. 1/50 a pound. The present scarcity of sugar is a blessing in disguise and I anticipate that once some persons give the lead this will catch up as a thriving cottage industry and within a matter of months, we could become self sufficient in sugar. With increased production, the price will come down and with experience the cost of production could also come down. Let the price stabilise at a level that will be acceptable to the producer and the consumer under the laws of supply and demand. In the same manner the ban on the import of chillies and onions had been a boon to the farmers in the North, the Palmyrah country would have done it again by producing all the sugar the country needs at a reasonable price.

IN THE CONTEXT of unemployment and abundance of natural resources, there is no gainsaying the fact that our industries should be labour intensive and use local raw material. Apart from industries that spring up for the manufacture of import-substitution goods like for example, factories for the manufacture of sugar, our industries will have to be export-oriented. It is not possible to think of industrial export in this world of sophisticated industrial goods unless we ourselves can produce such goods.

I am therefore thinking why we do not try a deviation from our present approach? We are a coun-

try with plenty of natural resources. If we are poor we ought to say, "there is poverty amidst plenty." We are exporting rubber, coconut-fibre, etc., as raw materials for industries in other parts of the world. Some countries that are highly industrialised, like Japan are now confronted with the problem of air-pollution and water-pollution.

They are in fact thinking of expanding the industries in other countries on a Multi-National Corporation basis. Singapore and Malaysia have started industries on Multi-National Corporation basis. Multi-National Corporations have some inherent features that are problematic to a developing country. For example they will be producing only luxury goods and they will be capital-intensive. When we have abundance of raw materials which are exported as raw materials to feed the factories of the world, the country could with advantage negotiate for Multi-National Corporation industries and since they will be producing luxury goods, these industries could remain export-oriented until our country reaches a standard of living that will permit the sale of such goods locally as well.

We have really done it in the case of ceramic manufacture. We could extend it to factories that will use in abundance raw materials like rubber, coconut fibre, illuminate etc. The Industrial Development Board in Sri Lanka could extend its tentacles to include the functions performed by the Economic Development Board in Singapore and negotiate for our local industrialists Multi-National Corporation industries on terms that are acceptable to our country. Multi-National Corporations on a selected basis will give a new dimension to our industrial growth.

NEXT WEEK

- * OUR TRAGEDY
—Agriculture
 - * INTERNATIONAL
—Tensions Increase
-

IS IT TRUE?

Sherlock Holmes

- Non-aligned Rich Arabs
- JR's Strategy

IS IT TRUE that some Arab "non-aligned" countries, now flushed with billions of oil money, have begun to take a cock-eyed view of the non-aligned world? That the dizzy climb from comparative poverty to unsurpassed wealth has made them look with the most patronising air upon presently poorer members of the non-aligned world? That some of these Arab countries seem to think that the poorer non-aligned countries cannot undertake responsibilities or discharge obligations which only the rich non-aligned nations should dare to shoulder? That if this yardstick of the contemporary bank balance in the current account is the sole determining factor, then presently poor countries like Sri Lanka should not dare to play a leading role in the non-aligned world by seeking to host any conference at all, leave alone a summit conference? That the Sri Lankan habit of going round the world with a beggar's bowl is no doubt a noble act born of humility and detachment, but it is often likely to be misunderstood? That a wrong idea about Sri Lanka seems to have been created in some quarters—that conditions are so bad in this island that it would be ungenerous to invite rich and mighty delegations here? That unless our larders and shops are well stocked with all the good things of life—locally produced delicacies as well as everything found in the best market places of the world—it would be ungracious to invite discerning visitors here? That everything in the world should be made available here at duty free prices for the delectation of delegates? That every known variety of wine and every known variety of cheese should be available to tickle the palate of the *nouveau riche* among the non-aligned? That some visitors from some of the new nations also expect

a variety of home comforts which a puritanically-minded buddhist country like Sri Lanka cannot even unofficially countenance? That there were many embarrassing moments for some of our officials responsible for looking after visitors during an international conference last year because of the kind of wishes visitors made known to them? That in the present state of semi-poverty which this country is afflicted with, there seem to be many Sinbads lost in the dazzle of brilliants and emeralds in the caves of Aladdin (with the forty thieves) who think that Sri Lanka should not aspire to do what only gold-rich or oil-rich countries can hope to do? That it is to be hoped that saner counsel will prevail in the non-aligned world to see that *parvenu* philosophy of the *nouveau riche* will not create problems that will bring new tensions and rifts into the non-aligned world? That there must be wise Arabs as they are foolish Arabs and the former must ensure that Asia and the smaller nations are not denigrated because they do not have the doubtful glory of current oil wealth which history might well regard as part of new form of piracy (shades of Drake and the Spanish galleons?)

IS IT NOT TRUE that UNP leader J. R. Jayawardene has launched another gimmick in the political campaign to bring the UNP to power? That his decision to resign his seat in the hope that he will be returned at a by-election is no doubt likely to put the Government to some embarrassment? That the Government has one of several options? That it can hold the by-election in the normal course and allow JR to be re-elected? That if his example is followed by a host of others in the Opposition the country will have to bear the

expense of a whole series of by-elections to satisfy a craze for a new kind of political gimmick? That if, on the other hand, the Government postpones the by-election until the General Elections of 1977, under one emergency excuse or another, then it would become a talking point for the Opposition to lambaste the Government? That with the parliamentary majority the Government enjoys it can easily carry on even if the entire Opposition follows JR's example in to the wilderness? That what is even more significant is that in seeking endorsement from a delegates' conference, JR had said among other things that he would ensure that a General Elections would be held in 1975? That it is not clear how he hopes to achieve this miracle? That JR is too shrewd and too seasoned a politician to make promises which he cannot hope to keep? That an undertaking that he would ensure a General Elections in 1975 is not something people will forget in a hurry? That there is speculation as to how he hopes to achieve this boast? That the only way in which he could do this is to see that there a repetition of December 1974 when the requisite number from the Government benches cross over to the Opposition to secure the parliamentary defeat of the Government? That it is too much to hope that JR would be able to repeat the trick once again especially when everybody concerned will be on the alert to see that no such disaster overtakes the Government? That if it is not a crossover—as potatoes cannot be boiled twice over and 1964 cannot be repeated in 1975—it can be only a merger of like forces? That it would be interesting to know whether JR hopes to recover the ground he had lost when he failed to have his way at Kalawewa? That if JR hopes to secure a parliamentary coup through the polarisation of rightwing forces to bring about a General Election and a change of government, he must guard against the possibility of a leftwing parliamentary coup to establish a one-party (often one man) "democratic" dictatorship? That people in Sri Lanka will prefer to wait until 1977 for a general-elections, according to the 1972 Constitution, rather than risk the establishment of either a rightwing or a leftwing dictatorship?