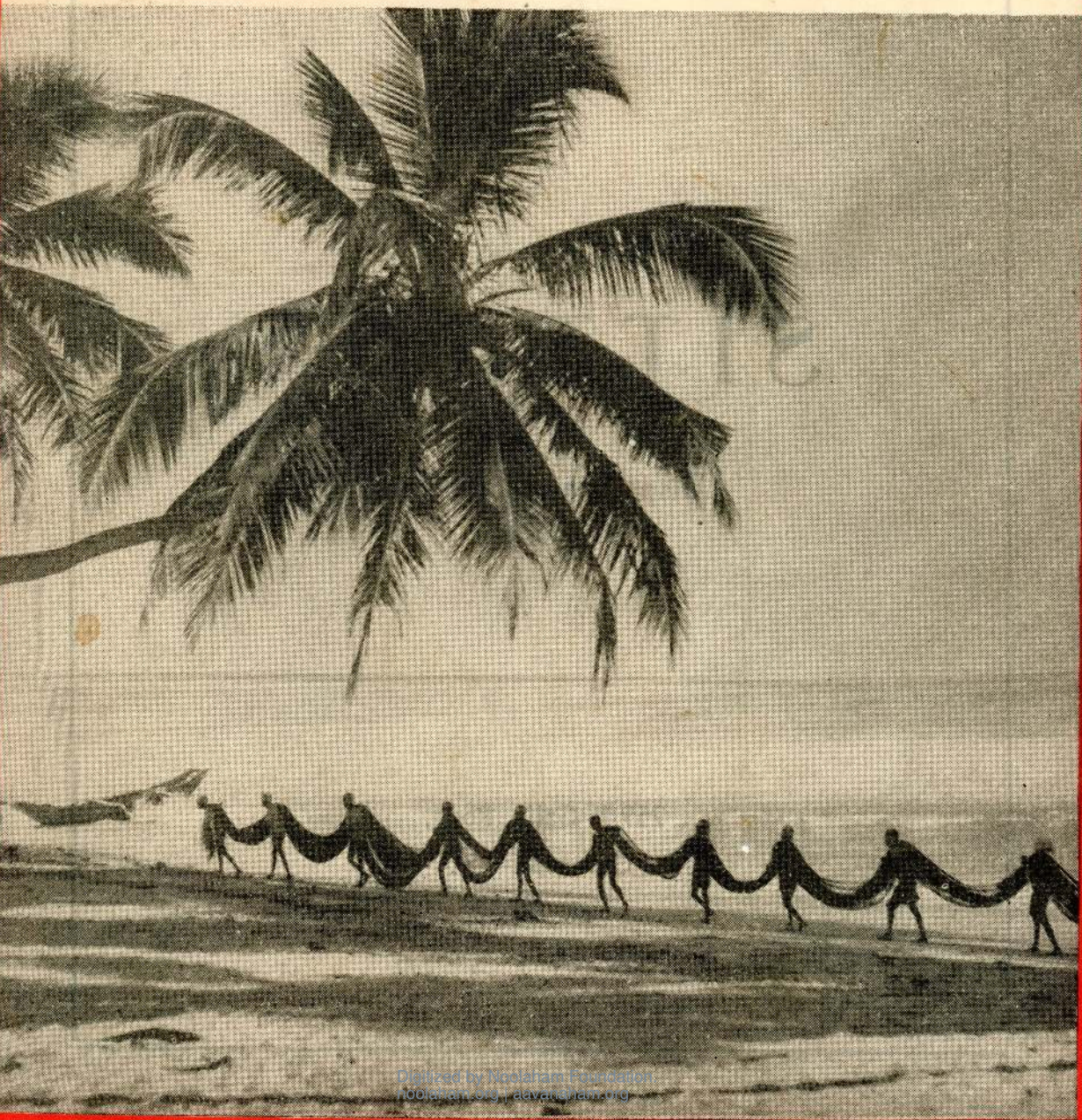


Vol. 22 No. 45 — May 6, 1978 — Rs. 1-50

# TRIBUNE

CEYLON NEWS REVIEW



At The Fixed

And Controlled Prices

# SITTAMS

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# Letter From The Editor

THERE IS AT LAST, A RESPONSE from the Ministry of Fisheries in a form of a registered letter dated April 27, 1978 to the Editor. It was from the Director/Development, Ministry of Fisheries and we have published it in this issue. His statement admits that fish is expensive and supplies are short but with the patronising air of officialdom says that "it was not for the reasons" suggested by *Tribune*. We make no claims to infallibility or to a monopoly of wisdom as to why fish has become expensive or scarce. We had only put forward various reasons our readers, reporters and investigators had suggested for the sad state of affairs in our fishing industry. The Director/Development repeats a number of reasons why fish is expensive and scarce—reasons which have been repeated *ad nauseum* in the daily press. Many of these factors were operative in 1974, 1975, 1976 and 1977 and yet fish was neither so expensive nor so short. That is why we looked for other reasons and in the first of our articles on 18.3.78 we raised queries about the correctness or otherwise of rumours that the Corporation's trawlers had been leased to some foreign entrepreneur. We did not have the faintest idea—nor did anyone else in the public—that licences had also been given to foreign companies to trawler-fish outside a 25-mile limit. When the Minister revealed that he hoped that 40% catch from these foreign trawlers would make fish plentiful and cheap, it came to us and many others as a bombshell. Why did the Ministry not reveal earlier to the public and press that licences had been granted to foreign trawlers? Why this secrecy? And the royalty rates per ton appear to be scandalously low. The Director/Development now says fish is expensive and scarce. But the public will recall the Ministerial statements just before New Year that there were buffer stocks of 34,000 tons of fish (*Ceylon Daily News*, April 3) and that there were plentiful supplies (*Observer*, April 5) that would be available to the public before New Year at fixed prices (*Ceylon Daily Mirror*, April 11). All these proved to be just plain wishful thinking, just fables. If the Minister, instead of talking about buffer stocks had told the public what the Director/Development now says (fish is expensive and scarce), the public would have welcomed the Ministerial admission and sought to co-operate with him in finding ways and means of ending the sorry state of affairs in the fishing industry. Instead of that, the daily press, which had no alternative but to echo official stories, however unbelievable, was inundated with sunshine stories about buffer stocks brought in by licensed foreign trawlers, about plentiful fish and ministerially fixed (cheap) prices. The Director/Development has not answered many queries we have raised and which trouble the public. Instead he follows the played-out propaganda tactic of blaming the last regime (nearly 10 months after Dharmista) for the present difficulties, and ending with the customary bureaucratic homily to the *Tribune* about not indulging in "insinuations" which cannot be substantiated, and self-righteously proclaiming that the Ministry welcomed "frank criticism". The one and only way of dealing with criticism and even insinuations is to answer truthfully the queries raised and not to preach sermons on journalistic ethics. Can the Director/Development even at this stage, at least tell the public why the Minister said that fish would be plentiful and cheap before the New Year and for ever thereafter and he (Director/Development) not talks about fish being expensive and scarce? On the morning of Tuesday, May 2, immediately after the news broadcast a special announcement from the Fisheries Corporation that three or four varieties of popular fish would be sent to seven or eight corporation outlets in Colombo to be sold at (fixed) cheap prices. It was also stated that several hundred pounds of packeted "Ceyfish" would also be sent for sale. By the time our investigators went to these stalls in the morning they were told that the fish was "sold out". Who were the lucky to get this fish?

# TRIBUNE

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## EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

### • May Day • Growing Pessimism

Colombo, May 2,

In spite of fears to the contrary in certain quarters, May Day passed off peacefully without any incidents. Every party and organisation that wanted to hold a rally, meeting or a procession was permitted to do so. The SLBC in its newscasts did not blackout the meeting of any party and even mentioned some of the criticisms against the government. The *Daily News* and other Lake House papers gave a fair coverage of all meetings and speeches, though understandably prominence and emphasis was given to the UNP rally on Galle Face Green and to its cultural show, because apart from everything else it was the biggest of all the rallies in Colombo.

May Day 1978 was undoubtedly in sharp contrast to what took place in recent years when the SLBC and the government-controlled media blacked out news of meetings of all parties and organisations except the ruling party and its allies. Another notable difference was that the use of buses to bring its supporters to town by all political parties had been banned, though the special bus and train services in addition to the normal services were operated in order to transport commuters (and those coming to the rallies). In the past, not only was the entire fleet of the CTB "allotted" to different parties (the ruling party no doubt getting the bulk), but all government and corporation lorries were also used by the government parties to carry persons to Colombo to swell the crowds at their rally. The abuse of the state-owned

transport was not confined to May Day but was extended to all political rallies and meetings in Colombo and the outstations. The UNP government must be congratulated for stopping this practice.

The dominant political keynote theme at the government's (UNP) rally was the avowed and openly proclaimed intention to de-politicalise May Day. The President in his speech, "asked the people of this country not to treat May Day as a day of political rivalry as in the past but to emulate the examples of the celebrations in the Soviet Union and China where the day was a day of national celebration. May Days in the past in this country had been used to hurl abuse at rival political parties and disrupt normal life. Vicious slogans, sometimes rank filth, were used by all political parties at rallies and processions. He said it was because of this that the Government had decided to commemorate International Worker Day differently and had invited all trade union organisations to participate in celebrating May Day on a common platform and seek solutions to the problems facing the workers and the rest of the country." The UNP (and the Government) carried this intention into actual practice by staging a major cultural show at the rally.

The Prime Minister R. Premadasa, made an appeal for national unity but he sprang a surprise by reading a letter from Felix R. Dias Bandaranaike (former Minister of Justice—among other things) in which he stated that the "draconian" CJC Act was suggested and drafted by Mr. Victor Tennekoon when he was the Attorney General.

Mr. Premadasa, commenting on this letter, quite correctly pointed out, that: (1) Mr. Bandaranaike admitted that the laws he had

drafted were draconian; (2) he was belatedly trying to put blame to the former Attorney General, Mr. Victor Tennekoon—whom this government, Mr. Bandaranaike said, had made the Chairman of the Law Commission; (3) it was an absurd contention because no government was ever forced to accept a draft by an Attorney-General who was only a public servant; (4) Mr. Felix R. D. Bandaranaike, had, in his capacity as Minister of Justice, introduced the law in the NSA; and (5) it was wrong and puerile for FRDB to say that the CJC Act was not his sin but the sin of a public servant.

This letter and the comments were no doubt a political sensation of the highest magnitude, but many feel that in keeping with the spirit of de-politicalising May Day Mr. Premadasa should have resisted the temptation to have a fling at the SLFP at the UNP May Day rally (however justified) and kept back the letter for publication and comment in a different forum, preferably in the NSA, which he did on May 2.

The rallies of all other political parties and organisations were full of political thunder and polemical fury. The following besides the UNP held meetings: (1) SLFP; (2) the ULF of the LSSP and CP; (3) the JVP; (4) the MEP; (5) the RLP (Revolutionary Labour Party); led by Edmund Samarakkody; (6) the CMU and the RMP (Revolutionary Marxist Party) led by Bala Tampoe; (7) the RML (the Revolutionary Marxist League); (8) the Ten-Party United May Day rally led by Peking-wing Communist Party—bringing in Shanmugathasan's CPC, Premapala Hewapattige's Janath Sangamaya, Gamini Yapa's Peradiga Sulang, Mahinda Wijesekera's MVP, Dharmasekera's MJP, Vasudeva Nanayakkara's Vama Sama Samajist,

Nanda Ellawela's PDP and D. S. Mallawaratchi's Marxist Youth Front; (9) the Communist (Marxist-Leninist) Party, another Peking wing group.

The most significant statement that came from Mrs. Bandaranaike at the SLFP rally that the SLFP was even today for "left unity"—she posed a question to the LSSP and the CP; "She asked whom they considered the common enemy, the UNP or the SLFP. She said since the time of the late Mr. S.W. R. D. Bandaranaike it was the SLFP that worked for a common front with the Left parties. Even today they were for Left unity. Mrs. Bandaranaike said at a time they were reorganising the party, the presence of such large numbers for the May Day rally was a great encouragement. Today there was a movement on an international scale directed against socialist leaders and movements, Indira Gandhi, Ali Bhutto and Mohamed Daoud of Afghanistan had fallen victims, she said. Referring to the Free Trade Zone proposal, she said, the SLFP had completed the process of independence by taking over the foreign-owned estates. But, Ministers of this Government went round the world offering foreign businessmen all incentives including land. Thereby they were once again trying to sell the country to foreigners. The SLFP leader said following the failure of attempts to destroy the Party, the Government was now trying to destroy the leadership of the party by appointing a Presidential Commission. Even before the Commission could sit, Mr. Premadasa had found her guilty. From this you will know what they are trying to do. They might deny me my civic rights but they will not be able to send me out of politics, she said. The UNP, which was steadily depriving the workers of their rights and had put obstacles in the way of the SLFP May Day celeb-

rations, was trying to lure the people to their May Day meeting by gimmicks. They had even gone to the extent of importing singers from South India, which was an insult to our own artistes she said. Mrs. Bandaranaike said the Government had given the Town Hall grounds to the JVP in spite of there being no application by them according to the Special Commissioner of Colombo. This showed that there was an understanding between the JVP and the UNP. If the JVP tried today what they did in 1971 this government would not show the mercy that she showed. If she had not acted in the way she had done at that time, even President Jayawardene and Prime Minister Premadasa would not be alive today, she said. All those who did not support the UNP were being harassed in various ways and the freedom they were talking of was limited to those belonging to the UNP trade union Junta. The so-called national newspapers had become the mouthpiece of the government. The truth appeared only in *Dinakara*."

According to the SLBC and some other reports, Mrs. Bandaranaike had blamed the CP daily *Aththa* for standing in the way of Left Unity. At the ULF Rally, "Three United Left Front leaders—Dr. Colvin R. de Silva, Mr. Pieter Keuneman and Mr. T. B. Subasinghe at their Hyde Park rally yesterday called for the unity of all progressive forces in order to continue the struggles of the working class. Dr. De Silva who presided said that there were 24 ultra left splinter groups whose aim was to smash capitalism. If they are honest in their convictions I say to them, don't criticise from across the river. We are prepared to have discussions with you. You can point out any wrongs in us and show where you are right. Then let us by discussion arrive at a program and unitedly fight for the rights

of the workers. Many think that after we die the left movement will be no more but I can assure you there will be many more leaders to continue this struggle he said." Dr. N. M. Perera, LSSP leader who was to have presided at this rally was not present as he was indisposed. Dr. De Silva said that they would have to face decisive struggles next year. The Left unity founded by the LSSP and the Communist Party of Sri Lanka must be further strengthened. The door of the United Left Front was open to all progressive elements including those in the SLFP. Stressing the necessity for the ULF to unite the working class to undertake coming struggles, Dr. Colvin R. de Silva said the Left Unity achieved by the ULF would be stabilised through struggles....."

Mr. T. B. Subasinghe former Minister of Industries said: "There can't be any Left Unity without the LSSP and CP. That is why I who was in the SLFP left that party and now am prepared to do anything to preserve and strengthen that unity. When the United Front came to power in 1970 the constituent Left parties wanted to do many good things. But the rightist elements in the SLFP opposed those measures culminating in the withdrawal of the LSSP and the CP from the United Front, he said.

Mr. Keuneman at the ULF rally stated that he wished to invite all progressive forces to get together to carry out the working class struggle against the capitalist UNP. He said that some people asked why the leftists did not join hands again with the SLFP and continue the struggle. I say in all sincerity that this is an impossible task with the pro-capitalist attitude of the present SLFP leadership, he said. Mr. Keuneman said that the SLFP leaders knew only to shout out from platforms that the left parties were dead. But they did not open their mouths

in Parliament when the UNP introduced any bill. They simply shook their heads. The SLFP was claiming to be cleaning the party but had not announced what they were going to clean."

Mr. Rohana Wijeweera of the JVP in their Town Hall rally said, "When the JVP youth were being killed the LSSP and the CP did nothing to stop it, but today they were shedding crocodile tears for them. Mr. Wijeweera said Mr. Pieter Keuneman was shedding tears and asking the workers what mistake they had made. It was also ironical that Dr. N. M. Perera had made the same mistakes that Mr. Philip Gunawardene had made years ago. The UNP had come to power because of the attempts of the SLFP, the LSSP and the CP to destroy the JVP. The large crowds at their meeting and in the procession had proved that the see-saw of political power between the UNP and the SLFP had come to an end he said. The UNP had introduced a White Paper on Labour to destroy the working class. The SLFP was now trying to raise its head again with its blood stained hands and was even asking the JVP to join them. Even Vasudeva Nanayakkara who betrayed the JVP was trying to pose as a Left leader, he said."

Mr. Shanmugathasan at the Ten-Party Rally stated, "The revolutionary movement in Sri Lanka had now reached a stage where unity was essential, otherwise it would be doomed. In short, the present situation could be described as one of swim together or sink separately said Mr. N. Shanmugathasan, General Secretary of the Ceylon Communist Party (Peking wing). Mr. Shanmugathasan said the working class movement wanted to hold a united left May Day rally of all parties opposed to the UNP, but the old guard of the LSSP and the revisionist Keuneman opposed it."

At the Maradana CP (Marxist-Leninist) rally: "The left movement in Sri Lanka was now in fragments. In the past, the Communist movements was a force to be reckoned with. Today the opportunism of certain members of the leadership had brought disaster among leftists" said Mr. A. S. M. Cassim, one of the District Committee members of the Communist (Marxist-Lenin) Party at a rally held at the Municipal Council Community Centre at Maradana yesterday.

At the Rallies, the UNP had the largest turnout. The SLFP had the next largest with the ULF coming a close third. The JVP had a sizable number. All the other rallies were not noteworthy for the numbers but for what was said. May Day has not evoked any euphoria of enthusiasm for the government. The political and economic scene in Sri Lanka today is in the doldrums inspite of all the aid promises of the IMF, IBRD, ABD and a number of industrialised countries. People are no longer jubilant about future prospects. People complain that everything looked static and was static, and cynical remarks are heard of about the "never implemented-Dharmista era of a change.." There is a wave of pessimism about the future, though on the surface Sri Lankans are living it up while Colombo is looking brighter and gayer than ever. The best and most expensive restaurants and five-star hotels are crowded, the shops do brisk business among the small class who are getting richer every day; and roads, trains and buses are jammed with thousands of travellers many of them foreigners. But the more serious minded of the Sri Lanka people are worried about the future: they are in a fretful mood, unsure of themselves.

Why is this?

Perhaps the most important reason is the widening gap between promise and fulfilment,

prices and the capacity of the majority to buy, and the worsening law and order situation. This sense of pessimism has begun to increase because of the inability of many Ministers to get things done. Only a few Ministers inspire confidence that they have the capacity to fulfil obligations and make people work. The Prime Minister, Mr. R. Premadasa, has so far evoked the greatest admiration and inspired the greatest confidence among all Ministers, but he cannot do everything.

It is also not clear whether in a presidential form of government the PM could go outside the purview of the departments in his charge. It is possible that if the Third Amendment gives him the power to "interfere" and "intervene" in the work of other Ministers, a great deal can be done. It is too much to expect the President to overlook every Minister, overlook every department and get things done. The Prime Minister must take over some of the burdens—if progress is to be made.

It is also necessary to note that the importing of foodstuffs that are grown here has already begun to cause rumblings in the countryside. There is no doubt that potatoes, chillies and onions, among other items, are being imported in such quantities that local producers will soon not grow them. There is understandable concern that a group of importers have begun to dictate policy to a "Coordinating Committee" that does not seem to pay adequate consideration for the imperatives of local production.

The time has come for an overall review of import policy. If this is not done, the government will find itself in a blind alley. It will not only exhaust the foreign exchange granted by the IMF, but also kill local production in agriculture and industry.

## BETWEEN THE LINES

BY SERENDIB

● In Abundance, But....

● Bhutto ● Recovering Loans

**COST OF LIVING:** The *Ceylon Daily News* in a rare moment of truth editorialised on Thursday, April 27 on a BRINGING DOWN PRICES. The editorial merits attention and comment: "With the exception of beef most food items are now readily available in the open market—but at very high prices. Prices seem almost to defy the laws of supply and demand and have developed the habit of sticking high even though food items and other goods seem to be available in plenty. The most dear is fish the price of which has shot up beyond the budgets of the lower income groups because of the natural shift that the consumer has been compelled to make towards fish. Coconuts and vegetables remain in the higher ranges though available in plenty. Rice is abundantly displayed in the open market at prices higher than those intended by the government. There is something in the sight of plenty for the confidence of a food-starved country, even though not for the stomach. Lakspray is available on the ration for infants but not for adult use. The consumer may be told that there is imported milk powder and condensed milk in the market but few people can afford to buy a kilo of powdered milk for Rs. 26 when they can hardly cough up Rs. 14 for a two and a half pound tin of the local variety. Pulses are plentifully stacked up in the shops and the downward price of spring

onions compensates for the seasonal upswing in the price of red onions."

The argument is that everything is available in plenty, but that prices are high. This is largely true, but some items are very scarce. The *CDN* pretends that fish was scarce only because of "the shift" that the consumer had been compelled to make from meat.

The editorial went on laying it thick about the "abundance" available. This is an echo of the official line: "This then is the rub. From inflated rubber ducks to refrigerators, all the electrical goods in between (mainly inessential), textiles, imported meats, beverages, processed foods for infants and others, cheese, cigarettes, instant coffee, broiler chicken at Rs. 10 per pound, eggs at over 75 cts. provide a bewildering confusion of goods but reduces the consumer to frustration. All these things which have filled the empty shelves of the last few years can be bought at a price. The price is beyond many of us."

And to the credit of the *Daily News* it has picked up courage to say: "the price is beyond many of us". It would have been truer to say that only a very few could afford any of the articles mentioned above—even basic food items.

The editorial then went on to examine the government agencies which are supposed to sell essentials at fixed and reasonable prices and it bemoaned the "plight of the consumer". "The Consumer may be told that the Marketing Department stalls, the central selling points and the polas sell food items much cheaper. While the pola is the traditional hunting ground for food bargains many people are still forced to buy their requirements quickly from the way-side boutique which charges any arbitrary price. Many housewives do not have the time to queue

up at Marketing Department stalls and when they do, they are served up with frayed and unfresh vegetables which they are barred from examining or choosing. The Co-operative with the exodus of the bulk of ration book holders provides the bare minimum of items and one frequently runs the risk of buying pest-ridden packets of Lakspray and dry fish on the way to becoming feruliser. This then is the plight of the consumer. The high price of local food items have to be traced to the middleman. Travellers to the south and the north know only too well the unconscionably low prices the farmer and the market gardner receive for their rice, vegetables, pulses and other produce. What reaches the consumer in the town has no relation whatsoever with the prices paid to the producer. The government has fulfilled one part of its undertaking to make goods readily available but it has not brought down the cost of living. Only a comprehensive distribution operation with plenty of outlets everywhere, state, co-operative, private seems to be the only solution. In the case of imported food and other essential items (we are hardly concerned with the high priced inessentials) only greater plenty can hold the price line down. There are imported electrical and electronic items which are cheaper here than in the reputed markets of Singapore and Malaysia. Whatever the merits of that exercise the entry of food items such as Masoor dhal and red onions would stem the present trend towards upward moving prices."

The editorial is a sad commentary on the present state of Sri Lanka. In desperation, the editorial suggests further importation of items like red onions—although the indiscriminate importation of commodities that are grown here will further

destroy the productive capabilities of the country. But it has no concrete suggestion as to how prices can be brought down.

So far as bringing down the prices, it seems to be only a question of NATO (No Action Talk Only) so far as the government is concerned. The Government must realise that making available an abundance of goods, most of them non-essentials, at prices which only a small tiny section of the population can afford to buy, is political dynamite. It would be far wiser not to exhibit these goods and show the sharp contrast where only a few can buy—than permit the present build-up for a volcanic outburst of frustration, anger and discontent.

#### DEATH SENTENCE ON BHUTTO.

Elsewhere in this issue is published a letter from the former Secretary of the Friends of Bangladesh in Sri Lanka pleading for Bhutto's life. The main reason he advances in support of his plea is that Bhutto had spared Mujibur Rahman's life. Why Bhutto had done it was not out of the kindness of his heart but because he thought that if his life was spared Rahman might help him to pull the chestnuts out of the fire for Pakistan, in Bangladesh. It was a political gamble which did not work the way Bhutto had wanted.

Appeals have been made by a large number of countries, organisations and persons to the Chief Martial Law Administrator (CMLA) to spare Bhutto's life and commute the death sentence—no doubt as a prelude to a pardon. Commutation and pardon will, in this case, be purely on political considerations, because the brutal record of Bhutto's regime in regard to civil rights, repression of political parties and cruelty and torture of opponents will not induce persons who are knowledgeable about the recent history of Pakistan to appeal for clemency

on humanitarian grounds or on the good deeds of Bhutto. It is difficult to bring Bhutto within the category of a freedom fighter, or a fighter for human emancipation, to base any plea for clemency on that score. Bhutto was a manipulative politician who helped to bring back a form of parliamentary (demagogic) politics to this part of the former British territory on the Indian sub-continent. But this is no reason to condone murder—if Bhutto is guilty of it.

When a decision has to be made purely on political grounds, no person, parties, or organisations outside Pakistan, or no foreign government has the right to intervene in such a matter. It is a matter strictly within the jurisdiction and purview of the government of Pakistan.

The only ground for such intervention is when there is a miscarriage of justice, or a perversion of the normal processes of the law. If the suspect or the accused was denied the right to defend himself, or if the normal tenets of law were not applied or if there is insufficient evidence to justify the verdict, it would be correct to make a plea for review.

We ourselves, had been concerned whether Bhutto had a fair trial and also whether the verdict was based on admissible and creditworthy evidence. We were fortunate enough to get a copy of the full 400-page judgement and other material and documents connected with the trial. We painstakingly read through the full judgement and other papers. Not satisfied we had submitted the judgement and documents to some members of the legal fraternity and judiciary in Sri Lanka who are conversant with Criminal Law and are familiar with Criminal trials to obtain their views.

Their considered views are in agreement with the views we ourselves had formed and we can sum them up in this way: (1) that in terms of the tenets of the British system of jurisprudence and law which, in the main, still continues to prevail in India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan and elsewhere, Bhutto had a fair trial; (2) the fact that he refused to participate in the proceedings after a certain stage was of his own seeking, when the Court refused to submit to his provocative and intimidatory tactics which cannot be tolerated by any court; (3) that if he withdrew from the case and refused to participate in the proceedings (as Bhutto did), it was undoubtedly because of bad legal advice in the belief that such a boycott might spark political agitation outside the court and compel the government to free Bhutto; and it was also probably intended to create an impression abroad that justice was being denied to Bhutto to induce and prompt appeals from outside that he be freed; (4) that even if Bhutto did not participate, the admissible evidence that has been led and established in the case is (by any yardstick) adequate to justify the verdict on legal grounds; (5) that the case is not a frame-up by any stretch of imagination—though there may be some weak spots (as in all cases) but by far and large it seems to be an unassailable case so far as the prosecution is concerned; (6) that unfortunately the long judgement is worded in idiom that betrays emotional involvement by some of the Judges but that does not detract from the basic correctness of the judgement.

The world press had picked on some of the more sensational of the badly phrased parts of the judgement and instances of emotional involvement for headline treatment and this led many to form wrong impres-



sions about the true merits of the judgement.

The position, as far as we can see, is that the verdict and judgement cannot be rejected out of hand, as some have suggested, on the ground that it is full of irregularities and illegalities. The quantum and trustworthiness of the evidence cannot be easily challenged. It is now for the Supreme Court of Pakistan to decide whether, in its view, Bhutto had a fair trial and whether the verdict was based on proper evidence.

The Supreme Court has the right to order a re-trial, free him, or confirm the sentence. The Supreme Court can also add a rider, if it so thinks, for clemency for the CMLA to consider commutation or pardon. Unless the Supreme Court decides, in its wisdom, that there are legal grounds, to invalidate the verdict of the High Court or to recommend clemency, there are no legal grounds for intervention on behalf of Bhutto.

*This, to us, seems to be the position. The charges and evidence against Bhutto are formidable and convincing. It is not possible to base a plea for clemency on any ground except political considerations and this is entirely a matter for the people and government of Pakistan.*

*Whether General Zia and the government of Pakistan will consider clemency if the decision of the Supreme Court is unfavourable to Bhutto is a matter for speculation. And it is also too early for such speculation. What would be politic at the time the decision of the Supreme Court is made known is hard to say as of today.*

**AGRICULTURAL LOANS:** Recovery of agricultural loans has become a big problem in Sri Lanka. All governments in recent times have faced this problem. An estimated Rs. 380 million is outstanding

from credit extended from 1970-77 according to some official estimates. Other estimates placed the outstandings in arrears at Rs. 900 million.

Recently the government, it is said, has devised a plan to ensure that the massive amount of agricultural credit pumped into the Maha cultivation is recovered from the farmers. The Minister of Agriculture has declared that farmers availing themselves of agricultural credit will be required to sign a banker's pro-note. After the harvest, the PMB will pay for the crop on a voucher drawn on the bank which has extended the agricultural credit. When the voucher is presented at the bank, the money lent will be deducted and the farmer paid the balance that is due to him. The Bank of Ceylon and the People's Bank have lent nearly Rs. 800 million to farmers for financing the current (1977-78) Maha cultivation. If the farmer wishes to have fresh credit, he must repay this loan. How far the government will succeed in obtaining repayment of such loans is yet to be seen.

The PMB has also decided to appoint Authorised agents to purchase paddy during the current Maha season under the Guaranteed Price scheme. At present only the the MPCS functions as authorised agents. These private authorised agents will be able to purchase paddy and other agricultural produce from the farmers under the Guaranteed Price Scheme in a defined area, stock them and deliver them to the PMB. The People's Bank with the concurrence of the Central Bank has consented to extend facilities to purchase paddy on behalf of the PMB by discounting Goods Receipt Notes issued by the PMB to these Agents.

Inefficiency and corruption, being rampant in the system, agricultural loans were granted to

the wrong people who indulged in worthless consumerism instead of cultivating the land. There are instances, in the 1977-78 Maha loan scheme, of one family obtaining over a lakh of rupees in the names of different members for the same piece of land. In other cases people, who had nothing to do with the land have been given loans and they have bought radios, watches, nylon shirts—which they will be compelled to sell fairly quickly to make ends meet.

Paddy cultivation is of utmost importance today for the development of Sri Lanka's economy. This means that more and more paddy should be cultivated to reach self-sufficiency and maybe export. To ensure an efficient working of the system, it is essential to set about everything in a systematic manner. Right from the word go, there should be no mistakes, corruption or inefficiency. Loans should be granted to the "correct people" to enable them to obtain seed paddy, fertilizer, manure, insecticides etc., at the appropriate time. The loan system can work only if finally the paddy is purchased from the farmer at a reasonable price—and if payments are made promptly.

The present system where purchasing officers cheat those who go to the PMB on weight etc., must be eliminated. Also the harassment through delays to compel sellers and give a "cut" to PMB officials must be ended.

Further, the Government must investigate and examine some fundamental questions in granting agricultural loans for "production." Such loans will be useful, meaningful and productive only if the lands in respect of which loans are granted are lands that are "developed" adequately (i.e. where it is capitalised to a productive level of development). Most loans remain unpaid because

the lands in question are undeveloped or under-developed and are therefore unable to utilise the loans granted and produce profitable results.

In such cases what is called for are long-term development loans not seasonal or short-term production loans. Ever since the massive agricultural loans schemes were started

with Dudley Senanayake's Grow More Food Campaign after 1966, little or no attention has been paid to the question of the developmental (adequately capitalised) level of the lands. The time has come to improve the methodology of granting agricultural loans—development as well as production so that there are no difficulties in repayment.

MINISTRY OF FISHERIES

## Make Fair Criticisms, Not Insinuations, Says Director | Development

MINISTRY OF FISHERIES P.O. Box No. 1707, Galle Face, Colombo 3.

Development Division  
21, Galle Face Courts  
27th April 1978.  
Ref. F/D/10/A.

The Editor,  
"Tribune".  
43, Dawson Street,  
COLOMBO. 2.

Reference the news items appearing in the "Tribune" on the 18th and 25th March 1978 and 22nd April 1978.

I am forwarding herewith a report for publication in the "Tribune".

Signature Illegible  
Director/Development

### Statement by the Director Development, Ministry of Fisheries.

Apropos the news items appearing in the *Tribune* on "Fish and Fisheries" of 18th March, 1978: "More about Fish" of 25th March, 1978 and "Fables of Festus" of 22nd April, 1978.

It is agreed that fish is expensive and in short supply, but not for the reasons as set out by you. The main reason is inadequate production. Our annual production is about 130,000 tons, 90% of which is from the coastal fishery i.e. upto a distance of 24 miles from the shore. A fair number of our boats are laid up by hull and engine repairs and others do not go out to sea as often as they should,

because of poor maintenance. This situation is due to a series of problems of which the most serious is the short supplies of fishing nets, engines and spare parts due to restrictions in foreign exchange. With the liberalisation of imports, there is considerable improvement in the fishing nets, engines and spare parts situations. However, it will take some time for things to come back to normal and for the boats to operate at peak efficiency. Till such time as production is increased and in the context of increased demand for fish in preference to other protein substitutes like milk, eggs and meat, it would be optimistic to expect a drastic reduction in the price of fish. It is common

knowledge that most of the Fishermen's Co-operative Societies are inefficiently managed. With these constraints, even with the best of efforts, the fishermen are unable to deliver the goods.

In this context it must be mentioned that the new Government inherited a depreciated set of assets and a system of management with controls, quotas, licences, permits and other sets of rules and procedures which were generally counter productive. Efficient management in the Ceylon Fisheries Corporation was at rock bottom levels. Its fleet of trawlers was managed inefficiently. The trawlers were more in the harbours than out at sea fishing. The Ceylon Fisheries Corporation produced 2,500 tons of fish in 1972. This dropped to 500 tons in 1976 and 300 tons in 1977. To arrest this downward trend and to reestablish the CFC on a sound footing, the Hon. Minister has taken a policy decision that the Corporation would in future not engage itself in fishing but instead concentrate on the distribution and marketing of fish. In the national interest the fleet of trawlers is being repaired and will be handed over to people who could operate them on terms that are advantageous to the Corporation. At the present time the Ceylon Fisheries Corporation does not control a sizeable share of the market to enable it to exert decisive influence on producer and consumer prices. It is to be hoped that very soon it would be in a position to control a larger share of the market by increasing its purchases direct from the fishermen.

In regard to exports, it is correct that we export lobsters, prawns, beche-de-mer, shark fins etc. This constitutes only about 3 or 4% of the total catch but brings in over Rs. 100 M. in foreign exchange. This foreign exchange is used to import the necessary in-

## SRI LANKA CHRONICLE

April 17—23

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

CDN—Ceylon Daily News; CDM—Ceylon Daily Mirror; CO—Ceylon Observer; ST—Sunday Times; DM—Dinamina; LD—Lankadipa; VK—Virakesari; ATH—Aththa; SM—Silumina; SLD—Sri Lankadipa; JD—Janadina; DP—Dinapathi; SU—Sun; CM—Chintamani; WK—Weekend; RR—Riviresa; EN—Eelanadu; IDPR—Information Press Release; DK—Dinakara; DW—Dawasa.

**MONDAY, APRIL 17:** Singapore and Sri Lanka will enter into a pact which will have far reaching economic benefits for both countries; the basic formula for this agreement was discussed yesterday when a delegation of Singapore Ministers met the Minister of Finance and Planning; the Singapore team evinced a lot of interest in the proposed FTZ to be set up in Sri Lanka. The police is to set up a 'search and destroy' anti terrorist unit styled on model units in France, West Germany and England. The President will open the National Agricultural and Horticultural show in Nuwara Eliya today. Mr. Arthur Clarke, well known space fiction writer and underwater explorer, has stressed the urgent need for marine and coastal protection in view of the unrestricted mining of coral in the country. Consumer Resistance Committees will be set up soon at electoral level; they will be a major instrument in the government's efforts to eliminate the black market and bring down the cost of living. The National Museum has arranged to purchase all genu-

ine articles of antiquity belonging to private individuals and institutions—CDN. The government is considering a proposal of providing the fullest protection to secret witnesses in major cases of crime and violence even to the extent of helping such persons to settle down in some other country. Sri Lanka is expected to receive a significant level of foreign assistance in 1978 from ten donor countries who form the Aid Consortium of Sri Lanka which met in Paris on April 5. While the Sinhala and Tamil New Year festivities were on an unprecedentedly lavish scale this year, the occasion was marred by as many as 34 cases of homicide, eight fatal accidents and thefts valued at Rs. 80,000—CDM. Sri Lanka and Tanzania are the first two nations to receive loans at most favourable conditions from the newly-established Rome based International Fund for Agricultural Development. 17000 families are to be settled under the Mahaweli development scheme before September this year. A systematic combing out of the jungles along the Murunkan-Madhu road by seven teams of skilled police investigators assisted by army personnel is going on; the assistance of air force personnel is also likely to be sought—SU. It is only through regional autonomy that the problems of the Tamils can be solved and I will do my best to get the support of the Sinhalese people to this said the leader of the LSSP, Dr. N. M. Perera—VK. The government has decided to increase loans granted to rubber producers by 50%—DM. The government has allocated 80 million rupees to construct and repair roads and bridges. The government has decided to construct a bulb factory soon—LD. Red brigade guerillas tonight sentenced kidnapped ex-Premier Aldo Moro to death. Kuwait today became the first Arab oil country

puts for the industry and also to partly finance inputs of essential food items. I think it would be erroneous to assume that if prawns, lobsters and shark fins are not exported, they would reach the nutritionally deprived poorer sections of the people. It would therefore be prudent to export high priced varieties which have an export market. Earnings from such exports could be made use of to bring in dried fish and other cheap protein substitutes which would be more beneficial than preserving these expensive varieties for the consumption of a privileged few.

As regards fishing on license, it must be mentioned that such licenses are issued only in areas outside the coastal fishing zone. It must be considered that the off-shore and deep sea area of our territorial waters is not presently exploited sufficiently. This could be exploited without affecting the coastal catch. 40% of the catch is sold to the CFC and royalties are charged on the balance 60% that is exported. Such fishing activities are supervised by the Fisheries Department Observers and if any of the conditions are violated the license is cancelled. The licence of one foreign operator has been cancelled for violating in terms of the contract. In any event, fishing on licence is on a trial basis and is for a specified period. If the results are not satisfactory, the licence will not be renewed.

It is a matter for regret that there are many insinuations in your articles regarding officials in the Fisheries Ministry and the Fisheries Corporation. I think you will agree that fair criticism must be confined to situation which can be substantiated with facts. There is no doubt that suitable action would be taken against errant officers, if they are found guilty after full inquiry.

(Signature Illegible)  
Director/Development  
Ministry of Fisheries.

in the Persian Gulf to introduce general conscription calling up its 1960 age group for national service. A magazine reported on Friday that a nuclear device secretly installed by the US to monitor Chinese atomic tests had crashed into the Himalayan snow and might contaminate the headwaters of the sacred river Ganges—SU. Thousands of cheering, chanting Israelis poured into the main city square to demonstrate their support of PM Menachem Begin's controversial Middle East Peace Policy—CDM. Somali guerillas fighting in the war-torn Ogaden desert said today that they killed more than 800 Ethiopian and Cuban troops in the past week. An Indian newspaper today quoted workers and teachers as saying at least 150 people were killed when Police fired at rioting farm workers last Thursday—CDN.

**TUESDAY, APRIL 18:** Sri Lanka had a great past and would have a great future under President Jayawardene, Singapore's PM, Mr. Lee Kuan Yew, said yesterday; he also said 'we must fight the common enemy—a common feature in every nation. A Presidential Commission will inquire into the malpractices in the University of Sri Lanka that led to the present deterioration in the standard of discipline and education in its higher seat of learning. The government has alerted the security services, particularly the customs and naval patrols to keep a sharp look out for attempts at smuggling paddy and rice from Sri Lanka to India. The deputy Minister of Health said that more doctors were returning home following better terms offered by the present government. A recent survey of the hotel industry has warned of a serious problem of over capacity which is bound to trouble the industry in the next few years with grave repercussions on the

overall rate of return on the invested capital. 1663 new vehicles were registered with the Registrar of Motor Vehicles between January 1 and April 12 this year—CDN. The admission of the 5000 new entrants to the University of Sri Lanka will be delayed by about four months because of the frequent strikes in the university campuses in recent years. There is an acute shortage of teaching staff including professors and lecturers in the Medical faculty. The Minister of Plantation Industry has called for an immediate report from heads of departments of his Ministry as to why over 30,000 workers have been paid less than the wages specified in the Wages Board Ordinance—CDM. There is a suspicion that the CID officers who were shot at Murunkan were shot at with their own guns—DP. The new District Ministers will be appointed with effect from June—VK. Indian Ayurvedic men will make use of easier travel facilities between the subcontinent and Sri Lanka to co-operate with their counterparts in Sri Lanka to research this ancient science—CO. The CTB has provided employment for 8327 persons during the period of July 1977 to March 1978. The Dept of Railways has given jobs to 1230 people during the same period—IDPR No. 23: An educational Voluntary Service Organisation has been set up for the first time in the educational history of Sri Lanka; this organisation would carry on maintenance work in schools through 'Sramadana' work, engage in the welfare of the children etc—IDPR No. 30. The Minister of Fisheries has decided to send a trawler with food and medical supplies and storing facilities for every 100, 3½ ton fishing vessels so that the vessels could spend more time at sea—LD. About 150 people were feared killed in a freak tornado in the Eastern Indian state of Orissa today. The US is

reportedly planning to gradually pull out of Diego Garcia—or in the alternative reduce sharply its military commitments in the controversial little island in the Indian ocean—CDN. British and American foreign ministers ended two days of talks with Rhodesian guerilla leaders early yesterday in deep dissent over who should hold the reins of power during the country's run up to black majority rule—CDM.

**WEDNESDAY, APRIL 19:** A five year programme to establish and run a university in the South at an estimated cost of Rs. 160 million has been drawn up. Singapore will extend its full support and co-operation to Sri Lanka's GCEC: this was clear after yesterday's talks between delegates of the two countries. The US is proposing an increase in its economic development assistance to Sri Lanka from 25 million dollars in 1977-78 to an estimated 25 million dollars more for 78-79, a large slice of which will go to the accelerated Mahaweli Project. The current heat wave in Colombo and many of the parts of the island is likely to continue until the outbreak of the seasonal SW monsoon. At a special ceremony to be held tomorrow at the Rashtrapati Bhavan, India, the President of India will hand over to our Minister of Cultural Affairs the Kapilavastu relics. 23 countries representing the non-aligned movement approved recommendations at a meeting for improving a common news pool and for solving communication problems.—CDN. Sri Lanka will receive a loan of nearly Rs. 192 million on concessional terms for Kirindi Oya Irrigation and Settlement Project. The Sri Lanka police have sought the assistance of the Tamil Nadu police to help in the investigations connected with the killing of the CID Officers at Murunkan. General

Sepala Attygala has started cleaning up operations at the Katunayake International Airport. The administrator of the UNDP, Mr. Bradford Morse, will be in Sri Lanka this week to participate in the regional meeting of UNDP Resident Representatives for Asia and Pacific—CDM. The government of Maldives has sought the assistance of Sri Lanka to help organise its Foreign Ministry on a bigger basis. There is a long queue outside the port of Colombo and the government has to pay 150 dollars a day as demurrage—SU. Sri Lanka has decided to purchase about 100,000 tons of rice from Pakistan in the context of increasing rice prices in the international market—CO. To avoid the shortage of fertiliser for the next yala harvest 10,000 metric tons of fertiliser are to be imported immediately—DP. Plans have been drawn up to construct a modern fish market in the Pettah at a cost of 20 million rupees—LD. Frogmen searched the bottom of a muddy Italian lake today for the body of kidnapped former PM, Aldo Moro, after a statement in the name of guerilla red brigades said he had been executed. No Arab leader will reject peace if it accomplished total Israeli withdrawal from all Arab territory occupied in 1967 and after, King Hussein of Jordan said yesterday—SU. UN Secretary General secured further Palestinian assurances that guerillas will not hamper UN attempts to hasten a withdrawal of Israeli occupation forces from South Lebanon—CDM. US Secretary of State, Cyrus Vance and British Foreign Minister Daniel Owen were told in Salisbury by all four black government members that the internal settlement worked out four weeks ago was the best hope for peaceful transition to black majority rule—CDN.

**THURSDAY, APRIL 20:** Singapore's PM believes that Sri Lanka

is generally on the right track, the Director of the GCEC said after talks with him. The PM of Singapore and four Singapore ministers who arrived here last Saturday leave for Singapore today. The Minister of Health has told the Ceylon Homeopathic Medical Association that the government will shortly implement the Homeopathic Medical Act No. 7 of 1970; it provides for the appointment of a Homeopathic Medical Council, registration of practitioners and other measures to regulate and develop this system of medicine—CDN. The owners of the arrested Taiwanese trawler yesterday paid the fine of 100,000 US dollars imposed on them by the Additional Magistrate Fort, on their pleading guilty to two charges of fishing in Sri Lanka's territorial waters. The Deputy Minister of Trade has directed the CWE to import 2000 tons of Bombay onions from India. A significant draw off of rice issued on ration had been reduced with the introduction of the new rationing scheme. The police claim to have established the identity of four members of the terrorist group involved in the killing of the CID officers in Murunkan—CDM. Police have asked for far reaching changes in some of the laws of the country to facilitate their work and speed up investigation of crime. The SLP Trade Unions will hold their May Day rally and procession at Hyde Park. A new nurse's service to treat patients in ayurvedic hospitals is to be set up soon; it will be known as the Ayurvedic Nurse's Service—SU. If the TULF fail to accept the posts of District Ministers it will not be necessary to appoint anyone else to these posts is what the government believes—VK. There is a likelihood of a salary increase for government as well as private sector employees within the next two months—DP. The government is going to recruit

Indian engineers and technical experts; they will get high salaries and other benefits not given to local officers—ATH. Estates under the Janawasama Commission have made a profit of 6.5 million rupees in the last six months—LD. The Controller of Immigration and Emigration has issued 13000 passports in March—DW. Israeli television said last night Israeli forces would make another and deeper withdrawal in Southern Lebanon in two weeks time pulling back to 10 kilometres north of the Israeli frontier with Lebanon. The Lebanese cabinet today tendered its resignation to the President. The US Senate last night ratified a treaty under which Panama takes full control of the 50 mile waterway by the end of the country—CDN. The World's birth rate dropped to the lowest level in recorded history during the past year and average life expectancy reached a new high according to population figures released today—CDM. President Anwar Sadat is reportedly preparing to convene the National Security Council, the country's top policy making body, to send a mes-

"He who regards  
With an eye that is equal  
Friends and Comrades,  
The foe and Kinsman,  
The vile, the wicked,  
The men who judged him,  
And those who belong  
To neither faction  
He is the greatest."

—Bhagavad-Gita

\* \* \* \*

The gods gave man fire and  
he invented fire engines. They  
gave him love and he inven-  
ted marriage.

\* \* \* \*

If a little knowledge is dan-  
gerous, where is the man who  
has so much as to be out of  
danger.

sage to US President Jimmy Carter as efforts to promote the West Asian Peace process gets into high gear—SU.

**FRIDAY, APRIL 21:** The ASEAN group of countries will consider Sri Lanka's entry into the Group if and when Sri Lanka responds to the declaration by the ASEAN secretariat that has been made from time to time for neighbouring countries to join ASEAN: Sri Lanka's President did not specifically discuss the possibility of joining the ASEAN group but expressed an interest in ASEAN, and what it was doing and hoped to do said, the Singapore PM yesterday. All restrictions on the issue of cement have been removed by the Ceylon Cement Corporation now any quantity of cement can be bought without any document such as the AGA's letter—CDN. Singapore investors would be here by next January said the PM of Singapore at yesterday's press conference. A new structure to provide efficient marketing facilities on national scale, with markets on a village and electoral level will replace the marketing Department stalls; this follows recommendations of the Parliamentary Committee appointed by the Minister of Trade to probe the activities of the Marketing Departments. Maximum security will be provided by the police in and around university campuses from Sunday April 23 onwards till as long as necessary. There were at anchor outside the port of Colombo yesterday 11 food ships with consignments of flour and rice for the Food Commissioner's department—CDM. The government yesterday concluded a multi-million dollar deal for the purchase of five cargo vessels from the Soviet Union at a cost of nine million dollars each. The Ceylon Electricity Board will be compelled to impose power cuts if the rains do not come within the next few days officials warned

yesterday. The government of India has decided to give an award to any person discovering a homeopathic medicine which can be used safely and effectively for the prevention of pregnancy—SU. About 70,000 bundles of dry fish imported for the New Year are still stuck at the harbour. The Social Service Department has spent 19 million rupees for those rendered homeless after the August disturbances—DW. A statement in the name of the Red Brigades said today that kidnapped former PM Aldo Moro could be freed in exchange for communist prisoners. US Secretary of State Cyrus Vance arrived in Moscow last night hoping to move ahead with negotiations on new Strategic Arms Limitation Talks as the Soviet Union issued fresh calls for all out efforts to achieve accord—SU. The Israeli government hopes to set up a company secretly to buy Arab land in the occupied West Bank an Israeli Newspaper reported—CDN. France vowed yesterday to keep its nuclear strike force up to date as comment on press reports that it has already tested a neutron bomb—CDM.

**SATURDAY, APRIL 22:** The President has asked that the highest respect and homage be paid to the sacred Buddha relics from Kapilavastu arriving here today, in keeping with time hallowed custom and tradition from the days of the Sinhala kings. The Sri Lanka Sugar Corporation is making arrangements to recruit about 4000 workers during the present sugar cane harvesting season. The West German team of consultants at present in the island to draw up a project out of the six priority projects in the accelerated Mahaweli scheme met the Minister of Irrigation on Thursday. The Ministry of Public Administration and Home Affairs has launched a program to give more power to rural development societies in a bid to mobilise locally available

resources and skills for the development effort—CDN. The Minister of Education will set up a polytechnic in each administrative district and government sanction has been sought to set up 12 more in addition to the existing 18. Malaria is not being controlled effectively in certain areas because some members of the medical staff at outstation hospitals are not prescribing the correct anti malarial dosage of medicines nor are they administering the combination of drugs necessary to control the disease. Sri Lanka has been granted a sum of nearly Rs. 504 million in foreign exchange for economic and social development activities by the UNDP for the period 1977-81—CDM. The import support scheme proposed by the government will get under way by July. The government yesterday moved into adopt a series of measures to ease the congestion in the Colombo Port. The Ministry of Higher Education has suspended a further batch of 30 students of the Peradeniya Campus who are alleged to have been involved in the recent disturbances at the university. The government has allocated Rs. 1 million for the rehabilitation of more than 2000 beggars who were sent out of Colombo by the previous government during the non-aligned summit. The Ministry of Higher Education has suspended a further batch of 30 students of the Peradeniya Campus who are alleged to be involved in the recent disturbances at the university—SU. The Minister of Labour will shortly bring in legislation to keep shops open even in the night—DP. The Minister of Labour has taken steps to grant legislative protection to about 20,000 workers in the Security Service trade who are at the moment not covered by any of the existing labour laws—IDPR No. 32. Tea production has gone down by 35 million kilogrammes because

the companies which administered the tea estates before the government took them over have not been replanted although they have taken government loans—ATH. The crisis within the leadership of India's ruling Janata Alliance appeared to be coming to a head today amid reports that interior minister Charan Singh has given his resignation. Heavy fighting is currently taking place in Southern Angola between government troops and UNITA which is for total independence of Angola guerrillas, a guerilla spokesman confirmed today—SU. Angola has smashed a military attempt backed by South Africa to set up a so called 'Black Socialist Republic of Angola' inflicting heavy casualties on the insurgents, Uganda radio said yesterday—CDM. South Korea and Japan tonight appealed for Soviet help in securing the early return of passengers and crew aboard a Korean Boeing 707 airliner which made a mysterious landing in the Russian Arctic. Japan today adopted wide ranging economic measures which a senior cabinet minister claimed could cut the country's massive current account trade surplus by about 10 billion dollars in the fiscal year 1978—CDN.

**SUNDAY, APRIL 23:** A shower of soft flower petals cascaded on the Katunayake airport tarmac as President Jayawardene received the casket containing the sacred kapilavastu relics from the Minister of Cultural Affairs yesterday. The government is actively exploring the possibility of obtaining the services of doctors from India to meet the shortfall in the Health Department's cadre, the Minister of Health disclosed—SO. In a rare gesture of confidence in the economic policy of the government, the World Bank has given the green light to proceed with the accelerated Mahaweli project even be-

fore the Aid Sri Lanka Consortium meets in Paris next month to consider aid for this venture. The police yesterday questioned five youths from Wellawatte in connection with the killing of the four CID officials Chronic absenteeism of Food Department lorry drivers after the New Year holidays was one of the main causes of the delays in clearing food cargo from the port of Colombo a senior official said yesterday. The Minister of Fisheries has cancelled the license of the Singapore firm that was given permission to catch fish by trawling within 24 miles of Sri Lanka; this is a sequel to the discovery made by the Navy that they were trawling within the 25 mile limit—ST. A foreign employment agency in collusion with a Sri Lanka operator is alleged to have bundled out over 2000 Sri Lankan into a life of misery and slavery in the Gulf States—WK. It has been discovered that a number of malpractices by government servants to obtain pensions when they have not served the

full term—DP. The leader of the LSSP has said that Tamil was not a minority language but a national language and that his party would recognise Tamil as a state language—EN. A group of SLFP supporters led by an ex-minister have asked for a Council of leaders for the SLFP; he has also said that moves have been made to change the present corrupt leadership of the party—SLDP. Soviet jet fighters fired at the South Korean airliner which they forced to land in Northern Russia, White House security Affairs Officers said—SO. Former Police Lieutenant of the overthrown pro-western regime in Kampuchea told an International Committee in Oslo of the forced evacuation of more than 2 million people from Phnom Penh by the red Khmer. British PM today issued a strong warning to the Soviet Union to use restraint in building and deploying warships.

## COVER

## LITTLE FISH, NO FISH

ON THE COVER we have once again spotlighted a scene from a fishing village, really a fishing wadi. The men have drawn the net in and are preparing to lay it by for tomorrow's catch. Today, was not a lucky day, nor was the day before. It has been so for sometime now. It has been a case of little or no fish this season. Even when a little fish comes in the net there is not enough ice to send the catch to the markets in Colombo and elsewhere. The fishermen do not know what has overtaken them to bring about this calamity. They have lit candles, but of little avail. Little do they realise that foreign trawlers have fished Sri Lanka's coastal belt almost to the extinction of fish on a commercial scale; and that these trawlers have been licenced to do by a short-sighted government. It is only now that the truth, like murder, has come to light. In Madras, recently, when farmers had started a "revolt" against inept government policies, catamaran fisherman began to block roads and resort to violence protesting on the encroachment of mechanised fishing vessels into areas declared to be the preserves of the non-mechanised fishing craft. Unless the Sri Lanka government wakes up, fishermen and farmers will soon stage revolts in this country—fishermen against foreign trawlers that carry our fish away after depleting our seas and farmers against local importers who have flooded the market with potatoes and other items which are grown here at throw away prices.

## Termination

—Safeguards For Employees—  
by A Special Correspondent

This is the second in the Series of four articles on some of the objectionable features of the Draft Law. We invite our readers to send us their comments on this series as well as the White Paper on Employment.

Let us now proceed to study one of the sections of major concern—the procedure to be adopted to terminate the employment of persons.

Section 22 (3) accepts the basic tenet that the employee should be notified of the case against him. But what is amazing is that the employee is given only "not less than 3 clear days" in which to give the explanation. This could very well be 4 days or 40 days depending on the perversity or otherwise of the management concerned. Reasonable men will ordinarily give 14 days, but all men are not reasonable. The law is there only to provide for such eventualities, because of the anti-social tendencies in human beings, which are easily discernible when the baser instincts in man take over. It thus seems necessary to make the grant of 14 days within which to give the explanation mandatory.

The procedure prescribed for the domestic inquiry is very interesting. It is claimed that "for the first time in this country...an employer shall hold a domestic inquiry into the allegations against his employee"—paragraph 19 of the Preamble to the Draft Law. If such a domestic inquiry was

hitherto not available, it is a severe indictment against ourselves, and more so when Sri Lanka is reputed to have on its statute books the most progressive labour legislation. This, however, does not appear to be quite the correct position. It is understood that out of a total work force of nearly 1.20 million, the benefit of domestic inquiries has been available to about 22,000 workers in firms which are members of the Employers Federation, under terms of Collective Agreements.

The 'domestic inquiry', will it is presumed, in the absence of any indication to the contrary, be held by a nominee of management. The Preamble further boasts that representation will be permitted for the accused at the inquiry. But in the very next sub-section (10) of section 22 there is the pernicious provision that the representative of the man in the dock "who obstructs such inquiry in any manner whatsoever" can be required by the employer to withdraw from the proceedings. Such an entitlement smacks of partiality, and becomes all the more obnoxious when the inquiry officer is going to be part of the management. Once the representative is required to withdraw from the proceedings, the accused will have to fend for himself and will have to accept the findings of the *ex parte* proceedings.

If the accused, if found guilty, punishment will be imposed on the employee. Thereafter, "such employee shall not be entitled to seek any relief or redress in respect of such termination in any proceedings under the provisions of the Industrial Disputes Act unless, it could be proved that: (a) such termination was effected in bad faith or was an act of victimisation; or (b) the inquiry under the provisions of this section was in violation of the principles of natural justice;

*Domestic Inquiries Alone Inadequate*

or (c) the findings were perverse on the materials adduced: as provided for under section 22 (15) of the Law. Now, by whom, and where and how are the three infirmities at (a) (b) and (c) above to be established. This does not stand to reason. In order to satisfy myself that I was not overreacting to this type of legislation which, in my view, is vindictive, I put this to a labour consultant to a sprawling industrial complex. His reaction was not far different from mine.

I examined the sections of the Law under Part III which deals with Employees Councils to see if there was any provision for the Council to intervene in these matters, but to my disappointment I could find no such provision, unless of course section 73(c) could be stretched to include provision for the Council to determine whether in fact there have been infractions of the Law that could establish the infirmities set out in section 22 (15) of the Law. This does not seem possible. Indeed why should the Law not make this very clear, that is, where and how section 22 (15) can be established by the aggrieved party. Office must be regarded as something closely akin to freehold property and the sanctity attached to it. **To deprive a man of his employment lightly is only less shocking than to deprive him of his goods or land.**

The provisions which I regard necessary to safeguard the worker from harassment and unfair treatment by the employer are on the premise that the remedy available now through the Industrial Disputes Act is being withdrawn under the draft Law, section 23(3). **I am inclined to the view that a domestic inquiry could be acceptable only if the aggrieved employee has a further place from which to seek remedy—the Labour Tribunal which is essen-**



tially a court of equity. The memorandum of the Centre for Society and Religion comments "...but to our mind the main effect of the proposed new legislation is to make job-security an illusion. An employer will have the power to get rid of an employee for any arbitrary or capricious reason including trade union militancy merely on the payment of compensation and his action will be final and unappealable" I could not agree with these sentiments more. I have already commented on the immorality of depriving a man or woman of employment lightly. It is therefore suggested that:

(a) an appeal from a decision consequent of a domestic inquiry be made available to the Labour Tribunal. This is what the Centre for Society and Religion has to say on this point:

"The Industrial Disputes Act of 1950 was amended in 1957 to establish a special category of courts called Labour Tribunals... is under duty to make all such inquiries into the application and make such order as may appear to the Tribunal to be just and equitable"

What is needed for industrial peace is justice and equity and only the assurance that an appeal to an institution administering justice, such as the Labour Tribunal, is available can ensure this. If sections 4 and 23 are to remain, an appeal to the Labour Tribunal is indispensable.

(b) Section 22(10) should be repealed. It follows that section 22 (11) will also need deletion. An ignorant worker pitched against the might of management at an inquiry before an inquiry officer nominated by the management would have no chance. If this were not tragic, it would have the flippancy of a Gilbert and Sullivan opera.

(c) The inquiry officer should be nominated by the Employees Council. If the Council is unable to agree on the inquiry officer, the Commissioner of Labour should be empowered under this Law to nominate the officer.

(d) Section 22(8) needs revision. If the accused officer prefers to be defended by a lawyer or by an employee from an undertaking other than that in which he is employed, it should be possible for him to do so.

(e) In view of my comments earlier on the indefensible provisions of section 22(15), provision should be made in the same section that the authority who shall determine whether any or all the infirmities set out therein exist, shall be the Commissioner of Labour to whom the aggrieved employee shall be free to appeal direct.

### STRIKES, LOCK-OUTS AND GO-SLOW.

Strikes have been the only weapon available to the worker to extract from the employer elementary justice. What I could never understand, and still fail to understand, is why a management must wait for a strike, to grant demands which could very well have been granted before the employees struck. The spate of strikes in 1956 over the payment of the allowance of Rs. 17/50 by the private sector is a case in point. Only the management can answer this question. Management is incontestably concerned only with profits and to the Managers in charge, profit will always be the criterion of success and prestige. In many instances, the badge of success of a manager is a duodenal ulcer! Strikes and lock-outs can always be avoided if the managers regard part of their job (apart from profit making) the removal of frustrations and obstructions to the performance in the areas for which they are responsible.

It is not my intention here to discuss the concept of management. In view, however of the fact that good management is indisputably an essential ingredient for the maintenance of industrial peace, perhaps a little diversion will not be altogether out of place. I go back to Japan once more! No major decision in a firm is taken without a consensus. Decision making is by consensus and though it takes time, perhaps even months, once the decision is made, every cog in the undertaking moves with clock work precision and in complete harmony, because everyone has participated in the decision making process and each one is in honour bound to make it work. What happens in our country, and regrettably all too often, is that in his anxiety to turn in a good performance and also go up a notch on the ladder of promotion, the manager avoids the time consuming process of holding goal-setting sessions (as in Japan) and sets arbitrary goals himself. These goals are never reached.

I do not question the right of the manager to approve the objectives and goals and that he must also have the last say on his subordinates. But there can also be no question either that setting arbitrary goals for subordinates is self defeating. The manager loses on all counts—motivation, understanding and opportunity to delegate. According to Maslow, the hierarchy of needs of the worker are: survival; safety; security; social status; ego-satisfaction and self esteem; autonomy and independence; and self actualisation. Many managers forget that all human beings, workers, middle level supervisors or executives, respond to a major extent to the same sources of motivation.

(To be continued)

## HUMAN RIGHTS

## The Endless Search

by Howard Wriggins

We print the full text of the speech delivered by Dr. Howard Wriggins, US Ambassador to Sri Lanka, at a meeting held under the auspices of the United Nations Association at Trimmer Hall in Jaffna on March 18, 1978. Short extracts of this speech appeared in some daily papers, but the full speech merits serious consideration and provides food for thought at this juncture of Sri Lanka and world history.

*Mr. President, Members of the United Nations Association, Ladies, and Gentlemen;*

When Mr. Duraiswamy invited me to speak before you, I was honored—and pleased. Honored because the United Nations Association is one of those institutions which bring men and women from many countries in support of one of the world's important organizations. And pleased, because I had been planning to come to Jaffna, and this gave me just the opportunity I welcomed.

2. The last time my wife and I were here was in 1956, when we participated in a prize-giving at Uduppidi Girls School, at the request of Rev. Sydney Bunker. And it was his daughter, Charlotte Bunker, who accompanied us home to the United States as helper to my wife when we returned with our 3 month old daughter, born in Colombo. So it is like returning to old friends to come again today.

3. I was also happy to speak to you because our President, Jimmy Carter, has given a renewed stress to human rights, and the United Nations has all along concerned

itself with issues of individual human rights.

The year that has passed since President Carter took office has been marked by a renewed concern—throughout the world—for the rights of men and women everywhere. We Americans have engaged in intense debate and discussion, experiencing some confusion and criticism about the role of human rights in our own society and in our relations with the rest of the world.

4. This national and international dialogue on human rights has offered us the opportunity to pause and reflect on our own heritage, to ask ourselves some basic questions:

—Why are human rights so important to us as a people?

—How is our concern about human rights manifested in our own country?

—Why, in our relations with other nations, does our concern about human rights now play a more important role?

5. In part this is because we have experienced during the past decade a remarkable change in our own way of dealing with one another—at least in certain parts of the country. And it derives, too, from a sense that in recent years some of our national leaders rather lost their way. For whatever reason, the American people feel impelled to again reach back to the roots of our political heritage.

6. You will recall that in the early days of the American Republic, the Founding Fathers—and Mothers—believed that no government could intervene against the basic rights of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. They advanced the claim that governments existed to secure these rights.

As we established our Constitutional structure, our founders

sought the strongest guarantees to preserve the basic freedoms of speech, worship, assembly, privacy, and due process of law.

7. These rights have served as the basis for legislation, court decisions and social action for the 200 years of our Constitutional history. They are essential to our self respect as a nation and a people. But their origins are to be found in other places and in other centuries.

The notion of the ancient Hebrews that man has a contractual relationship to his God became, as it passed through Greece and Rome, the idea of a social contract between man and his government. In the 17th and 18th centuries, a new view of that contract developed and evolved.

8. In many places, government was seen as an institution that bestowed what it would but always held itself supreme in that contract. Not in our tradition. For us, government was the servant of man, not his master.

This view became the basis of our Declaration of Independence and our Constitution, which proclaimed the sanctity of the individual. The Declaration and the Constitution reflected the right of individuals to equal protection under the rule of law. They held that the individual, not the state, is usually the best judge of his own interests.

9. They recognized his right, in concert with others, to form and participate in government. They asserted that man can best fulfill his human potential in a system of liberty under law.

But this was only a beginning. As is typical in human affairs, our practice also always fell short of our aspirations. From the earliest days of our nation, there have been members of our society whose

access to rights under laws was incomplete.

10. The full realization of these rights has never been automatic, or even assured. It has not been quick, nor has it been easy.

Our struggle for equality of rights has in fact been profoundly difficult. At times it has been tragic, as our recollections of the 1860's civil war remind us.

The events of the last two decades have produced a momentum which gives us hope. But much—even today—remains to be done.

11. We have only recently begun fully to perceive the needs of racial and ethnic minorities, and of women. We have only recently begun fully to recognize their equal claim to the general rights of society.

We have, we believe, fulfilled some of the dreams of the ancient philosophers and our own early statesmen. Indeed, the numbers of people who seek to come to our country suggest that for many millions of people we are an unusual people and offer our population unusual opportunities.

12. But nevertheless, we still struggle to achieve full human rights.

We, like other countries, face real dilemmas:

—We are troubled by the growing impact of government on our lives. Yet we ask more than ever from government. We demand satisfactions which it seems only government can provide; but we would prefer to increase the role of the individual in recognition of his paramount importance. How much of our individuality do we grant to the state in order to secure its services and protection? We are searching for the proper balance.

13. We recognize the wrongs which many groups in our society have suffered. We feel an obliga-

tion to redress those wrongs, even by providing special advantages for those afflicted. Yet each measure designed to help some may harm others, and therefore raises troubling questions. We are searching for the proper balance.

14. We accept freedom of migration as a right. Yet we restrict immigration—to its nation of immigrants—when they threaten the jobs of our citizens. The pressure from Mexico and the Caribbean is as great as the flow of Indians to Sri Lanka in past historical periods. We are searching for the proper balance.

15. These are but a few of the many such critical questions which we as a society continue to pose for ourselves.

Others, looking at us from abroad, have additional questions, which may be equally worthy of our attention:

—Why does the richest, most powerful country in the world not guarantee to all of its citizens the right to a decent job, the right to a decent living, the right to assured medical care?

16. Does the right to a fair trial include the right to free and adequate legal assistance for those who cannot afford it?

—How do we overcome the non-legal barriers to full participation in our society—the attitudes which prevent women and minorities from claiming what the law entitles them to enjoy?

—The prominence of these questions in our national life—whether posed by ourselves to ourselves, or posed for us by others—indicate that our own human rights work at home is far from complete.

17. Two hundred years after the Declaration of Independence, the implications of our revolution have not yet been fully realized. And yet—even more importantly—

the debate on these issues underscores the wide range of human rights that we have in fact already achieved.

As a people, we speak out. As a people, we participate. As a people, we give full airing to our views, thereby insuring that substantial problems will not go unnoticed.

18. Our continuing search for fair solutions to issues on our national agenda reflects something of both the apparent untidiness and the real vitality of the democratic process.

What is sometimes perceived as an excessive level of noise in our society is, instead, a reflection of a national democratic debate that we believe best assures equity. It is a reflection of our right to speak out; indeed, the necessity that we participate.

19. It is a reflection of the underlying values embodied in our system; a reminder that our pursuit of these values is a continuing process, never perfect but always under way.

It is a process to which we invite examination from abroad. We do not deny our problems; but we can and do affirm that our view of government as the servant to man—rather than the master—can best assure the continuing extension of human rights. That is our ideal; we cannot participate in international affairs in any way that is inconsistent with the ideal.

20. Not too many years ago, democratic processes were the subject of doomsayers; too untidy, they said, to organize the resources necessary to deal with the pressing problems of national development; too permissive to harness the energies of people to break through the barriers of poverty; too inefficient to bring to bear the technology that promises so much for so many if appropriately emplaced and properly organized.

21. Now, there is a perceptible swing of the pendulum. Now, the peoples of Spain, of Portugal, of India, of Greece, of many other countries—have turned away from the apparent efficiency, but even more obvious failures, of state— or ideologically-oriented systems.

Now, governments which previously had viewed "one-man, one-vote" as unacceptable are seriously re-examining their views.

22. Now, in many nations, where once the move was from democracy to military authoritarianism, there are stirrings of movement back toward civilian rule.

President Carter has himself been shaped by the struggle for overcoming some of the more ugly aspects of life in our country. During his lifetime he has seen a radical change in the way white men and women in our Youth looked upon black men and women. He has known from deep personal involvement the transformation in human perceptions and relationships that can come about if men of good will and men of energy and devotion set their minds and talents to the task.

23. So we have much to do within our own country to bring to fruition the fullest expression of our ideals. We have nevertheless made visible progress during the last fifteen years. We know that some of these most painful difficulties can be grappled with.

But we also know that it is not merely a matter of good will, of political organization, of sensitizing consciences, though these are important.

24. What is also needed is growing opportunities...opportunities for training, opportunities for young men and women to apply their energies to building a tolerable future for themselves and, in the process, contributing to the

\*productivity and virtue of their own regions and their own states.

That is why governments—including yours in Sri Lanka—are concerned to promote economic growth, to help people be more productive, to add more resources and goods and needed services to the total of goods and services available.

25. And that is why the government of the United States as well as that of a number of other countries, are assisting the Government of Sri Lanka in its efforts to get the economy moving again. Outsiders can be of some help at critical points.

But the real attack on these problems must be internal. It is the efforts of men and women in all parts of Sri Lanka that will decide the future here.

26. As for us, we have no intention of imposing our ideals, or our system, on others. History has taught us the pitfalls of moralistic crusades. We lay no claim to being perfect as a nation. Surely there are others whose contributions we welcome, whose wisdom can enlighten us.

We level no accusations against any one country, any one people, or any one system. We are only too aware that the problem of human rights is universal—and a never-ending search.

27. But to be true to ourselves, to remain faithful to our most fundamental values, to fulfill our obligation to those elsewhere whose concern is as genuine as our own, we must not leave doubts as to where we stand.

—Wherever the individual is deprived of the due process of law,

—Wherever the individual is denied the freedom to participate properly in determining his own fate,

—Wherever there is torture and hunger and discrimination and a denial of basic human needs,

We must, and we will, continue to make known our concern.

28. And, finally, we have heard, in this last year, the voices of so many, in so many parts of the world, join with ours in the pursuit of freedom and human rights.

The ideals that brought so many people to our shores have not languished abroad. They remain alive in all of the lands of our forefathers. If the flames have sometimes seemed snuffed out abroad, indeed if they have occasionally flickered at home in America, we were and still are looked to as the principal keeper of the flame.

29. We do not contend that the world must be "made in America." We do not seek to have it so. In the long run of history, the peoples of the world must and will make their own choices, true to their own needs and aspirations, true to their own cultures, true to their own histories. But in making their choices, the peoples of the world must and will be aware that there are alternatives open to them:

—Some systems place the sanctity of the individual above that of the state; others do not.

30.—Some systems are characterized by a dispersion of power in the hands of the people on their elected representatives; others are not.

—Some systems rely fundamentally on due process and the rule of law; others do not.

—Some systems are marked by tolerance, the freedom to move and to speak, and to rest alternative approaches in the free marketplace of ideas; others are not.

31. We believe that in each case it is the former which hold the best hope for preserving and enlarging basic human rights. And because we must remain true to ourselves and to those who would

nurture freedom everywhere, this belief must and will remain central to our concerns and our policies as a people and as a nation.

It is this unending quest for future improvement rather than acceptance of the legacy of the past which we Americans of many backgrounds share with the diverse peoples of Sri Lanka.

32. I am confident that we will continue to learn from each other's experiences and draw strength from each other's efforts. Thank you.

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FROM THE HANSARD

## Foreign Trawlers

*In the NSA on April 21, Minister Festus Perera presented Regulations under Section 33 of the Fisheries Ordinance in respect of Inland Fishing. In the course of a debate on these Regulations, there was a discussion on other aspects of fishing including the problem of foreign trawlers. We publish the relevant extracts on this matter—Ed.*

**Mr. Festus Perera:** I must also mention the trawlers that are fishing around our territorial waters. I have given a licence to a foreign firm to fish in the deep sea but not within our coastal area. Our coastal area stretches 25 miles out to sea, and that area is strictly prohibited to the foreign trawlers. Yesterday I got a message from the Navy informing me that some trawlers were fishing within our coastal area, and I looked into this and immediately cancelled their licence. I have ordered the trawlers out of our area. Similarly, I will take immediate steps if any Member informs me that foreign trawlers are fishing in our coastal area. I want to preserve the coastal area for our local fishermen.

**Mr. K. Thurairatnam:** The trouble is that it is only within the area of 100 fathoms that there are the valuable fish, and naturally they are hovering round our coast. You will have to ask them to operate outside a 50 mile limit and then you can be sure they will not operate within the 25 mile coastal area. When you stipulate a 25 mile limit they come within 8 miles of the coast. It is better to tell them that it is about 35 to 40 miles off-shore so that they will come within a margin of 10 miles. Otherwise, they come within the 12 miles limit by night.

**Mr. Festus Perera:** The Hon. Member will appreciate, when I say 25 miles, I mean 25 miles and not a single mile that way or this way. I have given strict instructions to the Navy and to the fishermen that if they find any trawler trawling within 25 miles off the coast, to inform me immediately. I would not hold any inquiry, I could cancel the licence. I did that yesterday.

If after cancelling the licence they are found trawling or fishing within the 25 mile area or within the 200 mile Economic Zone, I will see to it that the vessels are captured and brought to port. Thereafter, legal action will be taken against them, as I did in the past in the case of the Taiwanese boat which was caught off our shores fishing within our area. Legal action was instituted and a fine of 100,000 was imposed on the owners of that private trawler. It is a fine unprecedented in the history of this Island.

Earlier such boats had been caught and they had been allowed to go away without imposing any deterrent punishment. In the case of this particular boat, our Navy captured it, brought it to port and legal action was taken against the owners of the boat and a fine of 100,000 was imposed which

means Rs. 1,500,000 apart from the fish that had been confiscated which was valued at Rs. 200,000. Altogether Rs. 2,000,000 had been recovered from the owners of that particular Taiwanese boat.

I will see to it in the future that if any such boat operates within our area, not only within the territorial waters but also within the Economic Zone, that boat will not only be captured but be also confiscated.

I will be introducing legislation in this House soon to arm me with powers to punish them summarily. I want to avoid taking them to courts and adopting all these tardy procedures to punish them. I want to punish them summarily and confiscate their vessel and impose a fine of \$ 200,000 on such owners who come within our area to fish.

## LETTERS

### SLFP's Future

Sir,

Indira Gandhi heads an almost united opposition. Desai has under its command elements ideologically hostile to each other from Fernandez all the way through to Narain. Indira's chances of a comeback are slim despite the recent flash in the pan victory. Yet they exist.

The results of Colombo West must surely shatter an already unnerved Sirima. She tries to claim the leadership of all the anti-UNP forces. Yet at the last General elections nearly 32 lakhs of UNP supporters, 6 lakhs of Leftists and 6 lakhs of Northerners rejected HER (rather than the SLFP). Even within the SLFP she fears a Party Congress and a post mortem on the General Election. She must know that 90% of the members of her Cabinet consider her as totally responsible for the crushing

defeat she brought on herself and the SLFP. They know that her continued presence in the SLFP spells its doom. She tries to blame the LSSP & the CP for her defeat. If she was anything as strong or as powerful as she claims to be why did she not get rid of those Ministers she now says were inefficient, reckless or corrupt. Because, for these reasons she should first have sacked herself.

If she thinks that the entirety of the SLFP in particular and the country at large does not know for whose benefit she clings to leadership in her party then she fools only herself. The situation she is creating is a splendid excuse for the UNP to stabilise itself.

Lastly, even if the UNP lost a million votes at the next elections and got none of the new votes it will yet have about 40-50 seats by 1983 in the next National State Assembly. All of them will believe in private enterprise. The SLFP if it wins 65 to 70 seats (at the maximum) will have 30 to 40 of its own members who stand for private enterprise. At that point SLFP policies, as a separate capitalist party are irrelevant. If it turns to the Left for support it will solidify every progressive and radical to reject Sirima. Besides, thousands of SLFP members will cross over to the UNP if any new SLFP-ULF agreement is reached. Either way she is doomed politically.

Bandaranaike was an absolute necessity in 1956. That he benefitted from C. W. W. Kannangara's Free Education Scheme or that he ran away with Philip Gunewardene's concept of Sinhala Nationalism and Socialism—or even that he won so totally convincing a victory because the elections were held over three days (and that this boomeranged on the UNP) is irrelevant. Nor need we bother that he left the UNP because he could not become its leader and Prime

Minister. So also, Sirima Bandaranaike was an essential phenomenon in the progressive march of our people.

It is in the short term interest of the UNP that she remains as a visible symbol of all the vindictiveness and corruption her presence from 1960-1977 spawned. In the long run she must be encouraged to fight to hold on to power and on behalf of her successor. The longer she does this the easier will be the polarisation, the sharper the battle and the surer we can be of her total elimination from politics. With her will go the "Gang of Six".

In the meantime let us leave her with her dreams of taking on Prime Minister Premadasa in the next Presidential elections ahead. The very reason that she thinks will give her a handicap will guarantee her defeat. Unfortunately, this time too the same astrologers make the same predictions.

S.S.P.

Colombo.  
10.4.78

## Reform Of The Public Service

Sir,

I have read with much pleasure the series of articles you published in the *Tribune* ending this week. I am particularly pleased with the proposals suggested in the concluding article suggesting the creation of a National States Services Commission which has become a very urgent priority. It will be doing this country a great service if Government can be persuaded to give consideration to the article published. I thank you for giving space to this article because the present state of the public service is so very disheartening that His Excel-

lency the President should take a very close and serious look at it and help the public servant to regain some of his lost confidence in himself and in the public service.

I am a member of the public and each day when I read of public servants being attacked I wonder what has gone wrong and where. The poor man has no way of replying.

D. P. R. Seneviratne

Colombo.

April 9, 1978

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## Our Foreign Service

Sir,

We keep seeing stories in the Press suggesting a serious inquiry into the working of the Foreign Service. When things are not rosy, it is usually imagined that a reorganisation or possibly a restructure will make them better. Many people seem to think that our Diplomatic Service is dysfunctional as its members lead too sheltered a life and that they have an insufficient understanding of the 20th century economic and social philosophy, the aspirations, needs and urges of the people. A short stint at a rural Kachcheri is one of the suggested remedies.

What seems more profitable at this stage is to set out some of the general propositions which ought to govern any inquiry that might be launched to modernise our diplomatic service. The inquiry must be conducted without preconception or misconception. A failure to observe this principle simply leads to an Alice in Wonderland proposition, 'a sentence first and verdict afterwards.' Any inquiry must recognise at once that the original intake of probationers to the Foreign Service (an upstart established in 1949) during the Vaithianathan era was confined to "rejects" from

the steel frame of the old Civil Service stemming from the trunk of Fredrick North and truncating with H. B. Dissanayake currently Cusoms chief.....

Unfortunately this has given the two or three batches an unsavoury reputation but curiously enough most of the career diplomats have blossomed out incredibly beyond recognition. It was the intention of the founding father that the high watermark of their career would be that of 'counsellor' status. Once a DRO always a DRO—that was the formula but they too have broken the barrier by becoming Govt. Agents and Permanent Secretaries. It must also be pointed out that some career diplomats have notched inner circle appointments and right now are serving with distinction and competence in Tokyo and New Delhi without ever having signed a gun license permit in a remote Kachcheri. They are conducting a very effective rearguard action to conceal our shortcomings and minimise the damage to the image of Sri Lanka.

Since 1949, we have had as envoys senior politicians, lawyers, retired civil servants, judicial officers, university dons, business tycoons, social workers of either sex, townplanners, journalists—and by and large they have acquitted themselves well. A good many of our diplomats have been at some stage or other Govt Agents working in remote Kachcheris: Shirley Amerasinghe (Kegalle), Tilak G. Gooneratne (Trincomalee) W. D. Gunaratne (Kalutara) M. F. de S. Jayaratne (Matara) B. F. Perera (Kurunegala) and N. Q. Dias (Mannar).

Our not so-high rating in the world is not in any way due to the incompetence of our diplomats but to the cumulative errors of our political leaders and the dismal record of the performance of our economy completely run down al-

most to breaking point during the last few years. The recent posting as heads of missions indicate that the Foreign Ministry has not utilised the opportunity to make the diplomatic service more responsive to the present trends—the appointments more or less geared to the itinerant mendicant diplomacy of the cabinet ministers.

If politics is the art of the possible, more so is diplomacy. Was it J. K. Galbraith, American diplomat par excellence, who remarked that in other walks of life, pomposity is an occupational hazard—in diplomacy it is commonly called high professionalism. Styles in diplomacy change as all styles change. Fifty years ago Woodrow Wilson talked of 'open covenants openly arrived at.' How far away that seems. What would Lord Curzon have said of David Owen? Or for that matter D. S. Senanayake or A. C. S. Hameed or Nehru or A. B. Vajpayee. Now at the drop of a hat, our Cabinet Ministers are seen at the international Conference tables giving televised interviews in the world's capitals, virtually displacing our heads of missions. The art of diplomacy does not require that its practioners should be dishonest and lie abroad for the good of the country; only that they should combine intelligence with the necessary minimum of finesse. It is the duty of the Head of Mission to ensure that the Cabinet Minister in his diplomatic role does not behave like a man who goes to a dance without knowledge of the steps and wearing gumboots. Even Caligula's horse can deliver the goods with a modicum of training. Maybe the diplomatic Service is more sinned against than sinning. An inquiry is most welcome but certainly not an Inquisition.

**Mickey Jayasundera**

Rajasinghe Road,  
Colombo 6.  
18.3.78

## Tower Hall

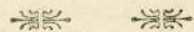
Sir,

Times were when our forefathers enjoyed music, drama and cultural events in their pristine purity during the Tower-Hall era. Once again due to the untiring efforts taken by the present Prime Minister, the one-time name and fame of our sons and daughters of this Lankan soil who gave life and meaning to the soul-stirring music and patriotic dramatic performances of the past unforgettable era are to be honoured and revived back to life by the present generation of this country. This is indeed a welcome move taken in the right direction and deserves the encouragement and support of every true son and daughter of this soil.

Apart from doing everything possible to make this a reality, it also behoves of this Government to give a helping hand to the surviving popular figures of the Tower-Hall fame, who now almost always lead a pauper's life and unquestionably would appreciate generous assistance from the State to cover up their present life of misery due to their old age and failing health.

**N. Sri Kantha**

Alwis Town,  
Hendala.  
17.3.78



## Spare Bhutto

Sir,

I have been one of the most intransigent political critics of Mr Ali Bhutto, particularly during the Liberation War of Bangladesh. I have written dozens of letters, (then as Secretary, Friends of Bangladesh), held meetings, attended international conferences supporting the cause of Bangladesh, against the politics of Bhutto, who

not only was the principal architect of the vivisection of Pakistan, but who was also behind the perpetration of the carnage of several hundreds of thousands of innocent lives in East Pakistan (now Bangladesh). His soldiers were responsible for the rape of over 250,000 women in Bangladesh. Over 10,000,000 people sought refuge in Calcutta, leaving their homes, many to be burnt and farms destroyed. Yet in spite of all the atrocities committed by Bhutto (who cannot disclaim the responsibility as he was the Prime Minister of Pakistan), there was one redeeming feature in his megalomania politics, and that was to spare the life of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the leader of the War of Liberation of Bangladesh, who was his prisoner. This may have been an act of diplomacy, but nevertheless, the Sheikh's life was spared and later he was to be President of Bangladesh. Thus with all the crimes that can be attributed to Z. A. Bhutto, this act alone, should rouse world opinion behind him against the death sentence imposed on him for the murder of one of his political opponents.

Another thing which one should not forget is that with all his shortcomings, he was a man of the people, who came to power through elections rigged or otherwise. It should also not be forgotten, that Z. A. Bhutto, was the principle person who displaced, Pakistan's military rule, which had gone on for over 15 years, and helped in the development of the democratisation of Pakistan, such as was permitted to exist, in whatever aborted form it was. Therefore world opinion, cannot allow a Military Dictator to sentence Ali Bhutto, to death.

The death sentence, in the second half of the 20th century (practised even in Buddhist countries) is as barbarous an act, such as the stoning to death of a woman who

had committed adultery recently in Saudi Arabia. It is also as barbarous, as the cutting of a person's hands for stealing. Therefore in the name of human decency, the life of Z. A. Bhutto should be spared, not only because the death sentence is a barbarous thing, but because, Bhutto, spared his life of his enemy and rival and helping to overthrow a long-lasting military dictatorship and to democratise Pakistan even in the form of a caricature.

**Amaradasa Fernando**  
(Former Secretary,  
Friends of Bangladesh)

Colombo 5.  
10.4.78

## A Challenge To All Religions

Sir,

I have followed with interest the articles written in the *Tribune* by Father Tissa Balasuriya OMI on race relations in Sri Lanka. To those of us who lived through August 1977 the call by Father Balasuriya is significant. Unless the leaders of all the religions in Sri Lanka respond, communal disturbances can occur again and just as 1977 was worse than 1958, the next one can be worse than 1977.

In the campaign for communal harmony the Buddhist leaders bear a heavy responsibility. Sri Lanka is a predominantly Buddhist country and proud of being so. The power of the Buddhist clergy is paramount—so much so that Mr. J. R. Jayewardene himself summoned the Mahanayakes of all the Chapters to Temple Trees, at the height of the communal disturbances and assured them that he will never permit Sri Lanka to be divided. Mr. Jayewardene has also repeatedly said that the Tamils in Sri Lanka have just grievances

and that he will see that they are removed.

Power carries responsibilities and the Mahanayakes have a heavy responsibility in directing their clergy and laity to preserve communal harmony. It is their duty to respond to the call made by Father Balasuriya. As religious leaders in Sri Lanka they should summon a conference of the leaders—both clergy and laity—of all the religions of Sri Lanka—Buddhists, Christian, Hindu and Muslim—and have a frank discussion as to the underlying causes for communal disharmony, not only between Sinhalese and Tamils but also with Muslims. The mass of the people of Sri Lanka are religious and readily respond to any call made by their respective clergy. After the tragedy of August 1977 the various religious bodies called for Neighbourhood Councils but by that time the Tamils had fled and the neighbourhood lay desolate. It will be more effective if Neighbourhood Councils are formed before communal disturbances occur. The Neighbourhood Councils should consist of the leaders of all religions—both clergy and laity. They should meet regularly and have official backing. If this is done without delay the climate for communal harmony, so essential for development, can be immediately improved.

During August 77 the flames of communal disturbances were encouraged by thugs who always wait for such opportunities. The law enforcement agencies were not helpful as evidence before the Sansoni Commission has revealed. A good portent for the future is that both the President and the Prime Minister have made it clear that they will see that law and order is enforced, with official support. The Neighbourhood Councils' led by the clergy and laity of all religions, can see any signs of communal tension anywhere in the island and quickly help to diffuse it.



The UNP government is changing over from a consumer-oriented economy to a production oriented economy. This is a painful process and necessarily entails hardships specially on the lower income groups. Tensions will mount and it will be the duty of the neighbourhood Councils to explain the need for this operation—the Surgeon's knife, which cuts to heal. Example is better than precept and the leaders both clergy and laity, must share in the hardships and accept no privileges. If this is done Sri Lanka need never again be afraid of communal disturbances.

This is the reason of the New Year for both Sinhalese and Tamils—a common heritage which we must all endeavour to cherish and foster.

R.W.C.T.

Colombo.  
10.4.78

## False Election Promises

Sir,

It is common knowledge that Political Parties that seek power give election promises in their Election Manifestos, some of which they themselves know cannot be fulfilled, but to hoodwink the Voters and capture their votes. Once they are entrenched in power, even the promises that they gave which could be fulfilled are left in oblivion, not to speak of the impossible promises they made in their Manifestos.

The Democratic Voters who are misled by these false promises and put the Party in power can do nothing as the Law stands at present, but to grin and wait till their full term is completed to teach them a sound lesson. This has happened in our country more than once.

Now the question is instead of waiting till their full term is com-

pleted is there no other Democratic Method of removing them from seats of power. It is an election offence to bribe the Voters to get their Votes. Cannot their giving of election promises in the Manifestos too be made an election offence if they are not fulfilled as deceiving the Voters to capture their Votes and the Voters given the right to challenge the Leaders of the Party in power in the highest Tribunal in the land and if proved the Leaders and the Members of that Party unseated for seven years and the Party too banned for seven years.

This question should be above Party Politics and all those who are desirous of having clean Elections should support this move. Of course, improvements could be made on this proposal and for this all the Democratic Party Leaders who have the interests of the country at heart should get together and hammer out a solution on the lines indicated. Then there would be less rivalry and clean elections could be held in a calm atmosphere. Last, but not the least. Voters would not be deceived.

Solomon Gunasekera

Walpola, Angoda.  
25th April, 1978

## A Plea To His Excellency The President

Sir,

A few months ago, a fine of Rs 1000/- was imposed on the Editor of *Ceylon Observer*, Mr. Harold Pieris and Associate Editor Mr. Philip cooray, each by the NSA for breach of Privilege. We must be very grateful to the Independent Newspapers Ltd., and to Mr. S. Nadesan Q.C. for promptly pointing out the dangers inherent in such action.

The complainant in this case was the Honourable Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. A. C. S. Hameed, first

Member for Akurana in the National Assembly. This is the first time in Sri Lanka's parliamentary history a case was brought before the NSA and heard. The NSA has powers to punish the accused under Section 22 of the Parliament (Powers & Privileges) Act No. 21 of 1953 as amended by Law No. 5 of 1978 read with the Schedule Part A under Section 22 paragraph 8 of the said act.

In this case the Editors showed cause for the error and tendered their apologies to the House as well as to the first member for Akurana. The present Prime Minister, Hon. Mr. R. Premadasa (then Hon. Minister of Local Government, Housing and Construction Leader of the House) stated that the fine should be Rs. 2,500/- each but His Excellency the President Hon. J. R. Jayawardene (then the Prime Minister in his speech brought a resolution to reduce the fine to Rs. 1000/- each.

In this case the complainant was a member of the UNP and most of the Hon. Members of the NSA were the party colleagues of the complainant and in these circumstances as Mr. Nadesan QC explained in his article in the *Sun*: "being called upon to prove something as a court of law is rather different from being called upon to prove it in the NSA, the majority of whose members may be party colleagues of the complainant."

Therefore, I agree with the views expressed by Mr. Nadesan, QC and I beg His Excellency the President of Sri Lanka to go into this matter with circumspection and protect the freedom of the press as the saviour of Free Ceylon.

Mirando Obeysekera  
(President, Deshapremi  
Kala Peramuna).

128, Lady McCallum Drive,  
Nuwara Eliya.  
16.4.78

# Confidentially

## Any Fish Left?

IS IT NOT A FACT that fish is scarce in our markets and prices have therefore soared? That seer more often than not fetches Rs. 15/- a lb.? That prices of all other varieties of fish have gone up proportionately? The quantity of fish that comes to the Fisheries Corporation stalls at the official prices is so insignificantly small that it has no impact on fish prices in the open market? That the "excuse" being trotted out in the official media is that owing to the scarcity of meat there is a greater demand for fish—and hence the shortage and high prices? That whilst there may be an element of truth in this, — there is no doubt that the quantity of fish caught by our fishermen has been reduced to a very large extent? That the Corporation does not do any deep-sea trawling (it was stopped because of corrupt and inefficient operations) and the country has to depend solely on the catch of our fishermen? That the Minister and the Corporation had placed all their hopes on the 40% that foreign licensed trawlers were expected to turn in? That, like counting chickens before the eggs were hatched, the Minister had talked about *buffer stocks* (it had ranged from 200 tons to 34,000 tons) that the Corporation had hoped would come from the catches handed in by the foreign trawlers? That all this fish was to be distributed during the New Year but there was none? That people know that fish is now extremely scarce everywhere in the island because the local fishermen have failed to get the quantities they usually get during this season? That elsewhere in this issue we

have published an extract from the Hansard of April 21 in which Minister Festus Perera stated that he had had to cancel the licence of one company because the Ceylon Navy had reported that the trawlers had violated the 25 mile limit rule? That the Member for Point Pedro, Mr. Thurairatnam, who is knowledgeable about fishing matters, said that with a 25-mile the foreign trawlers came up to 8 to 10 miles of the shore and suggested that the limit should be pushed up to 40 or 50 miles at least? That the crucial question is that without a large number of naval vessels to enforce the 25-mile limit, it would be impossible to patrol the entire coast to see that foreign trawlers did not encroach on forbidden waters? That foreign trawlers had encroached into our fishing areas even in the old days, but now with a large number operating under licences, poaching and encroaching has become virtually legalised? That Sri Lanka does not even have enough naval patrol boats to see that only licensed foreign trawling is done in our waters? That it is unfortunate that the Fisheries Minister had issued these licences without adequate discussion among circles which know something of these matters? That he and his officials would have learnt that countries with fishing industries had demanded the 200-mile maritime zone not merely for what is on the sea-bed but in order to conserve the fish near the coast for local fishermen? That in a recent article in the *Herald Tribune*, Michael Knight, discussing the complaints of US fishermen, in regard to the strict conservation laws (catching extremely young fish etc. etc.), had pointed out that: "The 200-mile limit was enacted after a decade in which fleets owned by foreign governments and using scout helicopters, teams of trawlers and large factory processing ships depleted the fish

populations by methodically working a given area until all signs of life were gone and then moving on to repeat the process. The Americans, working alone and on small wooden boats, were outfished beyond the old 12-mile limit and could not compete even in Gloucester, where the on-shore processing plants began importing cheaper frozen fish caught by the foreign fleets?" That the US conservation laws were intended to allow fish populations in the seas to regenerate ("studies showed that haddock for example, had declined to only 2 percent of the number found a decade ago") and to ensure that fish did not become extinct on a commercial scale? That in Sri Lanka, even if experts had studied the problem, the public is not aware of the impact of legal and illegal trawler fishing in the seas around the island? That a fleet of mechanised trawlers can "slaughter fish" our entire fishing banks so that fish will not be found on a commercial scale for a long long time? That one question is whether this has also happened even inside the old 12-mile territorial limit? That it is not enough to cancel licences of foreign trawlers which come within the 25 mile limit? That something more drastic is called for? That the cost to the Ceylon Navy and Government to patrol the entire coastline will cost us far more in foreign exchange (for boats, fuel, spares etc. etc.) than all the money the Fisheries Corporation can ever hope to earn on the meagre royalties charged for different varieties of fish, prawns and lobsters? That within six months or less of licensed foreign trawlers operating around Sri Lanka, our waters have been bled of all fish? That the time has come for government to consider the cancellation of all licences to foreign trawlers and allow what is left of our fish population to regenerate in the 200-mile maritime zone?

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