

# TRIBUNE

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## Wheat Flour To The Rescue

THE FOOD CRISIS IN SRI LANKA has been temporarily resolved through the massive imports of wheat flour which will be supplied from March 31 without any restriction on an off-ration basis. At the price of Rs. 1.10 a lb, the Government is likely to make a considerable profit on the off-ration wheat flour taking into consideration the current trends in the world market prices of wheat and wheat flour, but so far as the people are con-

cerned the availability of any quantity of wheat flour will stave off the famine which hung ominously over the country from the time the last northeast monsoon had failed completely.

A communique issued by the Ministry of Foreign and Internal Trade said that the following factors contributed to the government decision—

“The Government has been able to purchase nearly all the require-

ments of flour for this year already.

“The country will be receiving 94,000 tons of flour this year in the form of gifts as follows—:

European Economic Community	29,000
Australia	22,000
United Nations	17,000
Sweden	8,000
France	6,000
W. Germany	6,000
Italy	6,000

“In addition the United States of America will be selling us 94,000 tons of flour under PL 480 for which payment is spread over a long period.

“The month of April being the festive season of the Sinhala New Year the public should be adequately supplied with food.

“The Government was also concerned with hardships suffered by the people in queues to buy flour. The de-rationing of flour is expected to reduce congestion in the Co-operatives and reduce the waiting time of the consumer. The Government also took into account the number of small bakeries and confectionery establishments which had been adversely affected by the shortage of flour.

“A government spokesman further stated that the world market price of flour now is £ 35 less a ton than that for rice. It was exactly the converse a few months earlier.

AS OFF-RATION RICE was not available now to supplement the rations that were supplied and as the subsidiaries grown locally were also insufficient to bridge the gap, the Government has wisely taken the only step it could take and that

### CRIME IN SRI LANKA

THE REVELATIONS made recently by Mr. R. Sunderalingam of the Colombo Crime Detection Bureau in his address to law students has come as a shock to many people in this country. He had said that on an average thirty persons were murdered every week and that among other crimes four young girls were raped every week. The fact that crime was a serious problem in this island was well known but Mr. Sunderalingam's revelations, pinpointing the most most spectacular of our serious crime, has made many people to sit up. But, what is it that can be done? Murder has been endemic in Sri Lanka for a long time and this is a problem for long-term solutions. Sri Lanka, it is known, has one of the highest murder rates in the world and at one time statistics had been furnished to show that our murder rate was very close to the murder rate in gangster-dominated Chicago. There have been sociological studies about this matter, but nothing else has been done to bring about an improvement. Sermons by Buddhist, Hindu, Christian and Muslim religious leaders do not seem to have helped very much. Politicians who speak about rationalism and humanitarian ethics have not paid much attention to this—as much as their efforts to debunk superstition, astrology, black magic and what they consider other obscurantist mumbo-jumbo. But, what is distressing is that crime like rape has recently been moving up the scale of frequency. What many people do not realise is that the climate (or atmosphere) which our current socio-political ethos has generated has tended to promote a total breakdown in the discipline and self-discipline which keeps societies and communities with in an ordered system of life. The rowdy scenes which one witnesses nowadays at inter school (big schools) cricket matches, when spectators invade the grounds, once in every few minutes, is a phenomenon that reflects the new malady that has gripped the nation. There is always the excuse that such unrest is world-wide, but has anybody worked out the consequences of the free availability of alcoholic drinks in the biggest network ever of liquor shops throughout the island? They bring in more revenue, no doubt, but there is more crime also.

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is to rely on wheat flour which is now have readily available on the world market. Furthermore, Sri Lanka has also been the recipient of gifts of wheat from a number of countries—and this has come in very useful at a time when Sri Lanka's foreign exchange earnings and resources have been strained to the very utmost.

This success in meeting the crisis has, we find, bred a new kind of complacency in our bureaucrats and politicians that Sri Lanka, come what may, can blunder through anyhow much better than many other countries. There is no doubt that this is a comforting thought. But what is the comfort and consolation we can derive from all this?

First, are we not resolving the food crisis once again through massive imports and the free gifts we have received? And, what kind of comfort can we derive from this? It is no doubt true that little else could have been done in view of the drought, but the danger is that this tends to perpetuate the complacency in many quarters that we can continue some of our dubious experimentations in agricultural policies whilst food imports keeps famine from our door step,

Second, are we not strengthening a trend that our leaders and politicians (and our economists, agriculturists and the like) had tried to reverse, namely the wheat-eating habit? Wheat, as agricultural science stands today, is not a product that can be grown in this country. A new variety of hybrides have to be found if wheat is to be locally grown. Such being the case, readers will recall that Ministers and other venerable persons had called up the people to give up the habit of eating wheat flour products and revert to rice products and other subsidiary food crops (like kurakkan, millet, sorghum, etc.) which could easily be grown in the island. This was also something which Tribune had urged for many years as being a basic essential necessary for any economic progress. A natural disaster like the kind of drought this country has experienced for the last eight months is an excuse which cannot be questioned, but knowing the mental attitudes which dominate our bureaucracy there is a grave danger that the country

will be allowed to slip into accepting wheat and wheat flour as the main alternative and supplementary to rice.

Speeches are no doubt made calling upon everybody to cultivate every inch of land. The Prime Minister and her colleagues who are now constantly making these appeals are aware of the urgency and importance of the necessity to grow more food in this country.

But are the measures that are being taken adequate to make the food production programme concretely workable and a success? Do our bureaucrats and others responsible for implementing all these programmes, including the crash programmes (of which we have a multitude today), not have the supreme capacity of making gimmicks of these programmes for publicity and personal self-promotion resulting in a mockery of the whole thing?

It will no doubt be better to see hope, faith and glory in the programmes proclaimed by our Government and our bureaucrats. And there is no doubt that we will endear ourselves to the Administration, the Establishment and the Ruling Elite if we say Glory Hallelujah to every crash programme (including the training of nurses and toddy tappers) that is announced. But we will not be discharging one of the primary functions of a free press—even with all the limitations and inhibitions that restrict newspapers and newspapermen in Sri Lanka today if we do no more than blindly shower praise and congratulations on such schemes.

# Tribunania

## JR, UNP AND THE TAMILS

The political strategy adopted by JR and the UNP during the last two years has not brought the Party the results hoped for. It is true that they won Kalawewa and Katana just as the Party had won all earlier by-elections except

Ratnapura. Though the UNP had won the Kalawewa by-election, it was only after the strategy much desired by JR had been set at naught by the intransigence of SLFP Rightists and Centrists who had not acted in the manner JR had expected of them—in terms of the political textbooks (of the cold-war ridden fifties). JR had expected them, (motivated by what he thought would be class interests), to walk into his parlour by nominating Anura Bandaranaike whom he was willing to adopt as a co-leader of a new united centre-right coalition. But, even if Anura had received SLFP nomination, there would have been many a slip between the cup and the lip.

After Kalawewa, JR continued his old theme of a general elections in 1975—for which he had earlier risked the legality of his Party by desiring to enter upon a satyagraha of civil disobedience. With the government taking prompt action to restrain the UNP, even going to the extent of curbing its civil liberties, JR beat a retreat—the party was bruised but was still intact. Kalawewa and Katana had given the UNP the necessary morale-boosting for JR to venture on a new adventure. JR's aimless peregrinations in the wilderness of current Sri Lanka politics, hoping to win landslide support overnight, had caused disillusionment among a number of UNPers, and JR was compelled to purge the Party of elements which had shown reluctance to toe his line. The acts of commission and omission of the Government had brought by-election victories to the UNP, but the UNP was yet to project new image that it was a Party which was able to give a positive and concrete lead to the nation to achieve a breakthrough in economic development.

In pursuit of the negativism and perambulatory circumlocution which are still the hallmarks of the UNP at this stage, JR made a signal decision that he would resign his seat. In order, no doubt, to have a by-election where the question of a General Election in 1975 would be canvassed together with the legality (or otherwise) of the constitutional provision of extending the life of the 1970 parliament until 1977. JR called a delegates' meeting to have this decision endorsed.

And it was. No other decision would have been possible. But in the course of his speech at this delegate's meeting he had said that the UNP could elect another leader if he did not give them and the country a General Election in 1975.

This statement has led to a great deal of speculation. What did a veteran and seasoned politician like JR mean when he said this? He risked his own future as the leader of the UNP if he was not able to compel the Government to hold a general election in 1975. Or did he have some special mystical information which indicated that conditions would arise that would make a general election inevitable in 1975? And why exactly did he want the Party to elect another leader if he failed to give his supporters a general election in 1975? He had said that he had never failed the Party and the people and if he failed in this, he had no option but to step down. One can think of so many occasions in the thirty odd years that JR has been in the forefront of UNP politics when he was not able to fulfil what he had promised the Party and the people. But, that is another matter. But what is the real meaning of his threat to step down to enable the Party to elect another leader?

At the moment, the UNP has no other leader who can fill JR's shoes. The Party is devoid of leaders with national standing with that degree of charisma to lead a Party like the UNP. And there is no doubt that without JR the UNP will be left virtually leaderless for a time—until a new leader or a group of leaders emerge. It is idle to speculate what the UNP will do if JR carried out his threat to step down, but in the meantime there has been a great deal of loud thinking and even louder talking about JR's intended resignation.

Some SLFP leaders, starting off with Minister Maithripala Senanayake, have twitted JR by asking him whether he was anxious to be re-elected to the NSA which he thinks would be illegal after 1975. This is no doubt only a debating point, but much of our politics is no more than that. In political circles, there are whispers about the options open to the Government: one, not to hold a by-election but to postpone it until the General Elections in 1977; or second, to have

the by-election, but not field a candidate against JR and let him be returned uncontested thereby robbing him of the agitational platform which he wants; and third, a suggestion has been made that there should be constitutional amendment to prevent purely demonstrative resignations in order mobilise public opinion at by-elections (at much expense to the State) by passing a law that when there are resignations like that of SJV Chelvanayakam's or JR's intended resignation there should be no by-elections.

As we have mentioned in these columns before, SJV's 1972-75 political gimmick at KKS cannot be repeated in Colombo South—neither potatoes nor cabbages can be boiled twice over. But even before JR's resignation took final and concrete shape he was guilty of another miscalculation, no doubt on wrong evaluations by his Tamil supporters in the North. SJV's victory at KKS and the absence of universal spontaneity in the welcome accorded to the Prime Minister in Jaffna last October had made many diehards of the old UNP, still lurking sullenly in the byways of Jaffna, to think that the Tamil people will all (except for a handful of UF loyalists) flock to the UNP banner because they had nowhere else to turn. And JR too seems to have fallen for this line of logic when he prepared for his Northern tour on March 8 and 9 in the manner of conquering hero setting out on a triumphal march.

Even before JR went to Jaffna, TUF's Dharmalingam had made a speech which reflected the general trend of thinking in the TUF, and Lake House papers with great alacrity gave this speech frontpage publicity. The TUF, it is clear, has now grown to maturity that it does not follow the old FP strategy of swinging from the UNP to the SLFP and then back from the SLFP to the UNP as the FP had done in the years from 1955 onwards. It is only in recent times, after the TUF was formed, that the Tamils have sought to take an independent line—however misconceived their politics or however unmindful they are of economics.

JR went to Jaffna, and he was received with due tamasha by his supporters. Those who knew

the UNP of old will realise that it was in Valvettiturai that the JR was received with unbounded enthusiasm. They heyday of Valvettiturai prosperity and affluence had always coincided with UNP's heyday in power. Valvettiturai has much less to offer today than in the past, but there are many men of affluence in that village who are still hoping for a return to UNP *laissez faire* laxities so that Valvettiturai could once again make its millions.



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In Jaffna town, JR ran into difficulties at the public meeting, and the meeting had to be abandoned because of heckling which had proliferated into hooting. JR too does not seem to have been as tactful as he normally is, but reports indicate that this reception (and disturbance) had been a planned affair—and JR had walked straight into the trap. He said a few things which would infuriate a Jaffna crowd especially at this time when the Tamil man is touchy about so many little things.

There was an attempt to make it out that the TUF had been responsible for the breaking up of the meeting, but Secretary Amirthalingam had written to the papers that the TUF had nothing to do with it and the culprits should be looked for in other quarters, and he threw a hint that the fact the Police, who were present, had done nothing to stop the disturbance should give people an idea regarding the circles which had caused the disturbance.

The United Front has always accused the FP-TUF of being any ally of the UNP. At one time, from 1956 to 1965, the FP had tailed behind the SLFP in the hope of getting at least a little bit of what they wanted. It was only when the SLFP was not able to do this that the FP had somersaulted into the UNP camp in 1965. But ever since the FP quit Dudley Senanayake's Cabinet in 1968, it has been trying hard to establish a separate identity and this has only been partially possible after the formation of the TUF. But even the TUF was tainted with the pro-UNP alliance between the FP and the UNP between 1965 to 1968 and the TC's permanent flirtation with the UNP from 1947. But even after 1968, the FP had clung to the apron strings of Dudley Senanayake.

It is only now that the FP and the TUF has begun to speak of being independent of both the SLFP and the UNP. How far it will be able to sustain this posture is yet to be seen, but in the meantime it is necessary to place on record Dharmalingam's statements (as it appeared in the Daily News, 6-3-75), not only as memento of JR's visit to Jaffna but also as one of the first public statements in which the TUF has spelled out its new attitude to the UNP.

It was Mr. J. R. Jayewardene who was responsible for the abrogation of the pact that was made between the late Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike and Mr. S. J. V. Chelvanayakam to settle certain problems of the Tamils. It was this Mr. Jayewardene who was now shedding crocodile tears for the Tamils, who went on a march to Kandy shouting that Mr. Bandaranaike had sold the country and the Sinhalese to the Tamils by signing that pact. Now suddenly for certain reasons, best known to himself, Mr. Jayewardene was trying to become the saviour of the Tamils, said V. Dharmalingam, MP for Ubuvil speaking at a seminar held at Punnaikadduvam recently.

He said that Mr. Jayewardene had now begun to say that he could solve the problem of the Tamils. He was still having hopes that he could deceive the Tamils. But the Tamils were now not prepared to listen to him anymore. He further said that when the new Republican Constitution was framed Mr. Jayewardene did not raise the question of the problems of the Tamils nor did he speak anything in support of the demands of the Tamils. Instead Mr. Jayewardene told the Government that the importance given to Buddhism in the new Constitution was insufficient and that Buddhism should be safeguarded at all cost. Today he was coming to Jaffna with the hope that he would receive more garlands than the Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike, received when she visited Jaffna in October last year.

Mr. Jayewardene was now trying to show to the Sinhalese masses that

he had more following among the Tamils than the Prime Minister. That was why he had now started speaking about the rights of the Tamils. Mr. Dharmalingam continued: "Recently Mr. Jayewardene invited the representatives of the Opposition parties in the NSA to discuss his proposed resignation. I too went with Mr. Chelvanayakam and the Vavuniya MP to this meeting. There we told Mr. Jayewardene that he was resigning in protest against only one clause in the Constitution. But Mr. Chelvanayakam resigned his seat some three years ago to protest against the whole Constitution. The people at Kankasanturai had accepted this and returned Mr. Chelvanayakam with a larger majority. As such we are not prepared to follow you. Our only aim is to liberate the Tamils through the formation of a separate state.

He further said that as far as the Tamils were concerned the SLFP and the UNP would never care to solve the problems of the Tamils. Some people had said that the problems of the Tamils could be solved by having talks between the leaders of the Tamil community and the Government. The TUF had informed the Government that they were prepared to come for talks. But so far nothing had been heard from the Government. The Tamils now realised that it was only through a non-violent struggle that they could form a separate state for themselves.

But for JR's proposed visit to Jaffna, this speech would not have received either lengthy or frontpage treatment in the Lake House of today.

#### BACK TO OLD FAITHFUL WINDMILL

The U.S. Federal Government is getting serious about windmills as it pumps more money into the development of new designs for the ancient energy source. For centuries of European and Asian civilisation, windmills ground grain, drove ships and pumped water. But their importance declined with the discovery of oil and the invention of the steam engine. In this country they have been used on individual farms to pump water and drive electric generators. Now, with world energy supplies growing scarcer and costs soaring, the windmill has acquired a new appeal as a clean, limitless source of power.

The National Science Foundation and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration this week awarded \$ 500,000 (Rs. 37.5 lakhs) contracts to two industrial firms for developing very large wind energy systems. The contractors will examine modern versions of windmills at sizes that generate 100 kilowatts for use by small farmers' co-operatives to three megawatts for possible connection into the power networks of large utility companies. A 3-megawatt windmill would be the largest ever built. Its rotor blades would be about 60 metres in diameter and each windmill could produce enough electricity to supply 100 to 200 homes, NASA reported.

## INTERNATIONAL - AFFAIRS

BY ARIEL

### • Indochina • Portugal • Sadat • Kashmir

IT IS ONLY A MATTER OF TIME NOW before the Lon Nol regime disappeared altogether from the Cambodian scene. Even if the US Congress decided to extend aid, it cannot save either Phnom Penh or the Lon Nol government. And, it is also clear that the mood of the American people is such that it would not any longer be willing to underwrite the war in Cambodia. In South Vietnam, the situation is somewhat different. The Thieu government still has vast quantities of arms, ammunitions and oil supplies to carry on the fighting for a year or so but the Saigon administration has, according to competent observers, purposely raised a hue and cry in order to prepare the ground to obtain a massive \$ 1,300 million military aid for the fiscal year 1975-76 (which South Vietnam has already requested). The present demand for the emergency \$ 300 million is believed to be only a prelude to the higher level of \$ 1,300 million "to be used to build up stockpiles of fuel and arms to support Saigon's military effort throughout 1976—the year of the US presidential election, during which an appeal for more aid might prove embarrassing for Washington ...." Unfortunately, the request for the \$ 300 million emergency aid has sparked off a powerful anti-Ford movement in the USA on this issue. Moreover, the US public is today not totally ignorant of the situation in South Vietnam. The *Far East Economic Review*, 14/3/75 had reported: "...the South Vietnamese army has enough in stock to carry on the present level of fighting for several months. All the army fuel depots are reported to be full to capacity; both the army and the airforce are relying mainly on supplies as they arrive. In the unlikely event of all US aid stopping immediately, there is believed to be enough fuel in stock to last six months, and ammunition up to one year..." Nevertheless, for a number of

other reasons, Vietcong Liberation Forces are making slow but sure progress in capturing one provincial centre after another and are reducing the territory under the effective control of the Thieu government. It will also be only a matter of time before the fate that has overtaken the the Lon Nol regime will overtake the Thieu regime—unless Kissinger can take time off from his Middle East commitments to persuade Le Duc Tho and Hanoi to give Thieu a little more time to prepare himself for a voluntary re-unification of the two Vietnams.

IN PORTUGAL, unlike in the Indochina peninsula, developments have been quick, unexpected and spectacular. Whilst tension had mounted between Right and Left as we mentioned in this column last week, there was a centre-right attempt at a coup d'etat led by General Spínola. This coup failed to trigger a general revolt and the attempt was suppressed without any difficulty. Spínola and his closest colleagues of about twenty army and air force officers fled to Spain, but asylum not being granted to them there, they went on to South America where a number of countries refused to give them asylum but were finally granted asylum by Brazil where Caetano whom Spínola had helped to overthrow is also an exile.

The Prime Minister, Vasco Gonçalves, had characterised the coup as one organised by "reactionary forces." The Armed Forces Movement thereupon took over the government and formed a new Revolutionary Council. The *Hindu* commentator, Batuk Gathani, writing from London on the day after the attempted coup (March 11) summed up the situation admirably "The coup in Portugal yesterday engineered by the country's moderates and the middle class directed against the communist power base in the Portuguese Government has failed miserably. General Spínola, leader of the April 25 coup against the dictator Mr. Caetano, last night fled to Spain and might be planning to follow Mr. Caetano's path of exile to Brazil. It is obvious that the communists are in full control of the situation. For the Western world, the abortive coup attempt in Lisbon has a far deeper connotation. Not only is NATO's

flexibility and military capability further weakened, but these events could also have a traumatic effect on developments in neighbouring Spain which is again simmering with political unrest.

"Jubilant mobs in Portuguese cities hailed Government's victory over 'reactionary forces' and promptly sacked offices of Portuguese moderate political parties. Meanwhile a senior Portuguese officer hinted that the United States was behind the attempted coup and suggested that the US Ambassador in Lisbon 'had better leave the country after what had happened.'

"The evolution of Portugal as a free democratic State is a matter of deep concern for the whole Western world. Socialists and Popular Democrats, the two main political parties of the centre are trying to set up in Portugal a rational democracy but have failed to cope with the issue of living with extreme leftists and communists. Most Westerners argue that communists and their friends do not have majority support in the country and hence they have created a 'crisis atmosphere' to thwart the democratic process of holding a general election. If the moderates were that sure about their own popularity among the masses, one wonders why the units in the Army and Air Force supporting General Spínola made the first move yesterday to stage the coup. Left-wing elements in the Army and Air Force obviously retaliated with all the fury and mercilessly crushed the coup attempt."

The Centre-Right coup, which was not only intended to split the Portuguese Armed Forces Movement, but at the same time also spark off a revolt against the extreme leftwing and communist forces, had boomeranged on those who had organised it. And what is more, is that it had strengthened the leftwing in the Armed Forces Movement and strengthened the Communist Party immeasurably.

This unexpected development has naturally raised many questions and doubts in western countries, and Batuk Gathani went on to examine their implications. "West European observers are confused about these developments. There is a growing conviction all around that the Americans could have master-minded the coup attempt,

however clumsy and pathetic it may look. One wonders if West European Governments knew anything about these developments from American sources. Communist and left-wing grip on the country is tightening. Last September they ousted General Spínola from power in what amounted to a coup within a coup. This group is led by Brigadier Carvalho, who commands the Lisbon Garrison, a special operational unit which was created as the 'centre for the extermination of fascism'. From yesterday's events it is obvious that the Lisbon Garrison has been able to maintain its grip over the armed forces as a whole.

"It is suggested that Portugal could prove to be the first European country where Communists will assume power as a result of Moscow's current strategy of infiltrating into and trying to work through the armed forces. This is of profound significance for NATO and for the whole of Southern Europe, which is in a state of political convulsion where the Portuguese model of revolution might be tried. Spain, Italy and Greece are obvious targets.

"What is happening in Portugal to-day would determine the trend of events in neighbouring Spain. Western intellectuals to-day argue that marxists in Portugal are now tactically well-placed to achieve what Allende failed to achieve in Chile that is a revolution with the consent of the armed forces. The modes and logistics of modern revolutions have completely changed and it takes no flash of genius to perceive that the strength and sophisticated technology of modern armies have made revolution inconceivable in any advanced society without the participation of the majority. Portuguese left-wingers have been marking time since last September to make a bid for total power.

"The immediate worry of the Americans and West Europeans is that the new complexion of the Portuguese regime could have a direct bearing on a war in the Middle East and NATO's military capability in Western Europe itself. The Americans have no hope of using Lejas base in Azores Sea for refuelling aircrafts en route to Israel, which was a critical factor in them Middle East war of last October."

The new Revolutionary Council in Portugal has not only acted fast but decisively: all banks have been nationalised and as an immediate corollary all insurance companies have also been nationalised. A new Cabinet will be appointed. The Revolutionary Council has also announced that it will honour all Portugal's commitments, meaning thereby that the country will not quit NATO. But NATO will be chary about a Government with such a preponderant communist influence and control. In the meantime, the Armed Forces Movement has taken steps to bring if possible, all communists and socialists on to a common platform. It will be interesting to see how the Communist Party will set about establishing a stable government and running the affairs of the country in a manner which will win the consensus of the majority of the ordinary people. In Italy and France, the strong Communist Parties have been seeking to enter the Government through coalitions, but now in Portugal the Communists have an opportunity to show how they will conduct themselves in a different situation. In Western Europe Communists are pledged to parliamentary rule, free elections and democratic freedoms.

Whilst developments in Portugal have caused consternation in Western Europe, the ECM countries in a mini-summit in Dublin evolved a formula which they think will help to keep Britain within the Common Market. The Labour Party was committed to re-negotiating amended terms of entry for Britain to be in the ECM and also to get these terms approved in a referendum. The other members of the ECM have gone far to meet British difficulties: a formula has been evolved in regard to the two outstanding matters—the amount Britain should pay each year as dues and some concessions for New Zealand butter and dairy produce. A complicated system of rebates for the annual payments and a workable compromise for New Zealand's dairy products will now be placed before the British Cabinet and if accepted they will go before the public with the Cabinet's recommendations. But anti-Marketters, whether in the Government or and outside will be free to speak and act according to each person's "conscience."

IN THE MIDDLE EAST, Kissinger continues his place odyssey (whilst affairs in nearby Cyprus and the not-so-near Rhodeisa continue to be deadlocked.) Kissinger has already shuttled more than once between Egypt and Israel, Jordan and Syria. He has also hopped over to Turkey.. Up to the time of writing, there is no indication that he had met Gromyko. President Sadat seems to be the most hopeful that Kissinger's step-by-step peace strategem will succeed (eighty per cent according to Sadat) and thus bring about peace between Egypt and Israel. But Syria, Jordan and the PLO think otherwise. As against Sadat's insistence on going it alone, Syria, has announced that it has formed a joint military command with the PLO. This is an ominous warning to both Sadat and Kissinger.

The role which Sadat seems to be playing has begun to mystify many observers. Towards the end of January this year he had gone to France and made arrangements to purchase French planes—*Mirages*—financed by Saudi Arabia which is anxious to break Egypt's dependence on Russia for arms and military hardware. King Faisal wants Sadat to turn to the USA, Britain, France and the West for his arms, but there are obvious difficulties in this because Israel is almost exclusively supplied by the USA. In order to impress the French and Western suppliers, and no doubt the Saudis, Sadat has in recent months indulged in anti-Russian statements, and this raised questions about Sadat's methods in many quarters. An agency report from Paris had summarised an interview Sadat had given the leading French paper *Le Monde* thus: Egyptian President Anwar Sadat revealed that the Soviet Union is against the Egyptian people's just armed struggle against the Israeli aggressors, the French paper "*Le Monde*" reported on January 21. He added in an interview with the paper that the Soviet Union adopts an unfriendly attitude towards Egypt. Referring to the differences between Egypt and the Soviet Union, President Sadat said that the Soviets "opposed and still opposes any military action, even limited ones, against Israel" They have refused to provide us with the military material we require. So in 1971, the decisive year I have announced, they prevented

me from starting hostilities by a very simple way: they refused to honour the concluded armament contracts."

Egyptian Soviet differences, he added "have now been extended to the military, economic and political domains. They accused me of launching an anti-Soviet Campaign in the Near East in order to undermine their position in the region. However, I have the duty to make public our grievances and tell the Egyptian and other Arab people the difficulties we have encountered.... They also accused me of obstructing the convocation of the Geneva Conference. This is contrary to the fact."

"In the field of economy", he went on, "they did not provide us with the means to control the effect of the destructive war imposed upon us by the enemy and the effect of world inflation. Last year we had to pay them 80 million Egyptian pounds for partial settlement of the debt we incurred in the purchase of arms and equipment... This year we demanded a ten-year moratorium... but they turned a deaf ear to our request," he said.

The Soviet Union refused to replenish Egypt's material losses in the October war and to supply sophisticated weapons, while Israel got everything it required from the United States, he said. "I only cite a few examples to show you the Soviet's unfriendly attitude towards us," he added. Referring to the expulsion of Soviet military "experts" and "advisers" from Egypt in July 1972, President Sadat said, "so far as I am concerned, this affair is closed for ever." With regard to the possibility of abrogating "the Egyptian Soviet Friendship Treaty," he said, "I can't rule out such a possibility... My patience has limits and my responsibility is to defend my country by every means."

The Newsweek, 10/3/75, however, in an incisive piece has cast doubts on Sadat's claim that Russia had let him down. The Newsweek does not hesitate to ask "who is telling the truth?"

"Anwar Sadat has been telling every important visitor to Cairo the same story: as a result of his falling out with Moscow, Egypt has been unable to make up its military losses from the 1973 war and thus is in no position to attack Israel. Recently, however, a number of top Israelis have suggested that while Sadat is crying poor, he is secretly arming for war. Three weeks ago,

Gen. Ariel Sharon, the hero of Israel's 1973 Suez Canal crossing claimed that Egypt now has more than enough weapons to launch a limited strike against Israel and is 'working like mad' on preparations to send up to seven divisions storming into the Sinai.

"Who is telling the truth? On the basis of the best intelligence estimates available, the answer appears to be that, except in the vital category of air power, Egypt has virtually returned to its pre-October-war strength. The catch is that, thanks to the nearly \$ 2 billion worth of sophisticated weaponry the United States has shipped to Israel, Egypt has at the same time fallen far behind in the arms race. Actually, the argument over the strength of Egypt's armed forces is not so much military as political. Israeli hawks like General Sharon are strongly opposed to Henry Kissinger's step-by-step peace negotiations, and by invoking the threat of a new Egyptian attack, they are hoping to prevent Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's government from agreeing to a major new pullback in the Sinai. By contrast Sadat, has his own political reasons for exaggerating the weakness of his armed forces. The Egyptian leader has placed his hopes for regaining his lost territory in Henry Kissinger, and just last week he stalled off the Soviet Union—which has been urging him to abandon Kissinger's step-by-step approach and return to the Mid-east peace conference in Geneva—by informing the Kremlin that Egypt will not go to Geneva until it has been fully supplied with weapons.

"While some top Israeli sources whisper privately that the highly public Egyptian-Russian quarrel is really a smoke screen hiding a continuing flow of Soviet arms so Cairo, Kissinger adamantly denied this is true. Satellite and aerial-reconnaissance photos document the dramatic halt last April in the flow of Russian tanks and planes. But while the direct flow has been spotty, Sadat has acquired considerable amounts of Russian equipment from several of his Arab allies and early this month, there were indications of a resumption of advanced Russian arms aid when a ship arrived in Alexandria bearing six long-sought MIG-23 jet fighter bombers (Newsweek, Feb.

24) From intelligence sources in London, Paris, Washington and Mideast capitals, Newsweek has pieced together this estimate on where Egypt stands militarily today.."

It is Newsweek's view that Russia has given Egypt the sophisticated MIG 23, and that Egypt has nothing to complain about in so far as military supplies are concerned. And the Newsweek, then proceeded to sum up what it thought was the relative strength and weakness of the two antagonists, Egypt and Israel. "Air defenses. Within a month of the end of the 1973 war, the entire Egyptian anti-aircraft-missile screen was replaced by the Soviet Union. The problem for Sadat, however, is that his SAM-2s, SAM-3s and SAM-6s are quite old, and experts believe Israel has been given new US electronic countermeasures that will be effective against these missiles.

"Tanks. While estimates vary, experts feel Egypt is at least approaching—and may even have surpassed—the level of 1,900 medium tanks it had at the start of the last war. Egypt now has three full tank divisions compared with the two with which it entered the 1973 fighting.

"Planes. Although Egypt has replaced only 80 of the estimated 200 planes it lost during the 1973 fighting, the Egyptian Air Force has never played a significant role in any Mideast war. Nevertheless, Sadat is anxious to beef up his air force and has been pressing the Kremlin not just for MIG-23s but for the more advanced MIG-25s as well—both of which can outfly the US Phantom that is the mainstay of the Israeli Air Force.

"While the Egyptian Army has been struggling back toward its 1973 strength, the Israeli armed forces have vaulted into a new age of weaponry. The 'smart' bombs and sophisticated electronic devices the US has provided Israel have given it such an advantage, in fact, that Egypt's position—in the view of many analysts—would be only marginally improved even if Russia gave Sadat the \$ 2 billion he is seeking in jets, tanks, artillery and anti-tank weapons. But the decision to go to war is not made strictly on the basis of military strength. It is, above all,

a political decision, and if he ever has to make that decision, Anwar Sadat will not be the helpless weakling that he has sometimes portrayed himself to be."

With the furious arms buildup in the Middle East, and with Syria and Jordan taking contrary position to the step-by-step strategy, Henry Kissinger has his hands full in his attempt to bring peace to the Middle East. If he does not succeed within a reasonable time, and also succeed in his step-by-step peace without provoking a backlash from Syria and the PLO which could upset the applecart, it is more than likely that the hawks in Israel and also in Egypt, who are now waiting on the sidelines, will take over—and a new conflagration might well ensue in the region.

IN SOUTH ASIA, new confrontations are building up. The lifting of the ten-year old US arms sales embargo to India and Pakistan has brought a major qualitative change into the situation. Pakistan, which had been compelled to take defensive and negative attitudes since Bangladesh, has now been emboldened to take positive and even aggressive postures. When Prime Minister Bhutto was in the USA and even before the promise that the arms embargo would be lifted was made public, the assassination of one of his Ministers led him not only to outlaw the second biggest political party and the chief opposition party but he has also imprisoned its entire leadership. This is an open and direct challenge to the Baluchis and the Pakthoons, and has brought strained relations with Afghanistan.

Prime Minister Bhutto has also taken a very strong position towards India in regard to the Kashmir question. At a press conference at Rawalpindi on March 10 he had stated that the Kashmir dispute had to be resolved in accordance with the wishes of the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

He said, "the basic problem was to ascertain the wishes of the people of Jammu and Kashmir. But the dispute was linked with the obligation of India and Pakistan. There were three parties to the Kashmir dispute—the people of the state of Jammu and Kashmir, Pakistan and India. Therefore, no solution of the Kashmir dispute

can be brought about with exclusion of one of these three parties. Prime Minister Bhutto had pointed out that the Kashmir dispute should be solved through bilateral negotiations under the Indo-Pakistan Simla agreement. No party, neither India nor Pakistan, could alter the situation unilaterally till a final settlement of the dispute.

"The Prime Minister said that the deal between the Indian government and former Prime Minister of the Indian occupied Kashmir, Sheikh Abdullah, could not solve the dispute, but would complicate it. He said that he had written to Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, protesting against this deal which bypassed the people of Pakistan, the Azad Kashmir and the Indian occupied Kashmir. He also pointed out that the Kashmir dispute had not ended. It was proved by the February 28 general hartal. Even in the Indian-occupied Kashmir, the strike was successful, despite the repressive measures taken by India. Prime Minister Bhutto declared that since the people in the Indian occupied Kashmir had responded to his hartal call, Pakistan would observe a 'self-determination day' on March 17 to express solidarity with their Kashmiri brothers.

Whilst the USA and the UK have been silent about the new developments in Kashmir, Iran has given feeble support to Prime Minister Bhutto. China of all the big powers has come out strongly on the side of Pakistan as against India. Even on the question of the lifting of the arms embargo (and the almost simultaneous visit of the Soviet Defence Minister Marshal Grechko to India), China supported the American decision by quoting the State Department spokesman's remarks that in lifting the embargo Washington had taken into consideration "the fact that the Soviet Union provides India with vast quantities of arms."

The Chinese position was detailed in a commentary by a *Hsinhua* correspondent who referred sarcastically to that part of the joint communique issued by India and the Soviet Defence Minister which said they have expressed grave anxiety "at the actions taken by certain quarters to step up the arms race in the subcontinent", and declared

that Moscow was "trying to find pretext to cover up Soviet arms race in this area at a higher level, sell more arms and carry out military expansion there."

The commentary charged that in the past 10 years the Soviet Union had made "strenuous efforts" to help India expand its armament industry. It claimed that Moscow had supplied India with two billion dollars worth of arms in the past seven years in addition to the assistance in building plants for the manufacture of MIGs and other items of war industry. Marshal Grechko's visit, it added, was designed to bring up-to-date weapons to the Indian Army and more advanced equipment to strengthen India's arms production capacity. The extension of this large military aid to India, according to the commentary, was for the purpose of contending for hegemony with the US in South Asia and the Indian Ocean region. It added Marshal Grechko and the Indian leaders had discussed in addition to co-operation in the military field the situation arising from the US establishment of military bases in the Indian Ocean. It said that Marshal Grechko's tour "is in no way unconnected with the Soviet attempt to offset the United States efforts to restore its influence in India."

In regard to the Kashmir question also, China had backed Pakistan fully and unequivocally. A Peking report on March 3, stated that "...The Chinese people firmly support the Kashmir people's just struggle for self-determination and the just stand of the Pakistan government and people on the Kashmir question." The *People's Daily* commentator's article was entitled *the Kashmir Peoples' Right to Self-determination is Indelible*."

The article said that the recent act taken by the Indian government on Kashmir "has aroused resolute opposition from the people of Kashmir and Pakistan. The Azad Kashmir Council of ministers in a resolution denounced India's 'heinous conspiracy to perpetuate its hegemony on Kashmir. Pakistan Prime Minister Z. A. Bhutto pointed out in a statement that the Indian government cannot deprive the people of Kashmir of their inalienable right to self-



determination.' The Kashmir and Pakistan people have these days held demonstrations, strikes and hartals, strongly protesting with the Indian government against its annexation of the Indian-occupied Kashmir."

Referring to the origin of the Kashmir dispute the article said, "when the United Nations mediated over this dispute in 1948, it passed a resolution on a three-phase settlement—cease fire, non-militarization and plebiscite. Both the Indian and Pakistan governments accepted the resolution and agreed that an 'impartial plebiscite' should be held to settle the dispute. In the past 20 years and more, Pakistan has been consistently adhering to the UN resolution and the India-Pakistan accord for a plebiscite in Kashmir. However, the Indian government has time and again gone back on their words, trying to annex Kashmir. To attain this purpose, the Indian government has not only brutally suppressed the Kashmir people's struggle for the right to self-determination, but also gone so far as to launch armed attacks on Pakis-

tan. In the past few years, the Indian government has been stepping up its activities to change the status of Kashmir."

After grabbing Sikkim, the article points out, the Indian government annexed the Indian-occupied Kashmir now. "The Indian governments expansionist nature has been fully exposed by this act which not only violated the UN resolution and trampled on the Kashmir peoples right to self-determination, but also did harm to peace and stability of the South Asian region." The article, said, "the deprivation of the Kashmir people's sacred national right to self-determination is not allowed. The Kashmir people will never cease to struggle for realizing their national right to self-determination. Their just struggle has won the support of the Pakistan people and all other justice-upholding countries and people. We hold that the Kashmir issue must be settled in accordance with the aspirations of the Kashmir people."

It is clear that a new confrontation is emerging once again in the

Indian subcontinent and South Asia. India, Bangladesh and Afghanistan seem to have identical views in regard to the confrontation with Pakistan. China, however, has fully backed Pakistan, but Iran is half-hearted and wants to maintain some kind of friendly relations with both India and Afghanistan.

Russia, while being intimately friendly with India, maintains friendly and cordial relations with Pakistan. That is probably why Prime Minister Bhutto has said that he would not take the Kashmir question to the UN because he would be putting a friendly country, like the Soviet Union, into an embarrassing position. The USA has no doubt agreed to supply arms to Pakistan (and India too) on a cash case-by-case basis, but is anxious to be friends with India. Washington, no doubt, recognises that India is now the dominant power in South Asia, but probably wants to keep this Indian superiority under some kind of check with a Pakistan militarily strong enough to be more than a mere nuisance.

CHRONICLE

MARCH 6 — 10

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

**THURSDAY, MARCH 6:** The Government yesterday announced that it has decided to consider the acquisition of estates whose ownership or effective control has changed hands after June 19, 1974, (the date when the Companies (Special Provisions) Law was passed) as a result of transactions not coming within the laws of this country and without the approval of the Government: the take over of these properties would be considered under Section 8 of the Estates (control of Transfers and Acquisition) Law of 1972, taking into account all circumstances of the respective transactions, according to an official release from the Cabinet Office—CDN. The Ceylon Electricity Board may be soon compelled to warn many local bodies and Government departments that their supply of electricity will be cut off if outstanding bills are not paid within two weeks: local authorities and Government Departments owe the CEB as much as Rs. 35 million—CDN. The nurses called off their work-to-rule campaign early yesterday following talks with the Health Minister on Tuesday midnight: Health Minister, W. P. G. Ariyadasa, told a deputation from the Nursing Service Trades Union Federation that he would submit a Cabinet paper within a month on the three demands made by the federation—CDN. According to the JCTUO Councils

sources, the JCTUO has decided to train its guns on the forces of "UNP reaction with a massive show of strength on May Day"—CDN. Mr. Anura Bandaranaike, Chief Organiser of the SLFP Youth League and youth adviser to the Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs, left early yesterday morning for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the People's Republic of China—CDN. The Jaffna Campus of the University of Sri Lanka will have a number of other courses of study besides the Statistics and Double Mathematics courses now available—CDM.

The USSR has called for a ban on techniques of artificially changing the environment which it said could be used as weapons of war and bring "incalculable calamities to mankind." US has recommended that French and British airlines be allowed to fly the supersonic Concorde airliner into New York and Washington airports.

**FRIDAY, MARCH 7:** A wage increase of Rs. 25 or 90 per cent of the salary—which ever is less—for certain categories of private sector workers drawing less than Rs. 800 is to be announced on April 1: Ministry officials are now finalising draft regulations pertaining to the increase which will be on the basis of ten per cent of the initial salary or Rs. 25 whichever amount is less—CDN. More than 9000 youths have obtained employment in agricultural projects maintained by the Divisional Development Councils throughout the island: the number of acres brought under cultivation is 14,000—CDN. Government X-Ray Technical Officers, Physiotherapists and Medical Laboratory Technologists throughout the island will jointly work-to-rule from today: the Associations of these three grades have

also threatened to pull out their membership on strike on March 14 if no action is taken on their demands for better prospects—CDM. An agreement confirming the Memorandum of understanding between the Government of Sri Lanka and the Government of India on collaboration for the setting up of Sheep, Cattle and Buffalo Development projects in Sri Lanka was signed yesterday—CDM. The Pugoda Textiles Mill which is an outright gift from the People's Republic of China will be ceremonially opened by the Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike, on March 14—CDM. Mr. J. R. Jayewardene, Leader of the Opposition, accompanied by six MPs of the UNP begins a three-day tour of the Northern Province tomorrow: Mr. Jayewardene and the MPs are scheduled to participate in several meetings, opening of branches and functions in Hindu temples: a mass rally in Jaffna on Sunday has been organised—CDN.

At least 12 people were killed after a seaborne Arab guerilla assault on a beach hotel in Tel Aviv. Uganda's President Idi Amin has had talks with the Chinese Ambassador in Kampala on co-operation between their countries in the military and economic fields. Indonesia and Australia will hold joint naval exercises in Indonesian waters later this.

**SATURDAY, MARCH 8:** A Sri Lanka trade delegation in Australia at present to negotiate for the purchase of flour is now expected to buy less flour than it was told to negotiate for before leaving the country: the trade delegation has been instructed to do so in view of the sharp drop in the price of flour in the world market and since the possibility of obtaining more flour under PL 480 too was brighter—CDM. In a press statement, the JCTUO leaders have told that May Day this year will be a mobilisation of masses against the fascist reaction that is being spearheaded by the UNP—CDM. The Secretariat of the JCTUO which met yesterday endorsed the proposal made to form Worker's Squads in all Government Department and Corporations—CDM. Mr. V. Dharmalingam, Federal Party MP for Uduvil, speaking at a meeting has told that the Tamils will not be deceived by Mr. J. R. Jayewardene—CDN. The Minister of Foreign and Internal Trade, T. B. Illangaratne, has sought the help of all MPs in regard to co-operative societies providing records and documents required by the Co-operative Service Commission—CDN. The State Film Corporation, the sole distributor of raw stock to film makers, has decided that the Sinhala film should be no longer than two hours and 30 minutes—CDN. The CTB plans to have 2450 additional buses on the roads this year: this will mean foreign expenditure of Rs. 162.5 million—CDN. The West German Fredrich Ebert Foundation has donated around Rs. 1 million worth of machinery to the State Printing Corporation—CDN. The first palmyrah distillery was declared open by the Minister of Finance, Dr. N. M. Perera, yesterday at Kaithady, Jaffna—CDN. Several big names in opium smuggling on both sides of Palk Strait—have come to light following the detection of a large quantity of opium recently—CDN.

Iran and Iraq had agreed to settle their border dispute and stop subversive infiltration across each other's frontiers. President Ford has confirmed that he

had received a report on alleged CIA involvement in assassination plots against foreign leaders.

**SUNDAY, MARCH 9:** The Ministry of Irrigation, Power and Highways is pursuing the idea of installing windmills as a source of power which could be a substitute for fuel—CO. The Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike, addressing a seminar organised by the National Committee for Women's Year said that women have a great responsibility in strengthening world peace and ushering in prosperity—CO. The Crows Island Fisheries Training Institute which is being set up under a Japanese government aid scheme will be opened at the end of this month—CO. Mr. T. B. Illangaratne, Minister of Foreign and Internal Trade, told the SLBC in a recorded program that the Government is making every effort to increase the weekly ration of cereals to 6 pounds—CO. Radiographers, physiotherapists and medicinal laboratory technicians in government hospitals will resort to strike action on Friday: the Joint Council of Managements of these three services have conveyed this decision to their members yesterday: the three services are at present on a work-to-rule campaign to win their demands of amalgamation of services, greater promotional prospects and increase of their salaries—ST. Japan airlines has announced 15 charters carrying tourists direct to Sri Lanka commencing next month: subsequent charters are expected to continue through the months of May and June—ST. The Australian-Ceylon Fellowship in Melbourne has plans to help under-privileged children in Sri Lanka to begin a new life in Australia: the Fellowship has appointed a committee to explore the possibilities of such children being sponsored by Australian families of Ceylonese origin who could give such children the help they need—ST.

Prime Minister Ali Bhutto of Pakistan said that the lifting of the American arms ban is a contribution to the stability and security of the region, in which India and Pakistan are both placed. The World's major oil exporting countries are preparing for the start of their dialogue one month from now with consuming nations on the world economic crisis. The Thailand National Assembly voted Prime Minister Seni Pramoj out of office only four days after he took over.

**MONDAY, MARCH 10:** The UNP mass rally held last night at the Jaffna esplanade ended abruptly as Mr. J.R. Jayewardene, President of the UNP and Leader of the Opposition, began to speak: the meeting was called off halfway as people started to shout and hoot at Mr. Jayewardene—CDN. The meeting ended abruptly when by a strange quirk of fate the stage cashed as Mr. Jayewardene was making a reference to the Bandaranaike-Chelvanayakam Pact: in the melee Mr. Jayewardene's bodyguard was injured while several others sustained minor injuries—CDM. The Ministry of Health yesterday issued a warning that it would not be pushed into a confrontation with any group of its employees and that any grievances that such groups of employees may have must be settled by calm and sober discussion and negotiation—CDM. The CWE will shortly become the sole importer of foreign liquor and infant cereal foods: this is part of a scheme to enable the CWE, which has lost considerable part of its business to make up these losses—CDN. Speculations regarding some untoward

happenings in the Maldives Islands has been gaining ground following unscheduled delays in air traffic between Sri Lanka and Maldives: there has also been a virtual blackout of news from the Maldives and a disruption of communications: the Air Ceylon plane which was due to return from the Maldives on Saturday at 11.45 a.m. had still not arrived—CDN. A team of British Parliamentarians led by Mr. M. T. William, QC, is due to arrive in Sri Lanka at the end of March to attend the Inter Parliamentary Union talks to be held at the Bandaranaïke Memorial International Conference Hall from March 31 to April 5—CDN. The Minister of

Foreign and Internal Trade, Mr. T. B. Ilangaratne, has instructed all heads of departments and corporations under his Ministry to supply correct information to the Press when asked for by the newspapers—CDM.

North Korea and Mozambique have agreed to establish diplomatic relations at ambassadorial level when the former Portuguese colony in Africa becomes independent next June. Indonesia and Rumania have signed a commercial agreement easing trade restrictions, allowing payments in Western currencies and pledging the two countries to expand economic relations.

BUILDING A VILLAGE HOUSE—25

## The Laggard Champion (i)

By Herbert Keuneman

I am by no means as convinced now, 30/40 years later, as my friends and I were in the 1930s and 40s that revolution is the only way to significant social change. After all, what Marx wrote was a commentary, not a Bible; and World War II taught, if it taught anything, how futile is violence as a means to any but a temporary end. But I am even more doubtful—actually, in a negative sense I have no doubt at all—of the possibility of bringing revolution about (as many of our less cynical and corruptible politicians still seem to hope) by bureaucratic reforms.

AS WITNESS: the case of I. M. Pinhamy (my boy Banders' father, on whose land I live) in which I became willy-nilly involved but involved without personal interest, so that I have remained able to comment upon it with reasonable objectivity. The matter, which concerned an application for land made at the time of Mr. Kobbekaduwa's introduction of his controversial Agricultural Productivity Law, was a simple one: was, or was not, Pinhamy entitled to the land he had asked for. Seeing that Pinhamy is now told that the land in question is a private holding from ancient times (*paravani* land) and hence outside his claim, one might have expected that an efficient and disinterested Administration could, and would, make a ruling to that effect in a few days at most: especially, seeing that.

(a) the application was made at the height of the Food drive;

(b) it was made by the head of a family of 11, of whom only two were self-supporting (one daughter was married; and one son employed);

(c) the land applied for was at the time, and had been as long as anybody could remember, under jungle although highly cultivable even for rice; and

(d) the application followed a total failure of the local *yala* crop of 1973.

Yet, before this routine matter was settled—routine; because Mr. Kobbekaduwa's revolutionary innovation was not even considered by the authorities and had not been invoked by the applicant; so that no legal complication arose—the whole bureaucracy, from the Minister to the Grama Sevakaya, was involved (but not, alas! as actively and idealistically involved as one hopes a revolutionary agency would be) and it took 1 year, 1 month and 16 days for a decision to be arrived at! Revolution? This is precession!

'Ehetuwewa? I know Ehetuwewa well,' said the Minister when it finally came to the point where I had to go and see him in this connexion. The announcement rather chilled me until I reflected that undoubtedly it was kindly said, to put me at my ease; for to 'know' a place as an influential visitor and to know it as an inhabitant are two very different things, whose difference not many politicians appreciate and even more politicians ignore. It is one thing to 'know' Sudu Banda as a man who ran useful errands on the day of a political rally; and quite another thing to know that he petitions that Kalu Banda has encroached upon the tank reservation he is motivated not by public spirit but by the fact that Sudu Banda's brother ran away for a honeymoon that failed with Kalu Banda's wife's sister! But it is the latter kind of

knowledge that yields juster judgments.

I SHALL therefore beg of you, my reader, to allow me time off to describe as objectively as I can (for I cannot be more objective than that) the context in which Pinhamy's application was made.

When my wife and I lived in Ehetuwewa and first took Banders (Dingiri Banda) on to draw water and generally to help about the house, we were appalled by some of the tales he told about the rapacity of village officials. (We were new to the Village then; and new also to Government officials of any kind save on a purely social basis.) Not unnaturally, the commonest tales were about *arachchis*, the forerunners of the Grama Sevakayas of today, and we were soon well aware that few such tales needed to be embroidered for effect. One *arachchi* who excited Banders' bitterest indignation was a *radalaya* (a member of the former landed gentry, though by caste a simple *goviya* like Banders and his ancestors themselves) who had succeeded to the infinitely more profitable status made possible by the egalitarianism of British rule: of becoming *arachchi*, or Headman, of a nearby group of villages.

Apparently this *arachchi* made quite a business of using his official position plus a personal reputation for murderousness to his advantage. He would encourage a villager to clear and prepare a rice field on Crown land—anyway, on land without an ostensible owner—promising to hold off by his influence any official interference until the land could be established in his new dupe's name. Then, when the dupe had slaved to make the field productive and had actually reaped a harvest or two, proving that his work had been well done, he would find a way to evict the man and

place the field under a stooge on an unofficial share-cropping basis.

One of this *arachchi's* victims had been Bander's *mahappa* (or father's elder brother). When the time came, in the *arachchi's* judgement, for Bander's uncle to be dispossessed the latter was not disposed to go and argued his rights. The *arachchi*, murmuring only that Tikiri Banda had better cast up his accounts of *pav* and *pin*—in other words, prepare for death—went away. But the next day he was back with his gun, supported by armed henchmen and Tikiri Banda had no recourse but to leave the fruit of some three years' labour. A petition, though (I think) made, was useless: he had been trespassing upon what was still Crown land.

BY ALL ACCOUNTS—and that is not merely a phrase intended to give dignity to Bander's single account—this *arachchi* held a typically feudal conception of his bailiwick; and, though now retired, apparently still holds it. He will not have in 'his' village any permanent settler of whom he disapproves. He will move heaven and earth to keep out anybody else; but since, as it is widely rumoured, he has a critical portion of the local bureaucracy in his pocket, and since in truth few dare to cross this violent man, he never has to go that far, he does not move heaven or earth: in these days it is as effective merely to jingle some money!

It is only fair, to both sides, to point in this background to Pinhamy's application: for the land he now applied for fell within the boundaries of this man's village. But it is also fair to point out that (a) the land was jungle-grown as the Government Surveyor later attested;

(b) it had been jungle-grown—scrubjungle; not useful timber-bearing forest—as long as anyone in the neighbouring villages could remember, so that obviously the village it belonged in had no special need of it;

(c) the land is now rented to agricultural *entrepreneurs* from Colombo. IT NOW REMAINS only to provide sketches of a few of the *dramatis personae* who will appear in my narrative not as members of the bureaucracy directly involved in their official capacities, but in important parts nevertheless.

One of these is the man, the minor Government Servant, who held a whole village up to ransom while he shilly-shallied about repairing the sluice of their tank and was disciplined for it and is fixed in the belief—erroneously, as it happens—that Pinhamy and I were directly responsible for bringing about the Departmental Enquiry into that malpractice. I will call him X.

The other I will call Y. There is not the least reason to preserve his anonymity, for his part in the story does him and the entire Public Service nothing but credit; but neither is there any reason why his name should be banded about. I did reveal it, with his ready permission, to the Permanent Secretary to the Ministry of Public Administration; and that should be enough. He is in this story as my great friend and consequently as an active and sympathetic helper in my attempt to bring the matter to issue. Once a Land Officer in Anuradhapura he is now a personage of far more consequence; but closely conversant as he is, by his experience, with true customs and psychology of the region, as well as with the routine—and many of the personalities—of the local Local Administration, he became our adviser and advocate without concession at any time of his discretion and integrity. *O si sic omnes!*

MY OWN POSITION in the business I believe to be reasonably altruistic and honest also. Knowing that I was personally acquainted with the AGA Kurunegala by whom such matters as his are handled, Pinhamy asked that I support his original application for the land with a testimonial as to his fitness to farm it. This I was glad to supply, for I did consider him fit to farm it and knew it would be a godsend to him. I did not look for any special benefit as a *quid pro quo*, since any benefit I could look for from him I was enjoying already. I certainly had no interest in the land as such, not being a farmer by ability or inclination. It was later that I even realized that Pinhamy's deuteragonist would turn out to be his brother's ancient enemy. I am not sure that Pinhamy—then—realized it himself; but I should think it likely he did: it bestowed the piquancy that informs any enjoyable village situation!

Pinhamy made his original application to the Government Agent, Kurunegala, on 30 October 1973. (I wish I could be as precise about all the dates in the following sequence of events; but a list which I compiled when I got finally drawn in to the affair I handed to the Minister on 15 July 1974 and forgot to collect.) I do not think it was actually posted, however; for, when Pinhamy called upon his Grama Sevakaya the next day in order to forward the application through him, he learned that proper forms existed for such applications. Obtaining a set, he filled them in under the Grama Sevakaya's supervision and left them with him having received the assurance that the latter would recommend the grant and forward the papers without delay.

By the end of the year—that is: after nearly two months—Pinhamy had not yet received so much as an acknowledgement of his application. He hoped earnestly to be able to get to work upon the land so that he might prepare even a portion of it for cultivation under the looked-for April rains (convictional showers that are, in the Ehetuwewa area, sometimes a quite considerable rain-source; besides, the land was irrigable from an *ela* which ran at its boundary) and asked whether I could not do anything perhaps by speaking to a friend,

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Sri Lanka.

to have the consideration of his application expedited.

I COULD, for the moment, think of nothing I could do and could only advise him to write again to the AGA. However, during the Christmas holidays, I met Y, who had still to redeem a long-standing promise to visit me in Ehetuwewa, and it struck me that he, as a personal friend of the AGA (indeed it was through Y's kindness that the AGA and I had first met and seemed simpatico) and with his familiarity with *kachcheri* procedure, would be the ideal person to bring about a decision one way or the other.

I repeat: one way or the other. I have no doubt Pinhamy felt different about it; but for my part I was not asking for any points to be stretched that were not intrinsically stretchable.

Y told me, to my great pleasure that he was due in Anuradhapura for a postponed Court case, a hangover from his old job, early in the new year on and his way back he would certainly spend a night or two in Ehetuwewa. He would do for Pinhamy whatever he rightly could.

## Inania of this, that and the other

### Smoke! Smokescreen!

BY INNA

ARE TOWNSPEOPLE of provincial small towns and provincial capitals, not people? Do they not share in the results of that Bandaranaike urge of long ago to put the common man at his ease?

Why only the Colombo cinemas and the areas where the bigwigs wiggle in and out of their lairs—for a programme of "Don't Smoke in the Cinema Hall"?

Why? Why? Why?

Are these not people? Have they no human dignity.

TAKE the Cinema of a provincial town, a fairly decently-built hall, let's call it *Bingiri*, and what do you see at *Bingiri*, good films with a scene or two burnt off. Let that go. What do you hear at *Bingiri*?

Good music too. No difference at all, at all.

But what do you smell at *Bingiri*? *Smoke, smoke*, all the way. A revealing short-interval beam of light from the projector, suddenly brings down memories of the wartime smokescreens of invading armies or Diyatalawa army trainees.

And the Special Commissioner cleans up the roads at night, good for him. Does he clean up the pimps and prostitute dealers and their verandahs? Does he turn a blind eye at these rocky hard-headed women as they lure many men to their evening while having an eye, both eyes, wide open to see if the rocks fall in place when the night-repair of the road is being correctly performed?

After all isn't human traffic more important than human tragedy?—or so he seems to reason out.

He doesn't go to the cinema, doesn't need to. If he does he will see that the smoke gets in your eyes in provincial towns. None so blind as these who do not wish to see, they say. Or again, equally true: "None so blind as those who get smoke in their eyes, smarting under the blow."

Cigarettes are sold for a "something extra" and who will buy them if they cannot be smoked on the spot? If you buy the cigarette, you feel you must smoke it, and if you don't sell the cigarette on the spot, those boutiques nearby will not advertise on the interval-screen profits of which finds its way to coffers and pockets, official and otherwise.

Didn't the so-called dirty British had the clean idea of marking in every pack of cigarettes "*This packet has been medically condemned*" or some such thing, meaning not only that "We sell it with great bravado," but also that it is worthwhile taking a risk, you die once.

WELFARE STATE, welfare state, you put chlorine and force it into the water that I drink; you make Tek (advertise it the livelong day in cheap commercials) and force those thick bristles (nylon, mind you) across my gums, expunging every possibility of 'danta-mukta', Pulasthie, and Haritaki (all local brands of toothpaste).

And now you tell me that smoking produces lung-cancer and then go ahead and build cinema halls in pro-

vincial towns (oh they are not people!) where you cannot ask the smokers to refrain so that others may not get lung-cancer.

For whose welfare, whose benefit, o Welfare state? Totalitarian, dictatorial bungler, hell-bent on lining the pockets of a few men with gold. The days are round the corner. The game is up. Detective stories thrillers showed how rats get smoked out, no lock, no stock, no barrel.

KAZI — I

## Galenbindunuwewa Area

by ANATORY BUKOBA

Kazi is the East African Bantu, Swahili word for work, or business, or employment. In this series, I hope to describe the situation, as I see it, in various parts of Ceylon, and eventually, if it is possible, limit my description to about four places, whose development, over a period of months, I shall follow in these Kazi articles.

February 8,

Galenbindunuwewa, with Elpitiya and Deniyaya, was much in the newspapers for a short time, from April, 1971, onwards, as a place where out lads, if I may use that term to describe citizens of Ceylon, even if they were engaged in activities which, if they brought a little glory to themselves, did not bring much credit to the country, held out for a brief while against the custodians of law and order in this land. The Alawwa Bridge was another place, but that packed up much sooner because it was on a main road connecting important towns. This was a place I knew before the insurgency, Elpitiya I got to know later, Deniyaya I do not know yet.

A friend asked me to visit his home in a village a few miles from Galenbindunuwewa. I shall not name it as I shall be able write more freely if I do not do so. The area

I am writing about is near the base of a triangle formed by Anuradhapura and Dambulla with Trincomalee as the Apex, and to the east of the Kandy-Jaffna road, which cuts off a small segment of this triangle where it runs through Dambulla. The two long arms of this triangle lie on the two roads from Colombo to Trincomalee; one, the more direct, passing through Kurunegala and Dambulla, the other through Puttalam and Anuradhapura.

It was night when I came to the Anuradhapura bus stand with no hopes, really, of getting to Galenbindunuwewa that day. Sure enough the last bus had gone, or so everybody thought, but a man beside me said that he was taking his bus to Galenbindunuwewa after a visit to the bus depot. The bus was obviously needed at that town to make the first journey to Anuradhapura the next morning, and probably because of some mechanical defect, it had not left as yet. At the unscheduled time that it left after an hour's wait on my part, there were not many passengers. When we stopped to let the conductor have a quick bath, he was only three minutes over it, and it was no inconvenience to me, the only passenger. We were now near our destination, and I was surprised about the water, as I knew there had been none here two months or so before.

Here I had better say that all this area, for many miles around, comes under the Hurulle Irrigation Scheme, and many a man will tell you he is going to Hurulle, which is miles off, when he really means Galenbindunuwewa and its neighbouring villages. Arrived at the bus journey's end, so far as travelling by bus was possible that night, for as the reader will have gathered, the scheduled time for last buses was long past, I set out to walk to my village, the one I had been commissioned to visit. I met not a soul for two and a half miles. There was a turning I was not sure of, but relying on my memory, I took what I thought was the right road. It was at this junction that I came across the only house on that walk. Passing it, there was still no house in sight. The occupants of that house had been too frightened or cautious to reply to my queries, an unusual occurrence I must say, and I plodded

on, feeling I could do no worse. Then I heard the sound as if of a tractor. It was coming my way, and the driver of this land master type of tractor stopped and reassured me about the road. He said there was a boutique not far ahead, where the people were up. I took the turning for this shop. They were all very friendly. Some even recognized me, on the strength or evidence of my solitary visit once before. It appeared that it was not going to be easy to get to the house which was my destination, and that I had better stay with some other friends I had in this village. One lad who was going a part of the way, undertook to show me the turning, and we stopped at another shop where I had a bite of food, some *Alluwa*, I think they called, it a sweet made out of rice. Very good, it was. All the house was asleep when I got there. There was no hesitation about letting me in, once they recognized my voice. It was not long before neighbours came along, relations who had been asleep themselves. There was no attempt to return to bed, although I was falling asleep sitting up, but it was too dark, by their lamp light, for my hosts to see this Tea was a long time a making, and the neighbours, who had come over, were given it, too. My friends knew the people I was going to visit, and this house was still a mile or more off, although still the same village. So I was able to fulfil a promise I had made before, to stay a night in the house where I was. My host's mother was in hospital in Anuradhapura and he, a school-master, was getting up at 5 a.m. to go visit her. There was a bus to catch a 6 p.m. She was at the *Ayurvedic* hospital where they are not so strict about visiting hours, there being fever patients, I suppose. I thought it was a good time for me to get up so as to be sure of catching the people I was going to visit and fulfilling my mission. In the end we got up at 5.30 a.m., and I think my friend caught his bus at six. Meanwhile, I was already on my way. The house would have been difficult to find the previous night. There were two canals to be crossed, both on log bridges, a singla tree, I think, at two places.

When I arrived I saw some cattle in the garden. I was given

a glass of milk, the finest I have tasted. For breakfast I had hoppers and jaggery. I delivered my letter and was given one in return.

Children had been about early. They were out to get their free milk, powdered, given by government. Work, paid work, was being given to the occupants of all the houses, to keep the wolf from the door, because of the failure of the paddy harvest at *Maha*. There would be no *Yala* either, so far as the main Irrigation scheme was concerned, but all the minor tanks were full, because of the recent rains. There would be a harvest with the water from these. I saw the Hurulle tank later. What water there was looked a large lake, but the tank covered a much vaster area, and all that was dry. The bund was a mile long, it seemed to me, and the bus, I was leaving on, went along the road on top of this bund. Everyone, even strangers, were friendly. The people I was visiting, had been here twenty years. Most people here, I was told, came from the Kandy-Matale area. An eighteen-year old son, of the house I was visiting, had been away a year and had not got in touch with his mother all that time; his father was dead. The eldest married son ran the farm.

Government was asking the farmers to grow cowpea in their paddy fields, and it supplied each household with seed for a quarter of an acre. People told me that they could well do away with rationing. Rationing was a farce they said. I have long been aware of this because of all the pawned rationed books, and others selling their ration. It was not rationed food they wanted, they said, but food itself. I hope that if the leader of the Opposition gives us the seven pounds of grains he promised, that it is all done off this ration and that he has the courage and good sense to abolish what rationing there is. This is what the people want. It is the only policy for a self-respecting country, anyway, and a self-respecting people which is what we are.

Here, I cannot forbear to do some quoting. It is from Paul in his letter to the Hebrews. I shall do it in short, not copying down whole sentences. Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers

for thereby some have entertained angels unawares. Remember those who are in prison, as though in prison with them, and those who are ill-treated since you also are in the body. Let marriage be held in honour among all and let the marriage bed be undefiled; for God will judge the immoral and adulterous. Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have; for he has said, I will never fail you, nor forsake you. So much I quoted in full after all. There is much more I could quote.

All this I have written seated on a rock in the river bed in sight of the new bridge at Dambulla, at what is known as *Miris goni handiya* or chilli sack junction. Coming from Colombo and Kandy, you branch off here either to Anuradhapura and Jaffna, or to Trincomalee and Batticaloa. We had the news of the KKS by-election yesterday morning. The time now is 10 a.m.

## INDIA

### Afghanistan, Pakistan and China

from Tribune's Special Correspondent  
New Delhi, March 13,

THE VISIT of the President of Afghanistan, Mr. Mohamed Daud, to New Delhi and the discussions that ensued are regarded in political circles as the most significant political event in the last fortnight so far as the foreign relations of India are concerned. The fact that the new Chief Minister of Kashmir, Mr. Sheikh Abdullah, was also invited to be present at some of the discussions have been noted by observers. President Daud did not hide his grave concern over the continued bloodshed in Baluchistan which is described as a much more distressing development than the recent intensification of the Pakistani repression in the North-west Frontier Province.

President Daud was on a four-day goodwill visit to India and during his stay he had far-ranging discussions on many bilateral and international matters, one of them being the wider repercussions of the US

decision to resume arms supplies to Pakistan in this explosive situation. The Commerce and Planning Ministers who had accompanied the President had separate talks with their Indian counter-parts on Indo-Afghan economic co-operation. The most important matter was an offer by India to assist Afghanistan in its ambitious project for building a 1250-kilometre railway line linking Kabul, Kandahar and Herat with Zahidan in Iran which is already connected by rail with the Persian Gulf port of Bandar Abbas. It is known that a broad understanding has been arrived at between the two countries and this was reflected in the final communique that was issued at the end of the visit.

President Daud and Afghan Deputy Foreign Minister, Mr. Waheed Abdullah, were at pains to explain the difficult situation which had arisen in their region: that the already strained relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan had been made worse by the ill-advised US bid to arm Pakistan especially at a time when Mr. Bhutto's actions in Baluchistan and the NWFP has made an honourable settlement of the Pakhtoon problem even more difficult than before. Mr. Waheed Abdullah described the ban imposed on the National Awami Party and the arrest of its leader, Mr. Mohammed Wali Khan, as a "very calculated move" on the part of Mr. Bhutto who was apparently not interested in a rapprochement with Afghanistan. He said that the Pakistan Foreign Secretary, Mr. Aga Shahi, was to have visited Kabul last month to pave the way for a summit meeting between Mr. Daud and Mr. Bhutto, but the sudden crackdown in the NWFP had destroyed the prospects of this dialogue. It was now entirely upto Mr. Bhutto to make the next move and Mr. Daud would not fail to respond to any meaningful initiative provided the ban on the NAP was lifted and Mr. Wali Khan was set free to create the necessary climate for it.

OBSERVERS IN DELHI have noted that Afghan criticism of Pakistan on the Baluchistan and Pakhtoon issues have become more outspoken and severe. In the past, Afghanistan has pleaded for justice for the Baluchi and Pakhtoon minorities in Pakistan, who have close ethnic links with the Afghan people,

without advocating actual secession from Pakistan of any part of either Baluchistan or the NWFP and its merger with Afghanistan. So far, Kabul's strong support for the Pakhtoon cause was limited to the suggestion of an autonomous status for the Pushtu-speaking peoples within Pakistan, not separation from it.

It is also well known that the Shah of Iran is deeply concerned over the developments in Baluchistan, knowing as he does that the Daud regime has so far not instigated any separatist movement there. Iran has a common border with Baluchistan, and it is believed that the Shah had impressed upon Mr. Bhutto the need for greater restraint and caution in handling this situation. The Shah had recently paid a visit to Mr. Bhutto in his home town of Larkana in Sind and many suspect that the talks had more to do with the situation in Baluchistan than the providing money for the purchase of US arms. The Shah has let it be known that he was worried about the Bangladesh type situation building up in Baluchistan. There is already a mounting exodus of refugees entering Iran and Afghanistan to escape the savagery of the Pakistani army on its punitive expeditions.

INDIA HAS AGREED with Mr. Daud's contention that the US supply of arms to Pakistan has only tended to increase Mr. Bhutto's determination to use brute force to put down the mounting discontent in Baluchistan and the NWFP. Pakistan has also mounted a propaganda war against President Daud. It is made out that he was a hardliner who had started the Pakhtoon agitation in the past, and owing to his differences with King Zahir Shah, Daud had been compelled to resign from the post of Prime Minister way back in 1962. However, it has been admitted even by independent foreign observers that whatever his own personal predilections, President Daud has not altered the policy which had been followed by his predecessors on this matter. Even the Shah of Iran has come to recognise this: that there has been no change in Afghan policy on the Baluchis or the Pakhtoon problems, other than perhaps a more articulate espousal of it. President Daud has not

abandoned the policy of moderation pursued by King Zahir Shah. He has not advocated direct intervention.

The Afghan President is visiting India, Bangladesh, Iran and Iraq as part of his effort to mobilise international opinion against the senseless repression let loose by Mr. Bhutto in Baluchistan and the NWFP which President Daud is of opinion is bound to have disastrous consequences. Mr. Daud will be well received in all the countries he is visiting. He is a cousin of the former King of Afghanistan and had served the Royal regime for many years as Prime Minister, Defence Minister and Interior Minister. In 1962 he had resigned because he was dissatisfied with the slow progress of constitutional reforms and also because he had differences of opinion with the King.

In July 1973 he had deposed the King in a bloodless coup and proclaimed himself the President of the new Republic. He has been functioning since that time as Head of State and Prime Minister and holding at the same the portfolios of Defence and Foreign Affairs. There is no doubt that he has consolidated the new Republican regime. After he took over, President Daud has succeeded in establishing internal peace without resorting to draconian measures. But his greatest achievement has been the consolidation of the country's foreign relations, and he is now in a position to face Pakistan from a position of strength and confidence.

Right from the beginning India and the Soviet Union had accepted the new Afghan regime without any reservations, but China and Iran had entertained apprehensions that there would be an anti-Pakistani swing in Kabul as a consequence of the sudden abolition of the monarchical system. However, Britain and the USA had adopted a more realistic attitude accepting Afghanistan's assurances that the new government intended to steer a middle course in the conduct of its international relations.

Iran realising its mistake soon developed better relations with the Daud regime. The Chinese who had made the initial mistake of denouncing the anti-Royalist coup as a Soviet-inspired conspiracy, tried to make amends by inviting

Mr. Daud's brother, Mr. Mohamed Naim, to Peking on a goodwill visit. The Shah of Iran sent his Foreign Minister to Kabul to clear up the misunderstandings with President Daud and offer financial assistance to the new government. The Afghan leader took full advantage of these two developments, and having neutralised both Iran and China, has gone on to call Mr. Bhutto's bluff about carrying war into Afghan territory.

CHINA'S ATTITUDE towards India continues to cause concern in the capital. After a four-month lull, China has renewed its attack, early this month, on India with stinging denunciations of Indian actions and policies over Kashmir, Sikkim and alleged threats against Nepal. The Chinese propaganda attack comes one month after the Chinese participation in the Calcutta world table tennis championships and talk about friendship between Indian and Chinese peoples. In its latest barrage, the Chinese news agency *Hsinhua* used such epithets, "robbers" as "gangster's logic", "Indian expansionists" and "tricks" to describe Indian actions. It accused India of sheltering Nepalese "anti-national elements" and letting them use India as a base for "harassment", sabotage and subversion" against Nepal. The agency then also charged that Chinese "Tibetan rebels" had their 'hideouts' in Indian soil and had been led "by their hosts to carry out rebellious activities." This outburst seemed to suggest that the Chinese Government was still facing trouble in Tibet.

Earlier on the occasion of the coronation of Nepal's King Birendra, China gave its firm assurance to the landlocked Himalayan country that "no matter what happens in the days to come" the Government and the people of that kingdom could depend on Peking's firm support in what was described as Nepal's "just struggle against foreign interference and in defence of national independence and State sovereignty." The reiteration of Chinese support for Nepal was made by Vice-Premier Chi Teng Kuei at a banquet given in Peking by the Nepalese Charge d'affaires in celebration of the coronation. The Vice-Premier said the Chinese Government and the people attached great importance to streng-

thening their ties of friendship with Nepal and expressed Peking's thanks to Nepal for the support and co-operation China had received from it in international affairs over the years. Nepal has borders with only two countries, China in the north and India in the South and west. This reiteration now of Peking's firm support to Nepal against "foreign interference and in defence of national independence and State sovereignty" must be taken as a warning only to India, whom China as well as some other countries have been obliquely accusing of entertaining designs to obliterate Nepal's independence following the political developments in Sikkim last year.

But more than all this, the sharp denunciation of the Soviet Union made at the ESCAP meeting in New Delhi, at the end of February made by the leader of the Chinese delegation, Mr. Mau Mu-ming, has aroused political indignation in the capital. It was a blistering attack of the Soviet Union denouncing it as an unconscionable exploiter of poorer countries whilst masquerading as a socialist country. Mr. Mau Mu-ming had told the session of the ESCAP meeting that the countries of the region faced the dangers which emanated from the rivalries between the two super-powers which were competing for world hegemony with growing intensity. He had singled out the Soviet Union and denounced it as a diabolical Super-Power that was vigorously peddling its so-called "Asian Collective Security System" while in reality it was seeking to establish its own sphere of influence in the Asian-Pacific region in pursuit of its "wild ambition of invading, controlling and enslaving the countries of this region." Mr. Mau Mi-ming described the Soviet Union as a country that talked most vociferously of detente, peace, disarmament and security while "energetically expanding its armaments and preparing for war, carrying out aggression and expansion, threatening the security of other countries, creating tensions and contending hard with the other Super Power for hegemony in the Asian-Pacific region."

THIS WAS THE FIERCEST ATTACK on the Soviet Union made by any country on Indian soil—something which the US had never



done even in the worst days of the cold war. Though Mr. Mau Mu-ming is the Chinese Charge d'Affairs in New Delhi, he had used a UN forum for launching this attack, and there is nothing India could do about that. He had spoken with vehement passion when he condemned the Soviet Union. China, he had stated, was a "developing socialist country" belonging to the world with no aspirations of becoming a Super Power at any time. He had said that no matter how hard the Soviet Union tried to bully or cajole the Asian countries with "threats and blandishments and cry hoarse in selling its wares", it was bound to fail in the long run.

Mr. Mau Mu-ming took special pains to warn everybody of what he considered were the nefarious activities of the two super-powers. "The people of all countries must enhance their vigilance and get prepared," he had said. He also criticised the attempts being made by some countries, particularly the Super Powers, to shift their economic crisis onto the developing countries. The implementation of the Declaration and Programme of Action adopted at the Sixth special session of the UN General Assembly last year was being opposed and resisted by the two Super Powers, he said. In the past year Mr. Mau Mu-ming said food supplies had been short on the world market with grain prices sharply rising. The gap between the prices of raw materials and primary products exported by developing countries and the prices of manufactured goods exported by developed countries also continued to widen. The new challenge before the developing countries in Asia and the Pacific was how to curb the "unscrupulous attempt of the countries that try to shift on to others their own economic crisis. In order to change this state of affairs, the Chinese leader emphasised, the developing countries must get united put up a struggle, develop their national economy and achieve political and economic independence.

Even political circles sympathetic to the Chinese here in Delhi were astounded by depth and extent of the Chinese antipathy to the Soviet Union. However, what was said at the ESCAP sessions was not surprising considering the fact that

Peking has been supporting NATO in Europe and has also welcomed the increased US naval presence in the Indian Ocean. During his last visit to Pakistan, the Chinese Foreign Minister went out of his way to praise the re-activation of CENTO as a bar to the extension of Soviet influence to the Persian Gulf area. The Chinese Vice-Premier, who attended the coronation of the King of Nepal, although he had hoped for better relations between India and China, had in some speeches in Kathmandu made oblique references to the dangers of an expansionist India backed by the Soviet Union attempting to extend its hegemony to neighbouring countries like Nepal and Bhutan. And now, there has been even stronger denunciations by the Chinese of the developments in Kashmir.

AGAINST THIS BACKGROUND, it was not surprising that India did not take an initiative to open political talks, even of a routine nature during the visit of the Chinese table tennis team. Thus, the latest version of Peking's ping-pong diplomacy was a non-starter in the sense that India took the stand that it would invite the Vice-Minister leading the team to meet some senior Indian officials of comparable rank only if he asked to see them. But the Chinese Vice-minister had maintained that it was up to the host country to make such a move since he had publicly indicated he would be happy to meet the higher Indian dignitaries.

New Delhi had, however, extended protocol on the correct lines. An official of the External Affairs Ministry was present at the airport to receive and see off the team along with his colleagues from the Ministry of Education, but beyond the exchange of normal courtesies there had been no political talk of any kind. Addressing the Consultative Committee of Parliament, the External Affairs Minister, Mr. Y. B. Chavan, had said that though India had repeatedly indicated its desire for better relations with China, there had been no reciprocal gesture from the Chinese side for normalisation. He had pointed out that the Chinese obsession with the Soviet Union seemed to colour Peking's attitude towards India for which there was no justification. Mr.

Chavan had made these observations (of India's desire for friendly relations) when some members had drawn his attention to the continued Chinese machinations in India's north-eastern region.

If one takes into consideration the nuances of opinion in responsible political quarters in Delhi, the next phase for an early dialogue would depend on what China would do in the wake of the US resumption of arms sales to Pakistan. If it steps up its own military assistance to Pakistan and indulges in further acts of provocation by shouting day in and day out about Indian expansionism the present deadlock is bound to continue. In the meantime, India is also keeping an eye on Chinese attempts to extend their influence to Bangladesh in a bid to generate a triangular discord in the sub-continent.

The latest outburst of Chinese propaganda against India has brought forth in this country all the suspicions about the Chinese plans to spread its influence in Asia, especially Southeast Asia. After the border conflicts with India in 1962 and the failure of other intrusions through subversive armed guerilla movements, China has now adopted other tactics to penetrate these countries. Peking is resorting to political, economic and commercial strategy to penetrate these countries and create pro-Chinese lobbies in all of them. For this purpose, Peking no doubt attaches great importance to the 13 million odd Overseas Chinese in Southeast Asia. It is known that hardline Chinese are now sent out to all these overseas groups. In 1973 alone it was reported that 50,000 emigrants had left for Hongkong with the tacit approval of the Chinese authorities. The Indonesian authorities have been worried about new emigrants joining the 400,000 Chinese in West Borneo and also about the increase of anti-government guerilla activity in Sumatra. But there is evidence that China is no longer placing a high priority on such subversive guerilla and liberation forces, but China has shifted its emphasis to trade.

It has also been a matter for comment that in opening new trade relations with governments in Southeast Asia countries, Peking had instituted that it will continue to trade with the private Chinese

firms it has dealt with in the past. This was the stand taken up by China in its negotiations with Thailand and Malaysia in 1973. While government-to-government trade has certain inhibitions and restrictions, trade through Chinese firms in these countries has much greater flexibility over which the local governments have little or no control. Through the local Chinese bourgeoisie in Southeast Asia countries, it is estimated that China derives a very large sum of money in foreign remittances.

All these considerations about Chinese tactical methodology are now brought out into the open once again in India after the latest Chinese attacks on India and the on developments in Kashmir. China's aims and ambitions in Asia are now under scrutiny. Who is really "expansionist"—India or China?

Must we get ready for another bout of hardline Chinese diplomacy?

## APPRAISAL

### P. G. Wodehouse

by Basil Perera

"Without that son of a gun, Wodehouse", someone said, "life would be dashed too rotten." And so it will be. The acknowledged dean of modern humorists is now dead, after completing 93 years and 93 books.

Some years ago, Wodehouse was awarded an honorary Doctorate in Literature by Oxford University, the second humorist to be so honoured. The first was Mark Twain. According to Hilaire Belloc, Wodehouse was the best living writer in the English language. "His object is to present the laughable, and he does this with such mastery and skill that he nearly always approaches, and often reaches, perfection."

Where lay Wodehouse's genius as a writer? It lay everywhere—in the brilliant construction of his stories related with unsurpassable skill, the excruciatingly funny situations, in his style, similes, twists of phrases, vivid descriptions and above all in his colourful characters. His style was simply a compendium of the most expressive

modern slang. He saw the humour in slang embodied it in his works, and has made it endure in popular idiom.

A PASSAGE taken at random from *Inimitable Jeeves* illustrates this:—"On the edge of the mob-furthest away from me a gang of top-hatted chappies were starting an open-air missionary service; nearer at hand an atheist was letting himself go with a good deal of vim, though handicapped a bit by having no roof to his mouth; while in front of me there stood a little group of serious thinkers with a banner labelled 'Heralds of the Red Dawn, and as I came up, one of the heralds, a bearded egg in a slouch hat and a tweed suit, was slipping it into the Idle Rich with such breadth and vigour that I paused for a moment to get an earful'."

Wodehouse was supreme in the use of his similes. Who can ever forget his comparison of someone's face to "a piece of cheese that has been condemned by the local sanitary inspector? Or someone else's Adam's apple hopping about "like one of those India-rubber balls on the top of the fountain in a shooting gallery"?

THREE INSTANCES should suffice to give an idea of Wodehouse's ability to produce the deft turn of phrase: "into the face of the young man who sat on the terrace of the hotel at Cannes there crept a look of furtive shame, the shifty hang-dog look which announces that an Englishman is about to talk French."

"It was a silver cow, but when I say 'cow' don't go running away with the idea of some decent, self-respecting cudster such as you may observe loading grass into itself in the nearest meadow. This was a sinister, leering, underworld sort of animal, the kind that would spit out of the side of its mouth for twopence."

"A sort of gulpy, gurgly, plobby, squishy, wofflesome sound like a thousand and eager men drinking soup in a foreign restaurant."

It is as the creator of what *Punch* has called "the immortal Jeeves" that Wodehouse himself achieved literary immortality. In his preface to *Blandings Castle*, the master facetiously described how this came about. Wrote he: "Except for the tendency to write articles about the Modern Girl and allow his

side whiskers to grow, there is nothing an author today has to guard himself against more carefully than the saga habit. He writes a story. Another story dealing with the same characters occurs to him, and he writes that. He feels that just one more won't hurt him, and he writes a third. And before he knows where he is, he is down with a saga and no cure in sight. This is what happened to me with Bertie Wooster and Jeeves."

This national figure the inimitable Jeeves, the cream of gentlemen's gentlemen is never defeated, never dismayed. He has always plans up his sleeve to solve his master's problems. By creating Jeeves, Wodehouse immortalised the whole race of butlers, a race very near extinction.

What happened with Bertie Wooster and Jeeves, Wodehouse confessed, happened again with Lord Emsworth, his son Freddie, his butler Beach, his pig, the Empress of Blandings and other residents of Blandings Castle. Here also appear Ukridge who is always about to get rich, but never.

NEARLY ALL the Wodehouse stories are centred round old English country houses, with their absent-minded earls, cranky aunts, the leisured class with plenty of money and pretty little to do. Here flit lovable characters with the most incredible idiosyncrasies and the most improbable names—Augustus Fink-Nottle, Cyril Basington-Bassington, Catsmeat Potter-Pirbright, Barmy Fotheringay-Dhipps and countless others. To quote Hilaire Belloc again: "If in, say 50 years, Jeeves and any other of that great company—but in particular Jeeves—should have faded off then what we have so long called England will no longer be."

Wodehouse could be as humorous in real life as in his novels. After one novel in which Wodehouse had referred to Stout Cortez staring at the Pacific, an anonymous letter writer wrote to him: "You big stiff, it wasn't Cortez. It was Balboa." Wodehouse, referring to this letter, wrote later: "This, I believe, is historically true. On the other hand, if Cortez was good enough for Keats, he is good enough for me. Besides, even if it was Balboa, the Pacific was open for being stared at about that time

and I see no reason why Cortez should not have had a look at it as well."

On hearing that his books were great favourites with American criminals, Wodehouse humorously described a gang leaders' last instructions to his men before the set out on a night's expedition: "Tread lightly, read the Wodehouse novel, and don't fire until you see the whites of the enemy's eyes."

After writing *Heart of a Goof*, a book that any golfing enthusiast would enjoy, he showed the script to his daughter. She made so many alterations and additions that it was many months later that the book appeared. It was gratefully dedicated: "To my daughter Leonora, without whose never-failing sympathy and encouragement this book would have been finished in half the time."

That was Wodehouse.

\* \* \*

BY 2000 A.D.

## India Will Face Water Famine

By Amil Agarwal

New Delhi, July 1974,

A devastating and perpetual water-famine is a certainty by 2000 A.D. in almost all States of the country despite the fact India is one of the most richly endowed countries in the world in terms of water resources. This scenario has been painted in a study entitled "*Water in Second India*" conducted by Prof. M. C. Chaturvedi of IIT, Delhi, for the Ford Foundation in an attempt to enunciate conditions that are expected to prevail when the country's population doubles itself in another 30 years from now.

A TOTAL WATER-DEMAND of about 4,000 billion litres per day (bld) is expected by the turn of the century. Approximately 87 per cent of the demand will continue to come from the water-starved agricultural sector itself. But it will be impossible to meet this demand, the study reveals, as it will far exceed the figure of 2,550 bld which is today estimated as the "total utilisable water

resources potential" in the country. The date set by the study when water-demand, as it is growing presently, should outstrip availability is as close as 1989.

Uttar Pradesh is likely to be the worst hit State as a result of this water famine. The total water potential of 380 bld in the State will fall more than 50 per cent short of the total demand of about 822 bld by 2000 A.D. The agricultural water-demand alone will become some 20 per cent greater than the availability. Punjab, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar and Andhra Pradesh will by then be the only States with water available in excess of the agricultural requirements. But even these States, according to the study, will find it difficult to meet demands generated in the domestic, power and industrial sectors.

The scenario that emerges out of the study is extremely dismal. When it is said that just enough water will be available to meet agricultural requirements, it means that it will be available to meet demands only as they are met today. Fifty per cent of the utilisable water is being used today yet all that the country has, in the words of the study, is "an apology of irrigation—inadequate in quantity, timing and reliability—for about 22 per cent of the sown land only." Water supply is available at barest levels to just about five per cent of the villages and water supply with water-borne sanitation to only 30 per cent of the population.

FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS are expected to lead to "unimaginable difficulties". By 1990 all the utilisable resources would have been completely withdrawn. "Free flowing rivers would become completely unknown. The return flows would have swollen by over 2,000 per cent in volume as compared with today and become seriously polluted by domestic use, industry and agriculture. Such heavy polluted quantities with increased pollution load and corresponding scarce fresh waters to dilute them would produce a stinking degraded environment which will be a serious health hazard. Even then only 70 per cent of the villages would have been served with organised water supply and only 50 per cent of the urban population could be supplied with water-borne sanitation. Agriculture shall

continue to remain the primary user, accounting for 89 per cent of water use, but only 50 per cent of the sown area would be only marginally irrigated even with complete utilisation of our total potential."

ONLY A REVOLUTION in concept, organisation and capability and immaculate action can help to meet the critical situation ahead, says the study. Efforts should simultaneously be made to perfect technique that can possibly help augment water resources—only three are known at present, namely, cloud seeding, desalination and artificial recharging of aquifers.

At present only 40 per cent of the Ganga basin flows are considered utilisable, the major portion of monsoon flows being considered unusable with known technologies. These flows, it is felt, can be easily stored through kharif channels and induced groundwater recharge. The general technique to do so is known but the issues can be qualified only if further studies and experiments are undertaken. If successful, an extra 30 per cent water potential can be developed.

For our agricultural systems the report makes a strong plea to spread the scientific techniques of dryland farming—a system which rely only on rain water yet assures a stable yield.

The present water management organisations are also felt to be inadequate by the study. The Central Water and Power Commission is under the Ministry of Irrigation and Power, while the Central Groundwater Board is under the Ministry of Agriculture. Mismanagement of watershed areas like the hills has led to inordinately high siltation rates thus sapping the life of dams. The apparent activity of the Central Board of Irrigation and Power which is expected to co-ordinate research is considered to be "deceptive." The organisation is said to be extremely bureaucratic in its approach.

A National Water Reservoir Council which can link up the development of total command areas right from individual fields to entire basin through proper system studies is recommended strongly by the study.

—Hindu



# IS IT TRUE?

## Sherlock Holmes

### • Crash Programmes and Equipment

IS IT NOT TRUE that we are now in a new era of crash programmes? That the first time that the term "crash programme" was used in the sense it is used today was in the early fifties when the UNP wanted to invent tamashas, gundus and crash programmes to impress voters that it intended to do something quick to relieve distress? That this term "crash programme" has been kept in the armoury of political jargon (and vocabulary) to be pulled out at appropriate times? That today we have a crash programme for everything? That there is a crash programme to make the railways better? That there is a crash programme to improve driving in the CTB? That there is a crash programme for toddytappers? That there is also supreme crash programme for agriculture as the aftermath of the drought? That it is not clear how a crash programme is different from any other programme? That a crash programme is as liable as any other programme to end up in nothing? That nobody in this country keeps a record of the longterm, shortterm, big, medium and crash programmes announced and what these programmes have achieved (together with the money that each such programme cost and the returns obtained in terms of rupees and cents)? That as far as one can see all programmes enable one or more departments to spend money without let or hindrance? That if any questions are asked it would be made to appear that that the questions were motivated by subversive or anti-national reasons and prompting?

That at the risk of being accused of sabotaging the current crash programme for agriculture for 1975 it is necessary to ask whether it is essential to import the following expensive mechanical equipment? That the whole order is to cost at least US \$ 20 million? That the

following are the equipment considered for the current crash programme: Bulldozers of the D 8 and D 7 class—20; Bulldozers of the Caterpillar class—6 to 8; Motor vehicles—4; Fronted Loaders—4; Traxcavators—2; Motor graders—20; Dump Trucks—10; Generators; Bowsers for diesel and water; and Compressors? That a few items in the list would be useful in the crash programme for groundwater? That the rest are only intended for saving manual labour? That in a country and at a time when manual labour was crying aloud for employment it was foolish (according to one way of thinking in planning and economic circles) to resort to mechanisation?

That apart from such high policy considerations about the relative virtues of manual labour and mechanical equipment (*a la* Dudley Seers), questions can be asked as to the necessity of importing some of the equipment mentioned? That it is common knowledge that there are in this country (a few in the private sector and a vast amount in the public sector) of bulldozers and other equipment useful for agriculture that are idle for the lack of a few spare parts? That thousands of water pumps have been immobilised owing to the lack of one or two spare parts to repair and service them? That farmers have to obtain these spares at fantastically high blackmarket rates to make their water pumps operative? That if part of the \$ 20 million is diverted for the importing of spares essential for maintaining and repairing agricultural machinery, already in the country, it would do much more for the crash programme? That there is a great deal which can (and must) be imported for the crash programme to obtain groundwater? That the bureaucratic answer will be that this money has been voted for one department which

CANNOT borrow the equipment mentioned from any other departments? That it will not be long for people to realise that this kind of purposeless duplication is what has ruined economic development? That the first crash programme that must be implemented is to ensure a total unified effort by all government departments to effect a break through in agriculture?

IS IT NOT INTERESTING that the Ministry of Irrigation has at last been moved to take some action about tapping the ground water resources in the country? That for a long time there was also a myth that only groundwater in the sedimentary rock and soft areas could be economically tapped? That now there is a reluctant admission that it would be useful to examine the question whether such groundwater could be economically exploited in the hard rock areas of the Dry Zone? That the present enthusiasm for groundwater might fade away with the next Monsoon if steps are not taken to ensure that a continuous programme is chalked out for exploiting groundwater resources? That whatever certain experts may feel about the value of the surveys already done a comprehensive modern scientific hydrological survey of groundwater resources in the island must be undertaken without delay? That in the meantime equipment should be obtained to sink surface wells, deep wells and tube wells? That arrangements should be made to manufacture and fabricate all kinds of well-digging and boring equipment in this country? That it is necessary to import water pump engines in larger quantities than at present and arrange to sell the water pumps made here at prices much cheaper than what they are marketed at the moment? That deep-well and tube-well pumps should also be made available to cope with such wells where there is not sufficient underground pressure to bring the water to the surface? That more than all this there was a need to secure supplies of adequate quantities of spares for water pumps and other agricultural equipment? That hundreds and thousands of such equipment are either idle or are not working at full capacity because of the lack of proper spares? That we can do without motor graders and traxcavators and fronted loaders but we cannot do without spares for water pumps?