

TRIBUNE

CEYLON NEWS REVIEW

MARCH 10, 1972

50 Cts.

VOL. 17, NO. 22



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FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

The History Nixon Has Made

March 1, 1972

The Nixon visit to China stole newspaper headlines during the last ten days, but it is unlikely to go down to posterity as "the week that changed history" in the way Nixon hopes it would. The richest and the most populous nations in the world have undoubtedly been brought together into a dialogue, after twenty three years of bitter hostility, but the out-

come of the impact is still uncertain. The joint communique issued from Shanghai on February 28 is an interesting document which reflects the course of discussions between the two countries. Each side set out its views on each question; and, where there was agreement, it was indicated in careful and cautious language. Nearly all important questions were covered: world peace, prevention of war and aggression, US-China relations, Indo-China, Korea, Japan, India-Pakistan and South Asia.

The US side stated "Peace in Asia and peace in the world requires efforts both to reduce immediate tensions and to eliminate the basic causes of conflict. The United States will work for a just and secure peace The United States supports individual freedom and social progress for all people's of the world, free of outside pressure or intervention. The United States believes that the effort to reduce tensions is served by improving communications between countries that have different ideologies so as to lessen the risks of confrontation through accident, miscalculation or

misunderstanding. Countries should treat each other with mutual respect and be willing to compete peacefully, letting performance be the ultimate judge. No country should claim infallibility and each country should be prepared to re-examine its own attitude for common good."

The US backed its eight-point proposal as a basis for settlement in Vietnam, and stated that "in the absence of a negotiated settlement the United States envisage the ultimate withdrawal of all U.S. forces from the region consistent with the aim of self determination for each country of Indo-China." The US will maintain its close ties with and support for the Republic of Korea and encourage the Republic "to seek a relaxation of tension and increased communication in the Korean peninsula." The US placed "the highest value on its friendly relations with Japan; it will continue the existing close bonds". Regarding the Indo-Pak conflict, the US consistent with the Security Council resolution of December 21, 1971, "favors the continuation of the ceasefire between India and Pakistan and the withdrawal of all military forces to within their own territories and to their own side of the cease-fire line in Jammu and Kashmir; the United States supports the right of peoples of South Asia to shape their own future, free of military threat, and without having the area become the subject of great power rivalry".

TRIBUNE
CEYLON NEWS REVIEW

Founded 1954

**A Journal of Ceylon and
World Affairs**

MARCH 10, 1972

Vol. 17 No. 22

43, Dawson Street,
COLOMBO. 2

Telephone: 33172

The Chinese side stated: "Wherever there is oppression, there is resistance. Countries want independence, nations want liberation and the people want revolution—this has become the irresistible trend of history. All nations, big or small, should be equal; big nations should not bully the small and the strong nations should not bully the weak. China will never be a super-power and it opposes hegemony and power politics of any kind. The Chinese side stated that it firmly supports the struggles of all oppressed peoples and nations for freedom and liberation and the people of all countries have the right to choose their social systems according to their own wishes and the right to safeguard the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of their own countries and oppose foreign aggression, interference, control and subversion. All foreign troops should be withdrawn to their own countries"

Having stated this, the Chinese side expressed its firm support to the peoples of Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos in their efforts "for the attainment of their gaol" and for the seven-point proposal of the Provisional Revolutionary Government of South Vietnam. China supported the eight-point programme for the peaceful unification of Korea put forward by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on April 12,

1971 and stood for the abolition of the "U. N. Commission for the Unification and Rehabilitation of Korea" China "firmly opposes the revival and the outward expansion of Japanese militarism and firmly supports the Japanese people's desire to build an independent, democratic, peaceful and neutral Japan." And in regard to South Asia, China "firmly maintains that India and Pakistan should in accordance with the United Nations resolutions on the India-Pakistan question, immediately withdraw all their forces to their respective territories and to their own side of the ceasefire line in Jammu and Kashmir and firmly supports the Pakistan government and people in their struggle to preserve their independence and sovereignty and the people of Jammu and Kashmir in their struggle for the right of self-determination."

After thus having laid down the current gospel according to the US and China sides respectively, the communique went on to assert that "there are essential differences between China and the United States in their social systems and foreign policies. However the two sides agreed that countries, regardless of their social systems, should conduct their relations on the principles of respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all states, non-aggression against other states, non-interference in the inter-

nal affairs of other states, equality and mutual benefit and peaceful coexistence. International disputes should be settled on this basis, without resorting to the use of or the threat of force. The United States and People's Republic of China are prepared to apply these principles to their mutual relations." Thus the famous Five Principles of Co-existence, or the *Pancha Seela* of Bandung was made the first point of agreement between China and the USA.

On this basis, both sides also agreed that "progress towards the normalisation of relations between China and the United States is in the interests of all countries: both wish to reduce the danger of international military conflict: neither should seek hegemony in the Asia-Pacific region and each is opposed to efforts by any other country or group of countries to establish such hegemony; and neither is prepared to negotiate on behalf of any third party or to enter into agreements or understandings with the other directed at other states. Both sides are of the view that it would be against the interests of the peoples of the world for any major country to collude with another against other countries, or for major countries to divide the world into spheres of interest."

Then the communique went to deal with the problem of Taiwan as one of the "long-standing serious disputes be-

tween China and the United States". The Chinese side stated that Taiwan stood as a major obstruction in the way of normalising relations between China and the US; that Taiwan was a province of China which had long been returned to the motherland; the liberation of Taiwan was an internal affair of China in which no other country had the right to interfere, and that all US forces and military installations must be withdrawn from Taiwan. China opposed all efforts to create two Chinas under various devices.

The US side declared that "the United States acknowledges that Chinese on either side of the Taiwan Straits maintain there is but one China and Taiwan is part of China. The United States government does not challenge that position. It re-affirms its interest in a peaceful settlement of the Taiwan question by the Chinese themselves. With this prospect in mind, it affirms its ultimate objective of withdrawal of all US forces and military installations from Taiwan. In the meantime, it will progressively reduce its forces and military installations on Taiwan as the tension in the area diminishes."

This statement by the US must be considered the major and most crucial part of the communique. The US has now agreed in principle to something on which China

laid the greatest importance. If the US had been adamant about "one China and one Taiwan", the talks would have stalled, but it is clear that Kissinger had cleared the ground for a compromise understanding of this kind beforehand. The communique then went to discuss how the relations between the two countries could be broadened: in fields such as science, technology, culture, sports, journalism, "in which people-to-people contacts and exchanges would be mutually beneficial". It was also agreed to broaden bilateral trade and also to "stay in contact through various channels, including the sending of a senior US representative to Peking from time to time for concrete consultations to further the normalisation of relations between the two countries and continue to exchange views on issues of common interest." The Communique concluded on the hope "that the gains achieved during the visit would open new prospects for the relations between the two countries. They believe that the normalisation of relations between the two countries is not only in the interest of the Chinese and American peoples but also contributes to the relaxation of tension in Asia and the world."

Such was the joint communique after Nixon's one week stay in China. It certainly was a major advance after twenty three years of

cold and hot war hostilities between the two countries. But it is yet to be seen how the "agreement", if it can be called that, will work. One is reminded of the sentimental and romantic upsurge which had been evoked by the Pancha Sila agreement between India and China in 1954 and the consequent cries of *China-Hind-bhai bhai*. Nehru had helped Red China to come out onto the world stage and it was climaxed by Chou's debut at the Bandung Con-

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Minimum Subscription
Rs. 30 per 60 issues,
post free in Ceylon.

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ference in 1955. At that time Nehru had conceded China's suzerainty over Tibet and the *bhai-bhai* epoch had followed. But China had other border claims besides Tibet, and India refused to concede border territory along the Himalayan border which China claimed. This ended the *bhai bhai* period and Indian leaders were branded as reactionary expansionists and neo-imperialists. There was an ideological, diplomatic, political and emotional rift between India and China after the short border war in 1962.

It had been a similar story with Soviet Russia. There had been a honeymoon period where eternal praises were sung about "monolithic unity" based on Marxism-Leninism. There were defence agreements and friendship pacts. Trade had reached phenomenal heights. But China had boundary claims on territory held by Russia and there was also the question of suzerainty over Outer Mongolia. Russia did not think it necessary to concede any of these boundary claims of China, and as for Outer Mongolia it was an "independent and sovereign state" about which Russia would not negotiate. Furthermore, the Soviet Union, after Stalin died, refused to accept Mao as the great teacher and the sole helmsman of the Marxist-Leninist movement. Differences on ideological grounds arose just as much as there were differen-

ces about boundaries and border territories. The great honeymoon between Russia and China ended, and the Soviet Communists were branded as revisionists and social-imperialists.

So far as the Americans are concerned, China has only one border-territorial problem, namely Taiwan. Soviet Russia has a 2500 mile border with China and India has over 1500 miles abutting on Chinese territory. And the disputes are many and varied because Chinese Emperors in the past had moved forwards and backwards over this area, and present-day China thinks that every piece of land which had at any time come under Chinese overlordship and suzerainty should now accrue to Communist China. Neither Russia nor India were or are willing to agree to this proposition. They are therefore discarded as anti-Chinese, as anti-Markist-Leninist-Maoists, and anti-progressive.

As long as the US had placed all its hopes on Taiwan to liquidate Mao's China, the US imperialists were the most dangerous foes China had. Neither Russia nor India had ever wanted to eradicate "communism" from China, but this had been the avowed policy of the US right from the beginning of the 50s with McCarthy and Nixon as the gallant crusaders to achieve this objective. At that time it was Russia and India

which had stood by China and had tried to bring China into the UN. The wheel of history has now turned the full circle. The US, unable to liquidate communism in China and elsewhere, has now decided that it must seek a method of "co-existence" which would sustain capitalist free enterprise under an umbrella of nuclear deterrence.

And it is a strange irony that it is Nixon, the arch crusader against communist China (and communism everywhere), who sent his emissaries to Peking. He has now expressed his willingness to settle the one border problem the US has with China, namely Taiwan, to Peking's satisfaction. He has so far agreed "only" *in principle* to the Chinese proposition that Taiwan was a province of China and that there was only one China and this was the People's Republic of China. The US has also agreed that its ultimate objective was to withdraw its forces and installations in Taiwan, and that in the meantime it would begin to effect the withdrawal as "tension" in the area diminished. How the mechanics of the Taiwan operation was going to work out is hard to envisage, but Peking has scored heavily in obtaining this acceptance even *in principle* of its proposition about Taiwan. China has no other border disputes with the USA and it is therefore

likely that the "friendship" between the two countries can grow—unlike in the case of India and the Soviet Union against whom China has insoluble border and territorial claims. Even Premier Sato of Japan, who had championed the two China policy with Taiwan as a separate entity; has hastened to embrace the new US formulation about Taiwan. The Chinese on both sides of Taiwan Straits, said the American side in the communique, "maintain there is only one China" - a piece of casuistry any Jesuit would have been proud of.

China, no doubt to impress the revolutionary Maoist parties it has inspired and encouraged on the five continents, had thrust its sermon on "revolution" and "liberation" and "emancipation" into the communique. Does this mean that China will continue its revolutionary role in setting up armed liberation struggles in several countries? What will the US have to say about this? Chinese ideological dissertations claim that China does not seek any territory, or imperialist, military or expansionist influence anywhere. It only wants the right for oppressed people everywhere to "liberate" and "emancipate" themselves through "revolution" with the aid of Mao's thought and to refashion the world in the image of Mao.

Christian missionaries in the ages past had sought to "emancipate" the people allegedly living in oppression under the heathen obscurantism of the Incas and the Aztecs in Central America or the idolatory of Hinduism in India with the message of the Sermon on the Mount and had endeavoured to refashion man in the image of Christ. They had not hesitated to use the sword, fire and the army to achieve their ends: and the wars they waged were in the name of God and Christ. Today, the new emancipators want the "oppressed" to resort to armed revolution, in the name of freedom, to fashion a new man in the image of Mao. It is this aspect of Maoism, this crazy zeal for evangelical proselytisation, which makes China a difficult friend. Those, who had in the past refused to be converted to Christianity, were cast into the outer purgatory as heathens and idolators, but today those who are not willing to accept Maoism as the one and only living gospel are cast into the special hell for reactionaries, revisionists, imperialists, expansionists and the like. Maoist evangelical proselytisers no doubt lead austere exemplary lives in the same way Christian missionaries had done, but until China and Maoism attain the maturity, which is derived from a spirit of human tolerance, China will find it hard to live in friendship with people of

different beliefs, persuasions and attitudes. The five principles of co-existence will be meaningless.

The USA is only just *coming out* of that McCathyan *cum* Dullesian phase of intolerance which had isolated it from all humanity except its clients, stooges and puppets. Today the US is seeking to win friends, and it seems to be making more friends than before, but many Americans still believe that they are god-chosen saviours of free enterprise—forgetting the tyrants, the dictators and other miscellaneous despots they continue to prop up with their military might and economic wealth. The age of saviours and proselytisers has ended.

Nixon went to China because he wanted something in return. For one thing, in the context of current US politics, the spectacular show in Peking, televised to the USA, will help him win the next elections, especially when he re-inforces it with another spectacular show in Moscow in May.

This is not going to be easy. It will be difficult for people to forget that the US had kept China at arm's length for twenty three years, and that only in President Nixon's second bid to enter the White House he has woken up to the urgency of making the world safe for peace (though not for

democracy) by the US President going to Peking after humbly obtaining an invitation. The Mingos and the Manchus had also received such emissaries who had gone to China to pay tribute. The conspicuous absence of tumultuously shouting welcoming crowds at Peking airport was in line with Chinese custom. Nixon was a visitor who had wanted to be invited. He was not a guest who was specially invited. It was different with Hailie Selassie and Bhutto who had been given rapturous welcomes not very long ago.

A British newspaper had correctly described Nixon as a Yankee at the court of King Mao. He had been given a week to prove himself. But the Chinese held most of the the political trumps. At the moment, it is the US, rather President Nixon, who needs the Chinese more than they need him. Knowing also that he was going to Moscow in May the Chinese were cautious. Stanley Karnow, writing from Peking for the *Washington Post*, on February 26, said " Chou is apparently trying to persuade the President to move toward formal diplomatic relations with Peking by dropping the US commitment to Taiwan. Chinese sources admit that they do not realistically expect the President to abandon Taiwan. Even so, Chou may be using the Taiwan issue as a bargaining counter. Mr. Nixon, evidently concerned

by the impact that scuttling Taiwan would have on American conservative elements prior to the US elections, seems to be urging Chou to agree to a far less ambitious relationship with the United States.

Judging from the White House statements prior to the trip, as well as his rare substantive remarks here, the President would like Chou to agree to cultural, scientific, journalistic and trade exchanges as well as what he called 'on-going communications belt'. As Administration sources have explained it, this permanent communications channel might be a US diplomatic mission lodged in a foreign embassy in Peking, or a Sino-American negotiating group headed by *shadow* ambassadors on both sides alternating between Peking and Washington or New York. Chou, on the other hand, appears to be making the establishment of such arrangements contingent on a pledge by the President to withdraw the more than 8,000 troops from Taiwan and recognise Peking's claim to the island"

The communique showed that Chou had won. Nixon did not want to return empty handed. He had therefore agreed "in principle" that US would "ultimately" withdraw its forces and installations from Taiwan which was recognised to be part of China—thus conceding near-

ly all of what Peking had wanted at this stage. Chou, it would seem, had impressed upon Nixon that it did not matter how long it took the US to withdraw forces from Taiwan—it could take even years or decades—but the claims of Peking had to be recognised in principle. And Chou got what he wanted.

It would be difficult for Nixon to say that he has not jettisoned Taiwan, Vietnam, Japan and South Korea during his triumphal odyssey to Peking. There is no doubt that they are among the main casualties. America has neutralised an enemy but has lost a few in the process. Militarily Taiwan may be able to look after itself, and Japan is a power centre, economically and even militarily, which China cannot easily ignore. In the communique there is an under-current of hostility to India, but it is difficult to forget that it was India which had consistently supported Communist China's entry into the UN even after the 1962 conflict. It was the USA, which had blocked China's entry into the UN right up to last year. Now, Nixon has adopted this strategy of wooing both Peking and Moscow—presumably to keep his seat safe in the White House. This is a kind of politicking which will be resented by sophisticated and knowledgeable people. At least, they will not be taken in.

(Continued on page 10)

TOPICAL

EMERGENCE OF BANGLA DESH

BY HISTORICUS

New Delhi;

An event like the birth of Bangla Desh is bound to mean different things to different people; and it is right that it should. However, major historical developments of this kind also need to be set within co-ordinates which are firm and valid in order accurately to assess and comprehend their significance. Otherwise history as such is liable merely to become an inventory of random and disparate happenings, without a yesterday and without a tomorrow. What, then, should be the framework within which we must locate the break-up of the unitary state of Pakistan, if it can be so described, and understand the emergence of Bangla Desh as a sovereign and independent political entity.

The immediate chain of causes that led to the fission is common knowledge. The Islamabad junta and its predecessors, whether military or civil represented a species of Bourbonism remarkable only for its stupidity and ignorance. They ignored elementary political realities and seemed to think that a viable modern state structure could be built on a medieval theocratic foundation; that people's urge for

democratic rights and economic justice could be smothered under the weight of a military dictatorship; and that a vast area, inhabited by a majority of the population, could be treated as a colonial hinterland and subjected indefinitely to systematic spoliation, without the situation exploding in their faces sooner or later—and sooner rather than later.

All this is true, but it begs the question. For the ruling establishment which ultimately brought about the disintegration of Pakistan was itself the product of certain forces and processes. Specially, while there can well be difference of opinion as to the responsibilities involved in the creation of Pakistan, there can be no manner of doubt that its establishment meant a strategic success for the policies of imperialism which at the very moment of its apparent physical withdrawal from India was able to prolong its hold over the sub-continent by setting up a powerful hedgehog position from which it could operate.

The usage to which Pakistan was put first by the British, then for a time jointly by

Britain and the United States, and finally predominantly by the Americans in a tacit if incongruous collusion with Maoist China is there to prove it.

The rise of Bangla Desh as an independent nation, therefore, must firstly be seen as a further and important stage in the maturing of the struggle against imperialism and neo-colonialism not only in the Indian sub-continent, but the whole South Asian region.

Whereas undivided Pakistan remained throughout the quarter of a century of its inglorious existence part of the elaborate system of checks and balances worked out not merely to contain India, but also to stultify the radical potential of Indian polity, the consolidation of Bangla Desh as a new centre of independent polity on the sub-continent cannot but serve to re-inforce the thrust of radical political developments in India and throughout the region which will no longer be subject to the same intensity of neutralising pressures and constraints.

However, the anti-imperialist context in which Bangla Desh fits perfectly, important though it is, does not offer a complete framework of understanding. It also belongs to another equally important context—the movement of reformation. For the partition of India on a communal basis and the creation of Pakistan which claimed to be

stridently, anti-secular in its outlook and orientation was not only a major victory for the forces of imperialism; it was also a triumph for the forces of counter-reformation and obscuratism

Indeed, there had always been an unholy if natural alliance between imperialism and counter-reformation which could be traced back to the early decades of the 19th century when imperialism in its classical Marxian sense was still only in its embryonic stage. Pakisian represented the dead sea fruit of that perverse alliance.

It is, of course, true that this was possible only because the countervailing forces of reformation in India had too narrow a social base. The movement of reformation, moreover, suffered from structural weaknesses to which too little attention was given by the progressive body of opinion; nor was it free from certain ambiguity and even ambivalence of outlook and purpose.

Indeed, the anti-imperialist movement of liberation represented by the Indian National Congress itself was unable wholly to prevent the growth of anti-reformatory trends, often masquerading as militant nationalism, within its own ranks, as Jawaharlal Nehru has noted in a chapter of his *Autobiography* headed "Paradoxes". The result was that at every point the effort to consolidate secularism was

vitiated by this powerful retrogressive undercurrent of irrationality, both during the years leading up to independence and since.

With the emergence of Bangla Desh, committed to the creation of a rational secular polity, the forces of counter-reformation in the sub-continent have suffered a serious, perhaps decisive defeat and the movement of reformation is likely to acquire a fresh impetus. It can even be suggested that for the first time in the history of the people of the sub-continent conditions have matured for the consolidation of a secular system of polity which is the precondition for the carrying out of radical transformation of society both in India and Bangla Desh - and in Pakistan itself. However, although ripeness is important, no less important is the need for our two nations and their leaders to try to understand the true nature of what has happened and base their policies and programmes on that understanding. Otherwise a magnificent opportunity might well be lost.

The significance of the emergence of Bangla Desh is very great both internationally and domestically.

Turning first to the former it means a serious reverse for Sino-American diplomacy to prop-up and buttress the military regime in Pakistan and to connive at, if not to collude with, the the massacres which

Yahya perpetuated upon the Innocent people of Bangla Desh. The relations between USA and our country have now recorded not only zero temperature but even below zero. But this is not due to anything which India has or has not done; it is entirely attributable to his wrong choices made by President Nixon, which, let it be noted, have been repudiated by a large body of American opinion.

Nor am I apprehensive about the threat of withdrawal of American aid. Too long we have walked on propped. Both a nation and an individual should stand straight on their natural legs and face whatever has to be faced. We have glibly talked of self-sufficiency while asking for more and more aid from America and other countries. Self-sufficiency can only mean the ability to carry on with what we have. And, God knows, we have more than enough in talent, resources and the gifts that nature has endowed us with. If China could build up a powerful technology without external aid, I do not see why we should always be looking helplessly to outsiders for any development.

A BUGLE CALL. The victory of Bangla Desh also means that the cause of freedom and self-determination can triumph against heavy odds if the people are firm and unyielding in support of their just cause. It is a bugle-call to countries and peoples

suffering under the colonial yoke—or subjected to the new form of imperialism which is economic domination over a poor and backward country.

Bangla Desh proves that the cause of liberty can never be lost even though sometimes it may take long for the ultimate victory to be won.

Vietnam is still being subjected to American terrorism—and yet it has survived and will survive so long as the gallant and heroic people of that small country can face American military might with equanimity.

Finally Bangla Desh, a predominantly Muslim country—the second largest in the world—has opted for secularism and rejected a theocratic form of government. It has accepted the only true concept of nationalism—that it is not religion that makes a nation—but common culture, common language and shared ideals. It is an example to other Muslim countries in the world. The retrograde and reactionary attempt to form a Muslim patriotism has received an almost fatal blow with one of the largest Muslim countries emphatically and unequivocally rejecting a concept.

HINDUS AND MUSLIMS: Domestically it is a matter of rejoicing that Pakistan, as it was conceived, is dead—its only *raison d'être* being the Two-Nation Theory ceases to have any meaning

or relevance. We have always believed in Secularism but even so what has happened in Bangla Desh will have a profound effect on Hindu-Muslim relations. To those Muslims who still felt a sense of separateness from their Hindu brethren, the collapse of the Pakistan edifice will bring home the truth that one can be a true and patriotic Indian, whether one is a Hindu or Muslim and that we have a common history, common traditions and common culture which are not the monopoly of Hindus but belongs to every son and daughter India.

Politically and economically Bangla Desh will be a source of great strength to us. We might have spent crores to help the refugees and may have to spend crores to help Bangla Desh to stand on its feet, but all will yield fruit in the future. To have a friendly neighbour bound to us with strong political and economic ties is a source of strength to any country, particularly when we have a menacing China in the North and a yet hostile, though a truncated Pakistan to the West.

BROTHERHOOD NOW:

We are one of the few newly independent countries which have not fallen a victim to the glamour of dictatorship and maintained democratic traditions. It is heartening to see that the first ordinance promulgated by Sheikh Mu-

jib is to set up a Parliamentary form of Government in Bangla Desh. There at least we will not have to deal with the whims and vagaries of a military dictatorship nor with the perpetual threat of war and a continuing stance of hostility.

And finally the brotherhood between us and the people of Bangla Desh which has been forged in blood will not be something ephemeral, nor something resulting from mere political necessity, but it will be a bond that will be emotional. And, emotional ties are more lasting and durable than those which are the result of mere national self-interest or political expediency.

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(Continued from page 6)

Already there is shock and consternation in Taiwan. Kissinger, at Shanghai, had stated that the US still stood by the treaty commitment to defend Taiwan although there was no specific mention of this in the communique. Kissinger had explained that this "omission from the communique was due to the delicacies of negotiations on the territory of a country with which the US does not have regular diplomatic relations". The failure to repeat the pledge was noticeable because in the same communique the US had stated that it would stand by the pledges to South Korea and Japan and "continue to develop the existing close bonds". Kissinger had been bluntly asked whether the US had not given away much more than it had received (it was pointed out that there was no specific concession by the Chinese in the communique), Kissinger said, "... We are not approaching this from the point of view of a scoreboard to see who scored how many points on each issue." He said that the major gain by the US was to set in motion the process of diplomatic exchanges which he said, should lead to solving some of problems of Asia without the threat or the use of force.

It is clear that Chou had taken the hard line position that if there was no pledge

by Nixon about withdrawing from Taiwan, there would be no reference in the communique even about developing the "communications belt". Confirming what Stanley Karnow had stated, Max Frankel writing to the *New York Times* from Peking on February 27 stated. "..... Thus it appears that Mr. Nixon has been asking that in effect, the problem of Taiwan be sidestepped and that it would be resolved by the Chinese in Taipei and Peking. But Mr. Chou apparently has been asking that, in effect, China's claims to Taiwan be recognised soon, even if absorption of territory takes a long time thereafter. Apparently, the last minute bargaining involved not only what would be said in the communique about this and other questions, but also what would be left unsaid."

President Nixon has been at pains to declare that there were no secret agreements with the Chinese but in Moscow and in Delhi doubts have been cast on this score. Frank Moraes, who has been one of India's leading journalists most friendly towards the US during the last twenty five years (he turned a little sour against the US during the last Indo-Pak war), stated in his weekly column on February 27 that: "... Some fifty years ago President Woodrow Wilson of America pleaded at Versailles for 'open covenants openly arrived at'.

President Nixon evidently works to another formula. He prefers secret covenants secretly arrived at. For a week he has been working behind China's bamboo curtain, and the joint Sino-American communique will certainly not reveal the secret commitments entered into by either side, whether against India or Soviet Russia. President Nixon might attempt to repeat the drill when he visits Moscow in the near future, though it is unlikely that the Russians will be eager to provide him with an iron curtain in their capital...'' Moscow has been harping about Sino-US collusion for some time now; and reports from Moscow already indicate that the Russians will insist that the Shanghai communique is only intended to camouflage the secret agreements made by Nixon and Chou after they had been secretly negotiated by Kissinger. This may be propaganda, or if may be true.

Time and history alone will reveal the truth. At the time of writing very little is known about the global reactions to the Nixon-Chou communique. But they are bound to be interesting and revealing. America's old allies have to do a great deal of re-adjusting to the new alignment of forces—and casualties will be inevitable.

FOR THE RECORD

HEADLINES

JAN. 16 — FEB. 7

SUNDAY, JAN. 16: The Police have instituted inquiries into the reported remarks of a leading FP politician who is alleged to have said that the Tamils in Ceylon should launch a Bangla Desh style movement with foreign assistance. The Permanent Secretary to the Ministry of Health yesterday told a press conference that the abolition of the existing channelled Private Practice by Govt. doctors would be done without fear or favour. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman yesterday expressed confidence that the nations of the world especially who had fought for their independence would recognise Bangla Desh and support its entry into the UN.

MONDAY, JAN. 17: The State of Emergency was further extended by a proclamation by the Governor-General yesterday. The official Committee appointed by the Govt. to make recommendations in regard to land reforms, has warned the Government that tinkering with the existing structure of tea lands would result in economic loss. "Paper Gold" (SDRs) to the tune of Rs. 10 million is to be given to Ceylon by International Mo-

netary Fund. Israeli Defence Minister, Moshe Dayan, said yesterday that the prospects of starting negotiations with Egypt were good and that Israel should be prepared to make compromises. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, in an interview to *Newsweek* correspondent, has stated that President Bhutto first prevented him from being executed and then stopped an attempt to kill him in Jail.

TUESDAY, JAN. 18: According to a Gazette Extraordinary issued yesterday, the Paddy Marketing Board has been vested with the exclusive monopoly of purchasing and processing of Paddy and rice through out Ceylon. A factional squabble over the Presidency of the FP is threatening to send its rank and file into complete disarray. The Finance Minister, Dr. N. M. Perera yesterday indicated to banking and financing circles that the credit squeeze would continue for another 7 weeks. In Chile, the left-wing Government of Marxist President Salvador Allende conceded defeat last night in two crucial by-elections. Prime Minister, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman yesterday ordered all members of the

Bangla Desh guerilla forces to surrender their weapons within ten days.

WEDNESDAY, JAN. 19: Mr. Felix Dias Bandaranaike, speaking at a public meeting in Jaffna, warned the people who were talking about a "Jaffna Desh" that the Government would not tolerate such talk and that they should abandon all such ideas. The Government has lodged a strong protest with the Ceylon-UK Conference Liners against the arbitrary imposition of a 7 percent surcharge on outgoing cargo. A Russian team of experts, which was in Ceylon few months ago, had indicated that there was adequate evidence of large quantity of petroleum deposits in North Western sector of Ceylon. Britain yesterday completed its negotiations for entering into the European Common Market.

THURSDAY, JAN. 20: The Government has decided not to release any Government doctors to proceed to Bangla Desh as members of a medical mission sponsored by a local organisation. A ministerial team led by Mr. Maithripala Senanayake, Minister of Irrigation, Power and Highways, yesterday told the visiting British delegation that Ceylon Government's policy concerning British investments here was not discriminatory. Bangla Desh Premier Sheikh Mujibur Rahman yesterday ordered an amnesty for all people convicted by Special Military

Headlines

Courts while under East Pakistan martial law administration.

FRIDAY, JAN. 21: The Minister of Justice, Mr. J. M. Jayamanne, resigned from the Cabinet yesterday and the Minister of Public Administration, Local Govt. and Home Affairs was sworn in as the new Minister of Justice. A divisional bench of three judges today directed that Mr. P. C. Gunasekera, brother of Mr. Prins Gunasekera M.P., be released forth-with following the writ filed by Mrs. Sita Gunasekera, wife of Mr. Gunasekera. Thousands of students of Cairo University yesterday demanded sweeping changes in the Egyptian administration.

SATURDAY, JAN. 22: The Govt. Parliamentary Group yesterday approved the Cabinet decision to abolish the channelled consultation scheme for government medical specialists. Mr. P. C. Gunasekera, who was released by the Supreme Court yesterday following successful habeas corpus application, was re-taken into custody last evening. The President of the World Bank, Mr. Robert McNamara arrived in the island today. According to *Sun*, Britain has sounded Ceylon on the question of granting recognition to the State of Bangla Desh and its admission to the Commonwealth. Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi yesterday inaugurated two new states of the Indian Union as a

part of the re-organisation of the country's strategic North Eastern area. The Bangla Desh Government yesterday announced that the new nation would observe March 26 as its Independence Day.

MONDAY, JAN. 24: It was indicated by informed sources following Mr. Robert McNamara's talks with Prime Minister, Mrs. Bandaranaike, that the World Bank is now unlikely to insist on a further devaluation of the Ceylon rupee as a pre-condition for any aid or assistance. United Motors, a leading private limited company dealing with automobiles and other motor accessories is being taken over by the Ministry of Industries under the Business Acquisition Act. The Health Ministry has decided to levy a special fee for drugs, dressings, injections and clinical examinations in Paying Wards. Mr. S. S. Kulatilake, Minister of Cultural Affairs, speaking at a public meeting yesterday, disclosed that the Republic of Ceylon will be born on March 2 this year. A new page was turned in European history yesterday when ten Western European nations signed a treaty linking them in a powerful economic bloc and a potential superpower.

TUESDAY, JAN. 25: The Federal Party has decided to boycott the Committee meetings of the Constituent Assembly. The Soviet Union has recognised the People's

Republic of Bangla Desh. Mr. Robert McNamara said in New Delhi yesterday that the WB could not give any financial aid to Bangla Desh at the moment. The United States had begun informal discussions with Greece on using Greek ports as a permanent base for US warships.

WEDNESDAY, JAN. 26: The system of automatic promotions allowed to students in educational institutions will be scrapped from this year. Insurgents engaged in food production at their respective rehabilitation camps will get a part of the proceeds from the sale of their products. The IMF yesterday announced a stand-by currency credit to Ceylon to a total value of Rs. 14.75 million Special Drawing Rights. President Nguyen Van Thieu of South Vietnam yesterday offered to hold new Presidential elections in South Vietnam in which the Viet Cong could participate. Militant Cairo students demanding war with Israel defied a ban on public demonstrations yesterday and many were arrested in a series of running battles with police.

THURSDAY, JAN. 27: The Minister of Home Affairs, Mr. Felix Dias Bandaranaike, has ordered a probe into several allegations that have been made against certain appointees to the Janata Committees. The GMOA's president yesterday officially announced the Association's decision to

support the Government's channelled practice ban. Pakistan has offered to increase its trade more than two fold with Ceylon. Israeli Foreign Minister Abba Eban yesterday called on Egyptian President Anwar Sadat to enter negotiations with Israel following the failure of what he called an imported solution.

FRIDAY JAN. 28: The Advisory Councils in two Government Departments resigned yesterday protesting that their representations were not being heeded and many other Advisory Councils have threatened to follow suit. The Ceylon National Chamber of Industries has warned the Government that the ceiling on disposable income would result in a large number of people being thrown out of employment. According to *Times of Ceylon*, a proposal to invite Mr. J. R. Jayawardene, Leader of the Opposition, to join the Government is expected to be discussed by the Executive Committee of the SLFP. Mass graves containing an estimated 500 bodies of Bengali Officers in the Pakistan Army have been discovered in Bangla Desh. Israeli Defence Minister General Moshe Dayan said yesterday that Soviet aid to the Arab countries had reached the very limit between assistance and actual participation in the war.

TUESDAY FEB. 1: The Federal Party has decided to totally reject the new Constitution and to call upon all

the Tamils in the country to voice their protests against it. Ceylon will establish a second multi-million Oil Refinery Project at Trincomalee with Foreign private collaborators shortly. The Prime Minister has asked Mr. C. Kumarasooriar, Minister of Post and Telecommunications, to continue in office. The Government has approved the holding of pony races in Ceylon. King Mahendra of Nepal died from a heart attack yesterday. Thirteen young men were shot dead and another 206 people were wounded when shooting broke out between troops and snipers during a Civil Rights demonstration yesterday in N. Ireland.

WEDNESDAY, FEB. 2: The Government has decided to release the compulsory savings of individuals for investment purposes. The leader of the Communist Party of Ceylon (Peking Wing), Mr. N. Shanmugathasan, was released from custody yesterday. He was kept in detention following the incidents of last April. Dr. N. M. Perera, the Minister of Finance, speaking at the inauguration of Jaycees Management Training and Development program, said that no person who wishes to leave the island to better his prospects abroad would be given university education in future. Mr. Arnold Smith, Secretary General of the Commonwealth, said yesterday that Pakistan's decision to withdraw from

the organization was illogical and reflected a basic misconception of the nature of grouping. President Zulfikar Ali Bhutto of Pakistan began talks with Chinese Premier Chou En-lai yesterday in Peking.

THURSDAY, FEB. 3: Mr. T. B. Tennakoon, Minister of Social Services, in an interview to the press, has stated that he would wholeheartedly welcome Mr. J. R. Jayawardene to join the Government. Undergraduates who are being held in detention in connection with the April insurgency are to be given facilities to sit their examinations. A team of geologists from the People's Republic of China arrived in Ceylon yesterday at the invitation of the Ministry of Industries and Scientific Affairs. According to *Ceylon Daily Mirror*, the LSSP and CP are opposed to the Leader of the Opposition, Mr. J.R. Jayawardene, being invited to join Government. President Zulfikar Ali Bhutto said in Peking yesterday that Pakistan would not consider its decision to leave the Commonwealth. The British Embassy was set ablaze in Dublin yesterday.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 4: The 24th Anniversary of Ceylon's Independence fell today and the Independence Day celebrations were on a subdued scale. Kandy and Hikkaduwa were declared diseased areas yesterday following the detection of a positive case of small

pox. Mr. John Rodrigo, appointed MP, tendered his resignation from the membership in the House of Representatives yesterday to make way for Mr. C. Kumarasooriar to become a Member of the House of Representatives. President Anwar Sadat of Egypt flew into Moscow yesterday for talks with Kremlin leaders. The Chinese Government has decided to change into grants four loans it has already given to Pakistan.

SATURDAY FEB. 5: Permission sought by the Chairmen of certain Corporations to pay a bonus to their employees has been turned down by the Minister of Finance, Dr. N. M. Perera. The State Film Corporation has taken over all unexhibited Hindi and Tamil films. The Governments of Japan and

Ceylon have reached agreement on the supply by Japan to Ceylon of a loan of 3,500 million Yen. The MPs of the North boycotted yesterday's Independence Day celebrations held at Jaffna Stadium. The Ministry of Shipping and Tourism is actively considering to stop the influx of hippies to the island following the detection of small pox cases among hippie visitors. Britain, West Germany, Sweden, Finland, Denmark, Norway and Holland yesterday announced recognition of the new state of Bangladesh. China has declared that the purpose of President Nixon's 8-point Vietnam peace plan is to fool the American people and world opinion. Irish Premier Jack Lynch called on the world yesterday to send financial aid to the Roman Catholic minority.

MONDAY, FEB. 7: The Tamil Conference on the new Constitution has decided to urge the Prime Minister to refrain from going ahead with the draft Constitution as presented to the Constituent Assembly, since it was unacceptable to it. President Zulfikar Ali Bhutto of Pakistan has launched a worldwide appeal to save the Biharis and other non-Bengalis in Bangladesh from attacks and atrocities. Sir Alec Douglas-Home, the British Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary, arrived in New Delhi yesterday on a 3-day official visit. China yesterday criticised Japanese Premier Eisaku Sato for being double-dealing in his China policy.

Ceylon: Marginal Notes

By **SERENDIB**

MARCH 2, 1972

The budget gap of about Rs. 400 million has still not been bridged. With a World Bank team due here this month to prepare its preliminary report for the Aid Consortium meeting in Paris in May, the Government has to take definite steps to deal with the yawning budget gap. On this Report of the World Bank team will depend the amount of consortium aid this country will get this year.

Unless the government adopted some positive measures in this connection, there is every likelihood that even the amount of aid that was granted last year will not be made available this year.

From all reports, it is clear that the Government has to fall back upon proposals made in the last budget but which had to be withdrawn consequent to backbencher opposition. From the measures which have been falteringly announced so far, it seems that nearly all the

measures contemplated earlier will be brought into force, in measured and cautious dribbles. On February 28, the Minister of Foreign Trade decreed that as from March 1 the monthly ration of sugar will be reduced to two pounds. This quantity will be issued against ration books or token cards every month. Sugar which was freely available earlier was rationed from November when the Finance Minister had fixed the ration at two pounds per person. It was subsequently raised to three pounds following pressure from the Government Parliamentary Group.

However, owing to the unprecedented rise in the world sugar prices, the Government has decided to stop the importation of refined white sugar and obtain only crude brown sugar. When the ration was 3 lbs a month at the rationed price of 72 cts, a lb of white sugar was freely available in the open market at Rs. 1.50 a lb. But today stocks of white sugar are over and only brown sugar is available to most consumers. In the meantime, the new Chairman of the Sugar Corporation, a Mr. Mahee Wickramaratne, and Mr M.A. de Silva, Director Publicity, of the Ministry of Planning and Employment, at a press conference recently stated that Ceylon will produce about 50,000 tons of sugar a year by 1976. This country has had the benefit of so many such ecstatic estimates about what would be done in the next few years that any new declaration about the millennium by 1976 leaves everybody cold. We have read stories, during the last 25 years and more, under every regime in this country, that this country would attain self-sufficiency in rice, sugar, chillies, onions, etc., etc., — almost everything we import— within a fixed number of years. Each government has promised that self-sufficiency would be attained before its term of office was over. But never of these promises have so far been kept.

With regard to the new promise about sugar, the target year is 1976, one year

after the normal life of this Parliament, but it may fall into the extended life under the new Constitution. It is also the final year of the new Five Year Plan. At the press conference the highlights envisaged in the Plan were outlined, and it was said that 50,000 tons in 1976 will represent a fifth of the total domestic requirement— and that it would be about a 400% increase over last year's output (we all know how to pat ourselves on our backs in this country!) Mr. Wickramaratne stated that "about 100,000 acres had to be cultivated with cane to reach an output sufficient to claim self-sufficiency and that this could be done at a later stage when more and more land will be made available with the gradual completion of the various stages of the Mahaveli Scheme."

In the context of what has happened in the past, all this sounds like a fairy tale. Every new Chairman of a Corporation makes his new broom debut with promises like this—all very excellent on paper. Mr. Wickramaratne then went on to announce that the Corporation was also working on "a scheme to encourage farmers to cultivate sugar cane by providing a Guaranteed Price Scheme, credit facilities like seed cane, fertiliser supplies and expansion of marketing facilities," etc. It is all very nice to hear about these "plans" on which the Corporation was

working. But what would satisfy the public is a report of what is actually being done and what has been done. What it is to be done and what will be done are only fairy tales—until implementation.

The Chairman also dealt in a cursory manner with the most important relevant problem: the question of price. He said that the cost of production of a pound of sugar was and perhaps would continue to be about 92 cents. His complaint was that the Food Commissioner bought the sugar from the Corporation at a lower price than what it cost them to produce. The Food Commissioner's price was the world import price plus the freight charges. The loss incurred by the Corporation by selling the sugar to the Food Commissioner was subsidised by the profits the Corporation made by the production and sale of spirits and alcohol of various kinds.

Unless the Sugar Corporation can produce its sugar at a cost which was competitive in the world market, it would not be worthwhile to increase the production of sugar in this country. There is no reason why sugar cannot be produced in Ceylon at rates which equal prices in other producing countries. The unnecessary overheads, the waste, the corruption and the like must be eliminated. Before the

new Chairman of the Sugar Corporation sets about reaching his target of 50,000 tons, it is essential to bring down the cost of production. Otherwise the increasing amounts needed to subsidise the sugar will have to come from government funds—because the spirits cannot bear the burden beyond a point.

By bringing down the ration of sugar from 3 lbs to 2 lbs the country will save about Rs. 40 million in foreign exchange. In the meantime, the world price of milk foods and crude oil have gone up, and the Petroleum Corporation has already increased prices: petrol by 25 cents and kerosene by 16 cents. Milk foods will shortly go up in price. In these circumstances, political circles have been debating how the increases and other "burdens on the masses" could be "sold" to the Government Parliamentary Party. One prominent member of the Government is reported to have said that "additional burdens should not be placed on the masses without nationalising certain big private sector enterprises here". But it has been pointed out that such nationalisation will not solve the crucial question of foreign exchange, though some believe that it would stop the drain on the repatriation of profits which at the moment is under Rs. 50 million a year. Furthermore all private enterprises in the country would have to be taken over and run efficiently if this outflow of Rs.50 million

is to be stopped and even the most enthusiastic supporters of nationalisation have doubts whether this can be done. In fact, nationalisation would only touch the problem of foreign exchange only marginally—with the added danger that such nationalisation might completely stop any further inflow of foreign capital and assistance.

It is also realised in government circles that the measures contemplated above will not be enough to cope up with the budgetary gap of Rs. 400 million. The underspending which is now being practised will adversely affect the development programme, and the Government will have no alternative but to reduce some of the welfare expenditure if the gap is to be bridged. But the Government is putting this off—but Doomsday will come sooner or later. There seems to be a great deal of wishful thinking that the abandoned proposals with regard to sugar and flour could be resurrected to reduce the gap. Already the saving on sugar has been achieved, and it is not unlikely that something will be done soon to effect the saving on flour—by increasing the price of flour and bread. Additionally, the Government is thinking of taxes to squeeze the middle and higher income groups, but saturation point having already been reached in such taxes, it is most likely that the Government will fall back upon the device of financing the deficit by an increase

in the money supply—inflation cannot be made any worse.

It is believed that experts in the Central Bank have pointed out that any further increase in the money supply would be disastrous as the additional inflationary spiral would further skyrocket the cost of living. But the Ministry of Finance, it is whispered, is so intent about bridging the budget gap before the World Bank team arrives that it does not seem to mind how it is done. The primary problem, they think, is to impress the World Bank officials that Government has been able to bridge the gap—as an indicator that this country was being pulled out of the present economic crisis—so that the World Bank team will report favourably to the aid giving consortium.

To sell the Budget to the IMF and the World Bank, the Ministry of Finance is doing what it can to put out the kind of *window dressing* which they feel will impress the hard-headed economists of the World Bank who will be in Ceylon this month. This is to get more aid and credit from the capitalist world. But in order to put across the new proposals to the Government Parliamentary Party and the "people", the Government has gone in for another kind of *window dressing*—nationalisation. Shortly before the sugar ration was cut down, the big private enterprise known as the British Ceylon

Corporation Ltd.(BCC Ltd.) was taken over under the Business Undertakings Acquisition Act, Minister Colvin R. de Silva has sought to justify the takeover of this Rs. 40 million firm on the ground that essential relief could not be brought to the coconut producers without this step.

It was said that the BCC "corners" the market and thus depresses prices and so on and so forth—forgetting that world market trends on coconut products have not been favourable for a long time. Whether the takeover will bring the results envisaged or not is another matter, but the history and record of nationalised ventures in this country cannot make anyone optimistic about this take-over. But, more important than the question of the efficient running of the nationalised undertaking, is the impact this action will have on foreign banking and money circles from whom this Government is so anxious to obtain credit, aid, loans and even fresh investment capital. A White Paper on foreign investments is to be published shortly by the Government, but the take-over of BCC Ltd (and a few more take-overs to "sell" the burdensome budget proposals to the "masses" will make this White Paper totally meaningless. No foreign investor is likely to come in after such take-overs. And foreign lenders and aid-givers will be also chary and cautious about "assisting" Ceylon in any way.

If this Government thinks that more and more nationalisation was necessary for it to retain its popular power base, then it should stop looking to the West and the capitalist world for credit and aid. It must turn completely round to the socialist bloc or rely upon itself for its needs. The old adage about running with the hare and hunting with hounds has become applicable to this Government in a big way. The socialist bloc of countries seem to be as strongly suspicious about the aims and objectives of this Government (from their own angle) as the western bloc of capitalist countries have become about what this Government says and what it does. And both blocs have not been impressed by the ability of this Government to get things done, especially the ability to mobilise the existing manpower in an efficient and profitable manner; to step up production and achieve proclaimed targets.

The BCC takeover will be a big stumbling block in the way of the Government's expectations to obtain loans and credits from the IMF, world Bank and other Western sources. Some dribbles will come, but this will be only a kind of "insurance" money to keep Ceylon still rotating within the capitalist orbit, but money adequate to achieve a real economic breakthrough will not come. And the unconvincing statement of the Plantations Ministry on the BCC

Ltd. takeover will provide the necessary documentation for western experts to tell their Governments why they will not invest in Ceylon. And if a few more takeovers take place shortly, as expected in political circles, the situation will only get worse. And the manner in which and the reasons for which the takeovers are being effected will certainly not impress the socialist bloc. To fall between two stools is a bad enough tragedy for an individual, but if such a disaster should overtake a country, the consequences will be devastating.

To make matters worse, the Ceylon Rupee is now linked to the Dollar (and not Sterling. This will compel further increases in the prices of a wide range of food and other commodities. The Government's decision to link the rupee to the dollar will mean that imports of finished goods as well as industrial raw materials from non-dollar countries will cost Ceylon more. Our exports to these countries, in the meantime, will become generally cheaper. This will therefore complicate our balance of payments problem. To minimise this new gap in our balance of payments, the Government will have no alternative but to raise the prevailing prices of more consumer goods. It is clear that in the coming months a large range of consumer items in Ceylon will go up in price because of the fact that the rupee is now linked to the dollar.

Ceylon's trade has traditionally and even now been mainly with non-dollar countries and linking the Ceylon rupee to the dollar is bound to make our imports cost more and our exports cheaper, but our Government wizards had their eyes so completely riveted on increasing our export potential that they seemed to have forgotten many other relevant considerations in this matter. The price of rice, flour, sugar and fuel will be affected by this dollar link. Among the other commodities which will be so affected will be dhal, milk foods, textiles, motor vehicles, tractors, motor spares, fertilisers, industrial raw materials used in local industrial goods, etc. etc., etc.

In the meantime, Government's top planners are holding seminars and meetings telling bureaucrats and others how the Five Year Plan could be made a success. The Permanent Secretary to the Ministry of Planning, and Employment, Prof. H. A. de S. Gunasekera, recently inaugurated a Training Programme for Planning Officers, and declared that "it is vital for the success of the Plan, that Government officials should adopt it, understand it, and dedicate themselves to its objectives"

This Training Programme had been organised with the assistance of a UN scheme for such training, and in the course of his inaugural add-

ress, Prof. Gunasekera had stressed that their objective was to mobilise the young people who would benefit from the Plan and on whom the success of the Plan depended. It was only by moving among the people that the Planners would come to know the people, their hopes and their aspirations. He went on: "Government administrators had only recently looked upon themselves as mere administrators dealing with files or issuing orders to subject clerks. Staff grade administrators had not got involved in the administration in a vital sense. The role envisages for the administration of the Five Year Plan was more than that." He further stressed that the Planning Ministry had decided that decentralisation of the administration was an important aspect of the general principle of planning. Information from the districts at the grass-roots level would be sent up to the Ministry and the views of the Ministry given to the people at the grass-roots level itself. It was with this intention that the Planning Ministry had decided to set up district offices.

"What I mean by grass-roots level," he said, "are the Divisional Development Councils set up about a year ago. They consist of local representatives of the people who can reasonably be assumed to be leaders of the local community. We have

thrust upon them the task of development at the local level. With the help of Government Agents and DROs we have been running these institutions quite successfully. We have been able during the past year to create about 7,000 new jobs in these areas. The role of the District Planning Officers is to take charge of and check this kind of activity so that the speed of development at the local level can be accelerated... I want to sound a note of warning—to request you at all times not to mistake the form for the substance or to miss the wood for the trees. Techniques, approach, evaluation and all that is important, but is not of much value unless we are able to make the people adopt the Plan and work it. Every individual has a role to play. In the implementation of this Plan the human angle is very important. That is our new approach."

All this makes wonderful reading. The words are soul-stirring and inspiring. But if the officials at the grass-roots level reported back truthfully what the people right down at the bottom are saying at the moment, officials like Prof. Gunasekera, in their plush seats in Colombo, will squirm. It is pointless going into this question of the total disillusionment which has begun to spread right round the country about the various measures being proposed by this Government. The truth will soon

be known. It has already begun to dawn on some of the politicians. No amount of sermonising by men like Prof. Gunasekara will change the situation. The less spoken and the less said the better. What people want is action, not sermons, results and not plans.

It is the Prime Minister alone of the entire Cabinet who seems to realise that what is really required is more work and more hard work. No other Minister calls upon people to work harder—they only tell them of the amenities and benefits which are being showered upon the "people" (meaning voters) and about the many more benefits which will come to them shortly.

In a message to mark the opening of the Hard Board Factory at Valaichenai, the Prime Minister had emphasised that increase in the output of work by public sector employees would contribute towards development of the national economy. The future prosperity of the country, she said, depended upon the hard work of the public sector employees. She also emphasised that an increase in output by public sector industries will help to conserve a considerable amount of foreign exchange needed to finance development.

This is not the first time that she had made this appeal calling upon workers in the public sector to work harder. Considering the fact

that very little real work is being done in practically all public sector undertakings—work even minimally required to constitute low norms, the PM's appeal is not only timely but necessary. The fact that deplorable conditions have become endemic in nearly all public sector undertakings is now being admitted even by leftwing enthusiasts of the Government. The *Daily News* reported on its front page on February 25, 1972 under the heading UNRESPONSIVENESS OF LABOUR AN URGENT PROBLEM—GOVT MP that: "One of the urgent problems facing the Government was the unresponsiveness of labour to the serious economic situation facing the country said, Mr. L. C. de Silva, MP, and Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee of MPs inquiring into the Customs. The Committee was discussing instances of pilferage at the port which were brought to its notice. Mrs. Vivienne Goonewardene, MP, told the Committee that after a report of a certain incident concerning her daughter's baggage had appeared in the *Daily News* a week ago, a Ceylonese woman who returned to Ceylon after long years of residence in Hongkong had related a harrowing story to her. When she had called over to collect her baggage sent by sea mail not one saree was found in the baggage. She now attends every auction to see if she can spot her stolen sarees.

"Her experience with an air freight baggage was no less disturbing, said Mrs. Vivienne Goonewardene. When she went to the Customs to collect it, the Customs officers had found the bag so badly bashed, in an attempt to break it, that the keys to the lock did not fit and the Customs had to break it to open to examine and pass the baggage. There was absolutely no discipline in the port, said Mrs. Goonewardene. But when visited the port the labourers were the first to complain about their grievances,

"Mr. T. B. Herath, MP, another member of the Committee, said that if one wanted to do a job of work in the port one was faced with thugery, intimidation and harassment. It was a marvel that Ceylon had reached its present stage with such dishonesty and pilferage in the port. He added that politicians were in a way to blame for this; for, the struggle to control the unions of port workers meant that the workers thought that they had protection from the law. The situation, he said, was very serious. No government had yet been successful in maintaining discipline in the port. All MPs agreed that the government must take very firm action against pilferage in the port. It was only an iron hand that could cure the port of its present ills, . . ."

It is well known that the work most systematically ca-

ried out in the port was pilferage. Indiscipline was the rule and not the exception. Any attempt to punish or maintain discipline brought a trade union MP into the scene shouting that the worker was being victimised by bourgeois-minded bureaucrats. In the end it was the administrator, who had tried to take action against the pilferage or the indiscipline, who got the sack, or a transfer, or a reprimand. The worker, a noble scion of the "proletariat", went scot free — to continue the pilferage and the indiscipline in greater measure.

The real position is that no administrator in the port or any other public sector undertaking is today willing to take action against any member of the "proletariat" either for pilferage, indiscipline or inadequate work — because any such attempt will bring the trade union upon his head and with that will come a whole array of politicians and MPs demanding the blood of the administrator. Officials in the public sector undertakings prefer to let sleeping dogs lie and collect their monthly salary. This state of affairs will not take this country to socialism, or even successful state capitalism.

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International Affairs

March 6, 1972.

BY ARIEL

President Nixon claimed that his sojourn in China would go down to history as "the week that changed history." Even if it does not attain the tremendous impact of the *ten days that shook the world* (John Reed's classic about the Bolshevik Revolution), there cannot be the slightest doubt that Nixon's visit to China at this juncture of US and world history is one of the greatest events of all times. The full scope of the impact of this visit has not yet manifested itself in the United States and the rest of the world, but it is significant that this event was set in a world in which events of important historical significance are taking place everywhere.

In West Asia, Israel took it upon herself, and with a great deal of justification no doubt, to deal militarily with the Palestinian guerilla commandos who were entrenched on the Israel - Lebanese border (and who led raids into Israel from time to time). For four or five days, Israel took military action to clear the area concerned of these commandos, and Lebanon, apart from the rushing to the UN Security Council, took the punishment with stoic fortitude. These Israeli attacks had occasionally penetrated into neigh-

bouring Syria as well, and Israel has ignored the Syrian counter raids in the air. After having achieved what she wanted, all Israeli forces have withdrawn within her borders. The Palestinian Liberation Organisation has asked for an emergency meeting of the Arab Joint Defence Council to take unified measures against the Israeli attack.

The Arabs, however, do not seem to be in a mood to wage a new war. Egypt's leading political commentator, Mohammed Heikal, in a recent article in his paper *Al Ahram*, told the Egyptians to forget about an all-out war with Israel and said that the only alternative now was a political settlement. He is very close to President Sadat and what Heikal says is taken seriously. He had stressed that at this stage the Arabs did not have the required military power to dislodge Israel from even the smallest town in Sinai or the Golan Heights. "Let us face it," he said, "neither the required strength nor the visible circumstances are opportune for the use of sheer force. Our only real alternative is the political settlement which is in itself a combination of many elements including the use of force, economic strength, diplomatic parleys and

propaganda media." In the meantime, Syria is beginning to appreciate the fact that the Arabs as a whole are in no mood for a war. Syria by herself cannot stand up to Israel in a war even for a few days, and Syria's attacks against Israel were probably no more than feelers to test Arab reactions. A Lebanese paper cast doubts on the justification of Syrian attacks against Israel and said that "there is a thin line between courage and recklessness and Syria may have crossed it." Israel has in retaliation carried on only a propaganda war calling attention to Israel's overwhelming military superiority over Syria. In the meantime, relations between several Arab states have become worse, particularly between Egypt and Iraq. Taken all in all, peace prospects in West Asia continue to be problematic. Both Arabs and Israelis seem to be increasingly restless and belligerent in a background of a no-war, no-peace confrontation. Both sides seem to be anxious to reach a negotiated settlement, but like a mirage it remains illusive.

While events continue to simmer in West Asia over the Arab-Israeli question, in Pakistan President Bhutto seems to be reaching his own doomsday and nemesis much faster than many had anticipated. When Bhutto had come to power in mid-December, the first thing he had done was to sack a large number of the top military

brass. He had appointed Lt. Gen. Gul Hassan as Army Chief and Air Marshal A. Rahim Khan as the Air Force Chief. It was said that Bhutto's strength lay in Gul Hassan and the influence he wielded in the army. But this Bhutto-Gul Hassan combine does not seem to have lasted more than two months. Bhutto with all his bombastic speeches and plans has failed to do anything positive or concrete. He has made more enemies than friends, abroad as well as inside Pakistan. The Baluchis, Pathans and other groups are up in arms against him and his methods of rule. Even in Punjab where he had the largest support he seems to be tottering with a police strike, industrial strikes, gherrao and what not. Bangladesh on the other hand has won recognition from nearly all leading countries in spite of Bhutto's Hallstein doctrine. Bhutto has also not been able to mend the fences with India nor has he been able to inveigle Indira Gandhi into a dialogue. The provocations started by the Bihari Muslims left behind in Bangladesh have begun to boomerang on Bhutto. In this situation, army top brass in Pakistan seem to have taken action.

On March 3, General Tikka Khan and Air Marshal Zafar Chaudhury took over as Army Chief and Air Force Chief respectively. President Bhutto "sacked" Gul Hassan and Rahim Khan and a number of

other military chiefs in what has been described as a devastating sweep. Bhutto himself had declared that the country was in a state of "total crisis". What is significant is that the elements which have come out on top are anti-Bhutto and are probably coming out into the open to challenge Bhutto's leadership. The excuse which Bhutto had given for removing Gul Hassan was that he had dealt too leniently with the police strike. Bhutto has conferred the rank of full General on Tikka Khan (a rank which he had not given Gul Hassan) and made him the new Army Chief. This is no doubt to placate the hawks in the military services. Gul Hassan and Rahim Khan are said to be under house arrest. And Bhutto continues to woo the "masses"—this time by announcing "revolutionary" land reform measures. He has not yet implemented the reforms he had announced earlier, and he had gone back on many (including the threat to cut the privy purses of princes and zamindars).

Meanwhile, in Washington, the Aid Pakistan Consortium reached agreement in "principle" on Pakistan's need for substantial debt relief for a short term. Pakistan had placed a moratorium on May 1, 1971 on certain of debt service obligations and the creditor nations have now agreed that "Pakistan would need substantial immediate relief while its economy was adjusting to changed cir-

cumstances." The US itself was hoping to resume aid to Pakistan in the near future. But even before succour on the economic front reached Pakistan from the US, the country was on the verge of major cataclysm.

Bhutto is facing mounting opposition within his own party. The Baluchis and the Pathans are in open revolt and have threatened to separate. The Sindhis, led by veteran G. M. Syed, have threatened to resort to guerilla war. Bhutto's efforts to find new political allies have not been very fruitful. But he continues to ramble in the most inexplicable manner every time he opens his mouth. In a recent interview to Peter Preston of the *Guardian*, he had said that he would hate to go to India, but he would go if his visit would produce a "permanent and far-reaching settlement". He frankly admitted: "I was a confrontation-man (against India). I don't want to go (to India) and see them grinning at me. But I shall go very happily because I think bigger things can be built, and if so, I won't return in humiliation." He still made a national claim to Bangladesh as part of Pakistan. He did not want to take back all of the million odd Biharis in Bangladesh, but he would trade in about 400,000 Bengalis in West Pakistan for a similar number of Biharis, or a little more of them. "Poor Biharis . . ." he said, "they have gone twice to the promised

land. Once at partition . . . Now they have a vision and want to come here. We have so many problems of nationalities in West Pakistan, so much need for toleration . . . And we have also made promises to our own people . . . If we were suddenly saddled with a million more Biharis there will be a wreckage, taking us back to the nightmare of partition, slums, shantytowns, men sleeping on streets, . . . cholera, small pox, unemployment . . ."

Bangladesh itself, in spite of many obstacles, seems to be going from strength to strength. Mujibur Rahman and some of his colleagues were in Moscow for five days from March 1. The Soviet Union has undertaken to aid the new state in a substantial way. The British Commonwealth Secretary, Arnold Smith went to Dacca and pledged Commonwealth assistance once Bangladesh's application for membership was accepted. Smith felt that Bangladesh would be in the Commonwealth before the end of March. Smith had come to Ceylon from Dacca and shortly after his visit, Ceylon had formally recognised Bangladesh. Ceylon's long delay in taking this step has been a matter of comment in the country itself and as well as abroad. Indian troops are expected to pull out completely from Bangladesh by March 12—two weeks before the schedule agreed upon between Indira Gandhi and

Mujibur Rahman when they had met in Calcutta in the first week of February.

Britain and India seem to have reached a greater degree of understanding than ever before—after Sir Alec Home's recent visit to New Delhi last month. Britain appears to have agreed to recognise India as the supreme power in the Indian ocean and Southasia region, thus wiping out Britain's *de facto* strategic links with Pakistan and CENTO and SEATO as instruments to contain India and maintain the power balance in this region. If the derelict military blocs of the Dullesian era have any further use to contain "communism", Britain does not show any enthusiasm for them. In the meantime, Britain has made known to India that "it accepts India virtually as its successor in the Indian ocean area in so far as safeguarding Britain's lines of communications through the ocean." It would also appear that the Soviet Union itself has accepted India had responsibilities in the Indian Ocean area. With Pakistan quitting the Commonwealth, and with the future of Pakistan uncertain in every sense, Britain has taken the practical step of allying herself with India in a very real manner. India, for its part, has offered many concessions to British investors and industrialists who wish to set up industrial plants for purposes of re-export. India has offered

the most attractive terms to British capital to shift labour-intensive industries to India provided the entire production was exported. This is likely to open new horizons for India. And it is known that the Soviet Union itself was considering the feasibility of collaborating with the private sector in India, thus departing from the earlier policy of only collaborating with state and government ventures in the matter of industrial production.

The reactions to Nixon's visit to China and the joint communique issued in Shanghai are many and varied. In the US itself views seemed to be divided in their attitude to the China communique.

While liberal Humphrey denounced it as a betrayal of the principle of self-determination for the Taiwanese, two other prominent fellow liberals, Sen. McGovern and Sen. Edward Kennedy were lyrical over it. Sen. Kennedy said the communique from Peking was "one of the progressive documents in the long tradition of American diplomacy". McGovern said the United States had gained everything and had reduced obligations that could lead to war "with this great power".

Sen. Mansfield, the majority leader, and Sen. Scott, the minority leader, welcomed the communique, while Republican conservatives opposed it. Sen. Mansfield told reporters. "In my opinion that joint com-

munique contains a great deal of substance, much more than I anticipated, a good deal of candor, a recognition we belong to different societies, but also the need to co-exist and live with one another".

Another democratic hopeful, Sen. Henry Jackson, reproached the President for agreeing to withdraw American troops unilaterally from Formosa. "We are doing the withdrawal, the Chinese are doing nothing", he said. "That seems to be a bad horse trade".

Conservative representative John Ashbrook, who is running against Mr. Nixon for the Republican nomination, said he was "shocked and dismayed" by the communique. Two influential liberal newspapers, the *Washington Post* and the *Christian Science Monitor*, both wrote today that President Nixon appeared at first sight to have given away more than he received. When Mr. Nixon arrived at Anchorage, Alaska, CBS television commentator Eric Sevareid said that the opinion of the journalists who accompanied him to China could be summed up as: "The Chinese did not give away anything. We gave away Taiwan".

The Nixons themselves seemed to have been taken up with what had happened in Peking. Mrs. Nixon seems to have fallen to the mandarin courtesy which Chou had spread out for the Nixons. Chou had not only invited other Senators to China who might

have otherwise have been a thorn in Nixon's side, particularly, Scott and Mike Mansfield. Chou also seems to have invited some other members of the Nixon family to China. No wonder Mrs. Nixon had this to say: "He is a real charmer," said Mrs. Pat. Nixon of her Chinese host, Prime Minister Chou En-lai.

"He is a man who knows the world," the First Lady continued, talking to a reporter during the flight home, "He has a delightful sense of humour. We had some fun moments. His capacity for detail amazes me"

While this Chinese honeymoon was going, the US balance of trade fell deeper into the red in January. Imports rose faster than exports. The deficit for last month totalled 319 million dollars compared with the shortfall of 274 million dollars for the previous month. With the exception of one monthly surplus in September, the US foreign trade account has been languishing in serious deficit since last April.

NEXT WEEK

- **The Mandarin and The Cow Boy.**
— Interpretative Analysis.
- **Reports on the China Summit.**
— from Sydney, New Delhi, Berlin, Tokyo, Hongkong, New York and London.
- **The D. M. K 'S Separatist Itch?**
— from Madras.
- **Whither the F. P. ?**
— on the brink or the lunatic fringe?

FISH

This week's cover is a picture of a group of fishermen in the Negombo lagoon. They make a good picture postcard scene. They make the kind of exotic picture which foreign tourists get crazy about. These men still use catamarans and old fishing equipment and nets in spite of the tremendous advances made by the fishing industry in Ceylon. They still catch fish offshore on the knowledge and experience which has come down with the generations.

But more and more of them have gone in for mechanical equipment. Small fishing boats with diesel driven engines have been sold, loaned or gifted to individuals, groups and co-op societies right round the island. Modern fishing gear and nets have been imported and sold to an increasing number of fishermen at all important centres. The Fisheries Corporation has a few trawlers which bring in sizeable catches, few private individuals also have large trawlers.

Statistics have been published about the significant increase in the total volume of fish caught in Ceylon in recent years. But the present Minister of Fisheries has shown that the Corporation was in a mess when he took over and that it was losing money every day. It is admitted that

great improvements have been effected in recent months and the Fisheries Corporation has begun to break even (?). The new Minister has also signed agreements with the USSR and other countries to streamline the industry and step up production.

We have been promised self-sufficiency in all fish products within the next few years. We still import dried fish and canned fish — until years it was over Rs. 70 million a year. Before that, it was over Rs. 100 million. This year because of the sheer lack of foreign exchange we will import less. But dried fish and canned fish are in short supply. You cannot get enough. And the price of fish is touching dizzy heights. Seer which is the favourite among a large number of fish eating people sells anything from Rs. 3.25 a lb. to Rs. 5 a lb. Even the Fisheries Corporation is not able to bring the price down.

In a country where proteins are getting less and less, there is no alternative but to increase the supply of fish because it is a readily available commodity in the seas around the island. Plans and programmes mean little or nothing. People have been told about such plans during the last two decades. They are simply tired of paper plans and speeches in parliament and elsewhere promising the millenium. What they want is fish at reasonable prices.

People ask why fish was so much cheaper in the old days when ordinary fishermen, such as those in the picture did all the fishing with old fashioned craft and equipment and did the selling themselves. The population explosion, if any, and any increase in the fish-eating habit cannot be trotted out as an excuse for this spiralling rise in the cost of fish. The overheads which the Corporation has made standard have tempted the mudalalis to increase their middlemen takings, which are kept at a trifle less than the Corporation's overheads. The losers are the producer - fishermen and the consumer - public. Can't something be done?



Printed and Published by P. Alagesan at Tribune Press, for Tribune Publications, 43, Dawson Street, Colombo-2.

WITH COMPLIMENTS

C. V. BHATT



BRISTOL

belongs to the world
of today



RIGHT SIZE
RIGHT TASTE
RIGHT PRICE

