

TRIBUNE

CEYLON NEWS REVIEW

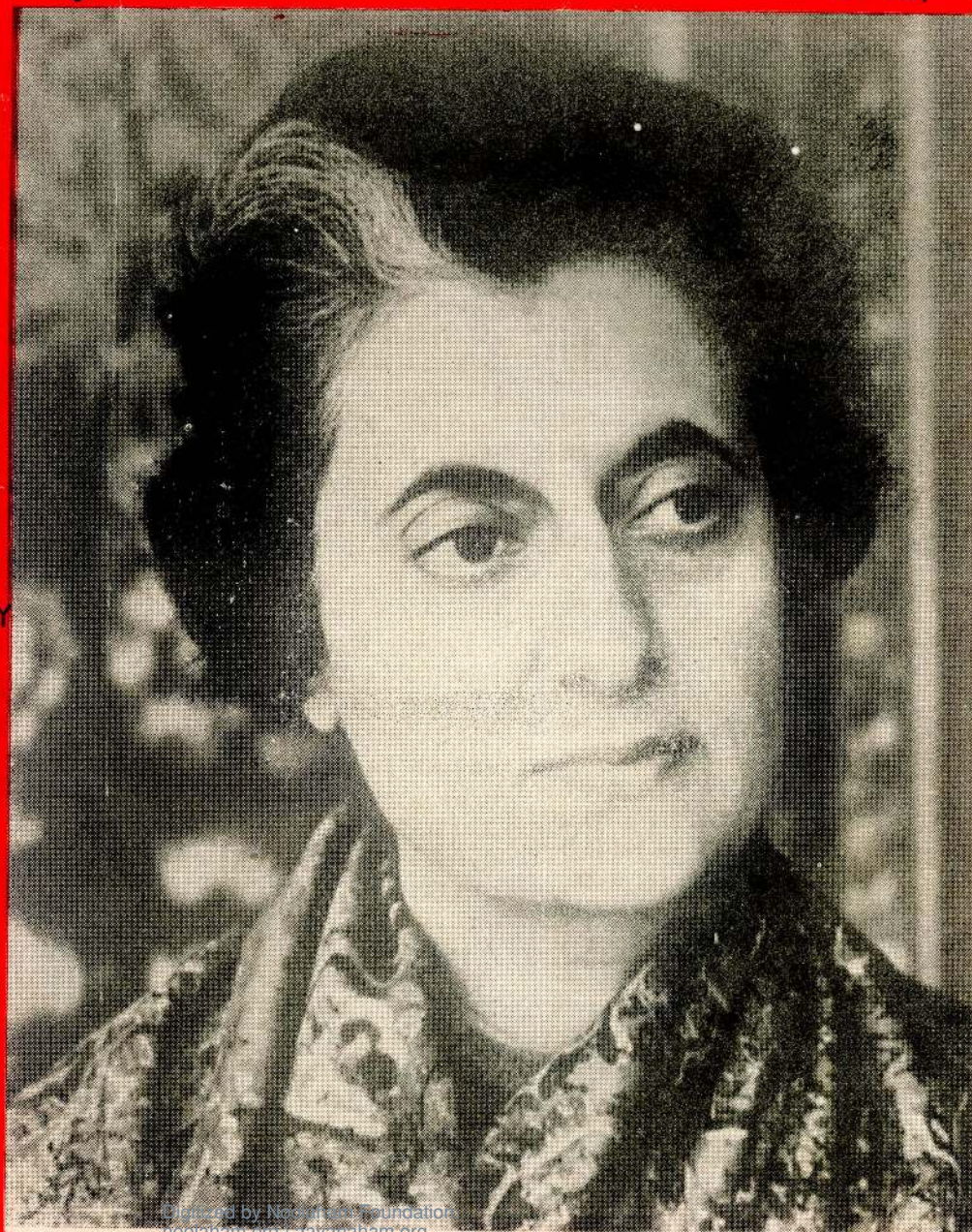
MARCH 30, 1972

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Indira Gandhi

Indira Gandhi has done it again. One year ago she won a two-thirds majority in the parliamentary elections. Last December she scored a stunning yet popular military victory over Pakistan. And now, she has swept the boards in 16 state legislatures. Only in two small hill states and in the problematic Goa has she failed to get complete control. She now commands India as only her father had done in the first years after independence. She has displayed leadership of a high order and it is significant that her power is based on popular will freely exercised through adult franchise. Her victory brings to the forefront in Asia the question whether economic development is compatible with democratic freedoms. Will she be able to lead India into an effective economic breakthrough? Will India become an inspiration to other developing countries? Or will India become a source of frustration to those who pin their faith on democracy?

Mrs. Gandhi had stated that the Congress Party's victory had increased its obligations to the people. She knows that if these obligations were not fulfilled, the Indian voter will turn against her. For the next four years she has the authority and prestige to get what she wants done. Will she get India moving? "It was more an annihilation than a defeat," said the *Economist* of March 18. "Mrs. Gandhi's Congress par-

ty swept the polls so completely in last week's state elections in India that the country is now virtually a one-party state. The most astounding victory for Mrs. Gandhi was in the chronically chaotic state of West Bengal, where Congress captured more than two-thirds of the seats and the formerly fearsome Marxists were reduced from a near majority to a derisory handful of 14. Only the pro-Moscow communist party survived the Congress tidal wave in Bengal and its 35 seats can be attributed to an election alliance with the Congress. The Congress—CPI alliance was the target of attack from the rightwing parties who had hoped that they could use the communist bogey to denigrate Mrs. Gandhi. But they failed. The pro-Moscow CPI won where they were allied to her as in Bihar and in Bengal, but lost where they were on their own in Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh.

The US *Time* magazine of March 27 under the heading *Indira's Coronation* stated: "At the end of last December's war with Pakistan, which left India the dominant power on the sub-continent, a senior British diplomat wryly commented that the victory had made Indira Gandhi *Empress of India*. After last week's state elections, in which Mrs. Gandhi's New Congress Party scored the most overwhelming electoral victory in the history of independent India, an American official added: 'And this was her coronation.' The election was indeed a personal triumph

for India's Prime Minister...." Analysing the causes for her victory, *Time* thought that "the decisive military victory over Pakistan" had added immeasurably to Mrs. Gandhi's popular support among India's voters, particularly the West Bengalis—they have now rejected the Marxists who had dominated the scene in the State for over a decade. *Time* also felt that she had done a lot of hard work to secure a firm control of the party machine. She had screened all party candidates, she had flown an estimated 55,000 miles across India "focussing her attacks on the conservative Opposition Congress and the Hindu rightwing Jana Sang parties". The magazine said that she now had an unchallengeable mandate to promote "populist policies", and that she was "in a stronger position—despite political backing from the Soviet Union in the Indo-Pakistani war—to pursue foreign policies of her own choosing. Last week, before leaving for a visit to India's ally, the Soviet Union, Pakistan's President Zulfikar Ali Bhutto indicated that he is now willing to drop his country's longstanding claim to Kashmir. It was a particularly eloquent bit of proof that Jawaharlal Nehru's imperious daughter has led her country into a new era."



from **The Editor's Desk**

THESE are thrilling times for any person to be alive in. *First*, the world is undergoing a period of change the like of which has not been witnessed for over two thousand years. Even the rise and fall of the Roman Empire did not bring about so much change as has already taken place in the last two decades. The seventies and the eighties of this century will undoubtedly bring changes which we cannot now envisage. It is not possible to detail all the historical, political, economic, cultural and technological changes which have already taken place, but what is most significant is the change which

is taking place in *man* himself. It is an old saying that everything changes, but that human nature does not. But human nature in the seventies is not what it was before, (in many places of the world), and what it will be in the eighties is anybody's guess. *Second*, in Ceylon itself everything is in a state of flux. The values which we held to be absolute and eternal have all gone into the dustbin in the last twenty years and more. We are now in a "state of transition" (*a la* Solomon West Ridgeway Bandaranaike) where "rivers will not flow backwards" and what Sri Lanka will be like in ten years cannot be said with certainty today. Whether we will all speak *English* or *Singlish* (admirably caricatured by Lucien de Zoysa in the *Observer*) will be determined not by the educational reforms of the crusading saracen Baduddin Mahmud, but by other factors which are at present best not spoken about. What kind of *homo sapiens*, both young and old, will emerge in Sri Lanka after a period of authoritarian regimentation by emergency regulations of the UF era is difficult to project, or imagine, but the new generation churned out of Srilankesques *socialism* (all play and no work for many, and all work and no play for a few) will undoubtedly interest social anthropologists on every continent. We are only at the beginning of the era procreating the new socialist man

in Ceylon, born of austerity, compulsory savings, income ceilings, land ceilings, queues, rations, blackmarket, and what not—all these now go into the witches' brew without the pill. In a few years we will have a generation who will gape at imported "luxuries" from abroad, like tape-recorders and other sophisticated instruments with the same wonder and open-mouthed amazement some tribals in a remote dark continent had sometime ago looked on gaudy beads and baubles which white traders had taken with them to trade in for ivory tusks and other valuables.

We live in thrilling times. Events in the rest of the world are so plentiful and move so fast that it is difficult to keep pace with them. But our newspapers do not have the newsprint to publish all the news, nor seem inclined to do it, even if newsprint is made available to them. In the past, and more particularly in the recent past, those of us who were old-fashioned enough to want to read all the news, fit for print, bought or borrowed newspapers, magazines, periodicals, books and the like which were published abroad and were imported into the island. Now foreign exchange is scarce; and we were first denied books (at the reasonable prices we could afford), and the axe has now fallen on newspapers and magazines. One can understand some restraint being placed on comics, pornos and sex fantasies,

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(a ban would be self-defeating) but, in the rush, some of the finest reading of the era have become taboo. The Controller of Imports is today the guardian of our cultural *mores*; and, among other publications, he has banned the *Playboy* which has a circulation of over 6 million copies for every issue. *Playboy* has undeniably a few saucy pictures and choice collection of ribald caricatures, but in the permissive society, which has enveloped the world, *Playboy* is comparatively a refined and sophisticated product which helps one to keep abreast of the new kultur which is dominating the rest of the world, particularly among the young.

To plead that *Playboy* be imported will sound like cultural treason in the ears of the *purists* in the Establishment of UF's Sri Lanka, but those who see treason in such pleading see a (paper) tiger everywhere. The *Playboy* is not a magazine every one can afford to buy in Ceylon. It costs one US dollar and with the heavy postage for its bulky size, it will cost a sizable amount in our devalued FEECS - inflated Ceylon rupee. But a few copies circulating in what is left of *avant garde* intellectualism in Ceylon will certainly help a few to pick up the new ideas and the new idiom agitating the modern world. The *New Yorker*, *Harpers*, *Encounter*, *Ramparts*, and *Mains-tream* are among the magazines which will enliven intellectual life in this country. But these magazines will be

classified by our UF *brahmin pundits* as decadent bourgeois stuff, hanging over from a colonial past. No wonder much of the talent in this country has flown away—not merely attracted by the higher remuneration elsewhere (they know that the higher cost of living and other expenses elsewhere nearly always levels things out) but because of the frustration unnecessarily imposed by the *mini caesars* who now straddle the local scene and who want to submerge the developing and the developed under specious slogans of anti-colonialism, anti-capitalism, and anti-alienism, thereby destroying the grass roots of individual self-reliance. A very large number of our intellectuals and professionals have already sought refuge and asylum in foreign countries and not all the promises of the UF have brought them back. In fact, only the restraints placed by the new passport laws and the regulations regarding exit now keep the remaining talent in this country. *It is not that they lack patriotism, but they are disillusioned with the UF.* This is not the place or the time to examine the reasons why intellectuals and professionally-trained people have become unhappy about the UF. That is a story which must be unfolded at the appropriate time. But those who are left behind, including those who are unable to get out, have a challenge before them. What must they do to give new life to the cultural and intellectual life in this country?

When will it be possible to bring back the intellectuals and the professionals who have fled the country? *It cannot be always like this. Someday they must come back. Someday they will come back.*

AMONG THE MANY PARADOXES in this country the one which is most eye-catching is the way we woo foreign tourists whilst we drive our intellectual and our professional talent to seek employment and temporary (and even permanent) homes in foreign countries. Everything we do in the country is for the foreign tourist who is expected to put up with our austerity and Poyaday prohibitions—in order to enjoy Lanka's scenic beauty and get the benefit of the sun on our beaches. But do we get all the benefits we are hoping for from the tourist industry? It has not yet brought a new prosperity or boom. We have sunk a very large amount of money (including foreign exchange) to attract tourists to Ceylon. We have built new hotels, motels, beach cabanas and what not. We are building more at a furious rate. The number of tourists, however, who have come are comparatively few. The insurrectionary troubles of 1971 tainted Ceylon's tourist image. But that is not the whole story. We still seem to attract only the less affluent who come on packaged charter tours. And we have the authority of the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Shipping and Tourism, Mr. P. B. Karandawela, that 40% of

tourist earnings still go into the blackmarket (*vide Ceylon Daily News*, March 8). Others less optimistic than the Permanent Secretary place the outflow into the blackmarket at a much higher percentage of the total. Various reasons have been trotted out why the blackmarket still gets the bulk of the tourist foreign exchange, but such postmortems do not provide even cold comfort in a country where foreign exchange has become even rarer than moon rock. To make matters worse, a Danish charter which took back 106 Scandinavian tourists from a package tour in Ceylon crashed near Dubai about March 15. All on board were killed. It was on the *Ides of March* the tragedy took place. Many knowledgeable people had warned Government enthusiasts, who had developed the psychosis of wanting to place too many of our eggs into the tourist basket, that it was a dangerous pastime, but these warnings went unheeded. Everything is today subordinated to the imperatives of what is thought to be tourist promotion for foreigners. Our resthouse charges have become prohibitive. Internal tourism has come to a standstill. Nobody, except perhaps expense-account tycoons, can afford the rates charged at our tourist joints. And foreign tourists have not come in the numbers expected. The Minister in charge of Tourism, Kalugalle, has assured us that by 1976 this country will be over-run with foreign tourists and they would bring in fore-

ign exchange beyond our wildest dreams. All these castles-in-the-air make thrilling reading, but it is not clear what the world will be like in 1976. The latest issue of *Time* has a cover story entitled *Is the U.S. Going Broke?* By the way things are going on in the rest of the world, by 1976 there may not be many affluent tourists to rush to an island like Ceylon.

And 1976 is still a long way off when the avalanche of foreign exchange from tourists is expected to make this island a paradise. In the meantime, our problems are getting more and more difficult. The *Ceylon Observer* of March 6 reported under the heading *Ceylon Fails To Reach GNP Target* that "Ceylon is likely to fail to reach the gross national product (GNP) target set by the United Nations for the last year. The target is six percent for the second Development Decade 1971-80. Ceylon's failure can be mainly attributed to the April insurrection which disrupted the economic life of the country to a very large extent." Whatever the cause, the rate of economic growth in Ceylon was inadequate. People were still reluctant to work as hard as they should. The Prime Minister in a recent speech had wanted workers in the public sector to work harder and produce more. The impetus to work harder and produce more in the public sector has still not gathered the momentum essential to effect a breakthrough.

IN THE RURAL SECTOR, the momentum which

had been generated by the food drive of the last Government has now slowly ground to a halt. The UF Government had proclaimed a different set of policies and targets, but these have not yet been put into operation. A beginning has been made with the Government taking over the purchase of the entire production of paddy as a monopoly, but bad luck has heralded the Paddy Marketing Board's initial entry into business. Great

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were the expectations about what the PMB would do and could do, in conjunction with the newly re-organised co-operative movement in *primary co-op unions* centralising the activities of a large number of earlier societies under official tutelage. The co-op movement is now *de facto* and *de jure* a governmental organisation. It was said that miracles would be performed by the PMB and the Co-op Movement with the current Maha crop. It is yet too early to evaluate the work of these two organisations in coping with the first Maha particularly because a natural disaster in the form of an unprecedented drought has ruined the Maha crop in all the rice-producing areas in the island, and if the drought persists for a short time more there will be little or no Yala crop to keep the PMB in business this year.

The Colombo daily papers were a little slow to awaken to the fact that a drought had struck the rice-producing areas in a way that affected the Maha-crop most adversely. The fact that no rain had fallen in the rice-producing areas after December 29, 1971 was not generally known. In fact, no rain had fallen anywhere in Ceylon after that—except may be for a few drops in places that did not matter. Without the mid-January rains, the rice crop was endangered. The entire rain-fed crop was ruined. Those who had access to water from tanks or wells were able to save part of the crop, but those who used tank water did

so by utilising water which in normal circumstances would have been used for the Yala. Cultivation committees had difficult decisions to make as to whether to open the sluice gates or not, considering the fact that the water was being conserved for the Yala. Without the January rains, the water in the tanks was insufficient for Yala anyway. To cut a long story short, the drought has knocked the Yala crop for a six (to use a cricketing phrase). But the authorities refused to believe that this could happen to a *socialist* government, i. e. to the demi-gods of the UF. The Gods (in whom they did not believe) could not be so unkind, they argued.

From about the 10th of March, news began to appear in the papers that a major drought had devastated the Maha crop. The *Daily News* reported that the *manavari* (rainfed) crop had been ruined in the Batticaloa district. And that there was partial failure of crops which received tank water. The *Daily News* also reported that since the PMB took over there was distress in the Hambantota area where the Maha harvest had begun before last December. This district is one of the areas which plant early and had rain in December but even here the results were most discouraging. According to the *Daily News*, it was estimated that the PMB would purchase at least 17 odd lakhs of bushels of paddy from the Hambantota district alone. The PMB had started operations

on December 17, 1971, to purchase paddy harvested from early December, but up to March 10, the PMB had only bought one and quarter lakhs bushels of paddy, that is, less than 1/17th of the estimate. In this area the crop was better than other areas because the paddy had ripened before the drought, but the PMB could do no better than this. To make up for the failure to buy from the Hambantota area, the PMB had bought stocks from Tangalle and Mataru. But this will not have much impact on the overall picture. And the failure of the crop in other areas was even more devastating.

The activities of the PMB must be *separately* examined in another article; and it will be a more distressing story than the drought which on this occasion has been islandwide. The city of Colombo is today faced with water shortage; and in many other areas, wells have begun to dry. A few showers had fallen in mid-March, but it was totally inadequate. The *Daily News* of March 17 published a report that the Director Meteorology had stated that though there would be few thundershowers in March, they would not be significant. Rain could be expected, he said, only in May with the Southwest—but whilst this would bring relief to the Central and Southwestern region, the Dry Zone which produced the bulk of the rice and other agricultural produce would not benefit. The NCP, NWP, NP, and the EP were not likely to get rain

until the next Northeast Monsoon in October — November except for occasional showers in April and August — if they came at all. It was a sad and bleak prospect, and there is little anybody can do about it, least of all a government totally unable to boost morale on other matters which affect public confidence, greatly shaken by the Government's failure to do anything successfully—even to control the coconut pest.

MINISTER COLVIN R. DE SILVA and HIS PERM. SEC. DORIC SOUZA have been making lengthy statements and stirring speeches about what had been done to check the coconut pest. At first, various obstacles had prevented them for carrying out their plans. The parasites to fight the pest refused to procreate even under the special care of the Ministry. Various officials were rushed to Singapore and other places to learn the secret of persuading these parasites to procreate in Ceylon under the benign care of a Minister of the United Front. Then two expensive automatic sprayers were airlifted from Japan at great cost; and the Minister and his eminent sidekick secured frontpage publicity for the ceremonial opening of the campaign to spray coconut trees. But nothing more was heard after that. Then on a bright and auspicious day—there was however a difference of opinion among astrologers as to whether it was really an auspicious day—the Minister and the Perm. Sec. released

millions of these comingii-killing parasites, bred in Sri Lanka under UF care, from over 20 centres. It was said that all the coconut pests would be swallowed up even before the Minister could repeat the magic formula *Samasamajaya* (a more indigenous catchword than *Jackrobinson*) a dozen times. Everybody awaited the end of the pest. At least, it was thought that its spread would be controlled.

But this was not to be. The parasite must have killed a few of the *cumingii*, but the pest continues to flourish and spread to new areas. The officials refuse to admit it, but one has only to travel in the coconut areas to realise the awful truth that the pest continues to reign supreme. The drought has made matters worse, but this will really be felt one year later in the crop production (and the effects will be felt for at least another year after that). While the drought has already begun to take its toll, the pest continues to outwit the Minister and his Perm. Sec. The newspapers have been generally silent about the extent of the devastation, but on March 20, the *CDN* had a front page piece about *Pest Control at Kandawela*. The *Sun* also reported this story when a proprietary planter, Mr. F. O. M. de Silva, held a demonstration about another method of pest control by injecting into the trunk of the tree with some "chemicals" to kill the *cumingii* parasites. As a prelude to the story, the *CDN* began the report on an emotional note:

"the lush green belt of coconut palms around Ratmalana airport is no more. A dirty brown belt of decaying coconut trees has replaced it. Some of the trees are already dead—the leaves having fallen off. Others are dying". Then it went to say how the day before, that is on March 19, the residents of the area met at Kandawela under the patronage of Sir John Kotelawela to witness a demonstration of how to curb the pest. Sir John himself had been moved to declare that the "government should take positive steps to curb the menace: that they should realise in the days gone by people would not have existed if it were not for the jak and coconut trees: that it was not a mere matter of economics: that the pest was threatening a vital source of nutrition and that it was now a question of survival if the pest was not eradicated. The pest had already done untold harm. On Kandawela Estate, the monthly crop had dropped from 10,000 nuts 4,000 nuts a month. Next month it may be only 2000 nuts".

Mr. F. O. M. de Silva advocated the *injection method*. Chemicals "injected" into the trunk of the tree brought results quickly. A hole was bored in the trunk and the chemicals were poured into it. The chemicals which travelled up the trunk went into the leaves and killed the pestiferous insects. Mr. Silva did not want to divulge the names of the chemicals immediately but was willing to supply the chemicals. The chemicals would not poison the

nuts he had stated; this method had proved successful in other countries. He had added that experiments in other countries had proved that there was no danger of the nut being poisoned. Even if it was poisonous, he had said, the crop could be plucked and the tree then treated. The CDN report concluded on a doleful note: "Scientists watching him, however, were sceptical of this method especially because of the poisonous nature of the chemical injected."

So much for that. Not so very long another person had held a demonstration at Temple Trees under the direct patronage of the Prime Minister to show how soap and water could do the trick if the solution was sprayed on the leaves. When this method was given publicity, Perm Sec. Doric De Souza, very correctly pointed out, (no doubt after the lessons derived from the costly Japanese sprayers), that "from the point of view of practical usefulness in dealing with large-scale infestations of tall trees like coconut palms over a wide area," all other methods than *biological control* had to be rejected. He had stated this in a press communique issued on March 9. He had also stated that it had taken time to import, breed and release the appropriate parasites. "The programme was delayed by misadventure with imports and in another way by the tragic death of Dr. U. Ekanayake who was at that time in charge of the programme." He said

that these parasites were being successfully established in the field and were expected to be self-propagating so that special releases could be discontinued. "In a matter of months," the Perm Sec. claimed, "we expect the pest to be held down to levels at which it can do no economic damage." Then he went on to say "there are innumerable ways of destroying the adult insect *promecotheca cuningii* on a home-garden scale, though if the infestation is prevalent in the area it will recur very soon. Our problem however is how to deal with the eggs, larvae, pupas and adults in tens of thousands of tall trees at several sites of infestation." All international experts consulted had recommended only one method, namely biological control. That was the method that had succeeded in "holding the pest to levels at which economic damage is not sustained." The Perm. Sec. then referred to the administrative steps taken by his Minister to fight the pest.

But it was clear that the Minister and the Perm. Sec. thought that all other methods than biological control were only good for trees in a "home-garden". But what was more significant was that the Minister and his Perm Sec. thought that the pest could be only kept down to levels at which "economic damage" was not sustained, meaning thereby that the pest would continue to be with us but that the economic impact could be minimised. It is time, therefore for

people of this country to learn to live without the coconut. *Pol* is likely to be a rare commodity in the island in a few years. We must learn to do without *pol* for our cooking and cadjans for our roofs. *Pol* arrack will become a legend and *pol* toddy a rare delicacy only for the affluent tourist. Ceylon will certainly be a totally different place from what it was a few years ago and from what it is today—for one thing it will be a land without *pol*.

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REACHES
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PEOPLE
WHO
MATTER

CEYLON: MARGINAL NOTES

McCain, Puri Plan, Land Ceilings, Rice, Takeovers, Gift Cars.

by SERENDIB

March 22, 1972

The visit of the commander of the US Seventh fleet to Colombo did not create a major *furor* as it would have done sometime ago. The state of Emergency prevented the ultras in the left movement or the anti-imperialist solidarity groups from staging demonstrations against the Admiral. But, apart from the communist *Aththa*, no other paper made any critical comment. The *Aththa* did not have anything new to say but repeated what was said by the left on such occasions. Admiral John S. McCain had arrived in Colombo on March 6 with a planeload of 15 of his naval experts and spent four days here on what was described as a "goodwill tour". He left on March 9. Before he left he had told newspapermen that he had not been in Ceylon before and that he had therefore thought he should pay a goodwill visit to "your Ministry of Defence and External Affairs." The Admiral had also added: "I was happy to meet your Prime Minister, Mrs. Bandaranaike and talk with her. I don't know how long the discussion was. But your newspapers said it was 25 minutes, so it must be correct I suppose." Apart from making calls on the Mi-

nistry of Defence and External Affairs and other VIPs, he also had played a vigorous game of tennis at the Queen's Club. He had also confided: "I thought it would be very hot here but the weather is very fine. It is very much like Honolulu."

The *Daily News* report on March 10 ventured a guess on the speculations which was rife about the visit. It said: "While officials and diplomats remain tight-lipped about the discussions between the Prime Minister Mrs. Bandaranaike and the American Admiral, informed sources said that Mrs. Bandaranaike had pointed out the rationale behind her *Indian Ocean Peace Zone* proposal which she first enunciated at the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference in Singapore last year. This proposal was later accepted by the United Nations. The Prime Minister and Admiral McCain also discussed the big naval presence in the Indian Ocean, the possibility of military bases emerging in the Indian Ocean region and the developing political-military situation in this area as a result of new alignments. Mrs. Bandaranaike pinpointed Ceylon's policy of non-alignment in foreign affairs." This was no doubt an inspired piece to keep speculation down to a minimum. It was not the kind of *kite-flying* story which the Lake House of

ten indulged in. In any case, nobody knows just what the PM and the Admiral had talked especially because there were no aides present at the talk. From the *Daily News* story it is more than likely that the big power naval presence which was talked about stemmed from the Indo-Soviet Agreement which had played such a crucial role in the geopolitics of the area during the recent Bangladesh war.

Indian papers were naturally greatly interested in this visit, but there was no hard news to comment on. The *Hindu* had noted that when the Admiral landed at Katunayake airport on March 6 "newsmen were not allowed to meet him nor was his programme released to them." The paper had also reported that "periodically there have been efforts by the Soviet Union, China and the United States to obtain base facilities at the Trincomalee harbour on the island's eastern shores. This natural, deep port had been a naval base of the allies during World War II." Even when he departed, the Admiral was not granted the "courtesy" of an officially-sponsored press conference—presumably because newsmen might have put questions to him which might have caused embarrassment to the big and small powers involved in the region and with each of whom Ceylon maintains the friendliest relations.

It is interesting to note in this connection that on March 6 in Canberra in Australia, Madame Y.S. Nasriddinova,

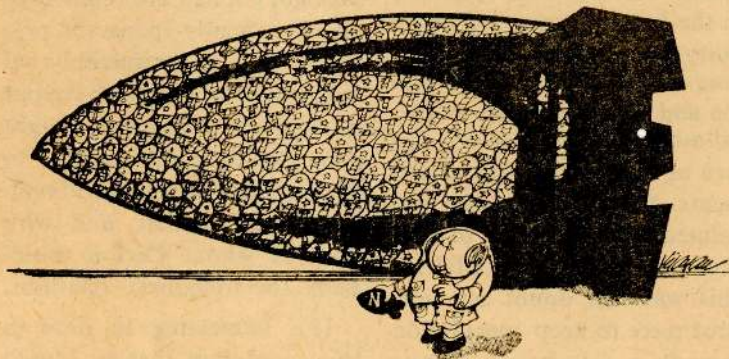
Chairman of the Council of Nationalities, of the Soviet Union, was asked at a press conference whether the presence of Soviet ships in the Indian Ocean constituted a threat to anyone. She had answered that Russian naval ships had never threatened anybody and that their presence in the Indian Ocean contributed to a "balance of forces". Madame Nasriddinova headed an unofficial parliamentary delegation and had added that "one day perhaps their presence (Soviet naval ships) will be useful." This was a message which was transmitted by *Reuter* and the words attributed to her may be as "unofficial" as the delegation she led.

A NUMBER OF SIGNIFICANT EVENTS have begun to take place in Ceylon during March. The repatriation of persons of Indian origin in Ceylon who had opted to revert to Indian citizenship under the Sirimavo-Shastri pact has got under way. Large numbers are returning to India and every ferry which crosses over from Talaimannar to Rameswaram

is chock-a-bloc with such repatriates. The present quickened pace of repatriation has been made possible by what is known as the *Puri Plan* which was accepted by the Ceylon Government after some hesitation in 1971. The Puri Plan envisaged the release of Provident Fund and other assets of the repatriates on their leaving the shores of the island on a travel document issued by the Indian High Commission. Under normal circumstances, the money would have been released only after the conferment of Indian citizenship, but in the present instance such citizenship would be granted within a year of the repatriate's return to India. Ceylon had at first been suspicious about the Puri Plan fearing that if Indian citizenship were not conferred on the repatriates after they went to India, they might have become a "stateless" liability weighing heavily on Ceylon. Later, Ceylon had agreed to give this plan a trial and it seems to be working most satisfactorily. Under the Puri Plan over 50,000 could be repatria-

ted every year, that is 15,000 more than what was contemplated under the original agreement. The Indian Government, for its part, has perfected the machinery to absorb 50,000 repatriates into various schemes. It would appear that whilst India has organised itself to take 50,000 repatriates a year, Ceylon is a little behind in its organisational readiness to send back such a large number. India has the land and the machinery ready to open new tea and coffee estates with the help of the repatriated labour from Ceylon. It must be remembered that most of the repatriates are skilled in plantation agricultural work and they will help to boost India's production in tea and coffee in a big way.

While the repatriates will be absorbed into India's productive manpower, the jobs they quit in Ceylon have not been adequately filled. Indigeneous Ceylonese labour, meaning Sinhala labour, do not like plantation work, and when about 50,000 or more are withdrawn from our plantations there is bound to be a shortage of skilled plantation workers able and willing to work on the estates. What inducements the Government will offer to Sinhala labour to engage themselves productively and profitably on the estates is not known. Ceylon's plantation industry is today not only losing skilled manual labour but also managerial skills without provision being made for replacement. If one is not inhibited by racialist feelings, one must admit that the



"Simple enough: let's get rid of our nuclear bomb."

Hindu

British planters in the hill country provided a pool of resourceful and able managers constituting a great asset to the industry. The salaries and the emoluments they drew were higher than what was paid to local counterparts, but in recent years there has been a levelling up which had reduced disparities. It must be also remembered that many of the British families had made Ceylon their home but in the contemporary climate particularly after the UF sought to implement its version of *socialism* life had become virtually impossible for these British planters and even others with managerial experience and talent. Ceylonese have the capacity to develop these skills, but a sudden vacuum in the field of management is not easy to replace. With the departure of labour to India and the managers (superintendents, visiting agents and the like) to Britain (and elsewhere), the plantation industry will begin a new chapter in its history. It must be also remembered that many Ceylonese who had been trained by the departing managers for supervisory posts have also found jobs in tea plantations in Africa and elsewhere—part of the flight of talent from Ceylon.

THE QUESTION OF LAND CEILINGS has been in the headlines this month. Minister Kobbekaduwa had promised to have his bill for land ceilings ready sometime ago, but various difficulties have delayed it. The Minister also has a whole series of legislative

and administrative measures to effect a major land reform. Already some of proposals have been put into effect. The Paddy Marketing Board, with a complete monopoly of paddy purchase and wholesale distribution, has started business from the beginning of this year. One of the main problems the Minister wants to solve is to find land for the landless Kandyan in the hill regions. He is emotionally overweighed with the sense of guilt that Kandyans were dispossessed by the British when the lands in the area were turned into plantations, and he is anxious to implement some of the major proposals outlined in the report of the Kandyan Peasantry Commission during his tenure of office. Many estates have been taken over for village expansion schemes, but it is not only the Kandyans who have got allotments from plantations which have been fragmented in this way, many adventurous persons from the south particularly from the Ambalangoda - Balapitiya - Matara areas have also become small landowners in the Kandyan regions. But the Minister does not seem to be satisfied with what has been done. The *Observer* of March 11 under the heading *Land for Landless In Their Villages* reported that the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands was busy collecting particulars of uncultivated lands and of landless peasants in the Kandyan districts so that these landless peasants could be settled on lands in their own villages. Minister Kobbekaduwa seems to feel that the only way agricultural production could be increased was by giving landless peasants land in their own villages. In the past, the UNP as well the SLFP Governments had given land to such landless peasants in colonisation schemes in the Dry Zone where they were given many subsidised amenities. But most of these colonisations schemes have not proved the success the Government had hoped they would prove—for one thing the money invested did not bring the returns envisaged. Moreover the political returns were also not worthwhile. In fact, experience had shown that whilst such colonisation schemes created new voters and new electorates mostly in areas where other peasants have lived traditionally for centuries, those who had benefited from government largesse had nearly always turned against the Government and Party which had installed them in the lands at the very next elections. All governments so far have failed to create "pocket boroughs" for the ruling parties with the help of the Land Colonisation Schemes—and this was because the reality did not conform to the promise as far as the pampered colonist was concerned—nurtured as he was on free subsidies and other free facilities, without having had to work for it, only because he was a voter. And now, Minister Kobbekaduwa seems to think that he should settle the Kandyan peasant in his own village on lands taken over from the big

DEFEAT IMPERIALISM

RS -
800 MILLION CHINESE
PEOPLE & THEIR GOVERNMENT
WELCOME YOU



"I told you, Chief. There it is!"

Hindu

estates and other lands belonging to "richer" persons.

Any examination of the proposals and actions of the Minister and his bureaucratic administrators will show that their efforts are to find land for the landless by dispossessing the rich and the big plantations. With the population increase new landless are being created every minute, but the emphasis seems to be on the landless who are voters in parliamentary elections at present. A more equal distribution of wealth is no doubt something to be welcomed, but what the Minister and his aides seem to forget is that the meagre resources of the Government should be directed towards increasing production and productivity and not merely satisfying land hunger of Kandyan landless voters. Even the proposal regarding land ceilings seem to be directed towards this objective. The Minister seems to be conscious that merely distributing land, either by imposing ceilings or by taking over land under other pretexts

would not increase agricultural production. He has therefore threatened to bring in new legislation "to ensure full agricultural exploitation". The *Daily News*, 15/3, dramatically proclaimed thus: "Cultivate all your land or be dispossessed. This is the theme of a new piece of legislation that the Minister of Agriculture and Lands, Mr. Hector Kobbekaduwa, will introduce in Parliament shortly." The Minister seems to have some kind of scheme whereby such uncultivated land would come under "ministerial supervision" for a year and if that did not make the owner cultivate the land, the Minister would take over the land and hand it over to someone else who would cultivate it. This seems to be another woolly-headed scheme born of a bureaucratic outlook on men and matters. There seems to be a completely wrong idea in some VIP quarters that if a landless person were to be given land he would cultivate it,

and that the present problem in agriculture was that owners were not inclined to cultivate land. It is true that a landless peasant would be willing to have a hut and plant a few brinjals plants round his hutment whilst he looked for an easy government sinecure where he could earn a gilt-edged government salary or wages on a daily or monthly basis. But such land handouts is no way to increase agricultural production on a national scale-even with the best of legislation devised by the Minister and his brains trust.

In the meantime, the legislation for the magnum opus in land ceilings is still hanging fire. Various submissions have been made to the PM and these are now being considered. In the meantime, Minister Kobbekaduwa has proclaimed (vide *CDN* 11/3/72) that there would be no rice imports after January '74'. This country has heard similar boasts from earlier Ministers in charge of Agriculture: D. S. Senanayake, Dudley Senanayake, C. P. de Silva, Felix R. Dias Bandaranaike, M D. Banda and others announcing that Ceylon would be self-sufficient in rice from 1954, 1960, 1963, 1966, and 1970. And now it is 1974. Whether a Kobbekaduwa can do the trick is 74 million question. One has only to flip through old press cuttings to realise the kind of make-believe world in which people in Ceylon have been lulled into by politicians who were adept in winning their votes.

Minister Kobbekaduwa has picked on January 1974 the D-day for paddy self-sufficiency, and this promise is largely based on the fact that new varieties of paddy would double and treble production. No doubt some bureaucrats in his office have put some thrilling reports, but if the Minister were a realist he must pay attention to the problem of ensuring that the levels of paddy production in 1970 and 1971 are not lowered in 1972 and 1973. The drought has already ruined paddy production for 1972, and the prospects for 1973 do not seem to be too good. The Minister has his eyes screwed on so firmly on Kandyan peasants in Kandyan areas (they were never the traditional producers of paddy in bulk in Ceylon) that he tends to forget what has to be done in other areas particularly in the paddy producing Dry Zone. The traditional farmers of this country in the dry zone seem to have lost all enthusiasm for agricultural production and this is something which the bureaucratic minions of the Minister do not seem to have realised.

HOWEVER THERE IS ALWAYS A SILVER LINING even on the darkest horizon. Minister T. B. Illangaratne was the first to announce (why did he agree to bell the cat?) that Government had decided *not* to give free rice to income tax payers. This would mean that over 20,000 persons who pay income tax would no longer get the weekly measure of free rice. This is a step that would be welcomed by all rea-

lists, but this is still only a drop in the ocean of free subsidies which has submerged the economy of this island into virtual bankruptcy. The day when the Government will abolish free rice for the 7 or 8 million adult rice rationbook holders will mark the day of salvation for this country. Together with this must go all other forms of subsidies. Minister Illangaratne has also announced that "from a date to be fixed soon, no rice will be available except on the ration". This means that the Government was hoping to abolish the free market in rice, by taking over all locally produced for the rationing scheme and thereby cut down imports of rice. This too would be welcomed if the Government took the necessary steps to increase the local production of paddy so that the open market in rice could be restored once self-sufficiency was attained. But, unfortunately, the measures the Government have taken, combined with the credit squeeze in the agricultural sector will tend to depress paddy production. Minister Illangartne also announced that the Government would shortly fix the price which the income tax payers will pay for the measure of rationed rice. All this is consistent with the dictum that the rich must be squeezed, but with compulsory savings and income ceilings, the income tax payers will soon become a "downtrodden and dispossessed group", and the Government may not be able to collect any more gold from the geese whi-

ch have so far laid all the eggs. The UF seems to be anxious not to kill the geese that lay the golden eggs but the way things are going the geese seem anxious to fly away, and if they cannot do this they will simply lie down and die. And the country will then be rid of all bloated capitalists.

QUIETLY AND UNOBTAINABLY, the UF government is pursuing its policy of taking over private business undertakings. This month the big coconut products and manufacturing firm known as the *British Ceylon Corporation Ltd* was taken over. Two engineering firms *United Motors* and its assembly subsidiary wanted the government to take them over voluntarily (after all, the motor business is in the doldrums) and these two firms have now come under the wing of Leyland Ceylon which is a state sponsored undertaking in collaboration with a foreign manufacturer. The *Anvil Arrack Distillery* has also been taken over. The two engineering firms belong to a family which has close ties with the UF government (the family had and has equally good ties with the UNP), and to most realistically-minded persons it seemed to be good business for such firms to voluntarily hand themselves over to government at a time when they were faced with a complete shutdown. The Anvil Distillery group has always been one of the staunchest opponents of one of the constituent members of the UF and cynics have quipped that the Business

Acquisition Bill was being used to eliminate political opponents. This method of eliminating political opposition has been tried out in Ceylon before, and it has always boomeranged. In other countries too, in recent times, such attempts have resulted in *comebacks* which have done the ruling groups no good.

Punitive and vindictive action has always brought *retribution*—even to those who did not believe in retribution. It is not clear what other private business undertakings would be taken over soon but these takeovers are only an indication of certain under-currents in our political life. Whilst these takeovers continue apace, gift cars from relations abroad would be permitted, it was announced. This announcement has been met with scepticism. When Ceylonese abroad were invited to send their hard currency savings at the FEECs rate to “save the motherland” the response was disappointing. The gift cars and gifts of other essentials seem to be another way of inducing the inflow of foreign currency, on which the Government will seek to collect customs duties. But what people outside the charmed circle of the UF fear is that the new cars they get as gifts would immediately be “taken over” by one of the Government organisations which feel they need new cars. If the armed services and the police do not take over these new gift cars, people fear that some bureaucrats in im-

PAKISTAN

Bhutto - Walikhan Agreement

Karachi,

MARTIAL LAW in Pakistan will be lifted on August 14 this year and the National Assembly will be convened on April 14, it was announced by President Bhutto on March 6, in an unscheduled broadcast to nation. This, no doubt, is a big victory for the democratic forces of Pakistan which were persistently demanding immediate revocation of the martial law and the restoration of democracy. This victory will certainly strengthen the forces of democracy in Pakistan. This announcement of President Bhutto came after three days of his talks with the NAP leader, Khan Abdul Wali Khan, and the leader of the Jamiat-ul-Ulema-e-Islam (JUI), Maulana Mufti Mahmud. Actu-

portant government departments would think that such cars were essential for their use. In the ultimate analysis, only a few persons who have the assurance that the UF government would not take over the cars they get as gifts would import them. The others would prefer to invest in a *buggycart* because it is reasonably certain that government VIPs would not want to take over bullock carts at this juncture.

ally these were tripartite talks held between Bhutto's People's Party on the one hand and the NAP and the JUI, the two main opposition parties having an alliance among themselves, on the other. In these talks an agreement was reached, according to which President Bhutto agreed to a timetable about lifting the martial law, convening the National Assembly and Provincial Assemblies. He conceded that NAP and JUI, as the majority parties in NWFP and Baluchistan, are entitled to form provincial governments there. He agreed to consult the NAP and the JUI with regard to appointments of the governors in these two provinces.

ACCORDING TO THE AGREEMENT, the National Assembly at its first meeting on April 14 will set up a committee to draft a permanent constitution, and this draft will be placed before the Assembly when it meets on August 14, the day fixed for lifting the martial law. President Bhutto has said, “we have acted in the spirit of adjustments”. *This implies that NAP and JUI had to forgo some of their demands. But the fact is that both these parties have scored more points against Bhutto. He has had to retreat.*

It was Bhutto who had been

TRIBUNE, March 30, 1972

dilly-dallying over the lifting of the martial law, convening of the National Assembly and restoring democracy. It was he, who was inflaming the sentiments of the people on these vital issues. He had admitted, on the day when he assumed office as President and Martial Law Administrator, that the country is facing a crisis—"a total crisis, military, economic and social crisis and international crisis". But he did not take urgently needed steps to overcome this crisis. People wanted to fight out this crisis with the strength and vitality of democracy, but he resisted this demand though he had been posing as a champion of democracy. This attitude of President Bhutto deepened the crisis and pushed the country further on the path of chaos. There were strikes of students and workers. Both these sections adopted weapon of "gherao". At some places students took over the control of colleges and the workers of the factories.

At some other places the workers were led to supplement the tactics of "gherao" with "jalao". There were mutinies in jails as in Multan. Policemen went on strike and came out in demonstrations in Hyderabad (Sind), Peshawar, and Lahore, clashing with PPP's uniformed volunteers. The strike of policemen was taken as a danger signal by the regime so much so that President Bhutto himself said "it was called a strike. In plain and simple words it was mutiny". Airforce technicians too des-

cended upon the Governor of Sind in a noisy demonstration. In Peshawar demonstrators even attacked the Governor of the NWFP and he suffered a fracture in the leg.

PAKISTAN'S ECONOMY had meanwhile been cracking due to loss of market in the east, heavy military expenditure and foreign debts. On the other hand dilly-dallying over the lifting of the martial law and restoration of democracy had created a grave situation in the country, particularly in the NWFP and Baluchistan. In these two provinces, the situation had assumed such menacing proportions that the *Nawa-e-Waqt* leading urdu daily of Lahore, warned. "A situation far more dangerous even than what it was in March last year in Dacca has been created in NWFP and Baluchistan. It is far more dangerous because these two provinces constitute about 52 per cent of the total area of West Pakistan and if they secede nothing will be left of this country."

In spite of such serious situation, President Bhutto did not move to concede the burning demands of the people. Instead he threatened reprisals and tried to rule with a "danda". As a last resort and in order to "force the hands of the President", NAP leader Wali Khan announced that he himself will call the Provincial Assemblies of NWFP and Baluchistan. Still President Bhutto paid no heed. He announced that local bodies elections will be held in all the four provinces on March 15. He conducted the elections

for women members of the National Assembly. He thought that by conducting these elections under martial law he could get a foothold in the NWFP and Baluchistan. But he had to suffer a defeat. His party, the PPP, could not get a single seat in the NWFP and Baluchistan in the elections for the women members of National Assembly.

THE ELECTIONS of the local bodies had to be postponed indefinitely due to the pressure of the NAP and the JUI, who had announced that they would boycott these elections and will not allow these elections to be held, at least in the provinces in which they had a majority. Thus Bhutto saw that it was not possible for him to make the NAP and Jamiat to surrender. It was really a stunning blow to him.

At the same time in the armed forces, crisis which had been brewing came to the surface. There is no denying that Bhutto came to power with the help of a faction of military leaders, headed by General Gul Hasan and Air Marshal Rahim Khan. The rival group of military leaders was headed by Tikka Khan and Akbar Khan. These two generals had given the ultimatum to Yahya Khan to hand over power at that time. Bhutto after coming into power removed all the senior army generals who were opposed to him and who belonged to the rival faction of military generals. Tikka Khan was too powerful to be thus disposed off. He could not be expected to take his defeat indefinitely

with folded hands. He was mobilising his forces and the in-fighting in the army was going on.

President Bhutto, naturally, could not be unaware of it. It seems he felt that the rumblings in the military were bound to culminate in something dangerous. He had to mobilise support for himself, and rally the masses as he could. First he announced labour reforms. Then he announced that a commission will be appointed to look into the grievances of the police. With great fanfare he proceeded to announce his "revolutionary" land reforms. For all their shortcomings and drawbacks, the peasants, particularly the tenants and sharecroppers, are sure to benefit considerably from these reforms. He simultaneously tried to win over the industrialists, particularly the monopolists who had been somewhat alienated by his earlier ultra-radical posture. He lifted the restrictions imposed upon them some time ago.

He stretched his hand of compromise towards the NAP and Jamiat. It is significant that on the day the announcement came that a military shakeup had taken place and Tikka Khan had taken over as the army chief of Pakistan, President Bhutto had had preliminary talks with Khan Wali Khan, Maulana Hazarvi and (Mufti Mahmoud, leaders of the NAP and the JUI.

PRESIDENT BHUTTO WAS FORCED to remove his staunch supporters in the arm-

ed forces, Gul Hasan and Rahim Khan. General Tikka Khan, the butcher of Baluchistan and Bangladesh, took over as the Army Chief. He is the arch hard liner, a hawk of hawks, and the strong man of the armed forces. He was the man who did not want Bhutto to be handed over power, who wanted that political power should remain in the hands of the military. It is this same Tikka Khan who has managed to come on the top in the military hierarchy now. Naturally President Bhutto cannot be feeling very secure. It is this compulsion of the situation that has forced Bhutto to come to an agreement with NAP and Jamiat leaders. In the three days of talks between Bhutto, Wali Khan and Mufti Mahmoud an agreement was arrived at, which, according to Wali Khan, "will usher in a new phase and help in the restoration of democracy in Pakistan."

It is a welcome development, as far as it goes. Naturally it cannot be said that everything is now settled. Many unpredictable things can happen between now and August 14, the date set for the lifting of martial law. The present equation between the civil power and the military is uneasy. Whether President Bhutto will be able to put the military in its place and finally assert the supremacy of civil power, in conditions of Pakistan today it is difficult to say. Undoubtedly it is a difficult task but it has to be fulfilled, and given continued mass support it can certainly

be fulfilled.

The plan for a war against India and making the Pak armed forces "the most powerful in Asia" to achieve that objective as stated by himself, must be given up by President Bhutto if civilian rule and democracy are to get a chance in Pakistan. India never wanted the disintegration of Pakistan. Hence India regards it as a welcome development that President Bhutto has reached an agreement with NAP and Jamiat leaders. The agreement will certainly help to preserve the territorial integrity of Pakistan as it stands to day, which was seriously endangered due to the growing threat of civil war. Full implementation of the Bhutto-NAP-JUI accord and determined restoration of democracy alone will strengthen the integrity of Pakistan. Not the danda against the working class and students but honest fulfillment of their demand alone will ensure continued mass support that is necessary.

A welcome feature of this agreement has been its realistic approach as regards the territorial extent of Pakistan. President Bhutto had said not long ago that he was against the convening of the National Assembly because that would mean the recognition of Bangladesh. Now he has agreed to convene the National Assembly and there is no hitch in regard to "East Pakistan". Thus a *de facto* recognition to Bangladesh has been accorded.

One might ask how long President Bhutto is going to take

to accord *de jure* recognition. Such recognition will only help Pakistan to solve its problems—particularly the problem of POWs, which has become such a sensitive problem that President Bhutto has to go down almost in “submission”, appealing to India to release the POWs unilaterally.

Recent developments in Pakistan augur well; still the next five months are going to be crucial. Much will have to be done by the democratic forces of Pakistan to make the military not to indulge in politics and look after the defences only, which in any case face no threat from any side. It is in the best interests of Pakistan and President Bhutto himself as well now to negotiate with India and Bangladesh and settle the issues across the table.

Gulam Hyder

BANGLADESH

India steps into the breach

“**O**UR problem is that they love us too much”, an Indian diplomat remarked recently after a visit to Bangladesh. “Sheikh Mujib acts as if Mrs. Gandhi were his prime minister and keeps phoning her up while his officials look to us to solve all their problems. Of course”, he added, “we know this can’t last”. With her characteristically acute sense of timing, Mrs. Gandhi is making her first state visit to Dacca

this weekend to capitalise on what will probably be the warmest moment in Indo-Bangladeshi relations for some time. She comes flushed with victory in India’s state elections, a triumph which must bring considerable comfort to Sheikh Mujib, since it kept the Marxists out of power in the neighbouring state of West Bengal. And she comes just in time to celebrate the withdrawal of the last of the 100,000 Indian troops who won Bangladesh its independence three months ago. Although Indian troops were remarkably well-disciplined for an occupation army, the highly visible presence of turbaned Sikh soldiers inevitably provoked resentment and scattered clashes. So the pullout two weeks in advance of schedule is bound to enhance Mrs. Gandhi’s popularity in Bangladesh. But in fact Mrs. Gandhi is said to have been even more anxious than Sheikh Mujib to get the troops out to put an end to sniping incidents than to quieten foreign suspicions.

THE WITHDRAWAL should bring some quick benefits to Bangladesh in the form of American recognition and perhaps the start of a conversation between India and Pakistan’s Mr. Bhutto. But it may also be to set off a new round of troubles by removing the main buffer between the Bengalis and their detested minority, the Biharis. At the very moment the ceremonial retreat was sounded in Dacca last Sunday several hundred Biharis were reportedly being killed and wounded at a jute mill near

Khulna. If more such attacks occur, it may rebound on the Indians because of Mrs. Gandhi’s refusal to allow the Biharis to migrate back to their former homes in India. Both the Indians and the Bengalis are highly aware of this and other potential pitfalls in their relationship. Both know that certain commercial conflicts are inevitable once Bangladesh trade gets going again—over jute markets, for example, over smuggling of essential commodities to the higher priced Indian market and over attempts by Indian businessmen to set up shops in Dacca behind Bengali frontmen. India has tried to forestall Bengali fears of an Indian commercial takeover by limiting trade between the two countries to state trading corporations. And it has instructed its diplomats and technical advisers in Dacca to walk softly. But its major method of keeping Bangladesh sweet is through aid. India is far and away the biggest benefactor and promises to remain so unless and until Mr. Nixon swallows his pride and opens his coffers. The Indians have given their help with a minimum of fanfare as much to defuse opposition at home as to keep the Bengalis happy. (If commodity grants were announced, prices would immediately rise in India). Total aid this fiscal year will be more than £ 50 m. This includes a £ 5 m sterling transfer in London to back Dacca’s new currency, £ 10m in grants to returning refugees, and 500,000 tons of food grains.

ALTHOUGH MRS. GANDHI has proclaimed that India can and will meet all the needs of Bangladesh, she and Sheikh Mujib have a common interest in wanting to spread the aid burden. Sheikh Mujib's recent trip to Moscow was an attempt to spread it in the direction India favours most. The package the Bangladeshi leader returned with an £ 18m credit previously promised to united Pakistan and unquantified pledges of technical aid was considerably smaller than he must have expected from his best friend's best friend. But Russia won a strategically valuable toehold by offering to clear the Bangladesh port. The failure of Western countries to raise \$6m for the port contract is symptomatic of their faint-hearted aid efforts. A \$565m UN appeal launched last month for urgently needed relief goods, mainly food grains, has been answered by fewer than a dozen countries, of which only the United States has given enough to amount to more than a drop in Dacca's empty bucket \$35 m in food and cash.

Bangladesh not only needs just about everything (\$ 2 billion—\$ 2.5 billion worth over the next two years according to its government estimates); it needs a good portion of it immediately in the form of expensive transport equipment if relief supplies are to get beyond the blocked-up ports. India has been doing its bit by rebuilding most of the 500 shattered bridges, and by donating 800 trucks; and some oth-

CHINA

Proforma claim for Hongkong and Macao

Hongkong.

PEKING has formally notified the United Nations that Hongkong and Macao, which are now in the possession of Britain and Portugal, are part of Chinese territory. These territorial claims are the first made by China through the UN since she was admitted as a member last October. But these claims do not seem to be aimed at regaining these territories as much as making it clear that they have no right to independent statehood, should Britain and Portugal ever decide to relinquish them. Hongkong has been a British crown colony since 1841 and Portugal has held Macao since 1557. Both are situated at the mouth of the Pearl River whi-

er help has come from voluntary agencies. None the less very little is moving into or out of Bangladesh. It is probably already too late for enough housing materials to be imported and distributed to provide shelter for the millions of homeless before the May moonsoon. And while governments fiddle with reports and committees, it may become too late to prevent a Bengal famine.

— *Economist*,

ch flows into the South China Sea. These territories are now officially listed as non-self-governing territories by the UN Decolonisation Committee and could theoretically aspire to independence from both their present colonial rulers as well as from China.

It is China's contention that they should be removed from this list, and this was the purport of the letter sent to the UN by China. Only a vote in the UN General Assembly can make this change. China has also staked its claim to the Senaku Islands which Japan asserts is Japanese. These islands are reputed to be rich in oil deposits. China has often declared that Hongkong and Macao are part of China, arguing that they were taken away from her through "unequal treaties" forced on her when she was a weak power. But, China has not tried to seize them by force which she could easily do. Why China has not done so is because both territories are lucrative entreports for much of China's trade with the outside world, and to seize them would be unrealistic as well as self-defeating. China only wants to make sure of its rights to these territories should either one or both, at some future date, cease to serve their present useful role.

THERE WAS UNDERSTANDABLE excitement here when US columnist Joseph Kraft, in a despatch from Peking, datelined March 9, had stated that Premier Chou En-lai had made a surprise visit to Hanoi three days after Nixon's visit

and that he succeeded in changing the balance of power in the Indo-China states in favour of China as against the Soviet Union. It is an open secret that Russia supported North Vietnam but was against Sihanouk. China supported the movements in all three states as separate entities and was pledged to restore Sihanouk in Cambodia. Reports indicate that Chou, after visiting Hanoi was able to promote a reconciliation between Hanoi and Sihanouk. Chou's visit to Hanoi was also disclosed by Sihanouk. Though China, after Nixon's visit, has issued strong statements deploring US bomb attacks on Vietnam and demanding the total withdrawal of all US troops from Indo-China, many observers feel that Chou's strategy in Hanoi has opened new vistas for American diplomacy provided Nixon was prepared to foster a new regime in South Vietnam acceptable to China.

It is felt that the Chou group has regarded the negotiations with Nixon as a tactical manoeuvre aimed at some improvement of relations with the USA to gain time to reinforce its military-technical complex to create nuclear weapons reserves which would allow China to talk to the USA from positions of strength so that spheres of influence could be determined without too much difficulty. Whatever China says, there cannot be any doubt that China seeks to gain *de facto* equality of bargaining strength with other super-powers and this would automatically mean a

new division of spheres of influence.

Chou has a difficult task. There are groups within China which do not approve the current policies. The fact that they are not openly manifest is no proof that they do not exist. It is well to remember that the decisions of the 9th Congress of the Chinese Communist Party proved fruitless and abortive owing to under-currents in the political environment in China. The current talk about the "threat from the North" is a diversionary tactic. It is to preserve the ruling dynasty of the Chinese communists based on the Mao cult. But such diversions have not always ensured the position of a ruling group, and Peking has often had to resort to savage reprisals against opposition. And furthermore this talk about the "threat from the North" is also for consumption in the Third World to justify Mao's rapprochement with Nixon and the USA. The vital interests of the national liberation movements throughout the world, especially in Indo-China, Bangladesh and the Arab states, according to these opposition groups, have been subverted by this flirtation with the USA. Orthodox Marxists of the Lin Piao group state that the anti-Soviet pro-USA line of Chou is unprincipled and is a betrayal of the class interests of the downtrodden for selfish reasons. This was weakness, not strength, they say. With this scare about an "invasion from the North", it is said that troops which had stood in rea-

diness to fight Chiang Kai Shek and US imperialism have been moved north to confront the Russians across the border. Whether the Chou group who have long fed the Chinese people on propaganda against US imperialism and its running dogs, will continue to have the support of wide sections of the ordinary people, and more particularly party cadres, is a matter for speculation.

Official statements recently made in Peking seem to indicate that China would be willing to accept both Hanoi's seven-point proposal and Nixon's eight-point as the joint basis on which to carry on future negotiations. As a preliminary step, China has demanded that the US should halt its bombing attacks on North Vietnam and other Indo-Chinese states and "stop all its aggression in this area". China has also demanded that US and allied troops should withdraw "totally and unconditionally and before a set terminal date and must cease to support the puppet cliques in Indo-Chinese countries so that the peoples of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia may settle their respective internal questions themselves free from foreign interference". It is believed that Hanoi and Sihanouk have more or less agreed to the new Chinese position on this question, and this will pave the way for side-tracking the seven and eight point proposals.

Tribune Correspondent.



"The air I breathe is filthy, my food is poisoned, my automobile is a gas-guzzling behemoth, my school taxes have doubled, the Internal Revenue Service plans to take the fillings out of my teeth, my wife is fifty-three and pregnant, my dog bit a lawyer's kid, my son steals, my mother-in-law is a Communist, my daughter ran off with a fink, and now you tell me that if I don't back up and let you have the right-of-way I'll be in trouble."

New Yorker

JAPAN

On the balance of power in Asia

Tokyo,

POLITICAL circles in Japan do not think that there has been a shift in the balance of power in Asia, after the Indo-Pak war and the defeat of Pakistan and the emergence of a strong India, and even in spite of the open involvement of the super-powers in the conflict (the US and China on the side of Pakistan and the USSR on the side of India). In an interview to the *New York Times* correspondent C. L. Sulzberger, Premier Sato of Japan has said that it was this realisation which had prompted Japan to

recognise Bangladesh quickly. Mr. Sato had also stated that Pakistan, before Bangladesh, was an incongruous unit. "To us outsiders," he said, "situated around the Indian sub-continent it looked rather extraordinary to have the situation that prevailed. It seemed rather unnatural that peoples should be grouped together in a country only on the basis of religion". The Japanese Premier also favoured a non-aggression pact among Soviet Union, China the US and Japan—but only if it included a clause providing for sanctions against those who violated the agreement. Mr. Sato was happy to learn through Mr. Nixon's visit that China did not want to become a super-power.

Mr. Sato had been briefed by an emissary of the US president about the talks in Peki-

ng and he felt that another consequence of the summit might be a decision by China to limit its backing for North Vietnam. He expected this development to lead to new peace talks on Indo-China based on the latest US proposals. This interpretation by Mr. Sato of what might follow the Nixon-Chou talks in Peking has been further reinforced by reports that Chou En-lai had made a secret trip to Hanoi. This gave rise to speculation here that the Chinese were acting as "intermediaries" between Hanoi and Washington, and that China was doing this because of secret understanding between Nixon and Chou under which the US would make a concession to China on Taiwan in return for Chou's efforts to persuade Hanoi to come to terms with the US.

THE WHITE HOUSE has denied that there was any such secret deal involving Taiwan and Vietnam. It is interesting to note that Sihanouk, giving his version of Chou's talks with the leaders in Hanoi, had emphasised that though Mr. Nixon had tried to persuade Mr. Chou to act as an "intermediary" on Vietnam, the latter had refused to do so either covertly or overtly. According to Sihanouk, Chou had promised full and continuing support to the North Vietnam etc. In the meantime, a new phase of increased Sino-Japanese trade is expected to develop in the months ahead with the expected arrival of many Chinese trading missions interested in

buying many Japanese manufactured items. Last year Sino-Japanese trade reached a total of \$ 900 million. This year it is expected that it will top the \$ 1000 million mark because Japan is expected to increase its purchases of raw materials.

But more than trade the question which agitates political circles here are rumours about various secret deals arrived at in Peking. Japan has many fears that Peking may use the help she would get from the USA not for peaceful purposes but for streamlining China's military potential much to the embarrassment of China's neighbours, many of whom, like Japan, are afraid of China's desire to flex her muscles and expand her territories. Many of US allies in East Asia and Southeast Asia entertain these fears, and Washington's (and Kissinger's) assertions that there were no secret deals in Peking have not eliminated such fears. It is also felt that China too would have many reservations about the USA because the USA still wants to restrain the "communism" of the People's Republic. US still has many bases around China, and the military pacts like SEATO, ANZUS, SENTO, ASPAC continue to exist. On the other hand, China is carrying on a regular campaign against the growth of what it calls Japanese militarism.

Japan is not bothered about this campaign against Japanese militarism. The ruling circles here take a pragmatic and realistic view of events. Propaganda does worry them, though

WHY THE ALERT?

Govt. ready for all eventualities

BY RECORDER,

ON Thursday, March 23, the Finance Minister Dr. N.M. Perera replying to a question on adjournment by Mr. R. Premadasa (UNP-Colombo Central), stated that the information received by Government necessitated various precautionary steps to preserve law and order. Dr. Perera pointed out that only a few days earlier two suitcases filled with handbombs were discovered

they would like if this anti-Japanese barrage from Peking is stopped. Objective observers here feel that Peking cannot get the better of the USA in the new relationship which has grown between China and the USA. For Nixon a *detente* with China increases his bargaining position with the Soviet Union. *But, it is realised that it is more important for Nixon to normalise relations with the USSR than with China.* Nixon has to secure a stabilisation of the international situation as a prelude to the presidential campaign, and the forthcoming Nixon trip to Moscow has great meaning and significance for Japan. This is particularly so after the visit of the USSR Foreign Minister Gromyko to Japan and the peace treaty which is being negotiated between the two countries.

Tribune Correspondent.

on the campus at Peradeniya. He said that the Prime Minister and the Government would very much like to relax the emergency regulations and allow normal conditions to exist. But the Government owed it to the people to provide adequate protection. This reply had been sparked by Mr. Premadasa's question why the UNP had been refused permission to put up posters on D.S. Senanayake Remembrance Day (i.e. March 22). He said that even party flags had not been permitted. Dr. Perera had stated that the Government had been gradually relaxing the regulations but the situation which had cropped up in the last two weeks had unfortunately made it necessary to take certain steps in the interests of security.

THIS WAS THE FIRST OFFICIAL STATEMENT on the growing alarm which the Government had shown in regard to the law and order situation in the country. The first hint that something serious was afoot dawned on the public when the Prime Minister in the first week of March at Attanagala deplored the present wave of crime and lawlessness. The *CDN*, March 7, reported the PM as saying on the occasion of inaugurating a Dhamma School: "It is essential that young people associate with Bhikkhus and bring their lives close to the temple in order to improve their kno-

wledge of Dhamma and better their sense of discipline. It is fearful to imagine what the younger generation would be if the present trends of indiscipline continue at this rate. Daily in the morning newspapers we read reports of grave crimes. It is a deplorable state of affairs to have such a high rate of crime in a country like ours which had been called Dhamma-deepa. One will be surprised to see the crowds after a show at a Cinema where certain types of films which are harmful to our culture are shown. But young people cry that they do not have to eat and they have no jobs. However, the Dhamma School can do a valuable service to establish discipline in the younger generation, said the Prime Minister"

Some observers also pointed out that there was a fear of a new *Rightist Offensive on the Sirimavo Govt.* Under this heading the *Indian Express* of March 9 had an interesting piece from its local correspondent. It read: "Fears of a *rightist* attack on Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike's socialist united front government have been gaining ground during the past few days. According to sources close to the Government, although these forces seem to be acting separately, by curious coincidence, all their plans, announced or unannounced, seem to be geared to go into action about the same time-towards the middle of 1972"

The *Forward*, official organ of the Ceylon Communist

Party (Moscow wing), partner of Mrs. Bandaranaike's Government, claimed recently that the last few weeks had seen resurgence of terrorist activities in the North Central Province and parts of Uva Province. Robberies by armed gangs had been reported with great regularity. The paper added, "It is not yet clear whether all these are the work of small, unapprehended bands of terrorists still operating in jungles in those areas or whether it is the work of ordinary criminals." However, the paper claimed that here was evidence that terrorist groups had been responsible for several incidents. It drew attention to the fact that defeated rightist groups were re-aligning their forces to prevent Mrs. Bandaranaike from going ahead with her socialist programmes speedily and effectively. It said the United National Party led by former Premier Dudley Senanayake was stepping up "youth league" activity. Some of the youth leaders who were recently released from detention were particularly active. In Tamil-speaking Northern Province "reactionary forces" among the Tamils had got together to plan an offensive against the Government to coincide with the right wing plans. The paper said the Tamil Congress and other forces which normally oppose each other had rallied round the demand for a separate State in the north and east for Tamils.

"Meanwhile, the main opposition United National Party has decided to move a vote

of no-confidence in the Government, adds PTI. The initiator of the motion, Mr. R. Premadasa, senior Minister in the former UNP Government, had proposed that the motion should be moved jointly with the other opposition party, the Federal Party of Tamils, and opposition independent members of the House of Representatives, but the parliamentary group of the UNP preferred to go it alone."

The *Sun* on March 7 under the heading **POLICE CRACK DOWN ON ACTIVITIES OF ARMED [GANGS]** published a lead story by Noel Seneviratne. It read: "The Government has ordered a tough crack down on marauding gangs operating in jungle pockets in various parts of the country. Police have been detailed to carry out round-the-clock mobile patrols in order to curb the crime wave which has reached serious proportions during the past two weeks. According to a senior Police official, the areas worst affected are Negombo, Veyangoda, Kalutara, Kandy, Kegalle, Kahatagasdigiliya, Galenbindurawe, Anuradhapura and Hambantota. The suburbs of Colombo too are being patrolled intensively to ensure that gangs do not extend their activities to the city. The same source also said that these bands were believed to be in possession of abundant stocks of explosives which they detonated in the presence of people to frighten them into submission. They then loot boutiques and houses.

Police believe that of late gang robberies have escalated to such proportions that peace loving people in several areas appear to be afraid to step out of their homes after sun set. The co-operation of the public in apprehending the culprits responsible for these burglaries and intimidatory tactics, is also not forthcoming as they fear reprisals.

"It has also been found that these gangs utilize vehicles—often stolen motor cars—to convey the loot. Recently, a police mobile party opened fire on a speeding vehicle. In the fracas a civilian was killed. Several bombs were found in the vehicle. In remote areas the Police have found that these gangs operate from jungle hideouts. Police admit the difficulty of tracking them down because of the possibility of snipers. An intensive campaign, however, has been launched to rid the country of these armed gangs.

The *Sun* on March 10 had a lead under the heading *Armed Forces, Police On Full Alert—Joint Action Against Armed Gangs*. The story was by Iqbal Athas. It read: "The Government has placed the Armed Forces and the Police on full alert to meet the growing menace of armed robbery throughout the country. The 'SUN' reliably understands that the leave of Services personnel and Police has been cancelled, so that the maximum number of men could be deployed for this purpose. Leave will be granted only under urgent circumstances. During the past few weeks, incidents of armed robbery,

arson, and looting have escalated, according to Police sources. Incidents have been particularly high in the North Central Province and in the South. The Police have also discovered a number of hidden arms caches and hide-outs where hand bombs were being manufactured. In certain cases, persons involved in the manufacture of these weapons have been taken into custody. It is reliably learnt that intensified mobile patrols are to be carried out both by the police and the Armed Forces to check the spate of thefts and other incidents.

In Kandy, a person who is alleged to have stolen dynamite sticks belonging to the Mahaveli Development Board, has been taken into custody by the Peradeniya Police, our Kandy correspondent reports. The 25 sticks of dynamite recovered from a house at Uda Eriyagama in the Peradeniya Police area had been stolen from a work site of the Mahaveli Diversion Project, police investigations have revealed. In this connection, Sergeant M. G. Fernando of the Peradeniya Police produced E. M. Heen Banda of Uda Eriyagama before the Kandy magistrate, Mr. M. E. Dharmawardena, who remanded him until March 15.

The *Weekend* of March 12 had a small item under the heading *HAND BOMBS FOUND IN NUWARA ELIYA*. It read: "A large cache of hand-bombs and other utensils for the manufacture of hand bombs, like barbed wire, wire nails

and empty tins were recovered from a thick jungle off Blackpool in the Nuwara Eliya area on Friday. The Police party led by Headquarters Inspector Carlyle de Silva recovered fifty hand-bombs and these utensils after having trekked through thick jungle and took ten persons in to custody. The raid was directed by the Superintendent of Police Kandy, Mr. Peter Gunawardene acting on a tip off. The suspects are now being grilled by the Police."

The next significant references in the newspapers began on March 17. The *Daily News* had a boxed item on its front page on March 17 under the heading *Armed Services Put on Full Alert*. It read: "The armed services have been put on full alert and leave has been cancelled for all service personnel. The Government has taken this step as a precautionary measure against the possible repetition of disturbances this year. The Government has had reports of lootings, hold-ups and armed robberies from certain provincial areas which were hotbeds of insurgent activity last year. As a result, the Government feels it is its duty to provide full protection to citizens to carry out their day-to-day activities."

The *Daily Mirror* on that same date frontpaged a story under the heading *Services on 24-hour Alert—Leave Cancelled*. The report read: "The leave of all service and police personnel has been cancelled with immediate effect. These personnel have also been put on a twenty four hour alert.

The Government has taken this decision because of the increase in the number of gang robberies and high way hold ups. Government has received information that in many villages, people are living in fear of gang robbers. In the recent past, they have committed a spate of robberies in various parts of the country. Buses have also been held up and passengers and crew robbed of cash and belongings. A spokesman said yesterday that the Government was not taking any chances, that it would do everything to maintain law and order and ensure that the people go about their business without let or hindrance. He added that service and police personnel have been instructed to take every possible action to apprehend these men who are terrorising the villagers. Meanwhile the Inspector General of Police, Mr. Stanley Senanayake, yesterday said that the Police Department welcomes information from all law abiding citizens, in respect of any acts of an unlawful nature which have occurred or are likely to occur in any part of the Island and such information will be treated with the utmost confidence.

On March 17 at a prizegiving ceremony at Trinity College, Kandy the P.M. once again referred to the same problem. The *Indian Express* reported this under the heading **SIRIMAVO VOWS TO PUT DOWN VIOLENCE** and the report stated: Premier Sirimavo Bandaranaike yesterday assured the nation that "we are duty bound to protect the lives of the peo-

ple of this country—even at the cost of our own lives. We simply cannot sit and watch," she said, "if a section of misguided and extremist youths tries to plunge the country into violence and destroy our hard-won freedom". She was speaking at a function at Trinity College against the backdrop of growing violence in the island. Even as she was speaking, armed forces were being placed on full alert. Volunteers were being mobilised and strictest security measures against recrudescence of violence and insurgency were being taken. Violence erupted exactly a year back which led to insurgency last April in which 1,200 persons were officially reported killed and 20,000 youths were arrested or surrendered to security forces. The Premier declared yesterday: "We are not opposed to aspirations of the youth, but we cannot give in to the disturbing contention that it is only through violence and destruction that the country's prosperity could be achieved". Mrs. Bandaranaike said the youth appeared to be under the misconception that "we elders are opposed to their aims and aspirations. Youth of today also believe that it is only they who could remedy the ills of the country". Referring to the amnesty she had offered to the insurgents last year and the rehabilitation schemes she had initiated, Mrs. Bandaranaike said the whole country was aware of "the sympathy and tolerance with which I have treated those youths", involved in the dis-

turbances.

The *Sun* on March 20 reprinted the same speech under the heading **Violence Is Not The way SAYS PM AT TRINITY**. The report read:

"While the Government is fully conscious of the aspirations of youth, it does not accept that these aspirations could be achieved through violence and... destruction", the Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike, said in Kandy on Friday. The Prime Minister was speaking at the centenary prize day of Trinity College. She said: "The youth of the country should not misunderstand the Government's attitude towards them. We are not oblivious to their aims and aspirations. Certain misguided and extremist youths believe they have all the answers to the country's problems and want to use violence to achieve them. The Government cannot allow that. It has a duty by the peace-loving people to protect them. The Government will not shirk this responsibility and remains undaunted and ready to protect the lives of the people in this country—even at the cost of our own lives." The Premier urged the youth to be patient and to co-operate with the Government to solve the urgent problems confronting the people. She said that their patience and co-operation was essential to the Government, particularly for the implementation of the Five-Year Plan. The plan has been designed to take the country forward towards a developed society, solving the prob-

lems of the people. The problems confronting the country today were the results of wrong policies in the past. Today, the country had to import food, medicines and textiles for which a heavy foreign exchange expenditure was incurred annually. The problems have been aggravated by the sharp rise in the world market price of these items, particularly sugar and milk foods.

Therefore, it was necessary to make a vigorous effort to produce our own food and textile requirements. That was the only way the country could get out of the present economic crisis. In the field of education too, the system had to be changed to suit the requirements of a developing country. The earlier system was not conducive to economic growth. It handicapped the development process as it was geared to produce only clerks and white collar workers. It had now been changed to produce scientists and engineers and technical hands the country needed for its development effort.

The *Hindu* of March 20 published a story from its Colombo correspondent under the heading *Subversive Literature in Ceylon Again*. It read: "Once again Ceylon is being flooded with newspapers and magazines of a highly explosive nature. One particular journal, it is stated, is a continuation of a foreign publication which serves as a 'hand book' for subversion, terrorist activity and ways of conducting the subtle business of destroying

law and order. Most of these publications, according to a reliable source, are airlifted in bulk and distributed through the post office. It is stated that the country was flooded with similar explosive materials prior to the April 1971 insurrection. Eleven months after they had completely stopped coming they are once again coming from the same source in bulk by air. Steps have been taken to prevent them getting into the hands of the people, however friendly the country of origin of these literature is."

PTI reports:

With a marked deterioration in the law and order situation and spurt in crime wave during the last one month, police and the armed forces have been placed on a 24-hour alert. Security arrangements around vital installations, such as the Ceylon Broadcasting Corporation, have been tightened. Police and army patrol have also been intensified in the capital and other trouble spots, and check and search of vehicles plying on road made more rigorous. Meanwhile, reports of loot, raids on shops and stores, wayside robbery and arson continue to pour in from several parts of the island to army and police headquarters here and they have mounted a combined offensive to maintain normalcy. Colombo, the capital, has also of late come under a crime wave with scare gripping the populace. But, no official briefing has yet been given by the Government to pressmen on the present disturbing situation rem-

iniscent of the days preceding last April's insurgency. Meanwhile, the Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike has said at a students rally at the hill capital of Kandy, 72 miles from here- "We are not opposed to the aspirations of the youth, but we cannot give in to their disturbing contention that it is only through violence and destruction that the country's prosperity could be achieved".

The *Sun* on March 21 referred to the same problem under the heading *Police Will Confiscate Subversive Literature*. It read: "Police are under orders to confiscate all types of subversive literature coming into the country. Investigations are being conducted into the flow of such literature. It is believed that subversive literature is being smuggled into the country surreptitiously through the post as well as with the help of ships' crew. According to a Police source, certain Embassy personnel are suspected of complicity in this manoeuvre. Meanwhile, Police say that the intensified patrolling now being carried out in the City and the suburbs has acted as a deterrent to lawless element. The situation in the country is normal and every endeavour has been made to protect life and property in the event of gangsters going on the rampage. This source also said that looting would be dealt with severely. Trouble makers who attempt to cause trouble by spreading rumours will be rounded up. Several convoys of troops have been despatched to various parts of the country."

The Communist weekly *Forward* in its issue of March 18 summed up the situation as viewed from the leftwing political angle. The frontpage story was under the heading *New Security Measures—Rally the People to fight Reaction*. The following excerpts from this article sets out the CP-angle on the situation. "The government has obviously decided to take no chances when, this week, it cancelled all leave for the security services and put them on a full alert. There are also indications that co-ordinating officers will be re-appointed to certain areas of the country. These precautionary actions are, it is presumed, the result of mounting talk and growing evidence that a fresh attempt may be made to repeat events not dissimilar to those of April last year. It is difficult to gauge how much weight should be given to this talk and to the evidence available. But the government obviously wishes to proceed on the principle that it is better to be safe than sorry. Indeed, after last year's events, there does not seem to be any other sensible course of action. The organised armed robberies on petrol sheds, co-operative stores and vehicles in certain parts of the country cannot all be put down to terrorist bands known to be operating in those areas. Several of these events are obviously the work of ordinary gang robbers and other criminal elements. But there are others that suggest that the motive was more likely to be that of gathering money and

supplies for insurgent political action."

"Many other things are taking place that are not dissimilar from what preceded the events of April last year. It is not easy for anyone to say with any certainty whether fresh attacks are being prepared or not—or whether, if they do come, they will follow similar patterns to what happened last April or, instead, take the shape of a campaign of individual terrorism, with the assassination of prominent political personalities. But the possibility of events taking such a turn cannot be ruled out. Especially so when the reactionary forces, emboldened by the economic difficulties that the government now faces and at the widespread dissatisfaction and complaints against high prices and shortages of essential goods, have gone far ahead in their preparations for a political onslaught against the government."

"The prolonged drought, which has already produced a nearly 20 per cent drop in agricultural production, has also led to serious economic dislocations in rural areas and on the estates. In several areas farming activity has come to a virtual standstill owing to the lack of water. On many estates, only two days work in the week is given, and that too with difficulty. This is certainly no time for complaining."

"Four months have passed since the Prime Minister's statement to Parliament on 9th November 1971, setting out a number of Socio-economic-measures

that the government intends to take. But so far the new Rent Act and the take-over of B. C. C. Ltd., have been the only concrete actions in furtherance of this declaration. And in the meantime, the economic condition of the people have got more difficult. The prices of a large range of goods have gone up. Government itself has put up the price of kerosene oil and removed one pound from the sugar ration. But, while the burdens on the people have not been slow to increase there has not been any corresponding speed in implementing the promised measures which affect the vested interests."

"The monopoly newspapers are daily full of stories about big shot delegations visiting Ministers to protest against proposed ceilings on the ownership of land and houses and on disposable family income. When, on the one hand, the people see all this happening and, on the other hand, nothing positive emerges in the direction of implementing what has been promised, can they be blamed for drawing conclusions? It is not re-assurances but action now that the people want and the situation needs. Positive action against the vested interests and to make life easier for the common man will go a long way to bridge the "credibility gap" that is beginning to develop between the government and the broad mass of its supporters and enable their re-union for a successful fight against the threats of the reactionary forces"



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