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ABOUT VIETNAM &
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POLICY

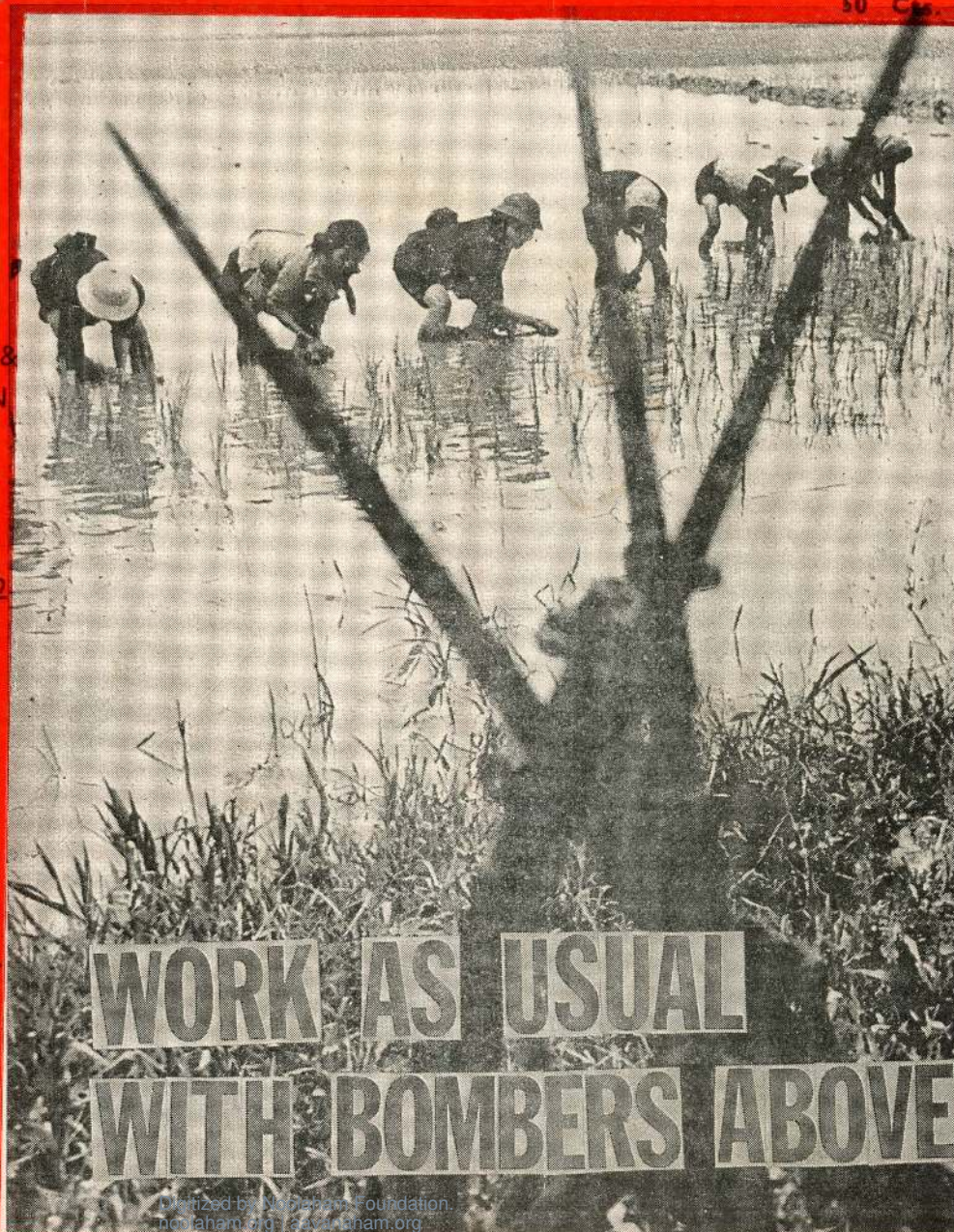
POPULATION
ENGINEERING — 2

SOUTH ASIAN
GEOPOLITICS

U. S. A. ● ITALY

IRELAND & I. R. A.

IS IT TRUE?



**WORK AS USUAL
WITH BOMBERS ABOVE**

WITH COMPLIMENTS

C. V. BHATT

About This Issue

THIS ISSUE goes into print when the astronauts of Apollo 16 are on the surface of the moon. They landed in the rough and difficult terrain in the Descartes mountain area six hours behind schedule because of mechanical trouble in the main spaceship. But the malfunctioning of the retro-engine in question was corrected and Houston gave the orders for the two astronauts to descend to the lunar surface in the *Orion*. We will have analytical information of interest to readers of *Tribune* only in forthcoming issues. What we receive now is only special versions of "spot news" which daily papers publish under bold headlines.

The second instalment of Prof. K. Kularatnam's series on *Population Engineering* appears in this issue. In our last number we published the first article in this series and in our next issue we will publish the concluding article. In this week's instalment, Prof. Kularatnam deals with vital statistics about Ceylon, India, USA and Japan to bring home the point he is making in this series: that population has not only to be controlled but that it must be made the central factor in all planning of a socio-economic and political nature. We also publish the concluding part of an article by S. D. Muni and Urmila Phadnis on the developing trends in the geopolitics of South Asia entitled *Ceylon, Nepal And The Emergence of Bangladesh*. The first part of this article which appeared in our last issue has already provoked a great deal of discussion. This is a subject on which there can be a great deal of controversy and argument. Ceylonese do not as a rule like to enter into controversies about geopolitical questions which affect the island, but it is better that we thrash out in open debate unsaid and unwritten thoughts about Ceylon's position *vis a vis* India and the Big Powers rather than let such thoughts be bottled up inside ourselves—only to fester into paranoic inhibitions. *Tribune* hopes that this article by Muni and Phadnis will promote discussion —

because that is the only way of achieving some degree of clear thinking on this subject.


The *Rambling Notes From the Editor's Desk* comes in the later half of this issue. *Serendib* writes his regular analysis of domestic affairs in his *Ceylon: Marginal Notes*. *Sherlock Holmes*, who staged a comeback in the last issue by revising the old *Tribune* feature *Is It True?*, has another lively piece this week. We have two topical articles about Ireland and Italy. We also publish a thought-provoking article by an Israeli academician now teaching at Harvard on the impact the Bangladesh war has on the Arab-Israeli question while at the same time discussing the role of the US as an ally of smaller countries.

Tribune hopes to persuade a columnist, who made a debut some months ago under the pseudonym *Agastya*, to write his *Contemporary Notebook* more regularly. His pungent humour and his humanist attitudes appealed to a great many readers who have been persistently requesting us to have *Agastya's* column regularly in every issue we print.

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Vital Statistics: Ceylon, India, U.S.A. & Japan

by Prof K. KULARATNAM

CEYLON'S FIVE YEAR PLAN calls attention to the problem of population with facts and figures. It shows that those with large families are the less affluent, namely that 63% of them have incomes less than Rs. 200 p. m. If existing family patterns continue, with 370,000 births a year, it will become 505,000 by 1981. The Family Planning Association (since 1953) and the Ministry of Health (since 1965) have done excellent work, but this is clearly inadequate in relation to the magnitude and gravity of the problem. Peoples' participation is required at all levels and for a long time more to come.

Life has no meaning if its function is merely to feed, clothe and house the people; even this, society is unable to provide owing to the burgeoning numbers. But society must also satisfy man's mental, emotional and spiritual needs and aspirations, that give life a meaning and purpose.

The population problem is at the root of most of our problems today: economic, political, communal, religious, rising crime rate, unrest and corruption, population corruption and chauvinism are interconnected. Our overcrowding world calls for emphasis in responsible parent-hood.

Here are some stark facts which would give an indication of how the population problem is frustrating and compounding efforts at development.

Ceylon	
Year	Millions
1871	2.4
1901	3.6
1931	5.3
1953	8.1
1963	10.6
1971	12.7

The density of population is 503 per sq. mile, and is among the highest in Asia.

The age structure of the population: Under 15 years—41% 15—64 years—56%. 50% of today's population was born after 1950, and 25% after 1960. Childhood dependency is very high, being 72 for 100 of working age, which comprises about 4 million people (of this 54% is in subsistence agriculture and 12% are themselves unemployed).

During the 1993-98 period the overall increase in survival rates and expectation of life at birth will increase to 67 for males and 71 for females. But the total cultivated area increased from 4,267,000 acres in 1946 to only 4,827,000 in 1969 (0.7% p.a). On the other hand, the rural population increased from 5,712,000 to 9,736,000 (2.5% p.a.). The density of rural population per cultivated acre increased from 1.36 in 1946 to 2.02 in 1969.

We are left with only about 1,500,00 acres more of developable land. The value of the total food imported in 1970 amounted to Rs. 1069 million (ie. 46% of total imports). Present food subsidy of Rs. 450 million has to increase to Rs. 900 million by 1998. We have therefore got to keep on running fester, just to stay where we are now, or may be where we were years ago. But we see the phenomenon of rising expectations alternating with increasing frustrations among the people, leading to instability. Therefore we need urgently a population policy based on *population engineering*, and this will have to be an integral and vital part of Economic Planning.

Proliferate or perish will have to yield place to proliferate and perish. Because of delays in pay-off, family planning campaigns must be on long term and intensified perspective basis, as pay-off takes 20-30 years. All efforts at development will be frustrated and compounded if the present phenomenal rate of population growth is not decelerated.

It is not correct to say that in the olden days Ceylon supported many times the present population. Estimates based on ancient irrigation works do not warrant more than 10 million at any time, and then human needs were few and small, environment was healthy and quality of life was good and culture flourished. [vide *Marga*, vol. 1, No. 2, 1971, Colombo].

Ceylon's problems are insignificant compared to these of the vast INDIAN SUB-CONTINENT. But, India is doing much better than Ceylon. Population there is a crucial issue, with the rapidly increasing tide of numbers cancelling the effect of two decades of 70% increase in food production and 150% increase in industrial production. Population increase is 13 million per annum. Ten million are without jobs. India has only 2.4% of the world's land, but carries 14% of the world's population, over 550 million people. The cardinal factor in population dynamics is the steep decline in death rate without any offsetting decline in birth rate. In 1966, for 46 births per thousand, there were only 16 deaths. Life expectancy too has risen from 32 in 1950 to 50 in 1966. For decelerating population growth through family planning, etc, the task of behavioural management is gigantic in the face of low literacy, inadequate transport, and inadequate channels of mass communication for the 80% rural population. Two centuries ago, the population of India was only 60 millions.

However, India has done well. Family planning was started as early as 1948, by creating motivation in the minds of the people and providing advice and service. The Fourth Five Year Plan, 1966 accorded top priority and put Family Planning on a war footing, with an outlay of Rs. 2300 millions. Human behaviour, attitudes, values and

beliefs are undergoing change, to make the small family not only a social norm, but a highly desirable personal aim as well. The programme is both time and target oriented. Already half million births are being prevented every year, and a community climate is being created in which the small family norm becomes the way of life.

IN THE U.S.A. death rate has fallen now to 9.5 per thousand and the birth rate to 18 (from 26 in 1948). The increase now is only 1% with average children in the family 3.5. More and more Americans are now recognising that population size, distribution and density are critical underlying causes of air and water pollution, urban decay, inadequacies of transportation, higher education, health services, recreation space, etc.

Experts' estimates of illegal abortion is said to be 1 to 25 livebirths. In many countries it seems that the number of abortions is equal to the number of live births (Japan, Yugoslavia, Rumania, U.S.S.R. Hungary, Poland, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, etc). In 1962, the Planned Parenthood Federation of America merged with the World Population, Emergency Campaign to form Planned Parenthood World Population, a single national organisation for unified action on the population crisis. An effective new organisation, the Population Crisis Committee has also been established. Congress too has enacted legislation

to give priority to family planning in the "War on Poverty" programme, to reduce the unwanted burden on dependency. To arrive at a long term population policy, research must be carried out into employment, education, health, housing, transportation, pollution, resources, recreation, urbanisation, economic development, environmental degradation, social and governmental organisation, family ties, way of life of the people, beliefs, etc. This is Population

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Engineering and involves teamwork by economists, environmental scientists, medical scientists, sociologists, geographers, anthropologists, psychologists, educationists, contraceptive technologists, statisticians, media-men, demographers etc. Since 1962, the International Planned Parenthood Federation has been doing good work. We also have the United Nations Special Fund for Population Activities. Though the task is great, so are the rewards.

JAPAN was faced with the problem of diminishing natural resources and environmental degradation due to rapid population growth. Japan was forced to undertake population deceleration by legalised abortion. The high figure of 3.7% births in 1947 has now been reduced to below unity and replacement level. There were 2 million abortions in 1955, now it is said to be 800,000 for 1.9 million live-births. This reduction may be in view of the supposed adverse social psychological and physiological effects. If so, responsible parenthood through education and enlightenment would seem to be the better method. Japanese tourism seems to have benefited through legalised abortion, judging by the rush to Japan of Americans and others for this purpose!

Many more examples can be given of the urgency and gravity of the population crisis in other countries.

To be concluded.

SOUTH ASIAN GEOPOLITICS — 2

Ceylon, Nepal and the Emergence of Bangladesh — 2

by S. D. MUNI & URMILA PHADNIS

IT MUST BE NOTED that in spite of these constraints at fairly influential segment of opinion leaders in Ceylon did not approve of the Ceylon Government's East Bengal policy. In fact as early as May 1971, nearly 250 well known persons, including academicians, trade union leaders and members of parliament belonging to almost all parties, issued a statement proclaiming "unqualified support to the struggle of the people of East Bengal for their national liberation". It also urged the government to discontinue the facilities "of our sea and air ports to Pakistan's armed forces on their way to East Bengal as well as all other assistance that would be detrimental to the people of East Bengal. We demand that the Government of Pakistan stop the massacre of unarmed people and withdraw its armed forces from East Bengal forthwith."

The statement, extracts of which appeared in an Indian newspaper, did not, however, appear in the Ceylonese press. During this period Ceylon was already under heavy emergency regulations and was still trying to recover from the April revolt of the People's Liberation Front. The organisers of the signature campaign, explaining the statement's non-

appearance in the Ceylonese press maintained that such a statement might be construed by the authorities "as a veiled criticism of the military action against the insurgents at home and might land the signatories on the wrong side of the emergency laws."

Three months later, when two 'screened' Awami League leaders—an MP of the still-born Pakistani parliament and a Buddhist monk—reached Colombo and gave 'first-hand' information of the situation in East Bengal, the sympathisers of Bangla Desh in Ceylon moved once again. Two events—the news of the secret trial of Mujibur Rahman and the week-long festival of Pakistani films in Colombo—provided them the opportunity to organise public protests on the Bangla Desh issue. Several organisations of women, students and teachers as well as trade unions and religious and cultural bodies joined hands to issue a statement protesting against the secret trial of Mujibur Rahman and urging his immediate release. They also called upon the Government of Ceylon to use its good offices to obtain the release of Mujibur Rahman and to mediate in seeking a "proper political solution to the urgent and tragic problem of East Bengal". The protest against

the Pakistani film festival was initiated by members of the Ceylon Committee for Human Rights in East Bengal which was formed in August and in which some of the prominent leaders of two of the constituent parties of the ruling United Front—the Lanka Sama Samaj Party (LSSP) and the Communist Party (CP)—were fairly active.

THE EXTENT to which the parties making up the United Front were divided on the Bangla Desh issue was evident from the presence of some of the party officials and influential members of the LSSP and the CP in the demonstration which was staged outside the Savoy Hotel when the film festival was inaugurated by a minister belonging to the leading party of the coalition, the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP). Speaking in the Senate, LSSP Senator William declared that even though the LSSP was a constituent party of the government, on important matters like the East Pakistan issue it could take an independent stand. "Massacre is taking place in East Pakistan and it is the intention of the LSSP to create public opinion against this." Further, the delegation which came to attend the International Conference on Bangla Desh in Delhi in September 1971, included Vivienne Goonewardene—an LSSP MP—who, much to the chagrin of some of the coalition members stressed in the House of Representatives that the Bangla Desh issue was a national liberation struggle

and that her party had always supported such movements. It was also reported that she was active in a signature campaign for the cause of Bangla Desh and had already succeeded in obtaining the signatures of more than one-third of Ceylon's MPs.

Among the other parties the Tamil Federal Party (FP) echoed the concern of the LSSP and the CP as was evident from the speeches of the FP Member of Parliament, V. Dharmalingam. But the major opposition party, the United National Party (UNP), remained quiescent till after Shirley Amarasinghe, Ceylon's Permanent Representative, had spoken at the UN. Only then did the UNP leader, J. R. Jayawardene, move an adjournment motion in the House of Representatives on December 8 seeking clarification of the government's stand. Moving another motion about a week later Jayawardene asked the government to consider whether Bangla Desh should be recognised or not in keeping with the realities of the situation.

As against the tone of the Federal Party MP, V. Dharmalingam, who unequivocally asked the government to recognise Bangla Desh, the UNP's tone was restrained and cautious. In keeping with its position as one of Ceylon's two major parties, the UNP has usually held similar views on Indo-Pakistani relations to those of its main rival, the SLFP.

It is noteworthy that on the East Bengal crisis Muslim leaders in Ceylon preferred to remain silent. The leader of one of Ceylon's biggest plantation unions, A. Aziz, when asked by the Secretary of the Ceylon Committee for Human Rights in East Bengal to lend his signature as President of the Union to a joint trade union memorandum to Yahya Khan—protesting against Mujib's secret trial—declined to do so.

Notwithstanding the apathy of the Muslims who comprise about seven percent of Ceylon's population, considerable public sympathy was evoked by the struggle of the East Bengalis. The East Bengali movement received greater credence due to the fact that the minor partners of the ruling United Front lent their whole-hearted support to the movement. This support partly emanated from their ideological predilections. The issue also gave them an opportunity to salvage their 'identity crises' as junior partners in the coalition. Presumably, they were also affected by a guilt complex about the governmental repression during the April insurrection, a repression which was unprecedented in the political history of independent Ceylon, but about which they, as ruling partners, could not afford to be critical.

The criticism from within the coalition on the East Bengal crisis may have embarrassed the government in August; in the changed situation in December it facilitated the

government's task. Ostensibly to strengthen the hands of the pro-Bangla Desh groups and possibly also to compensate for its earlier image, the government seemed ready to relax censorship regulations to allow local reactions with a predominantly pro-Bangla Desh bias to be filed abroad.

Despite the increasing public pressure in favour of the recognition of Bangla Desh, whose cause is being spearheaded by the influential 'Friends of Bangla Desh' (previously called Ceylon Committee for Human Rights in East Bengal), it appears that caught between the pro-Bangla Desh and the pro-Peking lobbies within the coalition and prompted by the desire to have relations with the reduced Pakistan as well as the new state of Bangla Desh, the Ceylon Government may prefer to sit on the fence till a large number of countries have recognised Bangla Desh.

THE STRUGGLE FOR BANGLA DESH was in principle a struggle for democracy, freedom and socialism. These are the values for which the Nepali Congress, an arch-enemy of the present regime in Nepal, also stands. Since the very inception of the Panchayat system in 1961-62 under the late King Mahendra's control, the Nepali Congress had been struggling to liberalise and democratise what is called the "autocratic personal rule of King Mahendra". At the international conference on Bangla Desh in New Delhi in September 1971, as well as in

a press interview, B.P. Koirala, the Nepali Congress stalwart espoused the waging of an armed struggle on the lines of that in Bangla Desh for the restoration of democracy in the Kingdom. This statement upset the authorities in Kathmandu. B.P. Koirala has been living in Banares since Mahendra released him in October 1968 after eight years' detention. The only way to restrain him from indulging in activities hostile to the King's regime was through the Government of India. And the Nepalese Government did not lose any time in approaching the Indian Government in this context and securing the desired response as was evident from the assurances of Swaran Singh that India would not allow any anti-Nepal activities to take place from Indian territory. Therefore, it is understandable that the Government of Nepal did not wish to disturb India by taking up a position contrary to the latter's interests in Bangla Desh.

The beginning of a shooting war between India and Pakistan on December 3 further brought Nepal closer to the Indian side. Under the provisions of a treaty signed in 1947, Gurkha soldiers (most of whom are Nepalese citizens) of the Indian army fought against Pakistan in Bangla Desh as well as on the Western front and laid down their lives defending India. Many retired Gurkha soldiers were also summoned by India from Nepal.

The general political and economic climate between India and Nepal had also improved while the Pakistani massacres of East Bengalis were continuing. In August, after a long stalemate, the two countries had concluded a new Treaty of Trade and Transit which was vital for Nepal. India had been making large aid commitments to Nepal and the work on the Kosi and Trishul projects had restarted after a long delay. In view of these developments Nepal did not see any point in displeasing India for the sake of Pakistan with which it had almost negligible commercial relations.

Whatever material benefits Nepal could think of from Pakistan were possible from the Eastern wing — now Bangla Desh — and not West Pakistan. Bangla Desh is geographically close to Nepal and it is there that had been demanding additional transit and port facilities for overseas trade to be conducted through Indian territory at Radhikapur in West Bengal. For bilateral trade as well, Bangla Desh offers better prospects to Nepal. Even culturally, the Nepalese living in Darjeeling, Assam and the Nepal Terai are closer to the people of Bangla Desh than to the West Pakistanis.

THE WEST PAKISTANIS compounded their disadvantages by their propaganda of *jihad* (holy war) and slander against Hindus and Hinduism. This evoked adverse reaction in Nepal. Though the Pakistani

propaganda was directed against India, the predominantly Hindu population of Nepal resented it. This sort of propaganda was resented all the more strongly since a part of the Terai had lately experienced Hindu-Muslim riots. Voicing Hindu resentment, a Nepal weekly wrote, "every Hindu of Nepal feels deeply hurt when Radio Pakistan conducts vitriolic propaganda against Hinduism, Hindu culture and Hindu epics. How long can we tolerate such propaganda?"

Besides, a number of Nepalese nationals working in tea gardens in Bangla Desh were also reported to have become victims of Pakistani military atrocities. These reports were officially denied without convincing evidence. Even if the denials were accepted, there were reasons to believe that many Nepalese were rendered homeless and thus faced hardships along with their Bangla Desh brothers.

In the light of the foregoing discussion one might ask why Nepal did not take a clearly favourable stand towards the emergence of Bangla Desh and India's position in the matter. Partly the question has already been answered in terms of Nepal's desire for peace, territorial integrity of a nation and maintenance of the erstwhile power structure in the subcontinent. Besides, total and open identification with the Indian stand was incompatible with its sense of separate identity. One wonders if China also made any attempt to keep

Nepal from falling in line with Bangla Desh and India. There is no clear evidence to support or reject the contention. However, a section of the Nepalese press which usually supports the Chinese line—particularly two weeklies, *Goreto* and *Matribhumi*—was active in upholding the Pakistani stand.

CONSEQUENT to the emergence of Bangla Desh, the power pattern in the subcontinent has been restructured. The new balance has pushed India into a position of indisputable dominance in South Asia. In a way this is not a welcome development for India's smaller neighbours including Ceylon and Nepal. It invalidates their hitherto pursued strategy and restricts their diplomatic manoeuvrability in the region. It also deepens their existing psychological apprehensions of India as a 'colossus'.

The old values and structures have crumbled. How and why are now only academic questions. The respective national interests of Nepal and Ceylon will soon begin to compel them to come to terms with the new realities. In fact, that they have already moved in this direction is more than evident. The explanation and implied apology extended by Sirimavo Bandaranaike's government regarding Ceylon's adverse vote in the UN General Assembly may be recalled here. The extent to which Ceylon hastened to correct its earlier stand was evident from the way the Ceylonese delegate spoke, with

special permission, in the Security Council (of which Ceylon is not a member), virtually reversing his earlier stand. Shirley Amarasinghe in this later speech regarded a "political settlement in East Pakistan" as the key to resolving the conflict and wanted negotiations to bring about such a settlement and to precede troop withdrawals. Later it was also reported that Ceylon had declined to support a Pakistani move to re-open the issue in the UN General Assembly.

As regards Nepal, the latest indication of official thinking in this direction was available in the semi-official *Rising Nepal's* reaction to Bhutto's first policy speech. The paper did not appreciate Bhutto's assurance that he would bring about a unified Pakistan. Public opinion in Nepal generally felicitated the new Republic of Bangla Desh.

In the military sphere, both Nepal and Ceylon have had some experience of India's military power. The pattern of the Indo-Nepalese relationship in the fifties and India's assertive posture created some hostility and heart-burning in Nepal and had to be gradually rectified, though in a limited manner. As regards Ceylon, the speed with which Indian military aid reeked there last April impressed it tremendously. It also rekindled Ceylon's lurking fears about the military might of its neighbour. India's swift success in the recent war might add to these fears. The question

uppermost in the minds of the leaders of Ceylon and Nepal will be to what extent and in what way will the 'new' India be interested in accomodating their interests and aspirations. The pattern of development of the Indo-Bangla Desh relationship will be of great interest and concern to Ceylon and Nepal.

In this respect a segment of Ceylonese public opinion raised a question in April-May last year which has become even more pertinent today. It wondered whether India was going to be the 'policeman' of South Asia. And if so, who was going to define and set the norms and conditions of such a role.

Due to all these complexities the emergence of Bangla Desh poses manifold challenges to Indian diplomacy in the South Asian region. It simultaneously opens up avenues for greater intra-regional co-operation. Leaving the initiative for co-operation in the hands of the neighbouring states could be the wiser course for India to follow.

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The United States: How Firm an Ally in War?

NADAV SAFRAN, Professor of Government at Harvard, author of books on Egypt and the Six Day War, looks at the implications of the Indo-Pakistan war for countries dependent on the U. S. who may now conclude that America is a fickle ally.

THE INDO - PAKISTAN WAR suggests some interesting lessons and bears some important implications for the Arab-Israel conflict. Observers in Israel have been particularly struck by the fact that Pakistan has been abandoned in its hour of dire need, and that the Chinese and the Americans allowed the Indians, backed by the Soviets, to dismember a state that was a friend and an ally without even making a serious attempt to save it. Undoubtedly, there is a lesson to be learned here, but it is easy to misjudge its nature. It is tempting to rush to the conclusion that allies and friends are worthless, and that there is no substitute for relying upon one self for one's own security. *It is tempting but wrong.*

It is wrong because it oversimplifies a number of complex issues. The United States was not a formal ally of Pakistan for purposes of the recent conflict. Pakistan is linked to the United States through CENTO and SEATO, but these alliances are aimed at Communist aggression, not at particular conflicts between member sta-

tes and third parties. This notion was repeatedly and explicitly reiterated in the 15 years since these pacts were concluded, and was confirmed by practice, including the precedent of the American stance in the Indo-Pakistan war of 1965.

Of course, an alliance for one purpose creates a presumption, though not an obligation, of mutual assistance with regard to other purposes; however this presumption is two-sided, and in the case at hand Pakistan had chosen to remain aloof from the American war in Vietnam, which fell much more plausibly within the purview of the SEATO treaty than the Indo-Pakistan conflict. But let us grant, withal, that the United States had an interest in the survival and integrity of Pakistan and that it had given the Pakistani Government to understand that much. Is it justifiable to conclude from recent events that this kind of solicitude is useless?

It may be, if one postulates circumstances similar to those that confronted Pakistan. Pakistan was facing secession and dismemberment due to an internal crisis, even without any outside interference. The Indian military intervention merely quickened an inevitable process. In such circumstances, one can perhaps say, paraphrasing the Psalmist: If a state cannot preserve itself, in vain shall its friends be solicitous.

SHORT OF SUCH A SITUATION, a friendship might well have helped. Even as it was, the United States had begun to make some moves, including pressure on the Soviets and naval manoeuvres, that might have seen Pakistan through the immediate crisis of Indian intervention if it had been able to hold on a little longer. *But the rot was so deep that Pakistan could not hold for more than two weeks.*

The Indo-Pakistani war suggests, then, not the uselessness of friendships but the limits of what they can do. It also suggests their possibilities, if one looks at the Indian side of the picture. India might not have been able to accomplish what it did had it not received the backing of the Soviet Union. That support shielded India from American and Chinese pressure long enough to permit it to finish what it had set out to do. It is no use to argue from this that Soviet support is somehow intrinsically more valuable than American or Chinese; because the fact is that the Soviets were in a position to give effective support with minimal risk, while the Americans and the Chinese could render effective assistance to Pakistan only by taking drastic and risky steps. We are back to the basic situation, and to the real lesson, which is that friendship is useless unless it is given a reasonable chance to come into play, and that self-reliance is crucial because it can provide that reasonable chance for fri-

endship, not because it can do without it. The practical implications of this lesson are different from the 'go it alone' conclusion indicated by the other lesson.

Moving from this general, abstract level to a more concrete, though long-range one, the Indo-Pakistan conflict points out two crucial lessons pertinent to the Arab-Israel situation.

Ever since Nasser committed Egypt to the aim of seeking integral Arab Unity, a few Middle East specialists have consistently maintained that such an aim was impossible to realise with countries that are territorially cut off from Egypt by the presence of Israel. Despite the collapse of the United Arab Republic experiment, and despite the failure of the Yemen war, these few specialists were always confronted by the great many interlocutors who opposed them with the example of Pakistan. There was, after all, a single state consisting of two parts separated from one another by a thousand miles, and it seemed to be viable.

Now, the secession of East Bengal, itself stimulated by geographic separation, and the futility of the attempt to nullify it, due decisively to the lack of territorial contiguity, remove all doubt about the non-viability of a segmented state. If this could happen to a state that was born one, and that was united by a religious bond that had served as its

raison d'etre, what hope can there be for an Arab state that would be constituted out of disconnected entities that have already had at least half a century of separate existence?

ANOTHER ASPECT of this same question of Arab unity is illuminated by the events on the Indian subcontinent. After nearly a quarter of a century in which differentiation from India and hostility to it constituted the fundamental bond among Pakistanis, the East Pakistanis suddenly turned around, rebelled and gained their independence with the decisive help of none other than India. The hated, infidel enemy of yesterday became the patron, ally and protector of more than half of Pakistan's population, reconstituted on an ethno-geographic nationalist basis as Bangla Desh.

If that could happen, is it too much, to envisage a day when Israel might be preferred as an ally by some Arab states over other Arab states? Even without going so far, the sudden evaporation of the real union of 120 million Pakistani Muslims certainly makes very dubious the unfounded but oft repeated hypothesis of 100 million Arabs ostensibly confronting Israel as one, in years and generations to come. There are many policy implications, not necessarily distant, that flow from such a readjustment of vision. Israel and its Arab neighbours would do well to ponder them now.

The Indo-Pakistan war bears some more immediate implications for the Middle East crisis.

It is quite obvious that President Nixon has been feverishly arranging his diplomatic activities in a way that would enable him to run for a second term as the great architect of peace and order in the world. The visits to Peking and Moscow have been planned to be the climax of these efforts. It is no secret either that among the topics that both the President and his Soviet interlocutors are eager to discuss in Moscow, the Middle East occupies an important place. In view of the fact that the United States and the Soviet Union are already agreed on the principles of the Rogers Plan as a key to a Middle East settlement, it seemed quite likely, until very recently, that the two superpowers would attempt in the course of the Moscow talks to translate the agreement on principles into a detailed agreement that they would then simultaneously try to 'persuade' their respective clients to accept.

IT IS WELL KNOWN that President Nixon tried to assuage Mrs. Meir's anxieties on this score during his recent *tete a tete* with her. However, the value of this reassurance has probably appreciated greatly as a result of the Soviet role in the Indo-Pakistan conflict. Dr. Henry Kissinger, the President's special adviser on security and foreign policy, characterised that role as an

attempt to score tactical advantages in India at the cost of jeopardising the strategic gains of an enhanced *detente*. A better characterisation perhaps is the one provided by James Reston, who saw the Soviets making strategic gains of enormous potential importance in India at the cost of jeopardising the tactical gains of a 'Moscow Spirit' as evanescent as the Geneva Spirit and the Spirit of Camp David.

In any case, the demonstration given by the Soviets that, *detente* or no *detente*, they take advantage of opportunities whenever and wherever they find them, if it does not start a process of deterioration that would bar the road to Moscow, is apt to make the President think twice before surrendering any real advantages he may have in the Middle East in return for expectations of Soviet self-restraint.

One of the advantages that President Nixon does command in the Middle East is the vicarious capacity to keep the Suez Canal closed, and thus deny the Soviets a most convenient line of communication between their European and Far Eastern territories, between the centres of Russian power and the lines of confrontation with China. If, in consequence of the role the Soviets have played in the Indo-Pakistan conflict, their relations with India should develop into a full alliance designed to wedge China and to deter Pakistani revanchisme,

the importance of the Suez Canal for the Soviets should increase immensely. The value of the advantage held by the United States would increase concomitantly, and it should be in a position to exact for itself, and for Israel, an appropriate return for facilitating its reopening.

Finally, if the Soviets do become involved in building up their Indian ally, the demands upon their resources would be so great as not to leave them with much to spare for other areas. The need to reduce the burden they bear in the Middle East, together with the enhanced need to see the Suez Canal reopened, may well dispose them to pay a higher price than they have been willing to pay so far in order to obtain a settlement. But the U.S. must first understand the value of the position it is in. Having done so it must then insist on getting the full return for it.

—From "The New Middle East", January, 1972

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Why Italy is at a Standstill

By PAUL - JEAN FRANCESCHINI

AMONG THEMSELVES the Italians debate with no little vigour the rather unpleasant realities of the crisis their country is engulfed in but, like the proud Cyranò, they will not accept criticism from foreigners. However, there is no escaping the conclusion that the political system has become notoriously incapable of functioning with a minimum of co-ordination in the peninsula. This incapacity prodded the extreme Left into launching a violent but futile extra-parliamentary offensive. It is now beginning to get the extreme "nationalist" Right interested in a very disturbing way.

The situation stems from a variety of deep-rooted reasons. It needed the farce surrounding the election of President Leone on the 23rd ballot to make the world aware of what was going on.

There has been talk of a "crisis in the regime," which doesn't mean very much since under the Constitution no change in the regime is possible, and a Greek-style coup is out of the question except in debates and the overheated imagination of some picturesque "black prince." There had been many signs of fatigue before the failure of Emilio Colombo's final attempt to form a Government: not a day without strikes, clashes bet-

ween demonstrators and counter demonstrators, and police charges.

Only the grumbling and growling are lacking, but these are more characteristic of the French than the Italians. The fundamentally easygoing nature of the Italian people and their hearty scepticism allow them to live with the evident failure of the political class, to accept the harm done to the economy and a daily existence buffeted by the hazards of permanent protest.

The "filthy crisis," as one prominent, editorial writer dubbed it in *La Stampa*, which is poisoning the political atmosphere, exasperating people, or, at best, provoking a pitying smile from the citizen, goes on and on without prospect of settlement. Is it the advanced stage in the decomposition of bourgeois parliamentarianism, as certain Leftist militants of several small political groups proclaim? Or is it the "chaos that is not yet proletarian," as Pasolini put it in an ode to the Sardinian Marxist Antonio Gramsci? Or is it just the classic Italian situation, as many Europeans believe who see the Italians as a band of ineffectual orators?

A YEAR AGO, to mark the 50th anniversary of the Italian Communist Party, Luigi Longo, secretary-general

of the party, drew his own conclusions from a Government which "exhibited a little more of its inefficiency and impotence with each passing day." As he saw it, the Italian Communist Party was establishing itself increasingly as "the Government party most apt to cope with the conduct of the nation's affairs."

The terms employed by the neo-Fascist MSI leader Giorgio Almirante are not far different. Encouraged by his party's successes in the municipal elections last June, he considers that his movement has at last been presented with its chance and that out of the compost heap of democracy's ultimate decay will spring the new vital stem of his own party.

The Communist Party, well aware of its strength, but maintaining a weather eye on the Leftists who could well flank it, are following a skilful but prudent policy, with a view to securing a foothold in the Government. The far Right, characteristically, whips up the traditional resentments and grievances in order to undermine the constitutional system.

The resurgence of the system of "squads," which Mussolini's Fascist commandos employed to terrorise their opponents, is becoming a fact of Italian political life today. In the face of a rising wave of agitation, the riot stick seems to many the most convincing argument. In the more serious

cases, strange political or police machinations are the prelude to activities of the kind that cost several lives in Milan, and which are blamed on "anarchists."

In Reggio Calabria an entire town rose in revolt under the influence of mounting far Right agitation which exploited regional susceptibilities, so inflammable in Italy. Against the "Fascist menace" the Left organises vast "unified demonstrations." One wonders, though, whether these processions will not prompt the simple shopkeeper or civil servant before whose door they file past today to give his vote to the Right tomorrow.

As has been the case since the war, the Christian Democrats set the pace and the tone. Unfortunately for them, their instruments are out of tune. There are no fewer than nine "trends" in the party and it would take a scale of politico-logical value-units to distinguish one from another. Personal rivalries are played out with a very Christian discretion but with equally democratic ferocity.

IN ROME it is no secret that Amintore Fanfani, disappointed with his setback in the presidential election, is settling a few scores with his friends, and is mainly responsible for Mr. Colombo's failure to put together a government. The party's dilemma was perhaps best summed up by Giuseppe Saragat with an expression of common sense typical of his mandate: "It (the party) has

the right to choose its own way, but the other parties have the right to know what it wants."

But how can a party continue to pretend to be the main-spring of the country's political life when, during President Leone's election, it provided a distressing spectacle by abstaining from voting for "technical" reasons—all designed to flush out its mavericks. Dissension on such a scale has never been known in the ranks of the German Christian Democrats, the British Tories, or the French UNR, and UDR, or in fact even among the European Socialists.

The controversy over the divorce legislation illustrates the ridiculous depths to which the squabbling can descend. Having hemmed and hawed and set all sorts of conditions, the Christian Democrats agreed to the bill legalising divorce. Now they are in agonies over whether they should or should not back a referendum to revoke the legislation. They want to avoid splitting the country but they also want to have done with it once and for all. Mr. Colombo doesn't want a referendum. Others press for it in their invocations.

The weakness—apart from this fundamental vacillation—is also in the nature and composition of the parties which seem to have been doomed by some perverse genius never to agree with one another. The Liberals, who can be a useful addition to a Centre-Right coalition and who, besides, lack

neither experience nor ability, have been cold-shouldered for the last ten years. The big families don't know how, and don't want, to join forces. It is hard to distinguish between all these different kinds of moderates that the Republicans, the Social Democrats, and the Liberals are. A party able to hold the balance, like the German Free Democrats (FDP), would be a valuable asset, but there is no sign of one in Italy today.

Faced with the impossibility of propping up a Centre-Left coalition which had however initiated—in rather difficult circumstances—a number of useful reforms, the Christian Democrats seem to have made their choice today. They fear a shift to the Right, but believe it to be inevitable. This, after all, is in line with what is going to happen in all the big European countries. Britain and France are clearly heading this way. Germany is held in little respect, with Rome generally refusing to regard Chancellor Brandt's Government as being of the Left, because it does not readily pronounce the familiar tribal shibboleths.

Shaken at the thought of what they might still lose on the Right, the Christian Democrats can only think of heading off such an eventuality. They are unwilling, however, to act upon the conclusions of their own analysis and take the chance of setting up a Centre-Right coalition—an adventure which would be rendered even

more perilous by competition from the MSI or by its unwelcome support.

The task of bringing the trade unions together has been made easier by this uncertain political climate. Spurred on by their rank and file, more vigorous and idealistic than the professional labour leaders, the three big trade unions are determined to carry out their merger programme. They have the backing of the Communists, some of the Christian Democrats, and all those who, for lack of anything better, are trying to link the State to structures guaranteeing a minimum of public order.

The trade union movement in Europe isn't very happy about the idea of a merger, for it is only too aware of the compromises and ambiguities involved in the venture. In any case, the first tentative signs of an economic recovery would quickly shrivel up if new massive social confrontations take place.

France has too often in the past provided a spectacle of political incoherence and dithering to be in a position to criticise its democratic neighbour. Nevertheless, there is growing concern in all of Europe about whether Italy will be an entirely reliable partner in an enlarged common market. Is Italy, after having pioneered in so many areas, launched into such bold projects like its regionalisation plan, and worked out its reforms, in the process of getting bogged down in the sort of lethargy characteristic of France's Fourth Republic?

Author, parliamentarian, and journalist Luigi Barzini had this to say on the subject: "Take a country in the throes of a crisis. Let it be ruled chaotically by political men, some of whom are incompetent windbags incapable of making up their minds. Then set on their heels Left-wing demagogues and revolutionaries who never prepare the revolution. Slow down production and investments with dark and apocalyptic threats. Then at some point in this situation frightened people are going to entrust power to the Fascists.

Mr. Barzini knows his fellow countrymen and he has described them with wit and wisdom in "*The Italians*." He is confident that "everything will be done to get Italy back on the rails and moving towards economic recovery, social peace felicitous reforms, and a sound administration." Who, in Europe, doesn't want it? But who really believes it?

Le Monde Weekly

IRELAND AND IRA

Heroes Or Murderers ?

Extract from an article by Swedish journalist Karl Gunnar Back published originally in Sweden in January 1972 after a visit to Northern Ireland.

LAST AUTUMN I stayed for several weeks at Falls Road in one of Belfast's most terrorized districts, where eve-

ry individual has personal experience of the fighting and where people have friends who have been killed or wounded in every street. Sorting out my impressions from the visits I can feel nothing but the strongest aversion such a fiendish movement as the so-called IRA Provisionals, I regard it as an organisation in which assassination—preferably of completely defenceless people and in ambush—is a trivial occurrence. Strike your opponent dead if he does not think and live as YOU! That is quick and saves you the trouble of arguing. The stronger is right and should make use of his strength without all the restraining fair-play concepts. That is Hitler's message. Might is right, particularly if applied in an extra brutal and vile manner—and by groups into which nobody has any insight and who are never obliged to account for themselves to the people. For some reason or other it is extremely difficult to publicise in Sweden today what to me seems to be such an obvious opinion; an opinion which I have formed myself after thorough local field research.

As regards the IRA Provisionals I personally can never cease to wonder at the sympathy which this organisation is meeting in many circles in Sweden—a country which contrary to Ireland has a long democratic tradition and which has always professed peaceful development; a country where we have realised that if this development is to continue we

have to recognize that democracy means compromise and that political assassination of political opponents is unacceptable.

It is not my intention to write here about the injustices committed by the Protestants in Northern Ireland. They are known by everyone and have been reported by many journalists and authors in a better and more informed way than I am able to do. But I wish to declare that the social philosophy which is being spread by IRA's so-called Provisionals is an evil. To accept such an organisation out of ignorance, cowardice or with regard to the discomfort of following one's convictions is, as I see it in the light of my experiences from Belfast, treason against democracy. The groups which support a movement of this type in Western Europe are not reliable democrats.

To take a stand against a movement which is "in" or "popular" can have unpleasant consequences. But where does defence of democracy begin, and where lies the responsibility of mass media? I wish to underline that this is not an article written on the spur of the moment. It was preceded by a decision taken after several months of consideration.

In face of IRA's assassination terror in Ireland and after having personally visited relatives of the victims and witnessed the horrible disregard for human beings and the intolerance which the terrorist

from THE EDITOR'S DESK

More About Vietnam: Ceylon's Foreign Policy.

April 25, 1972

EVEN the trials, tribulations, setbacks and achievements of the Apollo 16 astronauts failed to detract international public attention from the war in Vietnam. Inside the USA, a new upsurge of anti-war protests and demonstrations have begun to sweep the country. Anti-war Democratic candidate McGovern scored heavily in the primaries in Massachusetts and Pennsylvania. Even diehard Governor Wallace seemed willing to tone down his hardline diehardism on Vietnam provided he had his way on the problem of segregation

movement breeds, it is impossible for me to sit still in my safe office, silencing my conscience in the presence of this sorrow and desperation with the assertion that this murdering is "progressive". On the contrary, such an attitude I would regard as an insult to all decency.

What really surprises me most in a time of so many fine words such as equality, freedom of choice, participation and the right of the employee to have a say about his own situation at the place of work, is that it should be so damned difficult to be allowed to express such a simple human opinion about a gang of murderers.

and busing. The war in Vietnam is understandably *problem number one* in the world today. The offensive launched by the DRV is now in its fourth week, and although the heavy US bombing has slowed it down considerably, it still has a great deal of punch.

If the offensive did not achieve anything else, it has completely smashed the "Vietnamisation" policy of President Nixon. Without the massive and unbelievably extensive bombing by the US, the Nixonised troops of President Thieu could not have stood up to the troops of the DRV and the NLF. Many US papers continue to emphasise that the offensive was unexpected — Pentagon circles had not expected an offensive before the next dry weather period in October. Secondly, US strategists did not expect the forces of the DRV and NLF to attack where they did and within a short time open four fronts covering the whole of South Vietnam. The French newspaper *Les Echos* summed up the position thus: "The situation of the South Vietnamese Command is becoming ever more difficult. In spite of the unlimited support given by the US Air Force, it is aggravated by the fact that it does not know the real target of the enemy offensive—whether it is Saigon or

Hue" US Commander Abrams had his work cut out to decide where to throw in the reserves. The Saigon Correspondent of AP reported that the North Vietnamese had outwitted the enemy by making them believe that everything was to be decided on the Northern Front. Trying to avoid disaster in the Quang Tri Province, General Abrams quickly deployed his strategic reserves from the Saigon and Locninh areas. Two days later, DRV and NLF forces dealt a surprise attack in this area and captured the town of Locninh. On April 13, DRV forces besieged An Loc less than 65 miles from Saigon. All strategic reserves of the ARVN seemed to have been deployed and even a battalion of the "Presidential guard" has already gone into battle. The DRV had at first come down Route 9, but they also moved right down the line on Route 14 as well, threatening towns like Kontum, Pleiku and Dakto. Fighting is now raging within 20 to 30 miles of Saigon. The *Vietnamised* army of Thieu is in disarray. To make them more depressed the US President, with mounting anti-war protests at home has announced the withdrawal of a further 20,000 troops before July 1, leaving a mere 50,000 consisting mainly of non-combat troops. To compensate for this Nixon had announced that two additional squadrons of *Phantoms* would be sent to the Vietnam front.

AMERICAN BOMBING certainly causes a great deal

of destruction even in South Vietnam. The bombing of civilians in North Vietnam undoubtedly sets everything back in the DRV, but the bombing of the North does not help the South either. US sources have estimated that by late 1970, the number of South Vietnamese killed had passed the 500,000 mark. The Senate Subcommittee on Refugees estimated that there had been over 1,000,000 casualties of which 300,000 were believed to be fatal. Edward S. Herman in his book *Atrocities in Vietnam* estimates that the casualties are in the region of 2,000,000 with 1,000,000 deaths. Telford Taylor, in his book *Nuremberg and Vietnam*, cites estimates by the American Friends Service Committee of 150,000 deaths annually, and this would mean 900,000 from 1965 to 1970. All sources seem to agree that the vast majority of these deaths and casualties are due to American firepower.

The Senate Subcommittee reported that 6,000,000 have been displaced in South Vietnam since 1964, and 500,000 of them in the first six months of 1970. The population of Saigon had increased from 250,000 in 1961 to 3,500,000 in 1970. It is estimated that over 400,000 females in Saigon earn a livelihood through prostitution. The Senate Subcommittee Report of September 1970 recorded that there were 105,000 civilian amputees in South Vietnam, 51,000 military amputees, 258,000 orphans, 131,000 war widows — a total of 545,000 war victims. On a

conservative estimate that at least 8,000,000 people in Vietnam (nearly half the population) have been killed, wounded, maimed, displaced or rendered a ward of the state since the start of the war.

In Laos, it is reported that at least 200,000 have been killed and 700,000 to 800,000 displaced. Since the population of Laos was only about 3 million, then very nearly about a third of the population has been killed or displaced. The Senate Subcommittee Report also noted that in Cambodia that reliable figures were not available, but the displaced had reached the 1,000,000 mark. In addition, 400,000 ethnic Vietnamese had either fled or been displaced. Meanwhile the population of Phnom Penh, swollen with refugees, had increased from 700,000 to 1,500,000. The Stanford University Biology Group, in their report *Destruction of Vietnam*, have stated that the main victims of crop destruction by herbicides ("starvation as a weapon") are not Vietcong troops but children, pregnant women and the aged. Over 13.5 million gallons of chemicals have been dropped on Vietnam affecting 5 million acres or 12 percent of the land. (vide *Time*, May 25, 1970). Already by 1969, US B-52's had left 3.5 million bomb craters in the terrain of Vietnam, and US Forces had used over 9,000,000 tons of ordnance until 1969, that is over 500 times more than what the enemy has used.

THESE FIGURES tell a sad and distressing story. The

destruction caused by the fighting in the last 18 months, particularly in the last four weeks, will only add to the already mournful story. The upshot is that the sooner the US quits Indochina the better for the world, and the better for US itself.

In the meantime, the bombing of Hanoi and Haiphong constitute a serious setback for North Vietnam because the DRV has no real defence against the massive air attacks of the Americans. The Americans would have found themselves in a terrible quandary if they had wanted to persuade their ground troops to fight the forces of the DRV and the NLF. At least half a million men should have been thrown into the battle to make an effective impact. US ground troops are in no mood to fight the war in Vietnam. The US government had thought it had found a solution in the ARVN but this has turned out to be a flop.

Nixon has therefore used the ultimate weapon in his armoury, to wreak vengeance on Hanoi for seeking to annihilate the ARVN. The White House may have been able to justify the attempt to destroy the economy of North Vietnam if the US was fighting for its very survival, but in this case White House has even ignored the rules of war which forbid all avoidable slaughter of civilians. The US bombing will leave behind a legacy which the Americans cannot outlive for many generations. Washington has sought to argue that

South Vietnam had been invaded and that Saigon should not be allowed to fall victim to "foreign aggression." But what the US did in its counterstrikes savoured of *retribution* being imposed by a superior force. President Nixon is evidently "mad", angry and desperate—because of the "failure of Saigon's vastly superior forces, in terms of men and equipment, to contain the communist advance. The *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 22/4, very aptly commented: "If Saigon is correct in asserting that its subjects have no desire to be ruled by Hanoi, it is the South Vietnamese who, in the last resort, must prove this claim by their own resistance to the communists. But in adopting a policy of *Vietnamisation*, the US appears to have forgotten that the South has been laid waste by the failure of the American commanders to realise that their *scorched-earth* tactics—the use of massive firepower and chemical weapons in a vain attempt to defeat the elusive guerillas—have left the South so drained of blood that the continuation of the war is a near miracle".

President Nixon, it must be noted, has chosen to defy the peace lobby at home in an election year to mount a bombing offensive of North Vietnam which can undermine Hanoi's economy for at least three years. One result of the bombing is that the Paris talks will reconvene again. It was the US which walked out of it unilaterally in the first instance, but when the US was willing

to resume talks, Hanoi defiantly refused to attend. When the bombing of North Vietnam was at its highest, Hanoi wanted a resumption of the Paris talks, and the US finally agreed to attend, but cancelled the first scheduled meeting. Hanoi was willing however to meet whilst the bombing continued. The US wants the North Vietnamese to withdraw from the South before meaningful talks.

International public opinion has been generally anti-US and anti-Nixon on the current escalation of American bombing of North Vietnam. The Indian Government denounced the US bombing and this brought a sharp rebuke from the US State Department and from Mr. Laird. The US view was that North Vietnamese "aggression" should be condemned as a condition precedent before any denunciation of US action was made. India did not see any aggression on the part of North Vietnam, and this took President Nixon and Premier Indira Gandhi further apart.

The Ceylon government, as at all times, has been most circumspect about the Vietnam war. *And the present is no exception.* No official statement has been made. Neither the Prime Minister nor any of her senior Ministers have made any statement. But on April 23, the PM was expected to inaugurate the Asian Buddhist Conference to promote Peace. Delegates had come from 20 odd countries, but a reporter in the Magazine edition of *Observer* on 16/4 had pointed out

that China had been left out of the list of invitees. It was suggested that this Conference was a pro-Moscow setup and for this reason the Chinese were left out. There was no official comment or protest from the Chinese and this led many to wonder whether after the Cultural Revolution China does not permit its Buddhists to participate in such conferences. It may be that present day China does not recognize Buddhists as part of its body politic. Anyway, the Asian Buddhist Conference ended up with many resolutions, the most important one condemning "American activities" in Vietnam.

THOUGH CEYLON has been officially silent on the Vietnam problem, a great deal of attention has been focussed in regard to Ceylon's relations with the Big Powers. It will be recalled that Ceylon's P.M., starting with the Commonwealth P.M.'s conference in Singapore in January 1971, has been plugging her line about keeping the Indian Ocean a zone of peace by persuading all the Big Powers to keep their navies out of this region. With the British allegedly withdrawing from all regions east of Suez, there was talk that the US Seventh Fleet would fill the vacuum. Evidently in pursuance of this objective, the US leased the Diego Garcia island in the Chagos Archipelago in mid-Indian Ocean and has set up refueling and communications base there. The Soviet Union, with its growing naval strength,

naturally did not want the US to control the Indian Ocean solely, and the Soviet Navy began to "show its flag" in the Indian Ocean. Then came the Indo-Soviet Agreement which did not detail any naval bases or facilities, but the fact that the US had a base in the Persian Gulf was something which both signatories would not have overlooked. Then came the Indo-Pak war. The Seventh Fleet tried to rush in to help the Pakistanis beleaguered in the eastern zone, but another Gulf of Tonkin episode was avoided because 93,000 odd Western Pakistani soldiers chose to surrender than to fight. The flotilla of the Seventh Fleet then sailed the waters of the Indian Ocean for a time and withdrew to the China Seas. One of its vessels *Waddell* paid a courtesy call at Colombo. Following this visit came Admiral John McCain of the Pacific Fleet who paid a "goodwill visit" for four days and had a 25 minute discussion with the P.M. without any aides at all. This talk led to a great deal of speculation and it was suggested in many quarters that since the Sino-US thaw, Indo-Soviet Agreement and the Indo-Pak war, the Ceylon government had begun to think things over, and that Ceylon was now not as anti-American as before. It was even hinted that an anti-Indian and anti-Soviet edge had become manifest in Ceylon's foreign policy postures. Before the visit of the US warship *Waddell*,

Ceylon had received two of the five naval patrol boats gifted by China.

ALL THIS led to a kind of guessing game about Ceylon's "changing foreign policy attitudes." The Americans, notorious for "shooting off their mouths" by uttering thoughts which pass through the mind, once again repeated the performance. People in Ceylon had the first intimation about this from the *Indian Express*, 12/4, when it frontpaged a despatch from its Correspondent in Washington, T. V. Parasuram, under the heading US WARSHIPS NOW WELCOME IN CEYLON. It was datelined *Washington, April, 11*. This is what the despatch stated:

"The *New York Times* in a despatch from Co'ombo said on Monday that Ceylon, with one of the best natural harbours in the world at Trincomalee, appears to be trying to bring about a new power balance in the area following the events of the Indo-Pakistan war". The paper said: "*United States warships are quietly pulling into the port for rest stops here for the first time in recent history. The American embassy here is overjoyed with the new relationship.*"

The despatch said Prime Minister Sirimavo Bandaranaike "*has dropped from the official rhetoric the proposal made to the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' conference in 1971 and repeated before the United Nations General Assembly in October, that the Indian Ocean be declared a*

peace zone. Her belief is now that the balance has tipped so far in favour of India and the Soviet Union that a balancing by other major powers is necessary. She declined to be interviewed on the subject." The *New York Times* claimed "there is worry among Government officials that the Soviet Union and India may be cooperating with insurgent elements in Ceylon."

There is undoubtedly a little too much wishful thinking in this analysis and this has been borne out by events. In the first week of April Minister Illangaratne paid a visit to New Delhi, and surprisingly enough was able to persuade New Delhi to buy more from Ceylon in order to reduce the trade gap between the two countries. It was apparent that India was willing to streamline its relations with Ceylon and agree to a number of "concessions" which India had never before been willing to concede. It was clear that India was anxious to expand her economic cooperation with Ceylon on a scale never thought possible sometime ago.

And, as if answer to the Americans, Ceylon will receive a top Soviet admiral towards the end of April. He will come for a goodwill visit for a week accompanied by two "guided missile destroyers". The *Ceylon Daily News*, 26/4, in a report stated that Admiral Nikolai Ivanovitch Smirnov, "described in diplomatic circles here as the Commander-in-Chief of the Soviet Pacific

Fleet, arrives in Colombo on Saturday on a six-day goodwill visit. Diplomatic sources say that Admiral Smirnov's impending visit is a pointer to the growing big power interest in the Indian Ocean. Admiral Smirnov's goodwill tour to Colombo comes less than two months after the goodwill visit to Ceylon of Admiral John C. McCain, Commander-in-Chief of the US Pacific area and presumably his American counterpart, and hard on the heels of the Soviet Naval Chief, Admiral Gorshkov, to India a couple of weeks ago. Two Soviet destroyers, believed in diplomatic circles to be of the *Kashin* class, which are armed guided missile destroyers, came into Colombo on Friday the day before Admiral Smirnov flies into Colombo" The report after detailing known background material concluded: ". . . ." Diplomatic sources feel that Admiral Smirnov's goodwill visit is more to 'show the flag' since the US C-in-C Pacific area Admiral McCain has already paid such a visit to Ceylon. It is not certain whether Admiral Smirnov will pay a courtesy call on the Prime Minister and have discussions with her as did Admiral McCain who had a 25-minute meeting with Mrs. Bandaranaike."

The *Ceylon Daily News* on the same day, 26/4, wrote an editorial entitled *Soviet Visitors*. It was kind of apologia for Ceylon foreign affairs postures emphasising that this

country was "as steadfastly non-aligned as before". It was chiefly directed at India: ". . . it is our earnest hope that Indian critics of Ceylon's non-alignment will not turn Nelsonian when contemplating the naval. The Indian press did raise a hue and cry over the visit of the Seventh Fleet Commander Admiral John McCain and echoes of this senselessly noisy hubbub were heard in the august assemblies of New Delhi. A deliberate attempt was made (and, in fact, is being made) to give that visit and the visit earlier of two American warships a decidedly sinister construction. It was strongly suggested in some quarters that our steady friendship with China and our increasingly cordial relations with the United States represent a deviation from, if not formal repudiation of our declared policy of non-alignment. Of course, this is arrant nonsense"

The *CDN* then went on waxing eloquent: "Now, what have we here? Soviet warships of the Russian Pacific Fleet will call at Colombo. The highlight of the visit will be a courtesy call by Admiral Smirnov, the Soviet counterpart, so to say, of Admiral McCain. Will our critics turn a Nelsonian eye on this visit and refuse to observe its obvious significance? . . ." After delivering more profound *dicta* that non-alignment "has various schools of interpretation" the editorial challenged critics by stressing that "even otherwise intelligent students often slip

into a position which seeks to sustain the manifestly paradoxical view that the best form of non-alignment is an alignment with the big power they favour" and concluded with a sermon that "the reasonably objective mind recoils, however, from grasping that particular dialectical nettle. Whilst welcoming the Soviet ships and our distinguished visitor, may we repeat that this is another demonstration of Ceylon's policy of friendship with all nations on the basis of mutual respect and equality". This particular *CDN* editorial was a somewhat clumsily-phrased piece without any of the sleek and knowledgeable idiom so characteristic of the Mervynian style and manner, but its meaning was clear.

WHATEVER the *Daily News* may be inspired to say on this subject, observers tend to detect a continuing re-appraisal by Ceylon regarding her foreign policy postures. This is inevitable in a world of change and flux. There has been no reversal of UF policies, but there is obviously an attempt to re-adjust to new developments in Asia since the US-China *detente*, the Indo-Soviet, and the Indo-Bangladesh treaties. In the circumstances of the current situation, Ceylon has no alternative but to adopt a realistic approach to all these matters and this will make many observers think that Ceylon was shifting from a left-of-centre position to a middle position particularly with regard to her attitude to

all the big powers and her neighbour India.

For sometime, certain sections of the press and even high political circles were accustomed to repeat categorical dicta about "Indian expansionism" and the dangers of being besides big neighbour India. But this obsessive fear of Indian "expansionism" is now giving way, even in these circles, to a more realistic approach of seeking closer economic ties with India. The *Sun* which reflects the views of the hard-core SLFP Right and the views of Government generally has subtly changed its "tune" and has called on the Ceylonese to shed their "anti-Indian phobia" and place trust and confidence in its "friendly" neighbour.

It will be recalled that the UF government had started off in May 1970 from a left-of-centre position. Much to the annoyance to the USA, Ceylon had recognised the GDR, South Vietnam's Revolutionary Government in exile, North Vietnam's DRV, North Korea's DPRK and even Sihanouk in exile. Ceylon continued her traditional friendship with China and this too had made Washington uneasy. In addition Ceylon was extra friendly with Pakistan, and many observers felt that the fear of "Indian expansionism" had given room to observers to talk about Peking-Islamabad-Colombo axis to contain "Indian expansionism". Before and during the Indo-Pak war, many saw concrete instance of

such an axis in operation. Ceylon gave fuelling facilities for Pakistani troops being ferried through Colombo to Dacca. In the UN, Ceylon voted for the US sponsored resolution on the Indo-Pak war. The aim was to "contain" India in the way that China and the USA had sought to do (and still endeavour to do).

But the Peking-Washington thaw and the realities of the situation after the Indo-Pak war has opened new vistas to Ceylon with possibilities of greater manoeuvrability among the big powers whilst maintaining her customary non-alignment. The PM and her senior colleagues in the SLFP talk less about "imperialism" (US and otherwise) and more about friendship. Anti-American attitudes which were heard at the beginning of the UF government in 1970 are no longer in evidence. Anti-India cries have similarly faded away. There is the usual warmth for China, but there is an undercurrent of reticence to the Soviet Union.

All this, it is pointed out by knowledgeable observers, portend a slight shift in Ceylon's foreign policy attitudes. In the coming weeks and months, the trends which have begun to appear will undoubtedly manifest themselves in many ways. The US has already given Ceylon two helicopters and high frequency communications equipment as part of the three million dollar gift to strengthen Ceylon's security services. Even those papers in Ceylon,

Communists: UNP:

Private Enterprise: Press Takeover

BY SERENDIB

THE rumpus over the failure of 4 CP MPs to respond to the Government whip over the Criminal Justice Commissions Bill has already lost its sting. The SLFP Parliamentary Group had at first taken a tough line and there was much talk about expulsions. Explanations from the 4 MPs were scheduled for April 15, but time was granted until the 22nd. They had wanted time until the CC of the Party met in conference, and this meeting took place on April 20 and 21. It became evident, after Gen. Secretary Keuneman returned from Singapore, that the CP would not break away on this issue and that a face-saving formula would be found to resolve the dispute. The CP thereafter dutifully voted for the Bill to amend the Evidence Ordinance and other allied legislation, but this was not considered enough by SLFP hawks. It was equally clear that the

SLFP did not want to kick the CP out, but wanted the rebellious elements in the CP to toe the line.

The CC of the CP suggested a summit talk with the PM to find a way out. This was thought to be a suitable compromise to save everybody's face. But before the PM had agreed to a summit, Dr. S. A. Wickremasinghe had applied for an exit permit to attend a Communist summit in Rumania. This exit permit was refused and the news leaked to the newspapers. Banner headlines were stretched on the front-pages of our news-starved papers that the CP Chief had been refused an exit permit—until he tendered an explanation to the Chief Whip. This was the climax of the affair. Political wiseacres predicted that the CP was on its way out. Many knowledgeable observers were also tempted to think that the end of the road had come so far as the CP and the UF were concerned.

But, in Ceylon, even the biggest storms blow over quickly. And this is just what seems to have happened to the CP affair. The PM had shown that she meant business: and she had refused the exit permit to the CP chief. And the public was led to think

that the first break in the UF was imminent. A compromise, however, seemed to have been found even before the confrontation became acute. The communist Chief had expressed regret and tendered an apology for not sending in the explanation called for on the due date and wanted more time until his return from Rumania. This "apology" was considered good enough and the PM issued instructions that Dr. Wickremasinghe's exit permit be issued. He left by plane on April 22. The explanations would be tendered when Dr. S.A. Wickremasinghe returns and it is felt that the kind of explanation which would be acceptable to the Chief Whip and the SLFP would be forthcoming from the CP. *All's well that ends well.*

In the meantime, the *Forward* of April 8 carried the reasons why the CP did not vote for the Criminal Justice Commissions Bill. This is what it said: "The Criminal Justice Commissions Bill was passed in the House of Representatives last Wednesday with a large majority. Earlier, the Central Committee of the Communist Party decided unanimously to instruct its members of Parliament to speak against the Bill and refrain from voting for it unless the Government agreed to put off the Debate on this Bill or make the necessary amendments to make the Bill applicable only to the armed attack that took place last year, connected incidents and exchange control rackets."

(Rambling Notes)

which had always adopted strong, anti-Indian attitudes, have been strangely quiet. It is not the censor who has done the trick, but the hard realities of the new situation in South Asia which seems to have brought sense of discipline even among newspapers.

The *Forward* further stated that the terms of "this very controversial Bill were made known only to Members of Parliament in English. Many MPs complained when the debate on the Bill began in the House on the 5th April, that they had got the Sinhala and Tamil copies of the Bill only the day before. What was the necessity to rush this Bill with such far-reaching effects? It is true that it is a year since the insurgent uprising in which the persons who will be affected by the provisions of the Bill were taken into custody. But surely, if they could be held for a year without being brought to trial, not much harm would have been done to anyone if the Bill was delayed for just a few more days to get the controversial clauses thrashed out and agreement reached between the constituent parties of the United Front..... The article then set out the reasons why the Bill was "important" and the curtailment of civic and legal rights in the matter of legal trials should be confined only to the incidents of 1971. The CP wanted a summit to thrash out the difficulties. It also pointed out the danger of some of the more "controversial" aspects of the Bill especially the new provisions concerning "confessions."

And the *Forward* pointed out:....These are extraordinary provisions that have now been enacted not as extraordinary laws for a limited time and for a special purpose, but as the ordinary laws of the land, for

that is what it amounts to, the period of this 'temporary' law being eight years subject to a further extension by a simple majority in Parliament. That is why the Communist Party expressed its serious reservations against these objections and draconian provisions and wanted them discussed and debated at the highest level before they were presented to Parliament. Unfortunately these efforts failed,

"The CP could not openly vote against a Bill brought by the Government in Parliament. As a CP spokesman had told the *Observer*, 5/4, 'we as a party have striven hard for the unity of all progressive forces and we will not undermine that unity. Nor could we say *Aye* for the reasons explained above. That is why the Party decided that the best thing to do in the circumstances was for its spokesmen in Parliament to expose the dangers inherent in the Bill and refrain from voting for it."

This explanation and the call for a summit even after the Chief Whip had called for explanation from the 4 MPs was not considered good enough by the PM. By refusing the exit permit to the CP leader, she had indicated that the CP should toe the line if it wanted to continue in the UF. From all reports, the "rebellion" inside the CP has toned down and the dissident elements now seem to be willing to accept the Bill as a *fait accompli*. And for the rest, the

CP only wanted a face-saving clause to "maintain the Unity of the UF". This is what the other partners in the UF also seem to want—at least the vast majority in the SLFP and the LSSP.

IN THE UNP, however, things have not worked out quite so satisfactorily. The Leader of the Opposition had been asked to furnish an explanation regarding certain statements and speeches he is alleged to have made wanting the UNP to change its line and co-operate with the Government in the national interest. The UNP High Command led by Mr. Dudley Senanayake was opposed to this line, and he moved the Working Committee (mainly nominated by the President) to ask JR for an "explanation". When JR failed to respond within the stipulated time (an extension had also been given), the working Committee was summoned to expel JR from the UNP. On the day the Working Committee, was scheduled to meet, JR moved the supreme Court asking for an injunction to stop the Working Committee from expelling him. It was his contention that the Working Committee was not the "party", because the Committee was a creature of the President. The Supreme Court granted the injunction, and a legal tussle will ensue in the fullness of time. In the meantime, the UNP has announced a party congress next month where this matter and other policy matters would be discussed. It

is likely that at the party Congress, which will be a "democratic" unit, JR will be duly expelled. It is very possible that JR may move another injunction, but even he must realise that political battles cannot be resolved in courts of law. It is also significant that the *Sun-Dawasa* group now confidently predicts that JR would join the Government by mid-May. Whether this will happen before his anticipated expulsion from the UNP, or after, is still not certain.

However, the *Sun-Dawasa* group have also stated that the new Constitution would be promulgated on May 23 (the *Daily Mirror* had said that May 22 was the chosen day because it was an auspicious date.) Whether it will be May 22, or May 23, political pundits and UF publicists seem confident that the new Constitution would come into being in the third week of May and that with it will come a major and far-reaching Cabinet reshuffle. But the interest in the new Constitution has paled into virtual oblivion because of the very precarious economic situation of the country. It is now more than clear that the IMF and the World Bank are not willing to grant more loans of a substantial character to Ceylon. In fact the Aid Ceylon Consortium does not seem to think it necessary to meet. Apart from everything else, the IMF team is even said to have pointed out that whatever the other limitations, the uncertainty hanging over all private

enterprise was not conducive to "investment". The Business Acquisition Act was a veritable sword of Damocles suspended over private enterprise, and the bankers and entrepreneurs of the West do not seem to think that it was worthwhile investing in Ceylon. It is however, reported that the UK will on its own continue to extend such aid as it could to Ceylon. If this were true, there are good reasons why Britain will want to help Ceylon. It must be remembered that the UK has very substantial investments in this island, and it is in the interests of the UK to keep this country afloat as a going concern in the hope and belief that things would change for the better in the next year or two.

It is pertinent to draw attention in this connection to the speeches the Prime Minister and Minister Maithripala Senanayake have made last week assuring private enterprise that nationalisation would in future be only most cautiously extended and it would be only in the national interest that any private business would be taken over. The PM went so far as to say that in many instances nationalisation had led to less income and less profit and that this kind of mistake was not likely to be repeated.

The LSSP and the CP have been in the forefront of more and more nationalisation, but after having recently achieved fairly extensive nationalisation, the LSSP seems to be going slow, chewing the cud slowly

whilst the SLFP partners got used to the idea of more and more nationalisation. If the LSSP Finance Minister had been able to balance his budget, then the SLFP and the public would have supported more nationalisation, but the financial situation was so bleak with all the nationalisation that there is a great deal of public mistrust about indiscriminate nationalisation. The LSSP, however, has something to be jubilant about: one of its MPs, Vasudeva Nanayakkara, who had been detained since April 1971 was released last week. Sporting a Castro-like beard and hair style, he has become a much photographed figure.

At the moment the LSSP's chief policy objective seems to be to secure the takeover of Lake House. The *Nation* of 15/4 drew attention to PRESS FALSEHCODS and asked the question HOW WILL GOVT. REACT? The *Nation* seemed to realise that takeovers and nationalisation were not popular with the public or the SLFP at the moment, and this leading article was written on a low key style. It was intended to induce (or intimidate) the Government into action. The *Nation* stated "Every passing day makes it clearer that Ceylon has once more begun to stage the spectacle of a Government functioning in the face of the unconcealed hostility of the principal mass media to itself, no less than to its political programme. We say "once more", because the first time this became obvious was

towards the middle of 1964, shortly after the setting up of the Coalition Government of the SLFP and LSSP under the Prime Minister of today. Before long, the Government was provoked to seek to correct this impossible situation by appointing a Commission to go into the working of the press and, on its recommendation, by introducing a Bill to take over one of the newspaper companies. Everybody knows the events that followed."

The *Nation* stressed that the "newspapers" had mounted a major attack on the Government, and went on to say: "What is notable about this attack is that it is carried out with the same lack of scruple, the same disregard for truth, the same malice against the Government parties and members, that were evident in 1964. No less notable is the evidence of planning and coordination of propaganda between the different newspapers. Thus, all of them can be clearly seen to possess a central aim, viz. the reversal of the election verdict of May 1970. In pursuance of this aim, several subsidiary aims can also be deciphered. These latter may be listed as follows: 1. Campaign against the present Parliament so as to undermine its authority; 2. Destroy the standing of existing Members of Parliament by pouring ridicule on their integrity, intelligence, values, etc.; 3. Confuse the Ministers with rumours, false stories, warnings of future disaster (both astrological and otherwise) so as to

promote dissensions among them; 4. Sell the line to the country of bringing the UNP into the Government under the slogan of a National Government."

In the absence of a takeover, the *Nation* insisted that Government should "control" and "manage" the papers to ensure certain basic requirements". "It is difficult for the Government to deny the newspaper Mudalalis the right to determine the policies of their particular papers. This however, has to be subject to three conditions at least. Firstly, they must desist from foul methods of slander, vilification, the circulation of falsehoods, the whipping up of social envy etc. Secondly, they must give up the pretence that they are "national" newspapers and admit frankly that they are propaganda sheets also seeking to make money for their proprietors. In such case, the Government is not obliged at all to extend any kind of patronage to them. Thirdly, they must accept the necessity of some regulatory device to ensure that good use is made of the national resources that are consumed in these enterprises and that these resources, as in all other industries, are not used up in the production of unnecessary trash. Government, for its part cannot stop at this, of course. Since there are no national newspapers, it will be compelled to set up national newspapers to serve the citizens of the country. For the first time, then, we may have a decent, reliable and informative press.

The *Nation* has succeeded in many things it has campaigned for since this Government came into being, but whether it will succeed in having Lake House taken over is problematic.

IS IT TRUE?

★ Newspaper Merger

★ Film Corporation

★ Pol Arrack

by SHERLOCK HOLMES

IS IT TRUE that two of the three big groups among our "national" dailies might be joined in a merger within the next few months? That hush-hush talks have been going on for sometime about this matter? That one of the persons who had recently joined the Board of one newspaper group is actively canvassing for the merger? Many interesting problems about staff and management will arise when the merger does take place? That some believe that the stars are in favour of such merger?

✧ ✧ ✧

IS IT TRUE that the confrontation between the Minister (and one Director) and the Chairman (and other Directors) in the newly setup Film Corporation has brought everything to a standstill? That even before the ink was dry on

the Statute setting up the Corporation in-fighting had begun in a big way? That the big-wigs in the Corporation had patted themselves on the back for finding a way to finance the Corporation by taking over the films imported by the earlier exhibitors and importers (without paying compensation) and compelling them to exhibit them in their theatres and thereafter handing over 50% of the takings to the Corp? That this method of doing business was known as expropriation? That this was the first instance where a Government Corporation resorted to legal expropriation of this kind? That many felt that it was immoral for a Corporation belonging to a Government committed to pay compensation to act in this way? That before the public or any one else could discuss the ethics involved, a blight has overtaken this Corporation?

That some newspapers reporting these developments are divided in their loyalties? That some favour the Minister? That some other newspapers are fully behind the Chairman and other Directors? That the General Manager of the Corporation is a prime target of attack by the supporters of the Minister? That the Minister has in recent days issued a number of directives, as he is empowered to do, under the Act to make a mockery of the work of the Corporation? That an order has been issued that the Corporation should not enter into any contractual

arrangements to renew the contracts for the import of western films due to expire in June? That the Minister has also ordered the Corporation to stop the import of all Tamil and Hindi films? That a further Ministerial order has stipulated that no raw film should be imported? That this raw film was for the production of Sinhala films? That Ministerial orders have also been issued to prohibit the import of theatre equipment and spares? That a Ministerial fiat has prohibited the Corporation recruiting any staff? That there are efforts also being made to remove the Chief Executive and General Manager?

That the squabble has reached such proportions that a special ministerial committee was investigating the dispute to submit a report to the PM? That the affairs of the Film Corporation is no advertisement for the efforts of the Government to push the public sector into a dominant position?




IS IT TRUE that *pol arrack* would soon be a rarity never to be got? That at least for a few more weeks a few bottles might be found in some stray corner? That arrack drinkers would in future have to be satisfied with the mollasses arrack? That the popular name for this arrack was *Gal* in honour of Gal Oya where this kind of arrack was first manufactured? That the reason for

the shortage of *pol arrack* was due to the shortage of toddy tappers? That Ceylon had with great gusto packed off about 3000 to 4000 toddy tappers of Indian origin (who had been here for several generations) on the ground that they had visited their "homeland" once in a while?

That the Government had hoped to attract the unemployed youth of this country to this highly lucrative profession? That in spite of the best efforts of the Department of Labour and other government agencies the response for the call for tappers was more than disappointing?

That in desperation, the Government had even approached the Government of India to send about 2000 tappers on a contract basis? That the Government of India has refused to accede to this request? That as a result there will be soon little or no *Pol arrack* in Ceylon? That many think that with the depredations of the pest *cumin-gii* — tappers or no tappers — it would be wise to forget *pol arrack* for a long time to come? That *gal arrack* unfortunately was bound to increase certain kind of ailments which stem from drinking the non-*pol gal arrack*?

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