

TRIBUNE

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PRESS

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RAMBLING NOTES

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

On The Budget:

The Big Daily Press

WE DELAYED sending this issue to press in the hope that we may be able to make some comments on the 1973 budget and to also afford our contributors an opportunity to analyse the budget in constructive yet critical terms. When it was first announced that the Budget would be on November 2, we had hoped to make this issue a kind of Budget Special, but with the date being pushed back to November 9 we altered our plans to have only some preliminary comments on the new Budget. And, finally, it was announced that the Budget would be on November 10, (the budget proposals would come only at the tail end of the day), and we abandoned the idea of dealing with the Budget in this issue.

Tribune will discuss the Budget in forthcoming issues, and this will be necessarily stretched over many issues because we have a hunch that some of the major budgetary proposals will come in bits and pieces in the coming weeks in the form of gazette notifications. Already some of the more spectacular proposals have been proclaimed in gazette notifications and in draft

bills tabled in the National State Assembly. The income on ceilings, the new compulsory savings scheme, the amendments to the Capital Levy Act, and the amendments to the Inland Revenue Act, constitute part of the fiscal measures to 'prop up the 1973 budget—apart from bridging the gap in the 1972 budget. Additionally, the excise duties on locally produced beer, arrack and spirits have been increased through gazette notifications: so also the duty on tobacco. All these measures are intended to bring in some revenue, but it is difficult to see how the budget is to be balanced without touching the food subsidies and the welfare expenditure this country can no longer afford (really, it could not sustain such expenditure at any time.)

The Prime Minister and certain other Ministers, conscious of the gravity of the problems facing the country, have been of late preaching sermons to the MPs of their respective parties that it was necessary to impose hardships on a wide spectrum of people—if the country was to be pulled out of the economic morass in which it found itself. But

the backbenchers in a most vociferous manner (with most front benchers keeping silent) have told the Prime Minister and the other Ministers, who were foolhardy enough to speak frankly to them, that there was a list of "items" which should not be touched when hardship measures were contemplated. These items were an effective "shut out" for any possible measures which could be considered satisfactory: the subsidy on rice was *not to be touched*—except for the handful of income tax payers; the price of flour and sugar was *not to be touched* in a way that would adversely affect the common man; and social welfare expenditure was *not to be touched*. To help the government find money, the backbenchers of all three UF parties resorted to cliches, expropriation of the rich without compensation, nationalisation of foreign companies, complete take-over of all profitable commercial undertakings, elimination of wasteful expenditure, and similar suggestions which would boomerang on the import-export economy of the island in the most disastrous way—and one did not have to be an economic pundit to foresee the dangerous outcome of such unrealistically ultra-left measures.

In typical Sri Lank-onion style, wisecracks in the Planning Ministry, (it is said), are reputed to have devised a way of cutting the rice subsidy in a gaur-

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AT THE MOMENT

ON CORRUPTION & INDISCIPLINE

IN SRI LANKA & ELSEWHERE

THIS COLUMN is being written on the brink of major events which would have taken place by the time this issue is on the news stands. The first budget of Sri Lanka under the new Republican Constitution will be presented on November 9, and on November 7 the US Presidential elections will be concluded. That Mr. Richard Nixon will be elected is a foregone conclusion, but it is as yet uncertain what the Sri Lanka budget will contain—though it is generally known that food subsidies and welfare expenditure must be cut to balance the Budget, or at least make the Budget viable and workable.

The problems before the Sri Lanka Government are many and varied. We are a democracy wedded to a kind of a parliamentary system based on free elections. In theory our elected representatives are given a mandate which they are expected to implement, but it must be realised that the wishes of the people are to a large extent generated by the politicians themselves who seek their votes. The representatives are also expected to educate, to guide and

to lead the people, but the fact that when elected representatives become rulers they assume responsibilities of administration on the one hand, and of enacting legislation, on the other, which militate against the duties they owe to the people who elect them. The dual functions which elected representatives have to discharge create problems which undermine administration and good government.

The leftwingers and the Young Turks, including the tub-thumping exhibitionists have no use for this dual role of the parliamentarians. They feel that this system leads to delays and vacillation fatal to setting up a government of the people for the people without any delay. They want a clean sweep of the *status quo* and want to usher in the brave new world overnight. Their logic is straight forward and simple. The vast majority of the people in Sri Lanka are poor: they cannot tolerate the very existence of millionaires. The poor must have their share of the good things of life. They cannot gain their objective if wealth, lands, houses and luxurious establishments continue to remain and

multiply in the hands of a few. It matters little if these few are honest, clever, intelligent and enterprising. It is irrelevant to say that their opulence is the result of careful planning, hardwork and hazardous initiative. Often the wealth has fallen into their lap by inheritance. All that matters is that quite a few persons in the country have more, vastly more money, property and lands than they need. Their continued existence gives rise to resentment, envy and a sense of injustice. They have no place in the pattern of socialistic life which we have adopted as our ultimate goal.

With this onrush of "revolutionary thinking", very few pause to consider whether the collection of a few billions of rupees by taxation or levies will dissolve poverty or whether the imposition of a ceiling on the ownership of houses will help to provide living accommodation to the lakhs who do not have any kind of shelter which can be called a house. High taxation stimulates evasion and corruption. The filthy rich are no doubt a thorn in the side of Lanka Mata, but will the liquidation of the rich provide clothes, food and houses for the millions.

It is unfortunate but true that the rich do not realise that the world had changed and was still changing. They want to live in marble palaces and castigate the government for

its stupid, unproductive, and ruinous policies. And in exasperation the rich decry the "communistic" policies of the government. They bury themselves in large armchairs, sip Scotch and soda, (now arrack and thambili) and assert that the country was going to the dogs, that it had been sold to the Chinese (or the Russians) and proclaim that it was only a matter of time before there would be an internal revolution or even an external take-over.

THESE RICH and often clever people support this prophesy of doom by pointing out that our food production was down, that our imports had gone up, that the flow of exports had slowed down, and so on and so forth: that prices had risen and were still rising; and that inflation had become a Frankenstein which the government was unable to control. What they say is undoubtedly correct, but when these words issue from the lips of the affluent and the rich, little or no attention is paid by the ordinary people whose votes ultimately decides the destinies of the country.

The removal of poverty (and unemployment) is Sri Lanka's most urgent need, but this cannot be achieved by demagogic gimmicks, though the best of plans may have to be inter-laced with gimmickry in order to make it acceptable to the ordinary voters. But gimmickry, beyond a point, is self-defeating. *But poverty is not the only ailment from*

which this country suffers. As in many other countries we have a whole host of other problems. "We are told that unscrupulous politicians and businessmen are becoming richer every day and continue to add to their numbered accounts in foreign banks. The civil servants are more corrupt than ever. Private commerce is motivated by selfishness, dishonesty and unpatriotic interests. The public sector is corrupt and incompetent. The workers do not work, the students do not study, the teachers do not teach. There is no sense of probity or discipline to be seen anywhere, and well, everything that could go wrong has gone wrong.

It is no use blaming the government alone for this galloping corruption. It stems from the system we have glorified as democracy. But we cannot do without democracy either. Without being lost in the wilderness discussing the virtues of democracy, it is necessary to recognise that corruption and indiscipline have assumed proportions in our national life which have got out of hand. The problem of poverty, it must be also admitted, has become more difficult because many of us are corrupt and many more of us are *undisciplined*.

We speak of priorities, but few realise that the real priorities are the need to *remove corruption* and the need to *remove indiscipline*. This does not mean that we should post-

pone the imposition of ceilings on income and property in order to get rid of inequalities—because if these were postponed or abandoned the government might lose the support of the people and be deprived of the power to govern.

POISONOUS

People buying ice cream in the United States should be careful, warns the Ramparts magazine. "There is a very good possibility that you're treating your family to another poison" It writes. "Ice cream manufacturers replace natural ingredients with much less expensive but harmful chemicals. Wide use is made, for instance, of amyl acetate, an oil paint solvent, to give ice cream a banana flavour, and of ethyl acetate to make it taste like a pineapple. Aldehyde C 17, which is used to flavour cherry ice cream, is an inflammable fluid used in aniline dyes, plastics and rubber. Also in use as a substitute for vanilla is piperohal, a chemical which is utilized for exterminating lice.

When people get together in Sri Lanka today, the favourite topic is more often than not, *corruption*. The Ministers are corrupt, the politicians are corrupt, the civil servants are cor-

rupt, the businessmen are corrupt—only the poor are not corrupt. "We hear that it is impossible to get an import or an export licence or get clearance for setting up or expanding an industry unless substantial bribes are paid to the individuals who consider, recommend and sanction the project. The police have always been corrupt, but now they are more corrupt than before. Businessmen evade taxes, kept false accounts, take black money and have no integrity at all. Doctors, lawyers, professors and teachers are not above demanding illegal gratification. In this corrupt jungle, only the corrupt can thrive or, indeed, survive. The people are just destroying themselves."

And *indiscipline* is also rampant. "This malady too prevails in all spheres of our life and activity. Student unrest and the attitude of labour are only the more manifest and malignant forms of it. The evil is to be found everywhere, in the defection of politicians, in the unruly conduct of some members of Parliament, in the reckless driving of motor vehicles, in the conduct of jay-walking pedestrians, in the refusal of children to listen to parental injunctions, in the idling peons who smoke in office corridors and remain absent for frequent tea breaks. In the students who do not study and openly, brazenly copy at examinations, in the work-to-rule, go-slow tactics of employees in

banks, airlines and factories, in the frequent strikes by labour, in the increasing volume of crime and in almost everything that happens in the country. How can the country progress, how can production increase, how can poverty be abolished; ask the critics of the government?"

All this brings us to the central dilemma of the times. The rich and clever say that with all this corruption and indiscipline, it would be impossible to remove poverty. Expropriating the rich will not end poverty: it would result only in general pauperisation. Unless, of course production was raised at all levels in order to ensure that more and more people had more and more of the good things of life. The ultra-leftwingers, the young turks and even some of the pundits who claim to be middle-of-the-road democratic socialists, however, argue that poverty and indiscipline could be eliminated only by liquidating poverty.

During the last two and a half years, the United Front Government has taken a whole series of measures to reduce the power of the rich and the wealthy and to deprive them of much of their wealth. This was expected to satisfy the poor and many leftwingers had hoped that this general levelling down would induce greater enthusiasm from the poor to increase productivity through hard work. But, the reality is

that this has not happened. *Only corruption and indiscipline increased by leaps and bounds.*

Then, argued the young turks, the measures to liquidate the rich had not gone far enough; and now ceilings have been placed on land and income, and the rich have been made to save compulsorily. The big pundits of the UF, however, were aware that mere pauperisation of the rich would not lead to increased production or an age of plenty, and so special legislation has been devised: to promote production: a set of bureaucrats will supervise agricultural production, all compulsory savings will be siphoned into a special account constituting investment capital to generate production.

But will this end corruption and indiscipline?

That is the real problem before the country, its government and its people. Can those in power today remove corruption and remove indiscipline? Their record during the last two years and a half does not generate much hope? It is equally clear that the alternative party, the UNP with a sizable support among the voters, cannot do the job either?

What next?

THIS IS A BLEAK AND GRIM view of the domestic affairs of Sri Lanka. The only consolation which is available is that corruption and indiscipline is universal

in the world today. Take for instance, the United States, which is the apex of the twentieth century civilisation of capitalism. This is what a commentator has to say about a question of burning topicality.

"Many Americans still concerned with values in public life are asking themselves the question how the Nixon administration, one of the most corrupt and unscrupulous in American history, continues to command majority support and is about to be given a lease of life for another four years.

"It is certainly not for want of public exposure. A major television network did a series on the wheat scandal—how a tip-off from an Agriculture Department official who later became an executive in a grain firm enabled the big grain dealers to corner the profits at the expense of the small farmer. The *Washington Post* has exposed the police methods employed for espionage against the Democratic head-quarters at Watergate. These are not the only scandals, but they are illustrative of the rot within the administration. Yet a country which saw a key aide to President Eisenhower ousted from the White House because he accepted a fur coat for his wife from an industrialist no longer seems to care.

"Mr. Nixon is also popular in most countries abroad. The Chinese love him.

The Russians all but adore him. The Europeans hope and pray for his victory. The Israelis are actively campaigning for his re-election among Jewish voters."

Even the staid *Time* magazine, had a cover story about the "disgrace" centring round campaign funds with special reference to funds collected by the Nixon Republican Party.

Take any country in the world today. Corruption is the number one problem in every country and indiscipline (terrorism, hijacking, terrorism, etc. etc.) goes hand in hand. Owing to the absence of what we know as a "free press" in the socialist bloc of countries we do not have as much news about these matters, but bureaucratism is one form of corruption which is rampant even in socialist countries.

In this connection, an article which appeared in the *Washington Post* on August 17 from a *Reuter* correspondent in Warsaw makes revealing reading. The article is entitled MANY IN POLAND ACCEPT BRIBERY AS A NECESSARY EVIL. Even after making allowance for the western-capitalist-oriented attitudes of the correspondent, Michael Lockley, there is much in the article which rings true.

This only shows that human nature is the same the world over and *no-ism* has changed the nature of man. Whether it is Shintoism, Confucianism, Hin-

duism, Christianity, Islam or even Marxism—human nature has not changed, though the impulses and motivations have changed. The dialectical materialist will say that such an attitude betrays eclectic nihilism, but facts are stubborn.

In the meantime, it would be useful to see what Lockley has to say about corruption in Poland. "A feeling is growing among many Poles that bribery is the only way to get things done. This conclusion was reached by the authoritative Communist weekly *Polityka* which carried out a detailed survey on Polish attitudes towards bribery, dishonesty and theft. The outcome, lamented *Polityka*, confirmed the "well-known" and alarming truth that bribery is part of the Polish way of life, and is accepted by many young people.

"The unusually frank poll disclosed that a large proportion of Poles—and those questioned were mainly well-educated—saw the country's administrative system as 'ineffective or simply wrong'. Many cited low wages and mismanagement of the economy as justification for bribery of officials. Surprisingly, most of those questioned said the theft of state property did not merit punishment. On the other hand, the vast majority thought stealing private property was a crime which should be punished.

"The publication of the survey—the latest in a series in the Polish press on inefficiency, bureaucracy and vices—reflected the more down-to-earth attitude of Communist Party leader Edward Gierek compared to his predecessors. Gierek, a tough and skilled administrator who took power after workers riots 18 months ago, has pledged to modernize industry and streamline bureaucracy while substantially raising wages and living standards.

"The survey sought confirmation of the thesis that a slack attitude towards bribery 'is gaining in popularity and is somehow accepted by the younger generation now entering social life.' Those polled, mostly graduates of universities and technical colleges, were asked in exhaustive series of questions about their own attitudes and those of most Poles.

"The toughest question was the proposition that bribes were necessary 'to settle anything'. About 80 per cent thought that this was true. *Polityka* carried a large picture showing a fistful of banknotes being furtively slipped into another hand. The front page headlines was 'Where Does Bribery Begin?' One of the Pollsters, in the Silesian city of Rybnik, said he was told that in this region it was even necessary to give bribes to the church to obtain a grave in the cemetery. Another reported

from the Baltic resort of Sopot that people expressed interest in the questionnaire but doubted that 'anything would change for the better.'

"As expected, most people felt that bribery was most common in trade and business, to clinch deals and obtain attractive consumer goods still in short supply, although the Gierek regime has already improved the quality and variety of goods in the shops. Next came the social and health services, with numerous complaints that bribes were paid for admission to hospitals, for medical tests and even to nurses, presumably for quicker treatment and better conditions.

"Another area of apparent high bribery is housing chiefly the so-called housing co-operatives which decide on the allocation of apartments. Poland is suffering a chronic housing shortage, and Gierek has said that by 1975 homes must be built for more than 1 million families who now live in crowded or substandard conditions. Municipal councils also came in for sharp criticism for corruption. But the police and courts emerged relatively unscathed in the poll. Only 6 per cent of those queried believed the police were influenced by bribery, and 7 per cent thought bribes useful in the courts.

"Few people saw corruption in the Communist Party apparatus but, on the

other hand, almost nobody was prepared to say he had seen no bribery at all in his life.

Polityka said the poll could be taken to represent the views of Poland's intelligentsia. Analysts concluded that many Poles condoned the falsification by management officials of factory production figures in order to gain higher bonuses and wages from the state without extra output.

"This was done with the knowledge and 'blessing' of higher authorities and there was no point in denouncing the practice, many of those queried said. "The lack of reaction, the indifference toward the most obvious offenses, the reluctance to co-operate with the authorities in suppressing the offenses—or even deliberately misleading the authorities—these are the attitudes which we unfortunately encounter all too frequently." *Polityka* commented."

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OCTOBER 22-31

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 22: The 52nd day of the bank strike. Student violence at the Vidyodaya University on Friday and general unrest in the other universities has brought a clamp-down on all student activities outside the campuses. The Vidyodaya campus of the University of Sri Lanka is reported to have suffered a damage of half a million rupees while it served as a detention camp. The import of flavouring and colouring for canned food items, fancy packings for products, certain plastic (finished) goods, cardboard, strawboard and components for ball point pens and pianos will be banned: the Government will also restrict the quotas (or increase duties) of raw materials for nearly 35 industries owing to the shortage of foreign exchange. The US Ambassador to Sri Lanka, Mr. Christopher Van Hollen, arrived in Colombo yesterday with his family. The Civil Rights Movement of Sri Lanka considered the second draft of the Press Council Bill to be a threat to the rights of the people to a free flow of information according to the latest statement issued by the CRM. The Health Department, in pursuance of the recommendations of the WHO, will step up its campaign against smoking. President Marcos of the Philippines yesterday signed a decree "to emancipate tenants from bondage of the soil and transfer to them ownership of the land they till." Dr. Henry Kissinger was still in Saigon and there was much speculation whether peace was in the offing: but US B-52 bombers yesterday dropped over 500 tons of explosives over communist troops a little north of Saigon yesterday. Queen Elizabeth continued her state visit in Yugoslavia. Japanese Foreign Minister Masyaoshi Ohira arrived in Moscow yesterday to hold talks with Soviet leaders regarding a possible peace treaty. An Olympic Airways plane carrying 53 people plunged into the sea just before landing at Athens. 16 people were rescued and 37 were presumed dead.

MONDAY, OCTOBER 23: The 53rd day of the bank strike: the Ceylon Bank Officer's Association appealed to the Minister of Labour yesterday to "exercise his rights" and work

out a formula to settle the 53-day-old strike. As Sri Lanka was not yet ready to implement the fisheries agreement signed with the USSR last year, the *Daily News* reported the Maldives Islands have accepted the same offer: a massive project with many trawlers and a training programme. The *Daily News* also reported that "young" radicals in the LSSP, led by Mr. Vasudeva Nanayakkara MP, had submitted a political resolution different from the Central Committee's resolution for the LSSP Congress on November 3: this radical resolution wants the party to follow a more critical and independent line: this resolution is being supported by LSSPites like Athauda Seneviratne MP and ex-Senator D. G. William: that "observers" felt that this "revolt" within the LSSP will not come to a head as in the CP. The Democratic Worker's Congress (DWC) is expected to convene a Conference of all trade unions in the hill country to oppose the TUF's agitation for a "divided Sri Lanka". The deadline for filling declarations under the Land Reform Act has been extended to November 21. Sri Lanka will set up a resident diplomatic mission in Dacca (in Bangladesh) shortly. The *Daily Mirror* reported that 4772 extra hands had been recruited to the CTB in the last six months (from December 1971 to May 1972): that more buses had been bought (326 new buses): that the total mileage had registered an increase of 33.5 millions over the corresponding period in the previous year: and that there had also been an increase of 15.6 million passengers: but with more buses, more miles and more passengers, there were yet no profits. The Government issued a communique defending the draft Press Council Bill asserting that the freedoms of a responsible press had not been violated and that the measures were only intended to curb mischief working and sensation-mongering. An armed gang had robbed four lorries yesterday near Maradankadawela in the Kekirawa area: there were also reports of several armed gangs robbing train passengers in the NCP in the stretch between Nagollagama and Talawa near Anuradhapura. The Egyptian Government denied that there had been an attempt at a coup to remove the President during the weekend. President Ali Bhutto accepted the resignation of another Minister, Mr. Meraj Ali Khan—the second

in the last fortnight, the first being Mahmud Ali Kasuri: both are members of Bhutto's Peoples Party. The Ugandan Government has agreed to allow the United Nations to organise the issue of emergency travel documents to stateless Asians facing the threat of expulsion. At the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association meeting in Blantyre in Malawi, a British suggestion for a Commonwealth task force to protect the Indian Ocean against communist domination was opposed by Sri Lanka's delegate, Dr. Colvin R. de Silva. In the land distribution under Martial Law in the Philippines, each farmer got 5 hectares (12 acres).

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 24: The 54th day of the bank strike: the Civil Rights Movement wanted the Government to seek a solution to the bank employees' strike without resorting to the extraordinary power under the Emergency laws. Amendments had been introduced to the Inland Revenue Act which will enable taxpayers to assess their own tax and make quarterly payments. Sri Lanka's army commander, Major General Sepala Attygalle, was on a 12-day visit to military establishments in the country. Many of the free postal and telegraphic concessions of free postal and telecommunication services given to the government departments will be withdrawn from next year: the free postal and telecommunication facilities to MPs are now being examined by a Special Committee. The Budget Speech of the Minister of Finance, earlier scheduled for November 2, has now been postponed to November 9 as the Minister was indisposed. An armed gang entered a Veyangoda-bound train (from Colombo) between Gampaha and Daraluwa (when the train had been halted owing to the signals—also manipulated by the robbers) and robbed passengers of about Rs. 2000 worth of cash and jewellery. Press reports indicated that Ceylon will negotiate for 200,000 metric tons of rice under the rubber-rice pact for the next year. Dr. Kissinger left Saigon for Washington with no apparent peace agreement about Vietnam. President Idi Amin of Uganda has been admitted to hospital and has been ordered "complete rest". In southern Philippines government troops and gueril-

las were engaged in a pitched battle of great intensity.

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 25: The 55th day of the bank strike: a conference of 22 trade unions which had met last week end issued a statement yesterday condemning the attempts of the Government to break the strike and wanted the Government to initiate purposeful negotiations to settle the strike: the Bank Employees' Union in its bulletin criticised the recent circular to MPs of the Minister of Finance asking each member to nominate ten persons from each electorate for employment in provincial banks. The *Daily News* drew attention to one of the gravest problems facing the government on the eve of the Budget about how it can raise adequate resources for its development plans. Railway authorities reported that armed gangs holding up trains knew how to fix the colour light signals so as to stop trains they intended to rob. The *Sun* reported that the Ministerial Sub-committee on Planning had recommended that cash should be paid in lieu of the free rice on the ration—and that the Cabinet was examining the proposal. All the daily papers continued to examine, most critically, the government statement entitled *The Truth About the Press Council Bill*: the *Daily Mirror* had a most forceful editorial about it: the *Sun* reported that SLFP backbenchers would caution the Government about going ahead with the Bill to gag the press. The Government today tabled at the National State Assembly the Appropriation Bill for the year with a total Government expenditure of Rs. 4.5 million. The slump in the tea market again continued this week with the prices coming down 10 cents a pound all round. A peace mission from the South who went to Jaffna warned leaders of the TUF not to cause race riots. There were signs of a firm South Vietnamese consent to Kissinger's peace plans: however reports circulated in Washington and elsewhere that France had agreed to supervise the free elections in South Vietnam. Arab League sources were hopeful that North and South Vietnam would sign a unity pact shortly. The Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi was heckled yesterday by indignant demonstrators in Darjeeling and Calcutta for the second day.

demanding that Nepali be recognised as one of the official languages of India.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 26: The 56th day of the bank strike and there were no moves to settle the strike. The Government estimates and appropriation bill for 1973 revealed a gap of Rs. 2,067, million to be filled. The Exchange Control (amendment) Bill was tabled in the National State Assembly yesterday and one of its provisions was to empower the police to arrest without a warrant or prior authority any person suspected of committing offences involving more than Rs. 10,000. An Asian Development Bank team was now in Colombo negotiating a loan of 3.1 million US dollars to develop the fishing industry. The *Sun* reported that the Prime Minister would sound MPs of the SLFP parliamentary group when they met today for their views on the changes proposed to the rice subsidy scheme. An amendment to the Capital Levy Act was tabled in the National State Assembly stipulating that all properties gifted after October, 25 1970, to any person other than the Government or a charitable trust or institution will be deemed to form the capital of the donor for the purpose of the capital levy tax. The Common Market Commission yesterday put the final touches to a far-reaching anti-inflation programme for the ECM as a basis for a concerted effort to curb rising prices. President Idi Amin said yesterday that he would not take Uganda out of the Commonwealth. Letter bombs and booby-trapped parcels exploded in Lebanon and Libya yesterday wounding eight people, three of them seriously.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 27: The 57th day of the bank strike. At a four-hour meeting yesterday presided over by the Prime Minister, SLFP Parliamentarians put forward an 11-point programme which they urged should be implemented in the next Budget: among them were 1). that the prices of essential items like rice, flour and sugar should not be raised—that the rice subsidy scheme should not be changed so as to adversely affect the common man: 2). that organisations like Levers, Ceylon Tobacco, Lake House, etc. should be nationalised forthwith: 3). that the budget should be decentralised on a district

basis and that the District Councils with the MPs in each region forming a council with the GAs as secretaries should implement the Budget; 4). that the import of all luxury items should be banned; 5). that the controlling interests in all sterling companies should be taken over; 6). that an agreement should be signed with Switzerland to enable the Government to obtain the names of all Ceylonese who had secret Swiss bank accounts; etc., etc. According to the *Sun*, the Sri Lanka State Trading Corporation had over a million rupees worth of unsaleable goods in its stores—all imported through the utilisation of scarce foreign exchange: there were 11 million telephone batteries which were of no use for the Telephone Department in Ceylon. Floods had disrupted the train service on the main northern line as a result of a washaway and derailment between Kurunegala and Wellawa on Wednesday night. It was expected that the train services would be restored today whilst most trains had been cancelled yesterday. Hanoi had announced that it was ready to sign the negotiated agreement with the US and release the POWs even before total US troop withdrawals: the US had partially halted its bombing of North Vietnam: but, President Thieu was a stumbling block. President Sadat replaced his war Minister Sadek.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 28: This is the 58th day of the bank strike, and the Insurance Corporation faced with defaults from persons holding life policies has arranged with the banks to enable clients to pay by cheque. The papers published extracts from the political resolution of the LSSP. The *Daily Mirror* reported that the Government has decided to reinstate all those who had been detained under the Emergency Regulations and had been released. A new military regime headed by paratroop Major Mathieu Korekou had captured power in a swift coup in Dahaomey yesterday. Hanoi insisted that the US must sign the agreement by Tuesday, October 31, in spite of Thieu's opposition.

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 29: The 59th day of the bank strike and there were no signs of a settlement. Earthslips had caused damage in several villages in the Chilaw area near

Rambodagalla. The *Observer* published extensive extracts from a minority political resolution before the LSSP Congress which took a different view of the April 1971 insurgency from the view by the party hierarchy. The CID had been called in to investigate an eight-lakh fraud in the Government Factory at Kolonnawa. The *Weekend* suggested that people should "get set for Budget shocks". The Viet Cong had announced that they were prepared for a ceasefire. But President Thieu had created a deadlock by refusing to be party to any coalition with the Communists.

MONDAY, OCTOBER 30: The 60th day of the bank strike. The minority resolution of the LSSP set 8 tasks before the LSSP and the UF: 1). greater participation of the trade unions in management as well as in UF organisation; 2). that only nominal compensation only should be paid for land taken over under the Land Reform Act; 3). that all foreign companies, banks and estates should be expropriated without compensation; 4). That workers Councils must enjoy greater power in management; 5). that Youth brigades should be formed for national work not only to solve the unemployment problem but also to raise work-consciousness; 6)-that the wage structure should be altered so that working class and white collar workers were benefited; 7). that there should be a ceiling to the wealth a family could own, and a ceiling also on the the inheritable wealth an individual can get; and 8). That education should be re-structured on a socialist basis. Arab guerillas yesterday hijacked a Lufthansa plane and demanded the release of the three Arab prisoners held in West Germany over the Munich killings. The US was confident that the ceasefire agreement with Hanoi would be signed—even if it is delayed.

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 31: The 61st day of the bank strike. The *Daily Mirror* reported that the world market prices of rice, flour and sugar had gone up and that this would cost Ceylon Rs. 172 million more in subsidies in foreign exchange. The UNP wanted the release of all detainees held under the Emergency Regulations against whom no charges had been preferred. Government had increased the price of white *pol* arrack: the Rs. 12 bottle will cost Rs. 18 and the Rs. 16 double-distilled bottle will be Rs. 24—the Rs. 8 and Rs. 10 bottles will cost the same. During the last 48 hours, according to police sources' three more co-operative stores had been burgled. West Germany agreed to the Arab guerillas demand and released the three prisoners much to the consternation of Israeli circles.

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On to Puttalam - Negombo Fisher folk, Kaffirs. Colonisation Schemes, Manpower Shortage

By **ALKARDI MUGANA**

A regular *Tribune* correspondent is now (from October 18) on safari in Ceylon. In Africa safari means a hunting expedition. In Ceylon, safari should mean the same thing. But our correspondent writing, under the pseudonym *Alkardi Mugana*, is on a safari in the rural countryside, hunting for information, for facts, off the beaten track. His impressions will be sent to us, from time to time, from different places in Ceylon. We publish in this issue the first of such impressions.

IT RAINED all the way from Colombo to Puttalam. People stood in the aisle, and at Negombo an even bigger crowd got in. The *Deduru Oya* looked a hundred yards wide, the land on either side being flooded.

A fisherman told me that his family and his friends work a *Thep-pang* and fibre-glass boat together. Most of their fish is caught in the nets, and they use lines too. It is a secure occupation because as a last resort they can always eat their fish. They leave for the fishing grounds about 2 a.m. They get their direction from the winds and the stars. If these fail they stay put till

dawn. Even the *thep-pang* carries a lamp.

Some Negombo fisherman emigrate to Mannar for the south-west monsoon. Others go to Kalpitiya for the north-east because there is more fish to be had when the seas are rough at Negombo, and it is more rough at Kalpitiya during the south-west than it is at Negombo, or so I understood. In the monsoon, however, they stick to the fibre-glass boat only.

THERE IS a little colony of Kaffirs at Puttalam. They still look like the Africans. The oldest of the fold speak Portuguese, without knowing it. The middle-aged and the youth disdain to even know it, and use Sinhalese and Tamil Only. The Kaffirs seem to be a hard-working lot.

Looking round the newer colonization schemes, the most striking point seems to be the lack of manpower. The recent week-long seminar, held in Colombo on Family Planning from the point of view of the employer, concentrated on the aspect of more mouths to feed and the apparent inability of agriculture to keep up with it, and a lot of senior

officials addressed the seminar on this aspect.

BUT THE FACTS, if one goes by observation and not so much by statistics, seem to prove the opposite. That it is lack of manpower which is holding up the production of food. No single man can be in two places at once, and so much is left undone in the matter of food production and cottage industries not for lack of money but for sheer lack of people.

Curtainment of population by Family Planning seems to be a very great mistake. Families are split up between older villages and newer colonization schemes and each family has not enough people to work both their properties except in a cursory way. It is not lack of know-how or knowledge, or of equipment or machines. It is sheer lack of people.

On the other hand it is almost impossible to get the unemployed youth out of Colombo. The obvious answer to this is to bring the towns to the villages; to create new towns or, rather, cities. We want in other words, more Colombos and not more Kekirawas. As this will upset the constituencies and therefore the loss of each politicians' power, it is not likely that any government will try this. The creation of a new city would be more effective and quicker in its results than the implementation of any five-year plans. Besides, it will not

call for any foreign aid, we can do it ourselves.

WORKING in a field, if one is not used to doing so, can make one very hungry. One can feel ravenous enough to eat an ox at one sitting, but if food is not available at once, the hunger will pass off in half an hour, but while it lasts, one feels fit enough and weak enough to do nothing but eat.

There has been so much rain where I am writing these notes, that the corn or paddy is sprouting again before it has been stacked and the farmers are having to thresh it while it is wet.

The farmers here have a new problem, caused by others seeking too easy a solution to theirs. They do not have to watch their crops against animals but against men. Young chilly plants are stolen from nurseries at night, stolen by the thousand at a time. If the thief is caught in the act, he leaves the bundle and runs, and this leaves its own problem as to what to do with the uprooted plants until they are planted.

There must be animals, too, for I have seen fairly fresh elephant spoor in the most unlikely place—a paddy field rounded by wire and nowhere near a jungle, but with human habitation around. Animals know their men and just as cart bulls and buffaloes know who are used to

Fifty - Fifth Anniversary of October Revolution

By R. NISHANOV

Ambassador of USSR in Sri Lanka

ON NOVEMBER 7th the Soviet peoples are celebrating the 55th anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution. This revolution ushered in a new epoch in world history—an epoch of revolutionary renovation of the world of transition from capitalism to socialism.

The international significance of the October Revolution is a historical fact. It is also confirmed by the progress of Communist construction in the USSR which has now become a mighty industrial power, and by the impact of this world's first socialist state on world development.

The Soviet Union has traversed a more than fifty-year road of labour and struggle and attained impressive results. But the Central Committee of the CPSU sets new creative tasks, calling the Soviet people to new heights in the building of the material and technical basis of

communism, to the improvement of living and cultural standards. Having advanced its peace programme at the 24th CPSU Congress, the Communist Party appealed to the peoples of foreign countries to join hands in the struggle for peace and security, for national freedom and independence, against the scheming of world imperialism.

The Soviet people are marking the 55th anniversary for the October Revolution on the eve of another significant date—the founding of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, a multi-national state, on December 30, 1922. It was an immediate continuation of the cause of the October Revolution, an embodiment of the ideas of proletarian internationalism.

EVERY SOVIET CITIZEN daily uses the advantages of the socialist system. He is always ensured employment, free medical treatment and an annual leave with pay. Students receive grants from the state. The growth of popular well-being and culture has had a marked effect on the life of Soviet people. Infant mortality has dropped manyfold, while the average

handling them, so do elephants know the men who are used to the jungle, and they turn up their trunks at those who are not. The colonists here come from anywhere but jungle areas.

life span has risen from 32 years in 1913 to 70 years.

Modern Soviet industry is what underlies the upsurge in the standards of living and the economic and defence might of the USSR. During five days it turns out more industrial produce than tsarist Russia did within a year. In 1922, when the USSR was set up, Soviet industry was 35 times less in volume than American industry whereas nowadays Soviet industrial output is more than three-fourths of the US level. In output of several types of produce—steel, pig iron, cement, metal-cutting tools, woolen and cotton fabrics and footwear, Soviet industry was in 1971 ahead of American industry. The priority rate of Soviet industrial development proves the undeniable advantage of socialist economic methods based on public ownership of the means of production. There is complete certainty that the tasks of the further growth of Soviet economy set in the directives of the 24th CPSU Congress for the ninth five-year plan, will be carried out.

The triumph of the Leninist national policy became one of the historical achievements of the October Revolution and an important result of the unification of fraternal peoples within a socialist union. Embodied in this policy is the democratism of inter-

U.S.S.R: A Family of Nations

by **BULAT ZABIROU**

THE RUSSIAN EMPIRE was inhabited by more than 100 nations, nationalities and ethnic groups. Officially the Russians were recognised as the ruling nation; all the others were treated as colonial or semicolonial peoples. They were subjected to the triple yoke of czarism, the Great-Russian bourgeoisie and local feudal relationships; czarist Russia was named

indeed a prison of nations. The Socialist Revolution of October 1917 had among its cardinal objectives the abolition of national oppression. The Soviet Government granted every nation of the dissolved empire the right to self-determination and set up an entirely new and voluntary international community. The Bolsheviks headed by Lenin conceive of this

nationalist ideas championed by Communists. Guided by the Leninist teaching on the possibility for backward peoples to pass over from pre-capitalist stage, the CPSU and the Soviet state followed a policy of evening the levels of economic and cultural development of Soviet peoples. After overcoming their age-old backwardness, the former fringe regions of pre-revolutionary Russia have become advanced sovereign republics, which are ahead of many non-socialist countries of the east in level of economic and cultural development.

CELEBRATING the 55th anniversary of the October Revolution objective analysts in many countries note the successes of Soviet foreign policy in the reduction of international tensions. This policy is being carried out in alliance with the other fraternal socialist states. The

situation in Central Europe is in the process of normalisation. The Soviet stands for a durable and lasting peace in Asia. It is also resolute and consistent in supporting the struggle of the heroic Vietnamese people and in demanding an immediate cessation of the Israeli aggression against the Arab states.

The Soviet Union stands for friendly relations with all developing countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America, a good example of which are our economic and cultural relations with the Republic of Sri Lanka during the past several years.

Under the leadership of the Communist Party, the Soviet people are firmly and consistently marching along the Leninist path of socialism, peace and international friendship.

community of nations as a harmonious family of absolutely equal peoples in which national antagonisms were replaced by mutual trust.

Achieving this was an enormously difficult task. National antagonisms which were deeply rooted in Russia, had reached almost a breaking point. The bourgeois nationalists of the Ukraine, Byelorussia, Lithuania, Transcaucasia and Central Asia taking advantage of the chaotic situation, worked feverishly for separation from Russia. The old enmities between the various small nationalities threatened to erupt as they actually did in Transcaucasia, for instance, in bloody clashes. Under these conditions the national policy of the Soviet state had to be both clear and flexible, firm and cautious. Lenin and his comrades-in-arms conducted such a policy concerning the national question.

Addressing himself to the working masses of Russia's national outlands, Lenin wrote: "We want a voluntary union of nations, a union that would not permit violence by one nation against another, a union founded on the fullest trust, on a clear recognition of fraternal unity, on entirely voluntary consent."

For this policy to be implemented, it was necessary not only to nip in the bud every relapse to Great-Russian chauvinism,

but to demonstrate in practice the determination to help small peoples in the country's provinces pull out of their economic and cultural backwardness. In the first years of Soviet power, Central Russia was still devastated from World War I and the Civil War, and all resources seemed exhausted. Nevertheless, the government found ways to help the outland peoples. For instance, in 1921, when many of the universities and colleges in Russia proper were still closed, national universities were opened in Tashkent (Central Asia) and Baku (Transcaucasia) by special Soviet government decree. Any number of such instances of concern could be cited.

THE POLICY of Lenin's party gradually persuaded the working people of the non-Russian nationalities to

abandon their prejudices and suspicion. In March 1921 a resolution of the Tenth Congress of the Communist Party noted that the right to self-determination and the formation of independent Soviet republics had built mutual trust among the working masses of the different nationalities, had "raised this trust to the point of enthusiasm, of readiness to fight for the common cause."

In December, 1922, the First Congress of Soviet of the USSR proclaimed a Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. The declaration on the formation of the Union pointed out that it was only under Soviet power that national oppression could be uprooted, an atmosphere of mutual trust created, and the foundation of fraternal



The new Buddhist temple of the Ivolginsk monastery in Ulan Ude, the Buriat Autonomous Republic.

cooperation by the nations laid. Mikhail Kalinin, a Russian worker and a party comrade of Lenin, was elected Chairman of the Central Executive Committee of the USSR. The country's supreme authority between all-Union congress of Soviets between 1923 and 1927. Its functions are now performed by the USSR Supreme Soviet. In his closing remarks to the congress Kalinin said: "Whole millenniums have passed since the best minds of mankind began to tackle the theory behind the search for forms that would make it possible for the peoples to live in friendship and brotherhood, without the most terrible torments and mutual struggle. Only now, on this day, is the first stone being laid in practice toward this end."

The first congress of Soviets proved the success of the Leninist national policy. On the eve of the congress Lenin flatly rejected the so-called autonomization plan. It provided that the Soviet republics, with autonomous rights, merge within the framework of the Russian Federation. What was proposed, in other words, was a form of amalgamation in which the Russian Federation would be vested with full power and the independence of the other republics curtailed. Lenin proposed instead a voluntary union of independent and equal republic. His proposal was accepted,

Overcoming nationalism required much painstaking effort, tact and caution. Lenin kept reminding those in authority that the decades of czarist Russia's great-power chauvinism had left open wounds. And that it was therefore the duty of the Russian Communists and the Soviet Government not only to observe the principle of national equality meticulously but, even more important, to make the most painstaking effort to eliminate the accumulated mistrust and resentment.

THE PROCLAMATION of equality of nations, coupled with the rigorous application of this principle to everyday life, was the first blow struck at nationalism. But for the broad masses to be convinced that a basically new relationship between the large and small nationalities was a real possibility, the equality of the newly formed republics had to be demonstrated in action. They had to be made economic and cultural equals, and that had to be done in a historically brief period, in a matter of two or three decades.

It was no easy thing. The backwardness of Russia's national provinces, especially those in the East, was appalling. Take Uzbekistan, for instance. Tashkent, the capital as late as the second half of the nineteenth century had a slave market where people were actually bought

and sold. And it was these regions that had to be brought to the level of Central Russia. Aid of all kinds, from Central Russia primarily, was the main, and originally the only, answer. The redistribution of the national income of the Union as a whole in favour of the backward nations made for their speedy progress.

If by 1939 the fixed assets of industry in the country as a whole had increased about eight times compared with 1927-1928, in the Central Asian republics the increase was 19 times. Hundreds of industrial enterprises had been built in the Central Asian republics, dozens of them big ones of countryside importance. In Kazakhstan, a republic neighbouring on Central Asia with no industry of any kind, an industrial base established that subsequently, during the war with nazi Germany, 1941-45, played a vital part in keeping the front supplied.

Impressive cultural and scientific progress was made by the republics. Local cadres were trained. The peoples of the outlying regions saw tangible evidence of growth. This gave them confidence and a sense of national pride. It also made them increasingly aware of the unity and friendship of all the peoples of the Soviet Union, of their fraternal mutual aid, of the community of their efforts, all of which is what we mean

by socialist internationalism. This sense of being a single family, of the new-Soviet patriotism, is what enabled the Union to stand up against and win the war with the nazi aggressor.

MILLIONS of Soviet soldiers repose in eternal sleep over the vast expanse of the land, from the Black to the White Sea, from Moscow to Berlin, from the Volga to the Elbe. Russian poplar and birch, Byelorussian weeping willow, Polish linden and Hungarian chestnut trees rustle over their common graves. Resting there are the sons of all the Soviet peoples, men, young and middle-aged, in the mountains of the Caucasus, in the caves of Central Asia, in the steppes of Kazakhstan.... An old Georgian woman dressed in black visits a Lithuanian in a village. Her arms gently supported by tow-headed boys, she walks to the edge of the village, bends over the grave and lays a handful of Georgian earth on it.... Russian mothers go to the graves of their sons in Estonia and Moldavia, Ukrainian mothers go to Byelorussia, Armenian to Latvia.... The heroic deeds and the blood shed in the war of liberation cemented even more strongly the family of Soviet nations. In the fire of the war against nazism, socialist internationalism was tested and hardened.

Attacking the USSR, Hitler Germany pinned

its hopes on the breakdown of the union of Soviet republics, on the revival of nationalism under the impact of the first serious defeats of the Red Army. This could not and did not happen. All the Soviet divisions on the war fronts were multinational in composition—people of every Soviet nationality. Thousands of them won the honoured title Hero of the Soviet Union. But the ones who bore the brunt of the hardships and sacrifices were the Russians. And every nation of the Union pays homage to them for the leading part they played in the historic struggle.

EQUALITY of the nations and peoples of the Soviet Union is not only guaranteed by the Constitution and the laws of the country but is actually practiced in all walks of life. As a matter of fact, the small peoples and ethnic groups are the subject of special concern. It is like the care shown by a family for its younger children.

Representatives of all the various nations and peoples inhabiting the Union are to be found in the top government bodies in Moscow. In the Soviet of Nationalities of the USSR Supreme Soviet 66 of the 750 seats are held by members of the small national minorities, which total less than one per cent of the population of the Union. This is characteristic. There is no strict proportion here, but

rather a typical illustration of Soviet democracy.

The Secretary of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet is Mikhail Georgadze, a Georgian. The Chairmen of the Soviet of Nationalities is an Uzbek woman, Yadgar Nasriddinova. The Chief of the Central Statistical Board of the USSR is Valdimir Starovsky, a Komi.

To be an internationalist is to think not only of one's own nation but as primary the interests of all the nations and peoples, of the entire state. This overriding idea runs like a red thread through the national policy of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, through all its efforts to instill new social attitudes. And this idea has penetrated deep into the consciousness of our people, of all the nationalities. The socialist internationalism of the Soviet peoples manifested itself most conspicuously in the difficult period of post-war reconstruction of those parts of the USSR that had been occupied by the Nazi's (the Ukraine, Moldavia, Byelorussia, the Baltic regions, the western part of the Russian Federation). All our republics participated in this urgent work. There is hardly a big plant in the Soviet Union where people of different nationalities do not work side by side. Take the Baku oil refinery in Azerbaijan, in the Transcaucasus. Among in the best workers in the

REPORTAGE

G. D. R. Today

By Basil Perera

are the children of these couples? That gets little thought: The children usually decide for themselves which nationality to choose, the father's or the mother's. The really important thing is that these mixed marriages bring healthy, gifted, fine offspring—working people of the great country of socialism. In this atmosphere, swiftly "developing national cultures benefit each other. A dual process is to be observed: On the one hand, the purely national culture of each people blossoms; on the other, the mixing of the different national cultures gradually creates a new socialist culture common to all Soviet nations. The best features of all the nations of our country, the best elements of their culture, blend into one. Soviet cultural life acquires an ever more distinctly international character. Prior to the Revolution many of the nationalities in Russia had no alphabets of their own—the Kirghiz, Kazakhs, Yakuts, the peoples of Daghestan in the Caucasus among them. Today all these peoples have their own alphabets and their own literature, and they contribute to the culture of the Union as a whole.

All the Soviet nations, including those that were formerly outside the mainstream of civilisation, are now, under socialism demonstrating their creative talents, creating significant spiritual values. For the drawing together of our

I HAD the great privilege of making a short tour of the German Democratic Republic last July. I visited Berlin and Potsdam, Dresden and Leipzig, met representatives of the GDR Foreign Ministry and the Socialist Unity Party, officials of the Institute of International Relations, the Peace Council and the South-east Asia Society, lawyers, engineers who designed our textile mill at Thulhiriya, editors of the *Neues Deutschland* and *Frei Welt* and officials of the GDR Union of Journalists. I visited farms and factories, art galleries and

this fact is of cardinal importance. It refutes the lies about "Superior and "Inferior" nations, objectively helps to formulate an internationalist outlook among the people of the large nations, develops among the small nations a healthy sense of national pride.

A new historical community of peoples—the Soviet nation—has been formed in the Soviet multinational land in the course of socialist construction. It is a community without the inner contradictions that arise from nationalism. Multinational in its ethnic composition, this community is an entity in its social beliefs, ideals, interests, aims.

old imperial castles, a pioneer camp, even the former concentration camp at Sachsenhausen.

Through all these visits and meetings and discussions with responsible persons in different spheres of activity, I was able to add considerably to my knowledge of the GDR and gain some insight into the problems of the people engaged in the profound task of building the first German worker's and peasants' state.

AS IS well-known, real 'economic miracle' has taken place in the GDR since it was formed in 1949. Starting almost from scratch, with an economy bled white by the Second World War, and an almost total lack of coal and iron ore, the GDR has phoenix-like risen from the ashes to become Europe's fifth and the world's eighth biggest industrial power.

It has only a quarter of the population and territory of the Nazi Reich. Yet, production in the GDR long ago topped that of Hitler Germany at the height of its power.

Today, on the economic front, the GDR is concentrating all its energies towards overcoming certain disproportions between its basic industries. It is also giving precedence to capital investments which will help

speed up economic development as a whole, including the development of consumer goods industries. The GDR has already scored certain successes in these directions. What is more, the workers were pursuing this 'new economic policy' with great interest and enthusiasm.

With the ever-increasing successes of socialism, the state was confidently taking over more and more private industries and semi-state industries and running them as full-fledged state-owned enterprises. This was being done by permitting only the state to make new investments in these industries. In some cases, private shares were being bought over by the state. Today the state sector in industry accounts for more than 99 per cent of industrial production compared with 83 per cent in 1971.

All these economic advances have resulted in bringing the 'good things to the people of the GDR. As even the reactionary *Readers' Digest* has been forced to admit; "Real wages have increased, people are now saving money instead of hoarding food, rationing has ceased, rents are kept low, medical costs are next to nothing, the prices of staples generally are down, and the quality of shoes and clothing is up." All these material benefits which the workers now enjoy were bound to lead to greater productivity, leading in turn to greater prosperity for all in the future.

AN IMPORTANT point worth nothing is that the process of intergration within the Council of Mutual Economic Assistance has reached a new stage. From the stage of joint planning, it has now advanced to the stage of joint undertakings with joint investments, joint management and joint production. Big projects jointly planned by socialist countries were now under way. Thus, in the GDR will be soon build a textile mill jointly sponsored with Poland. The GDR will join five other socialist countries in setting up in the Soviet Union a big cellulose factory whose products they will jointly use.

This process of integration within the CMEA has even led to cooperation in scientific research by specialists in different socialist countries and the abolition of visas for travel between these countries. The GDR has already done away with the issue of visas with respect to its neighbours, Poland and Czechoslovakia.

The GDR has a very peculiar population structure. Due to a concentration of historical circumstances—two world wars and the cold war—it has the highest ratio in the world of old persons to young, resulting in a very high death rate and consequently an actual annual decrease in population of 0.3 per cent.

Thus, there is a shortage of labour in the GDR,

a position which is expected to change for the better only by 1980. Coupled with the shortage of essential raw materials referred to earlier, this tends to create grave problems for the country. But the GDR is striving to overcome this handicap by getting friendly countries to help her build special projects using their own manpower. Thus, Poles are constructing pipelines in the GDR using Polish labour. Yugoslavia and Sweden are putting up hotels on a similar basis.

THE SUCCESSES scored by the GDR in the field of foreign policy have not been second to its achievements on the home front. The GDR today has diplomatic relations with 31 countries in which live the majority of the world's population. It has official representation in 65 countries. It has treaties relating to shipping and aviation, scientific and technological co-operation with an ever-increasing number of countries.

The recent period has witnessed the conclusion and ratification of the treaties between the Soviet Union and the FRG as well as between the Polish People's Republic and the FRG, the Quadripartite Agreement on West Berlin, the Transit Traffic Agreement between the GDR and the FRG and the arrangements made with the West Berlin Senate and finally the transport treaty between the GDR and

the FRG. All these have brought the post-war period in Europe to an end and opened up a new, hopeful chapter for European detente and world peace.

These developments have not taken place accidentally. They are the direct result of the growing strength of socialism on a world scale, the growth of the might and prestige of the GDR, factors which have put paid to the old day-dreams of Dulles and Adenauer about 'rolling back' the frontiers of Communism and 'liberating' the states of Eastern Europe. They are a tribute to the consistent peace policy of the Soviet Union, the GDR and other socialist states which have patiently and persistently launched one peace offensive after another till the more realist leaders in the West themselves have been forced to acknowledge the new balance of forces in the Europe and the world.

This is the why and wherefore behind the new detente. As the Deputy General Secretary of the GDR Peace Council, Richard Zaenker, told me, summarising these developments neatly: "by strengthening socialism in the GDR, we have ensured world peace."

AS THOSE who have studied the treaties between the Soviet Union and the FRG and between Poland and the FRG will know, they bring the sanction of international law to the results of World War II and post-war developments

in Europe, confirm the inviolability of the existing European frontiers and make the renunciation of the use or threat of force a basic principle in relations between European states. The Moscow treaty also stipulates the recognition in international law of the frontier between the two German states, with the FRG accepting the sovereignty of the GDR.

All these have created the necessary pre-requisites for the establishment of normal diplomatic and other relations between the GDR and the FRG as well as the admission of both states to the UNO and its specialized agencies. But, unfortunately, the Bonn authorities have resorted to new devices to obstruct these next steps to further relaxation of tension in Europe. Far from establishing normal relations with the GDR they have used pressure tactics on third states to prevent that latter from doing so. And they have intrigued to prevent the admission of the GDR to the WHO and its participation in the Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment on a basis of equality.

Bonn seeks to make these next steps towards European detente conditional on some vague 'minimum level' to be attained in the settlement of bilateral relations between the two German states on the basis of the absurd concept of 'special inner

German relations'. But what kind of 'inner-German relations' can there be between the socialist GDR and the monopoly-capitalist FRG? The only kind of relations that can exist between them are relations of peaceful co-existence applicable to states with different social systems. Anything else would not only be a gross violation of the norms of international law. It would also be in sharp contradiction to the Declaration of Intent which the FRG made in connection with its treaty with the Soviet Union by which it undertook to renounce any kind of discrimination against the GDR in the international arena.

Opinion is unanimous in the GDR that after the ratification of its treaties with the Soviet Union and Poland, the FRG must now throw out outmoded concepts like 'inner-German relations' into the limbo of forgotten things into which history has already consigned slogans like "greater Germany",

Many people with whom I discussed international affairs in the GDR agreed that the Brandt Government has no future if it merely continues the old policies of Adenauer under new labels. On the contrary, fear was expressed that such weak and vacillating policies might only help Right extremists like Strauss and Brazel.

As Ludwig Herms, editor of *German Foreign Policy*, told me in the course of

WIJEWEERA AND CHELVANAYAKAM

a long and interesting conversation, the Rightists in the FRG have learnt their lesson. If they seek to usher in fascism again, they will not use the old Hitlertic methods but lead the West German to it in more sophisticated ways, mainly capitalising on the weaknesses and vacillations of Willi Brandt.

The fight against fascism in West Germany thus merges with the struggle waged by the GDR for normal relations between the two German states on the only basis possible in international law, the basis of peaceful co-existence.

MULTI-PURPOSE ALARM

A bank in one of the outskirts of Bangkok installed an alarm system connected with a nearby police station. Some time later it was tested for reliability. Imagine everyone's surprise when the only response was a small boy carrying a bowl of noodles. Investigations revealed that the police station where the alarm buzzed was located next door to a noodle shop, and the bank employees had arranged with the police to use the system to order noodles.

IN this issue we publish two statements for the record: one by the JVP leader, Rohana Wijeweera, and the other by the TUF-FP leader, S. J. V. Chelvanayakam. Wijeweera submitted his statement in writing to the Criminal Justice Commission and we publish the text (abridged owing to exigencies of space) as published by the *Ceylon Daily Mirror* on September 30, 1972. S. J. V. Chelvanayakam made a statement when he resigned from the National State Assembly on October, 3 and the statement was made in the Assembly.

"DURING THE short period of my life I have seen that the law in this prevailing social system is one thing and justice another. In this society the law has no justice, and justice has no law. The law can imprison people who respect justice, torture them, humiliate them and put them to death. But the law cannot make people forget justice. It is possible for those who respect justice to disregard the capitalist law and fulfil their obligations to the people."

So stated Mr. Rohana Wijeweera, the leader of the proscribed Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna, the 13th suspect in the insurgency trial in the course of his written submissions to the Criminal Justice Commission protesting against the illegality of the Criminal Justice Commission Act.

Here are excerpts from Mr. Wijeweera's written submissions:

I am not a person who has studied the law. I was

at one time a medical student, and it was because of my faith in and commitment to human progress, justice and equity that I became involved in politics. I trust that in considering my protest you will bear these circumstances that I write this statement bearing on law.

Of the legal system prevailing in this capitalist society my knowledge derives from the mass of my own experiences. In the light of these experiences I have no faith in the system. I do however, have a firm belief in justice. I know well and understand fully what justice is. I am submitting my views and making my protest in accordance with my conscience and in the name of justice, equity and human right.

THE RULING CLASS of this society presents its legal code and its judicial system as the immaculate symbol and image of absolute justice, absolute righteousness, omnipotence

and utmost purity. It represents that legal code and judicial system as a chaste virgin, blindfold, with sword in one hand and scales in the other. But what if a privileged minority forcibly rapes this virgin, takes her into their power, and incites her by terrorising her to raise her sword against those who respect justice? Will not that maiden of justice then appear to the people as a common prostitute running amok?

What has the ruling clique of this country done in setting up a new tribunal, in creating a new institution through the Criminal Justice Commissions Act? Have they not raped that "Immaculate" maiden of justice by force, taken her into their power and made her their instrument to fulfil their class needs and their debased ends? How can one obtain justice and equity at the hands of a maiden of justice who has lost her virginity at the hands of this vicious ruling clique?

In a society where a handful of idle men unjustly exploit the labour power of the mass of the people, where the power of capital rules, where feudal and capitalist rulers use their oppressive state power permanently to repress the proletarian majority, where opposing classes confront each other, justice and the law can never be one.

As a confirmed and ardent Communist who has

accepted the fact of the class struggle, I have realised that in a capitalist society the class struggle within the judicial institutions takes the form of the conflict between capitalist law and social justice.

Evidence the simple and clear truth that is evident to me as a Communist regarding this question from a class angle is that my protest should be directed not at the legal system nor at this Act, which are only part of the superstructure, but at the entire social system. This is what I have always done and will continue to do.

BEFORE I CONCLUDE my observations on this Act, I should like to draw your attention to what the author of this Act, the Minister of Justice, Mr. Felix Dias Bandaranaike, stated in Parliament while using every form of pressure in his unrelenting effort to have the Act adopted. On Tuesday the 4th April 1972 he said.

"The first of these is to charge them under the existing law. That is one way. If we adopt that course, you will never be able to prove a single case. There is no harm in following that course if what you want is to set them all free." (Hansard, April 1972, p. 107)

Does this not show that this Act was framed with the sole intention of not releasing and of punishing the suspects? Is this not a sentence passed by cons-

titutional means, in accordance with the needs of the ruling class? Has not punishment already been meted out? On Wednesday 5th April 1972, the Minister said:

"If after the debate on this Bill is over, it does not get the necessary two-thirds majority, I am seriously thinking of recommending to the Hon. Prime Minister that she should release all the insurgents at once, especially those from the electorates of the Hon. Members who vote against this Bill."

The Hon. Sirimavo Bandaranaike: "And withdraw the Army also."

The Hon. Felix Dias Bandaranaike: "You seem determined to preach civil rights. Well, all you have to do is vote against the Bill, and you will get your consignment of 'thrustawadis' coming right home to roost almost at once. You can get them at Warakapola, you can get them all back to your respective electorates if that is what you want...."

The Hon. Sirimavo Bandaranaike: "Withdraw the armed services also."

The Hon. Felix Dias Bandaranaike: "Of course you cannot possibly tell the Army to go ahead and fight these people's if Hon. Members are not prepared to give them the legal protection that is required, Madam Prime Minister." (Hansard p.449)

What is the effect of these statements? Are they not threats? Are they not a sentence, passed by constitutional means that we should remain in prison in accordance with their wishes? Do they not permit and give legal sanction to the armed services and police to harass and oppress the people as compensation for protecting the ruling clique? When the father of the Act has set out the truth in such clear and simple terms, what need is there for further commentary? According to the statement of the Minister of Justice in Parliament, it is the Attorney-General who advised him to draw up this Act. He is said to have given the Minister of Justice such advice on the 1st February 1972. If that statement is true, what has the prosecution done? Is it not punishing people under a law it has enacted according to its wishes, *ex post facto*—law enacted after an inhuman and unjust investigation conducted with utmost brutality—a law enacted to suit not only the incidents but also the investigation and its results? Is this legal? Is it just? Is it honourable? Is it moral?

I KNOW WELL that the blame for this unjust and inhuman Act should be placed on the constitutional dictatorship. Its supporters in Parliament have, without any honourable expression of protest, bowed down in cowardly fashion to the dictates of this constitutional dicta-

torship. They have betrayed with their consent the independence of the judicial system. The handful of persons who do not fall into this category made a fruitless attempt to repair the damage to the dignity of the judicial system. The cowardly and obedient majority have submerged these few. My appearance before this commission and my statements may be a futile act which will only lend an appearance of legality to these arbitrary and autocratic decisions. Yet it is my determination and my hope to tear down with a strong hand the curtain that conceals these shameful purposes.

As you have yourselves accepted there is no doubt that this trial is the most important in our history. The ruling that you will make today about the legality of this Commission and of the Act, and of the legality conducting an enquiry under the Act, will be an historic one. Even though the ideas I express here may be buried by the silence imposed on me by the constitutional dictatorship, future generations will fix their eyes many thousands of times on the decision you will give today.

You intend to judge the right and wrong of the Criminal Justice Commissions Act, I urge you to remember that future generations will judge the right and wrong of your decision today, not once, but hundreds and thousands

of times. The words I speak today will be echoed by others in the future many times over, not because I have spoken them, but because the question of justice is an eternal one.

Mr. Chairman, the indelible bloodstains that the ruling clique is bespattered with and the dishonourable efforts made by them to conceal them through your means cannot be unknown to you. Can you not see that the ruling clique has sought most craftily to fulfil their despicable purposes through you? Should you tall a prey to the design of the ruling class to make you a catspaw?

The Chairman of this Commission is the Chief Justice of our Republic. The other members of the Commission are the Judges of our Supreme Court. The masses of this country who have respect for and faith in you are waiting eagerly to see justice done at your hands and right upheld. If there is no room for you to protect your honour and that of the judiciary and uphold Justice and Right without bowing your head before the arbitrary laws of the vicious constitutional dictatorship, then the people will be happy to see the entire judiciary resign in the name of justice equality and human rights.

THE WHOLE of mankind is watching attentively the decision you will make regarding the legality of the Criminal Justice Commissions Act. Your ruling will be judged by genera-

S.J.V.'S STATEMENT

tions of your children and grandchildren. As a young man who has been compelled to endure in silence injustices, inequities, baseless insults, slanders and humiliations, who has been made the victim of privations and torture, I ask of you, in the name of justice, equality and human rights that you reject the Criminal Justice Commissions Act as being illegal and contrary to the principles of natural justice. If not, I ask that you propose to the Minister of Justice that a new Section 29 be added to the Act reading: "In order to inform the world of the true state of things in this country, a board shall be erected henceforth at the Katunayake Airport with the words: Sri Lanka, A Land Without Justice."

Whatever your ruling may be the supreme tribunal of the conscience of humanity has already given its judgement that the Criminal Justice Commission Act is illegal and contrary to the principles of natural justice.

On the Cover

A TURKMENIAN

Valya Mamedoya

A Student of the
Philological Faculty
of the M. Gorky Turkmen
State University

This is the full text of the statement by Mr. S. J. V. Chelvanayakam, in the National State Assembly, before he tendered his resignation as MP for Kankasanturai on October 3, 1972.

The history of the Tamil People in this country since 1948 has been one of deterioration. In the then Parliament of ninety-five elected members there were eight Tamil members representing the estate Tamil population who are today not there. They have been re-placed by Sinhalese members by now in double that number. The eight Tamil members were there by the grant of the vote to the bulk of the workers on the estates. This was thought to be a just decision on the question of Tamils of Indian origin by the United Kingdom government.

As soon as Ceylon became independent the first thing the Sinhalese government did was to deprive the Tamil workers in the estates of the vote. This was carefully manoeuvred through a Citizenship law that deprived them of citizenship and by granting the vote to citizens only. The entire structure on which the Soulbury Constitution was based collapsed. It must be said to the credit of the LSSP and the CP that they opposed this move through they have now succumbed to a purely communal policy.

The next most important thing that took place was the passing of the Sinhala Only Act by the Bandaranaike government in 1956. Even this was made possible by the depriving of the vote of the Tamil worker on the estates. Although the Tamil worker has been deprived of the vote the seats that were allotted to them have not been removed but have been given to the Sinhalese voter. This has meant that from 1952 onwards the legislature has been a Sinhalese weighted body and all legislation thereafter has been communal Sinhalese. Had the vote remained as it was in 1947 the landslide in the election of 1970 would not have taken place.

The next important event has been the creation of a new constitution by a legislature that was so Sinhalese weighted. The constitution had given everything to the Sinhalese and has given nothing to the Tamils. The Sinhala Only Act has been so strengthened that it requires a two-third majority to alter it. Sinhala has been made the language of the Courts. All talk about a man being tried in his own language applies to the Sinhala man and not to the Tamil man. There are many other features of the constitution that I need not mention here. Even the sight protection that was given to the minorities by sec-

tion 29 of the old constitution has been removed.

Faced with this situation the Tamil people of different parties formed a Tamil United Front and appealed to the Prime Minister to remedy some of these evils. I on behalf of the Tamil United Front wrote to the Prime Minister a letter raising six points on which the constitution has to be amended and we gave her time till the 30th of September to do that. But nothing has been done. In this situation the responsibility falls on my head, as the leader of the Tamil United Front to appeal to the Tamil people for them to say whether they are with me or not.

It is claimed by the Government that a sizable section of the Tamil people accept the constitution. We deny this and want to give an opportunity to the government to prove that claim. The best way in which that can be done is for me as the leader of the Tamil United Front to resign my seat in this Honourable House and re-contest it on my policy and ask the government to oppose me on its policy. Of course the decision will be that of the Tamil people. My policy will be that in view of the events that have taken place the Tamil people of Ceylon should have the right to determine their future whether they are to be a subject race in Ceylon or they are to be a free people. I shall ask the people to

Threat to High-Yield Crops.

THE triumph of the green revolution contains the seed of potential danger, warns a recently published report by the National Academy of Science (NAS) of the United States. Prepared by the committee on the "genetic vulnerability of major crops", the 300-page document says the danger of crop losses from epidemic is greater today than in the past.

The new high-yielding varieties have made crops genetically more uniform, rendering them vulnerable to new pathogens. But scientists continue to develop these varieties the report says. The report notes that most of the the major crops—maize, wheat, jowar, bajra, rice, potato, soyabeans, and cotton—are "impressively uniform genetically and impressively vulnerable."

The major crops are now becoming vulnerable because the recent technological advances depend on a small number of

vote for me on the second of these alternatives.

Let the Government contest me on that position. If I lose I give up my policy. If the government loses let it not say that the Tamil people support its policy and its constitution. Let not the government deprive the people of their decision on the issues raised by postponing the by-election."

genes such as the high-yielding gene, protein-yielding gene, and the dwarfing gene. Prominent examples are the dwarf varieties of wheat and rice that comprise much of the base for what has been called the "green revolution". The danger is that if one of these genes, such as the dwarf gene, is incorporated into a number of varieties, the crop becomes correspondingly uniform for that gene. And, if a parasite with a preference for his characters controlled by that particular gene were to come along, the stage would be set for an epidemic. Scientists say this is precisely what happened in 1970 when 15 per cent. of the maize crop in the United States was devastated by an epidemic.

The fungus which caused the epidemic attacked only a single type of maize, but that type of maize was grown by every farmer in America. The threat to wheat also is real. In the case of rice, which feeds half the world's population, the dwarf strains developed by the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) have now been introduced almost everywhere in tropical Asia, replacing traditional varieties.

"This is indeed a serious situation," said Dr. M. S. Swaminathan, director-general of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research

(ICAR). In India, the green revolution has brought about significant increases in the production of wheat, bajra, jowar, maize and rice. Dr. Swaminathan said that new varieties of these crops will be introduced once in five years so that they would not become "uniform", thereby avoiding any epidemic threats.

A recent report from the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) has also drawn scientists' attention to the fact that the green revolution has left in its wake serious outbreaks of diseases among high-yielding crops. This topic will be one of the important subjects to be discussed in the FAO regional conference opening in New Delhi.

In India too, there have been reports of disease among crops that are characterised by uniformity. The greatest setback, according to Dr. Swaminathan, is in the case of bajra, whose hybrids have a high genetic yield but have proved to be highly susceptible to the ergot and mildew diseases, "because all these hybrids have the same 'male-sterile' parent." Steps are now being taken to diversify the male-sterile source.

Apart from bajra, the HYV programme launched by India in 1966 was based on four other food crops—wheat, jowar, rice and maize. And in the last six years, the semidwarf wheats from Mexico have

been introduced in about 15 million acres, or 38 per cent, of the total acreage in India.

There are already signs that most widely grown wheat varieties like "Kalyan son" and "Sonalika" may be affected by brown and yellow rusts. And wheat, with the dwarf gene are reported to be showing susceptibility to a certain fungus in Punjab. Since wheat "black rust" moves from the south (particular) the Nilgris and Mysore) to the north, it was essential to grow only the resistant varieties in the south.

To avoid any possible epidemic in the rabi season, the ministry of agriculture has asked the state governments to be vigilant. A programme on wheat disease surveillance is now underway with headquarters at the Indian Agricultural Research Institute in New Delhi. In the case of rice, however, Dr. Swaminathan said, there is no cause for fear pests. The strains of "Tadukan" and "Tetep" from South-East Asia are resist to the blast fungus. The rice collection from north-west India have valuable genes for pest resistance. Dr. Swaminathan said a major international project to fight pests and diseases in crops will begin shortly with the establishment of a global network of genetic resource centres with headquarters at the FAO, Rome. India is likely to have a centre of this network.

The project, which was recently approved for funding, was suggested by India to the technical advisory committee of the consultative group for international agricultural research. Under this project all primitive crop varieties will be collected and preserved for use in breeding programmes. Dr. Swaminathan said that only eternal vigilance and a dynamic breeding programme could ward off tragedies like the Irish potato famine of the last century and the Bengal famine of 1943.

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From page 1
coated and invisible manner. The *Sun* leaked the story a short time ago: that persons with incomes above a particular amount will not get the free measure but that they will be able to buy two measures a week at a controlled price at the coops: that the others whose incomes were lower would be given a cash voucher equivalent to the value of the subsidy in lieu of the free measure which they could convert to cash to purchase rice at the fixed government price—or buy any other goods—if and when available at the coops. When Mr. Dudley Senanayake cut the ration by half in 1967, he “sold” it to the voters with the gimmick of a free measure of rice.

The cash voucher is just another gimmick, but it will be argued that without such gimmickry the rulers in a parliamentary democracy would not be able to rule. Without entering into a discussion of the inevitability of gimmicks in a parliamentary democracy, it must be said that cash vouchers will be based on bank credit (it will be only another form of printing currency notes) and this will lead to an inflationary spiral of prices of the very essentials people want. It will be idle to speculate on what will issue from the Finance Minister's *pandora's box* on November 10, but there is not the slightest doubt that the common man will “take”

the hardest measures in good faith—if the parliamentarians who seek to impose them do not ride about in 5 Sri and 6 Sri cars made available to them at a cost which is only a fraction of the current market value of these cars.

WHILST THE dark shadows of the budget hang over the country ominously, the Government has tabled the draft Press Council Bill and has sought a debate on November 15. In the meantime the Civil Rights Movement has challenged its validity before the Constitutional Court. The draft Bill has measures which impose severe restrictions on the publication of certain kind of news which have been scheduled as “government news”. It is said that the Bill does not impose any restrictions on comment on news which is “officially released”, but the essence of press freedom is to be able to anticipate news and to comment on them in advance.

There is not the slightest doubt that the government is very shortsighted in its approach to the problem. However, the daily press in Ceylon has certainly not over the last thirty years and more, discharged its responsibilities in the way a free truly press should have done. Right up to 1956, *Lake House* and *Times* made and unmade politicians and governments: character assassination of the vilest kind was the weapon freely used by these two

groups to achieve their ends. The break in the “coalition” between the *Lake House* and the *Times* groups in 1954-55, however temporary, made it possible for the landslide victory scored by S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike in 1956. The infamous role played by these two groups between 1956 and the assassination of SWRD in 1959 is part of the political history of this country and columns of *Tribune* of that period will reveal the disgraceful manner in which these big daily groups exercised the “freedom of the press.” Both groups wanted to “manage” the news in such a way that they were king-makers (and profit-earners), and the true responsibilities of a free press never entered into their calculations.

It was because of this deplorable history of the two big press groups that a demand arose for some action against such unprincipled conduct by powerful newspapers. Since 1960, SLFP-led governments and coalitions have sought to curb the activities of the “monopoly” press, but it was unfortunate that the Government was never willing to adopt measures to permit a truly free independent and responsible press to grow in this country. In the meantime, the *Sun-Dawasa* group joined the giants and it scored a political victory when it helped to bring the UF to power in May 1970. The *Sun-Dawasa* group wanted to

be the new kingmaker and it began to "manage" the news to suit its own purposes. It encouraged the takeover and breakup of the powerful *Lake House* for purely selfish reasons.

The UF Government started with good intentions that of enabling a "free press" to grow on a new re-distribution of government advertisements but they only encouraged party papers; and with the customarily narrow parochial imperatives of "party" dailies, they never made the grade. The SLFP's *Srilaka* folded up sometime ago: the CP's *Aththa* has been wobbling for sometime: The LSSP *Janadina* is still in publication but it has little or no impact on readers outside the LSSP. Having failed to set up a United Front daily press, able to compete and challenge the big three, the Government confronted with mounting criticism from all sides has resorted to a series of draft Press Council Bills to curb the activities of the Press. This is tragic. The remedy will be worse than the evil. When the freedom of free communication in any country is disturbed by the intervention of power, only disaster can befall that country. It is not merely a "violation against the freedom of print", it is "closing down the heart of a nation." One word of truth, it has been said, shall outweigh the whole world.

IT IS IDLE to preach sermons to a Government,

with a steam-roller majority, but a cynical observer can only sit back and say that the big daily papers in Sri Lanka have only got what they asked for: they never believed in the true freedom of the press: *Tribune* was a dirty unmentionable word in the *Lake House* and the *Times* ever since we began publication in 1954 because this little paper published news and comments which the big dailies suppressed, slanted and twisted. The *Sun-Dawasa* group was no better. All these papers published only news and comments which suited the ruling Establishment in the different organisations.

However, it is no doubt futile to indulge in a fit of sadism to say that the big dailies have got what has been coming to them for a long time. Even today these papers have not realised their responsibilities. They are only advertisement news-sheets and all the news "fit to print" which they publish — domestic and international — can be read in a few minutes. Huge headlines and advertisements take most of the space. It takes about five to ten minutes to read the news and comments in the *Daily News*—the rest are fillers and journalistic trash. The *Daily Mirror* takes even less time to get through. The *Sun*, at the moment, publishes more political news than the other two, but the rest of columnage does not reflect the responsibilities of a free press.

One cannot get an idea of what is happening in Ceylon, and more especially abroad, by reading any of the local papers which claim they are fighting for the freedom of the press. The *Observer* and the *Times* make their appearance regularly, but the less said about them the better. The state of affairs in the Sinhala language and the Tamil language papers is no different. Whilst, as we said, a cynic or a sadist would be justified in proclaiming that the *Lake House Times* and the *Sun-Dawasa* groups have only got what they have been asking for, a pragmatist must realise that the Government by seeking to enact the present Press Council Bill would only succeed in cutting its own nose in its attempt to spite its own face—it must be remembered that for over two years the UF Government has sought to bribe these papers by either granting advertisements or withholding them. The UF government did not have any workable policy on Information, Press and Radio. The Government tried to emulate the UNP, but failed to win over the big papers. *Lake House* and *Times*, in the period 1965-70, were blind in their support for the UNP and violated every known code of journalism not only in comment but also in presenting news in their attempt to further the political interests of the UNP. A paper has the right and freedom to back any political party,

From The Editor's Desk

but there are certain basic principles of fair play and justice which must be observed in the presentation of news and comment, and both groups were guilty of breaches which cannot be easily overlooked. The UF government at first believed that by juggling government advertisements, it could repay its debt to the *Sun-Dawasa* group and win over the *Times* group, and by withholding advertisements to *Lake House*, the better could be intimidated into subjection (this and the threat of a takeover has indeed reduced *Lake House* into a mock turtlish caricature of a newspaper group.)

Such in brief, are the broad historical perspectives of the Press Council Bill. It is not too late for the Government to re-think its policies on the press, information and radio and make possible the growth of a free press and free opinion in this country. This may seem

an unattainable dream, but there would be no harm done if the UF Government does make a genuine attempt to discard vindictive policies and adopt constructive ones.

AS WE go to press, news is to hand that Richard Nixon has scored an unprecedented victory with a landslide majority. In our coming issues we will discuss the dynamics, meaning and significance of the Nixon victory especially with peace in Vietnam, a real possibility for the first time since the US plunged into the maelsstrom in Indo-China.

The USSR this week celebrated the fifty-fifth year of the October Revolution and the fiftieth year of the establishment of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics (USSR). To commemorate this, the Soviet Union opened an industrial exhibition in Colombo on November 1 with an impressive array of goods. We have published in this issue a

message from the Soviet Ambassador in Ceylon and also an article entitled the Family of Nations.

Whatever view one takes about the Soviet Union, there is no doubt that the October Revolution has had a tremendous impact on the world and mankind. Fifty years is a short time in the history of a nation and it is yet to be seen what changes overtake the USSR and the socialist bloc of countries in the next decade or so. With a regimented control of economic development and manpower, Soviet Russia has been able to do in fifty years what other countries have taken over two hundred years. But it has had to pay a great price in terms of values which many people cherish. A new ethic and a new ethos have developed in the USSR and the next few years will show the way the course of history takes in the land of the October Revolution.

IN SRI LANKA

Sri Lanka has spent nearly five thousand million rupees during the last ten years in food subsidies. The gross subsidy for this period was over Rs. 7,000 million but this was reduced considerably by the profits that the Government made on the sale of sugar and flour. The profit from sugar and flour during this ten year period was Rs. 2,110, 490,000 thus reducing the nett subsidy for the period to Rs. 4,021,557,238. The profit made from the sale of flour and sugar has not been indicated in the 1971-72 and 72-73 budget estimates, when the gross subsidy totalled Rs. 823,000,000 (for 15 months) and Rs. 732,500,000 respectively.

The nett subsidy in 1961-62 was Rs.171,427, 090 and had been increasingly every year, except in 1965-66 and 1966-67 when it fell to Rs. 217 million and Rs. 193 million respectively.

Meanwhile, Ceylon has spent a sum of over Rs. 6,966,588,081 in foreign exchange for the purchase of rice flour and sugar during a period of fourteen years—1956 to 1969. The total tonnage of rice, flour and sugar imported during this period amounted to 13,990,818 tons. In 1956, only 381,290 tons of rice were imported to feed the then population of 8,800,000. During the same period, 266,555 tons of flour and 118,851 tons of sugar were imported.

In 1963, Ceylon purchased 514,975 tons of rice at Rs. 1242,295,160. The cost of rice purchase during this period was comparatively high. Similarly, in 1967, the imports of flour too cost Rs. 234 million for 517,130 tons. In 1965, a sum of Rs. 174 million was spent on the purchase of 208,551 tons of sugar.

—Ceylon Daily Mirror.

WITH COMPLIMENTS

C. V. BHATT



BRISTOL

belongs to the world
of today



RIGHT SIZE
RIGHT TASTE
RIGHT PRICE

