

TRIBUNE

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VIETNAM WAR

SRI LANKA IN
THE COMPLEX
WORLD OF
TODAY

TRIBUNANIA

SAFARI IN
CEYLON

THE EVASION OF
TAXATION—
A SERIOUS CRIME

CHRONICLE
DEC. 22 - JAN. 11

THE VIETNAM
PEACE AGREE-
MENT.



Tribune

VIETNAM WAR

ON THE COVER, our artist has put together bits and pieces from cartoons and caricatures which had appeared in US newspapers and journals, some of them leftwing and some plainly anti-Viet-war, to make a composite picture of the travails one experienced in the US before the peace treaty was initiated in the last week of January. Naturally Richard Nixon has to bear the brunt of the whiplash of anti-war sentiments. The ceasefire went into force at zero hour on January 27, and though fierce fighting went on between the contending factions in South Vietnam for some days, calm and peace has at last come to the Indochinese peninsula after 25 years of war, civil war and anarchy. The truce and ceasefire have not officially been secured in Cambodia and Laos, but tensions have begun to ease and all parties seem to be in a mood to talk peace. At least they want to stop fighting—for the moment at any rate. All know that the Big Powers do not want to be involved in any fighting in that region. The USA has decided to pull out; Russia and China have been pressing on the parties to stop the fighting and to

make a major effort to develop the area economically. Without the involvement of the Big Powers, fighting can be only on a low key and profile.

Ariel surveys the scene in Vietnam and examines what observers and commentators who are knowledgeable in contemporary history have to say on whether it will be a peace which will last in Vietnam or whether the war will be carried on under other auspices. The Editor in his *Rambling Notes* also devotes a great deal of space to matters international and seeks to find out how Sri Lanka is placed in the complex world of today. *Pertinax* raises a few pertinent questions about the way things are going on in Sri Lanka. *Canax* in his inimitable style, probes into the problems of life and living in the Sri Lanka of today with that sense of cynical humour which has won him many admirers.

Alkardi Mugana is on a long *Safari* and we publish the first part of this rather long piece in this issue. He winds his way through Kandy and Mahiyangana to Bintenne and Dambana

to the area where the Veddahs, or those of them who are left, exist. He has some interesting things to say about them.

We have a report from *Dacca* on the forthcoming elections in *Bangla Desh*. The political situation in that new state is complicated and it is difficult to foresee its future with any degree of certainty. We have a short note on *Beggars* in *India*, which has a great deal of relevance to *Sri Lanka*. Also we have an article on *LBJ*. The feature *Chronicle*, which had not appeared for some time, comes on again in this issue. It is interesting that this is one of the features that many readers insist they want to see in every issue.

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RAMBLING NOTES

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Sri Lanka in the Complex World of Today

A GREAT MANY EVENTS in 1972 have changed the international situation in a fundamental way. Ever since the end of world war two in 1945, we slipped into a bi-polar world of capitalism versus socialism with its concomitant imperatives of the cold war. Truman, Churchill and Stalin had forced their impress on the world, and everything was judged on the yardstick of capitalism or socialism. It was an oversimplified unrealistic system of determining right and wrong, of choosing friends and allies, on the one hand and enemies and foes, on the other.

But this bi-polar division could not stand up to the test of reality, and fanatics began to brand some who did not fall into line as fellow travelers and front-men and others as stooges, satellites, and lickspittles. Hard words were the order of the day. Capitalism, led by the USA (Truman, Dulles and McCarthy) built a world system of friends in a global network of military alliances and pacts infused with cash handouts for economic assistance, whilst the socialist bloc (and Stalin) en-

deavoured to emulate the capitalists.

But both monoliths began to crack wide open within a few years. Before long a third world of non-aligned had appeared. And today the Truman-Dulles monolith lies in shambles in the same way that the Stalin-organised Comintern monolith lies battered in two halves with China challenging everything, good and bad, done by the Soviet Union. The arch-anti-communist Nixon went to Peking and then to Moscow. Japan and China, who had been ferocious enemies for over seventy years, are now friends. Countries which had shunned China and the USSR as political and economic lepers at the behest of the USA are now tumbling over each other to make friends with the Chinese and the Russians. Not long ago the friends of the Soviet Union and China would have never dared to shake hands with an American, but today frowns from Moscow or Peking will not deter any country, however small, from being friends with the USA even though it is allegedly full of CIA witch-hunters.

A major revolution has taken place in the Asian and Pacific region. Malaysia which was for long the leading outpost of anti-communism now pleads that no international conference was complete without China. Australia and New Zealand have thrown out governments, which were still

wedded to the cold war inhibitions of the Truman-Dulles era even after Nixon had gone to Peking and Moscow and new governments have emerged which immediately established diplomatic relations with China.

In the 1970's the world has moved into a multi-polar era in which each country has to adjust its relations with other countries in terms of its own national interests. In the period of transition from the bi-polar world to the multi-polar world, words like *detente*, *confrontation*, *tension*, *normality* and *co-existence* have begun to dominate political terminology. Nearly everyone is convinced that confrontation and cold war have no further validity: that negotiations were better than fighting.

This is most significantly seen in Asia especially in the changing attitudes which have come over the USA. Truman and Dulles believed in *diktation* and arms-twisting. Many other countries had also followed the same techniques to make their presence felt. Each accused the other of starting the game. But this policy has failed. It has failed in Europe. It has failed in Third World countries. Divided countries — Germany, Korea and Vietnam provide clear evidence that the policy of cold war and big power *diktation* have flopped. It is well to remember that the capitalist world had sought to "unite"

these countries into one homogenous capitalist whole but the reality of two Germans, two Koreas, and two Vietnams have now been recognised. The communists too had failed to unite them into one whole. It would be now left to the Germans, Koreans and Vietnamese to decide what they should do with themselves and their countries — because *diktation* from outside had failed to bring either unity or peace.

On another level, the policy of *diktating* from a position of strength to enforce discriminatory treatment, for instance, against the Bengali people, resulted in the disintegration of Pakistan and the creation of Bangladesh. It is naive to suggest that India's interference was solely responsible for the disaster which overtook Pakistan. The cause of the Pakistan tragedy was not India. The nabobs of West Pakistan were the grave diggers of the state. India's actions only accelerated the process of the emergence of Bangladesh. Current thinking in Islamabad confirms this analysis. *Countries which mete out discriminatory treatment to a section of its population, either directly or indirectly, would do well to ponder on what has happened in Pakistan.*

UNDOUBTEDLY, THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENT is that the Big Powers have begun to talk and negotiate instead of standing aside and grow-

ling all the time getting ready for a fight. Primarily credit must go to the US re-appraising its policies and changing its attitudes. Whatever the reasons, the change from the cold war monomania of the McCarthy era to the present pragmatic realism of the Nixon of today is a big Leap Forward. It certainly stemmed from failures but the change was welcome. With the US changed so much, it was inevitable that other countries should also change. There is no more talk about the Yellow menace or the Red Dragon. And people have begun to forget the Paper Tigers. These are the outward signs of the changed situation, but the change in the climate of international relations was possible because of the number of agreements which the two super nuclear powers have been able to negotiate after long and painfully tedious talks during the last three or four years. There have been agreements on the limitation of the use of nuclear forces, the prohibition of bacteriological weapons, the agreements which outlaw the use of sea-bed and the surface of the moon for military purposes.

It is not the US alone which has changed. West Germany and the Soviet Union signed realistic peace treaties, and Chancellor Willy Brandt's *ostpolitik* has not only brought a detente in Europe but the possibilities of a real peace

in the world. The frontiers and boundaries established after the second world war have been stabilised. Two German states have come into being. Poland and West Germany have agreed on frontiers and opted for negotiations instead of war. The all-European security conference to be held in 1973 is bound to improve the situation still further. Already a preparatory conference is under way in Helsinki.

One hundred and eleven member-countries of the United Nations moreover have voted for a World Conference on Disarmament. It is to be regretted that China had opposed the resolution and has refused to participate in the "committee" of 35 set up to make the preparations for this important conference which has stirred hopes in mankind that a disarmed world would be a reality in the foreseeable future. **IT will not be long, it is hoped, before China forgets its cold war against the Soviet Union and participates in world developments without being inhibited by considerations which have lost validity in a world of detente and peace.**

It must be pointed out that the third world of non-aligned countries which had refused to be drawn into the bi-polar world of cold war and confrontation have contributed in a significant manner to the international detente

which has emerged today. The non-aligned countries fought against aggression, fought against diktation, fought the last vestiges of colonialism, and they have fought also for disarmament, for the prohibition of nuclear tests, and against the use of chemical, bacteriological and other kinds of armaments of mass destruction. The importance of these policies pursued by non-aligned countries cannot be exaggerated. It can be said that much of the change which had come over the world stemmed from the insistence by non-aligned countries that confrontations must end and be replaced by negotiation.

With the ending of USA's direct involvement in the war in Vietnam and the consequent ending of other Big Power "interest" in the fighting in the region, the process of international detente will undoubtedly be accelerated. The people of Vietnam, in the north and the south should have the right of solving for themselves the problem of re-unification, of the kind of government they want and of the social system they would like. The fighting had escalated with the US jumping into battle more than a decade ago, and it has taken away millions of lives and swallowed over 135 billion dollars. What is more it has shaken the very foundations of the richest country in the world—the USA. The Americans were not able to win the war, but it only

brought them trouble, tragedy, unpopularity and even disgrace.

Even in West Asia, Israel has drawn sustenance and support from the USA which thought it essential to become involved in that area as it had become entangled in Asia. Big power intervention from one side compelled the Arabs to seek help from other quarters.

The result has been disastrous for the people in that area. The deadlock can be broken only when the Israelis begin the withdrawal of their troops from areas they have occupied in the 1967 war. If the US can withdraw its troops from Vietnam, there is no reason why Israel cannot withdraw its troops from territories it had over-run in 1967.

THE DYNAMICS of the current movement towards an international detente have also made their presence felt in the region in which Sri Lanka is geographically situated. The Simla Agreement between Pakistan and India brought relaxation and it was welcomed by all who wanted the tension to be eased. The delays in the implementation of the agreement had caused many anxieties, but ultimately a way was found through negotiations to smoothen out difficulties.

It is well to remember that peace and detente in the South Asia region

and perhaps in the whole of the Indian Ocean region, will be possible only if India and Pakistan maintain friendly relations. It will be dangerous to let things slip back to the unhappy situation which had existed before the blood-bath in East Pakistan. Too many mistakes had been made at that time, and too much blood of innocent people had been shed, and the cruelty of the Pakistani Army, which had occupied the eastern wing of the their united Pakistan, was primarily responsible for the inevitable bifurcation of the country.

Bangladesh is now a reality. Most countries of the world have recognised its independent existence. Most Arab and Muslim countries are holding out—because of sentimental sympathy for Pakistan but a number of them have already realised that their with-holding of recognition will not bring back the old united Pakistan. China had obviously vetoed Bangladesh's entry into the UN for political considerations, but this will only help to prolong the tension and in no way help the the arrogant forces in West Pakistan to learn from the past and end their desire for revenge. There cannot be a *Jehad* in the world of today.

It is difficult for many in Sri Lanka to understand why China thinks that the present trend towards international detente is a

piece of hypocrisy by the two super-powers. The big powers (China is also one but nuclearly not so powerful as the USA or the USSR) naturally have their narrow and selfish national interests, but what be must realised is that it is this national interest which had compelled these countries to discard old cold war shibboleths and adopt realistic policies to reduce tension and achieve a detente. That is why the contrary and negative positions adopted by China in many matters in the world today have evoked surprise. China, for instance, is critical of the convocation of a European Security Conference. China has not acceded to the UN appeals demanding that nuclear tests in the atmosphere should be stopped. China has insisted that the withdrawal of US troops from Europe or the mutual reduction of troops on that continent would not really strengthen peace or stabilise the situation—that it was only another method of continuing the tension under camouflage. China condemned the treaty between West Germany and the Soviet Union and also the treaty between West Germany and Poland. China has ridiculed the Simla Agreement between India and Pakistan. China has outstanding claims for territory from the USSR and India on their respective borders and judging from its present attitudes towards Moscow and New

Delhi it does not seem possible that the tension on this sector will diminish for a long time to come—unless some miracle takes place. Cold war belligerency which seem to envelop this sector of international relations will tend to push China into isolation in matters in which she can easily play a vital and dynamic role.

There is not the slightest doubt that China heavily backed the proposal made by Sri Lanka that the Indian Ocean should be declared "a zone of peace". But it can be easily realised that for this plan to be effective certain pre-conditions are essential: tensions must be relaxed on a global scale; armaments should be reduced, and fear and suspicion not only between the two super powers should be eliminated but also among all big and small powers which have arms and are capable of plunging into war disturbing the peace in various regional sectors of the world. *A peace zone in the Indian Ocean would be possible only by reducing tension on a global scale and it is difficult to understand the logic behind China's attitudes on many matters.*

SRI LANKA is a small country. It is a poor country. It cannot play big power politics. It is so small it cannot play any kind of power politics at all. It is self-delusion to think that

because of its location in the Indian Ocean it can play geopolitical power politics, playing bigger powers than herself against one another, and thereby getting herself into a position of strength, dominance and power.

Sri Lanka for its survival as an independent and sovereign state, needs stable peace in this area. That is why a zone of peace in the Indian Ocean area, in fact in the whole of the South Asia region, is a vital necessity. Furthermore, Sri Lanka must maintain friendly relations with all countries. Sri Lanka must maintain friendly and sincerely cordial relations with India, Pakistan, Burma, Nepal and even Afghanistan in the South Asia region. It must have friendly ties with the Southeast Asian group of countries on one side of the Indian Ocean, and with East African countries on the other side. But above all, she must maintain friendly relations with all the big powers in Asia (China and Japan), in Europe (the ECM countries of West Europe and the USSR-led bloc of Eastern Europe) and in America (the USA).

Sri Lanka cannot afford to make the mistake of thinking that she can play one country against another, by tilting to one side now and leaning on another later, and thereby getting away with the golden fleece. Sri Lanka cannot hope to play Pakistan

against India, and make India dance to her tune. Nor can she lean on China and hope to keep the USSR at bay. Sri Lanka cannot downgrade her relations with the USA and the West in a bid to get more support from the USSR and the socialist bloc, or even to please China when she is overwhelmed by the Paper Tiger mood. It is unfortunate that policy makers in Sri Lanka have been making mistakes of this kind, not in the avowed declaration of intent and foreign policy, but in the actual manner in which the non-alignment of Sri Lanka was carried out. At the moment, it is a pity that Sri Lanka is still in a labyrinthian maze of its own creation unable to straighten out its relations with several important countries.

Sri Lanka's relations with the USA, UK and other Western countries is not of the best and from this country's own narrow national self-interests they are suicidal to say the least. In spite of statements that Ceylon has friendly relations with the West, it is a fact that they are rigid and strictly formal. Leftwing fanatics are heard to proclaim that a "socialist" country like Ceylon cannot have much to do with the capitalist countries of the West. But, why then go begging for aid and assistance to the West? Why plead before the World Bank, IMF and the Aid Consortium—after denouncing

these institutions as being the creations of a capitalist Satan.

But are relations with the Soviet bloc any better? They are not. Our relations with Moscow and its allies are infused with so much suspicion and are restricted by so many inhibitions that it can be said that relations are strained. We are even afraid to conclude a Fisheries Agreement with the Soviet Union which is very advantageous to us (it is no doubt in the national interest of the USSR to have such an agreement, but it is also in our interest to conclude the agreement—and take the necessary precautions to protect ourselves from any danger.)

It is also noteworthy that our relations with the South-east Asian bloc in ASEAN is not much better. They were (and are) regarded as satellites of the USA and the West and we talk to them from a position of self-importance that Sri Lanka is unsullied and pure. Although, we have bent our ourselves into two to help our Arab friends, they "let this country down" at Georgetown. We have never done any thing to express genuine friendship to African countries (we trade with S. Africa) and their attitude to us at the non-aligned meeting at Georgetown was understandable.

If there is one country with which we have

really friendly, genuine and cordial relations, it is China, but this friendship is likely to be misunderstood in view of our frigid relations with other countries, thereby constituting a "tilt" in our foreign policy in favour of China. If Ceylon maintained the same friendly attitude to other countries as it does to China, then there would be no room for complaint. It may be argued that friendship is a two-way business, and that if other countries behaved the way China did, Ceylon's response would be different. This kind of casuistry to justify the failure to carry out a truly non-aligned policy will not take us anywhere.

The fiasco which attended Sri Lanka at the Georgetown meeting of the non-aligned powers last year was a clear indication that Sri Lanka had driven herself into a position of isolation in foreign relations. Except for India and a few Asian countries, whom this country has treated with scant respect, no African, or Arab country backed Sri Lanka's claim to host the next non-aligned summit. Even Yugoslavia which has shown such solicitude to this country in the past, and which maintains such close ties with one consistent party of the UF, let Sri Lanka down at Georgetown. China was not in a position to make the African-Arab bloc to swing round

in Sri Lanka's favour. Our policy, whatever may have been our intentions, and whatever our pleadings, had been misunderstood. It was thought that we had put all our eggs into the China basket.

ALL WHAT we say must not be understood to mean that we must downgrade our relations with China. We must continue our friendship with China at the highest level. But we must upgrade our relations with all other countries to the same level as that of our relation with China. If our policy is truly non-aligned, and if our approach is correct, the response from all countries will be similar to that of China. This will be so especially in the new multi-polar world of individual bi-lateral relations.

Sri Lanka has made many mistakes in foreign policy matters in recent times. Our blundering and heavy-handed waywardness in regard to the Bangladesh crisis was an indication that Sri Lanka had lost its non-aligned bearings. Our own national interest in our relations to India demanded a more realistic and more consistent non-aligned policy, in the Bangladesh matter, but we were led by considerations of geopolitical power politics to "tilt" in favour of West Pakistan, and thereby create the impression that we were responsive to certain trends in big power mani-

pulations in the area directed at checking the growth of Indian power. Such deviations detract from our professions of neutrality and non-alignment

Sri Lanka has to keep out of all big power intrigue. Our national interest can never coincide with the national interest of the USA, UK, USSR, China, Japan, India and Indonesia—even in the Indian Ocean. It would be foolish to attempt to play power politics by involving ourselves in the clash of national interests of the big and not-so-big powers which have navies in the Indian Ocean. We must not get involved in the hangover of the receding era of the cold war, either in the cold war between capitalism and socialism or the cold war between Arabs and Israel, or even the cold war between the communist giants.

We can easily stand up for the principles of non-alignment—against aggression, against colonialism and imperialism, against exploitation—without tilting into cold war imperatives of one side or the other which surround most problems today. In the UN, in particular, we have "tilted" so much in favour of the Arabs *vis a vis* Israel that there cannot be much respect for our non-alignment. The position we have taken on "terrorism" was also symbolic of our "tilt."

Unless all these "tilts" are corrected, Sri Lanka will find herself isolated more and more in the complex world of today.

FISH TAUGHT TO 'HELP THEMSELVES'

A new 'self-service' system for artificial fish ponds enables the fish to get their food whenever they feel hungry—after a little training. This device has been invented by Israeli fish breeders.

Whenever fish feels like a snack, it nibbles at an iron rod fixed onto the bottom of the pond. The rod operates the trap door of a container of food, suspended above the fish pond. How does the fish learn to nibble at the rod? It only takes about two days to train the average fish, the instructors say. The new system prevents waste and enables the breeder to keep a more accurate check on the quantities of food he is using, the experts say.

Tribunania

WHERE ARE WE GOING?

By PERTINAX

THE PRIME MINISTER is still the only member of the Government who draws attention to the fact that this country is in a miserable plight. Her recent speeches have been more grimly realistic than ever. The only other Minister who has taken the trouble to point out the near-bankrupt state in which we find ourselves is Minister T. B. Illangaratne.

All other Ministers and political leaders on the Government side are still harping on the theme that this country has added glory to its resplendent name by adopting a Republican Constitution which would carry Sri Lanka to socialism no sooner than the National State Assembly passed the controversial Press Council Bill: that all the present ills of the country were due to "reactionaries" who stood in the way of the Press Council Bill and who were opposed to the "progressive legislation" so far adopted by the United Front Government. Occasionally, as a matter of passing significance, some of these Ministers, who are overwhelmed by the slogans of socialism and the imperative need to fight "reactionaries", talk of the "difficult" economic situa-

tion in this country, and plead with the people that it was necessary for them to work a little harder and "save" a little more.

In a recent speech at a meeting in Panadura, the Prime Minister had warned the country that "famine conditions are round the corner in Sri Lanka." It may come within the next few months, she declared in the speech which made it clear that the immediate future of the island's 12.5 million people was going to be bleak. She went on to say:...."Sri Lanka is facing the worst ever economic crisis. There is no gainsaying the fact that the immediate future is gloomy. My Government has no qualms about it: the masses of the country should know the actual situation and no purpose will be served by hiding facts....Until and unless all of us cultivate every inch of land we will all perish...."

If more of the Ministers and leaders of the United Front talk in this strain the masses in this country will wake up to the situation and thereafter endeavour to do something. Instead, rosy pictures of the glories of socialism are trotted out and the

current difficulties confronting the people are attributed to the subversive activities of "reactionaries" who are alleged to have mobilised themselves to fight the Press Council Bill because they could not fight the progressive legislation of the UF (like the Land Reform Act, Income Ceiling, etc.. etc.) openly.

ONE QUESTION which many thinking people, who cannot be branded as "reactionaries" by any stretch of imagination, ask is why after all the wonderfully "progressive" measures adopted by the UF government, the country has slipped into this mess, and why it is being pushed, not very slowly but certainly very surely, into economic disaster.

Where are we going?

Why have the Land Reform Act, the Agricultural Productivity Act, the Ceiling on Incomes Act, the Ceiling on House Ownership Act and all the other wonderful measures not brought about a miraculous change in the socio-political-economic atmosphere in this country—to impel the people to work harder and save more?

*Where are we going?
What are we heading for?*

Thinking people ask the question whether the leaders of the UF do not realise that sloganising socialism by itself cannot produce miracles—that something more has to be done. Even after fifty,

years of socialism the Soviet Union has not been able to solve the problem of agricultural production. This year the Soviet Union was importing over \$ 1,000 million worth of grain from the US and Canada, and news reports are now to hand that top Ministers in charge of Agriculture, Irrigation and allied fields were being sacked and that other stern measures were being adopted to overhaul Soviet agriculture. It is therefore very clear that socialism by itself, socialist ownership by itself, and the socialist distribution of goods and services, cannot, by themselves, ensure plenty in agricultural production. Stalin had failed to resolve the problem of agricultural production, in spite of his policy of forcible and compulsory collectivisation. Krushchev with his policy of opening up millions of acres of "virgin lands" also failed to resolve the chronic inability of Soviet agriculture to deliver the goods. And now, Brezhnev and his comrades find themselves in a worse plight. It is true that drought, bad climate and other natural disasters have recently added to the man-made inadequacies of Soviet agriculture, but the question which must be faced is what is missing in the socialist agriculture of the Soviet Union which has brought about this grave situation. What is it that does not make Soviet agriculture tick?

THE QUESTION which many have begun to ask is why after three years of the United Front government, with its glorious policies of socialism and near-socialism, we find ourselves in this plight? All the excuses have been trotted out: the bad policies of the UNP in the past, the insurrection of April 1971, the subversive activities of local "reactionaries", the unhelpful attitude of international finance-capitalists, and all the rest of the well-known tale of woe, including the sad fact that this country (like many other countries) has had to face partial drought conditions for four years running (with monsoon failures and a new "unseasonal distribution of rainfall"). And, all these excuses have been examined and the post-mortems held: and then, at the end of everything, people yet ask.

Where are we going.

Where are we going, indeed?

In *Tribune*, it has been consistently pointed out as elsewhere in this country, that every one of the measures adopted by the United Front, be they socialist, near-socialist or otherwise, are self-defeating in the context of the realities in Sri Lanka.

If the aim of any government in this country is to increase production, productivity and wealth—so that more and more of the good things get to the

masses — then, the experience of the last three years has shown that the Government has failed miserably in its objectives. All the boosting over the state Radio and all the heavily-paid for advertising supplements in the daily papers have failed to establish that this country is better off now than it was before May 1970—simply because realities are more compelling than fiction even if the fiction is produced by the Government. And it is difficult to resist the charge that the Government was keen about imposing fetters on the press, except the state-owned media of propaganda, through the Press Council Bill in order to prevent information about certain aspects of governmental activities from reaching the people, the "masses".

Where are we going!

What is the economic system we want in this country? It is said that the mandate of the UF is for a "mixed economy" but the LSSP and the CP only talk about a socialist state and the SLFP do not speak of anything at all except to echo the slogans about socialism. It is clear what this mixed economy means, but if it means a co-partnership between the private sector and the public (and co-operative) sector, than what is happening in Ceylon is a contradiction in terms. THE FIVE YEAR PLAN of the Prime Minister is a

wonderful academic exercise for a "mixed economy. But in actual practice, whilst the Ministry of Planning and Employment and certain other Ministries seek to have a happy balance between the private and public sectors, the Ministry of Finance and certain other Ministries have done everything to restrict, inhibit and even destroy the private sector under cover of extending the scope of the public sector under the excuse of bringing socialism, nearer. **These contrary and contradictory policies of the UF Government constitute the basic causes for the present tragedy which has overtaken this country. A mixed economy can work, with many limitations, with reasonable success, to break the economic stagnation and effect a breakthrough as has been shown by the progress made by India during the last twenty years.**

A mixed economy is not the best, but if political and other realities demand a mixed economy, then an honest effort must be made to make it.

But has such an effort been made in Sri Lanka?

The answer is no. Everything has been done to destroy the private sector, private initiative, private enterprise in industry and agriculture. The latest regulations regarding chilli purchases and distribution will be one the last nails

into the coffin of private production of agricultural produce in the agricultural sector.

But has everything been done to make the public sector work efficiently, work profitably and be in a position to take over the private sector in a way to make the economy of this country tick over smoothly?

The answer is again, no. A few public sector enterprises show profit on paper. It is possible by accounting gimmicks and juggling of stocks (and their value), to show profits, but even with all these techniques only a few public sector organisations show even a paper profit. Most corporations cannot hide their losses. And the profits can be "earned" only by charging exorbitant rates for the goods and services supplied to the people. Furthermore, public sector undertakings have been over staffed by anything from 30 to 100 per cent (to find political supporters safe berths and sinecures) and this makes efficient administration a total impossibility. Moreover, discipline cannot be maintained —with the multiplicity of unions which are the adjuncts of political parties in the United Front as well as in the opposition.

And, to make matters worse, the administrative machine which has the duty to implement the Five Year Plan and all other government work has already cracked up under various political

and socio-economic pressures set in motion by the "revolution" promoted by the United Front. The extent and depth of the crack-up in the administrative machine has not been realised by those who hold the reins of political power.

In these circumstances, can anybody be blamed for asking the question: where we were going?

This columnist, and probably Tribune, believes that a mixed economy is not the best answer for Sri Lanka's current economic ills. Either the private sector, or an efficient public sector (mark you, an efficient public sector) has to dominate the economy if we are to get anywhere.

THE HALFWAY house of a mixed economy will not take us very far. In fact, a mixed economy with the kind of coalition government in power, will end up in a hopeless contradiction. But the question of whether we should re-appraise our economic policies is another matter, but for the moment we are concerned with our present plight.

The Sun of February 9 spread a banner headline across its front page: **RICE--THE BITTER TRUTH: WHY WAS PM KEPT IN THE DARK?** The report was set out in sensational journalese idiom and phraseology, and it used: "Sri Lanka is slap-bang in the midst of a critical rice crisis. Stocks in hand will

not last till the first week or so of March. The Sun reliably understands that the situation is really serious and that frantic efforts are being made by the Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike to obtain emergency supplies. Although the explanation trotted out by officials for this critical situation is the failure of two suppliers to honour their contractual obligations knowledgeable circles claim there is more to it than meets the eye.

"These circles contend that the rice shortage has been created for certain political reasons, principally to coincide with the current crisis in the United Front, the immediate cause of which is the Speaker, Mr. Stanly Tillekeratne, ruling on the Press Council Bill.

"Some of the questions being raised in support of this theory are Why was the Prime Minister kept in the dark for so long about the breakdown in rice supplies? Why was she not informed about the dwindling 'buffer stocks' position. The Food Department is expected to maintain the buffer stocks for a minimum of three months. Food Department contracted to obtain 36,000 tons of rice from Pakistan, part of it from private contractors. Only 16,000 tons were supplied. But the balance due from private contractors was not received. Was it

because an attempt was made to manipulate the price with the private dealers in spite of the fact that the Government of Pakistan went all out to help? Who is the VIP behind these manipulations?

"It is understood that China has indicated that it is unable to help us out as Burma had defaulted in its supplies to China, because of drought. Rice cannot be obtained from Thailand because the Thai Government has banned rice exports due to a fall in production. Soviet Union is unable to help Sri Lanka due to a fall in production and the United States cannot come to our assistance because of its contractual obligations to the Soviet Union under the US-Soviet wheat agreement. India has said that it had no rice to give Sri Lanka as production had been affected by the drought. The only two countries where rice is said to be available are Egypt and Japan. **Political circles believe that the Prime Minister should send a high-powered political delegation to these two countries in search of rice at once if the crisis is to be averted.**"

The Daily News, also of 9/2, set out the story on a lower key under the heading OFF TO PAKISTAN ON A RICE-BUYING MISSION. The report stated: "The Secretary to the Ministry of

Foreign and Internal Trade Mr. B. J. B. V. Senaratne left for Pakistan yesterday to negotiate for purchases of rice. The decision to send Mr. Senaratne on this mission was taken after the Prime Minister Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike reviewed the food supply situation in the country yesterday with the Minister of Foreign and Internal Trade Mr. T. E. Illangaratne.

"Sri Lanka signed two contracts with Pakistan last November one with the State Trading Corporation of Pakistan for the supply of 26,000 tons of rice and the other with a private contractor for 20,000 tons.

The Corporation has shipped 15,000 tons of its contract and has now agreed to ship the balance 11,000 tons too. Mr. Senaratne's main task will be to negotiate with the contractor who had agreed to sell 20,000 tons of rice.

"The government is taking no risks about the food supply situation in the months ahead because it is aware that there is an acute world shortage of grain and rice at the moment. Indonesia has been buying heavily from Thailand and recently, when Sri Lanka made inquiries from Thailand she was not able to get any supplies owing to Thailand's commitments with other countries.

"A consignment amounting to 40,000 tons of

rice is expected from Burma. This is a spill-over from the 1972 China-Sri Lanka rubber - rice pact supply.

The negotiations with Pakistan will ensure continuity of supplies to Sri Lanka."

Tribune has been consistently repeating that the information and statistics provided by Government on rice supplies were incorrect. The ramifications of the foreign purchases have now partially to light. There is also a hint that even China will not be able to supply to us anything more than what has been contracted for, **WHERE ARE WE GOING TO?**

An even greater shock awaits the Prime Minister and the public when the realities of local production and purchases are revealed in the near future. In the past, the inaccuracies and falsehoods (mainly based on administrative fabrications) were glossed over by imports, but this year, with insufficient imports the stark facts about local production will come to light. And if no imports come to cover gaps, the situation will be worse.

ADMINISTRATION VIPs and political officials will then no doubt, raise a hue and cry about the local hoarders, black-marketeers of rice and paddy — as they did in the case of chillies. They will bring in draconian rules to chase and confi

scate stocks — which do not exist. But we are running ahead, but we can predict what will happen when it is realised that the Maha Crop, which is already being harvested in some areas and which will be harvested everywhere in the rice-growing dry zone areas soon is a partial failure.

The radio may blare forth what has been purchased by the PMB, but government propagandists will not dare to compare these figures with what had been estimated as the potential production. Neither the Prime Minister nor the public realise that on average about 30% of the land cultivated in 1972 and earlier has not been cultivated this season. Furthermore in the crop coming in, owing to the partial drought the amount of chaff is anything from 20 to 50 percent, and where the chaff is less, water meant for Yala has been used for Maha (and hence there will be no Yala and the total for the year will be less.) **If the PMB is able to get anything like 50 to 60 percent of its estimated targets, this country must consider itself lucky. Additionally, cultivators will sell less to the PMB because they will want to keep enough for themselves, their relations and friends to eat.**

The famine which the Prime Minister spoke about is certainly round

the corner. The doctrinaire pundits who glibly mouthe slogans will not be able to find us rice. And they do not know how to grow rice or anything else.

What they seem to know is how to remove all incentives from agricultural production. The Land Reform Act, the Agricultural Productivity Act, the Ceiling on Incomes Act the Business Takeover Act, and the rest mumbo-jumbo of the United Front—this is what all this legislation will turn out to be — will bring existing production down sharply. Drought and nature have added other difficulties in the way of production, but these are not the major causes of the current debacle. The dominating causes of the present setback to production are singularly and exclusively UF-made.

This is not said because the columnist is motivated by "reactionary" purposes. The writer and **Tribune** have extended to the UF government the greatest goodwill and support, but when the actions of the government and the measures adopted by it had the objective result of denigrating production and thereby undermining the national interests of Sri Lanka, there was no alternative but to adopt constructively critical attitudes.

Looked at even from the most "progressive"

CONCLUDING

THE EVASION OF TAXATION

- A SERIOUS CRIME

By MANIL SILVA

THIS IS THE THIRD AND CONCLUDING INSTALMENT OF THE ARTICLE ON "THE EVASION OF TAXATION IN CEYLON", BY MANIL SILVA WHICH HAD ORIGINALLY APPEARED IN THE JOURNAL, STAFF STUDIES, PUBLISHED BY THE CENTRAL BANK OF CEYLON-

THE LAW provides for the imposition of penalties up to treble the amount of the tax evaded and a sum of Rs. 5000 or imprisonment on conviction by a magistrate in the case of prosecution. The Tax Commission of 1954/55 recommended certain changes to make the law and administration effective in combating evasion. These changes were:

Tribunania

angle, the actions of the UF are a contradiction in terms. One part of the Government wants the private sector, the other does everything to destroy it. The mixed economy of the Five Year Plan has become a farce and a caricature.

Where are we going?

(1) The imposition of a monetary penalty in any case where the tax assessed and paid is more than the tax due on the basis of the return. The penalty is imposed by the Commissioner and subject to appeal to the Board of Review.

(2) The provision of section 87 of the Income Tax Ordinance to be made more effective, by throwing the burden of proof on the tax payer.

(3) For the purposes of discovery of new tax payers as well as for obtaining better information and investigation, District offices to be opened in some of the principal outstation towns.

The Department of inland Revenue strengthened the work of investigation by setting up a special division to carry out the work and a Deputy Commissioner was placed in charge as from September 1, 1959. The law was further amended to enable the Department to carry out a search under the written authority of the Commissioner, without the need to obtain a magistrate's search warrant. These measures enabled the Department to take very speedy action on receipt of very reliable

information and to obtain evidence for prosecutions, before the tax payer could destroy such evidence.

THE INTRODUCTION of the Business Turnover Tax from January 1, 1964 provided a fresh avenue for detection of evasion. The Turnover Tax law requires the issue of receipts for every sale and a quarterly return of the amount of the turnover, (i.e. sales with the payment of the quarterly tax. It provided powers of inspection which enabled the Department to check on transactions as they occur as well as on sales for which no receipts are issued.

Surplus cash collected was readily detected. Table 7 shows the effectiveness of this method of checking evasion.

In the early years of Income Tax an informant of another's tax evasion, was not paid a reward and only information from disgruntled employees and other connections of the tax payer provided information relating to any tax evasion.

The earliest reference to rewards is seen in the Administration Report of the Commissioner of Inland Revenue for 1964, which states that a sum of Rs. 4,925/- was paid as rewards to 3 persons who gave information about evasion of tax. In 1965, the amount reported is Rs. 49,725/-. The more liberal grant of rewards induced many persons to make available information

Tax Evasion

regarding any case of tax evasion.

Though the Tax Commissioners in 1955 recommended the opening up of District Offices, this question was not considered till 1961 "when the then Minister of Finance the Hon. F. R. Dias Bandaranaike appointed a committee to report on a complete scheme of decentralisation. Action was not, however, immediately taken on the report of this Committee". (Administration Report of the Commissioner of inland Revenue, 1963 p. B. 43)

The first office to be opened was in Jaffna in October 1963, then Galle in February 1964. The regional offices were to deal with the taxpayer resident in the district except those who were taxed as employees.

For a time the taxation of agricultural estates continued to be dealt with by the head office in Colombo. Since 1969/70, these are also dealt with by the regional office.

THE OPENING of regional offices has contributed in a large way to the registering of new tax payers and efficiency of the tax administration. Table 8 shows the increase in the number of files (the tax payers) with the opening of each regional office, and Table 9 shows the additional income assessed on evasion in each regional office.

TABLE: 8.
Number of files for tax payers.

Regional Office.	Date of Opening	No. of tax payers at opening date	No. of tax payers at 30-9-1970
Jaffna	1-10-63	1,586	3,940
Galle	1-2-64	2,061	3,691
Kurunegala	14-9-64	1,061	4,010
Ratnapura	16-11-64	662	3,322
Badulla	5-2-65	1,046	3,665
Negombo	11-10-65	1,992	4,461
Kandy	27-11-65	3,706	8,143
Kalutara	16-9-66	1,739	4,957
Nuwara Eliya	1-10-69	By transfer from Kandy	3,255
Matara	1-4-70	By transfer from Galle	3,890

Source: Administration Report of the Commissioner of Inland Revenue, 1970.

TABLE: 9
Additional Income Assessed on Evasion
Year ended 30-9-1970

Regional Office	No. of Cases	Additional Income Rs.	Additional Tax Rs.
Jaffna	3	222,276	55,981
Galle	29	1,359,183	377,255
Kurunegala	38	2,898,446	529,891
Ratnapura	39	3,668,536	1,179,479
Badulla	44	3,488,786	778,416
Negombo	20	2,199,653	677,930
Kandy	76	6,681,516	1,855,745
Kalutara	61	4,221,969	1,179,617
Nuwara Eliya	1	60,000	10,012
Matara	12	525,639	105,386

Source: Administration Report of the Commissioner of Inland Revenue, 1970.

It is evident from these figures that the recommendations of the 1955 Taxation Commission was fully justified.

AS AGAINST these methods of enforcement a novel

method of inducing tax payers to make proper returns of income was introduced in 1965/66. From the years of assessment 1958/59 to 1962/63 with the introduction of Wealth Tax, the marginal

rate of tax was 60%. From 1965/66 to 1969/70 the marginal rate of tax was by inclusion of a super tax rate of 35% increased to 80% but this rate was to be reduced by a rebate of 50% in respect of any sums placed in savings deposits or approved savings, so that in respect of such sums invested, the effective marginal rate was 30%. The slab just below the level of the marginal rate was taxed at 65% and 33 1/3% savings relief granted, so that the effective rate for that slab was 31 2/3%. The savings relief granted in respect of income below this level was at 1/4 of tax at the effective rate on the income invested below that level. Thus a person (married with 2 children) with an income of Rs. 1,00,000 investing Rs. 50,000 in an approved savings was granted relief as follows:—

Assessable income.	Rs. 100,000	
Less allowances	4,500	
Taxable income.	<u>Rs. 95,500</u>	
Tax on first Rs. 25,000		Rs. 6,975
Tax on balance Rs. 69,500 (at 80%)		<u>Rs. 55,600</u>
		Rs. 62,575
Less Savings Relief Rs. 50,000 (at 50%)		<u>Rs. 25,000</u>
Balance tax.		<u>Rs. 37,575</u>

of tax evasion was yet high.

Income Tax revenue constitutes nearly 15 per cent of Government revenue. The raising of the rates of Income Tax to obtain more revenue has been a convenient device available to the Finance Minister to narrow the budget deficit. It is for this reason that there has been a regular increase in the tax rates—the increase is determined by the amount of additional revenue to be raised.

There is a substantial difference in the tax collections actually realised in a year and the amount that would have been realised if the degree of tax evasion was insignificant. This in turn would minimise the increase in tax rates that the Minister announces at the time of the Budget to meet revenue requirements. Consequently the incomes that are actually taxed are subjected to a higher rate than otherwise. In this context incomes that are easily checked by the Inland Revenue and which a tax payer cannot hide bear a high rate of tax

than incomes which are partially hidden.

THE PRINCIPAL type of income which cannot be hidden is income from employment. Thus employees are the most fully taxed section of the community. Not only is the assessed tax effective on this group but the whole of the assessed tax is recovered from the salary. The percentage of recovery of assessed tax is also very much higher in the case of employees. Other tax payers who default in their payment sometimes even have tax written off because there are no effective means of recovery. Then again assets of non-employment tax-payers may be held in the names of others. The Inland Revenue cannot seize such assets and even part of the assessed tax tends to remain unpaid. Thus when actual payment of tax is taken into account the employee is at an even greater disadvantage.

Tax evasion is necessarily considered a serious crime against society. The tax dodger retains for his benefit monies which are due to the Government for providing an administration,

Supporting social services and all other things that a modern society requires. It is an act to undermine the redistribution of income which is one of the objectives of direct taxation. The tax dodger commits as serious an offence against society as a person who retains property which does not belong to him. He inflicts an unfair burden on the honest citizen, since taxation tends to be higher than

would otherwise be the case, had there been no evasion.

As pointed out, in the course of this study, tax evasion is an evil that is facilitated by restrictions on the normal activities of a citizen. These are brought about by travel restrictions, exchange restrictions, controls, quotas and other forms of restrictions which constitute what is generally known as the close

economy. The need for such restrictions is the endemic resource gap— itself a corollary of under development—and as tax evasion on a large scale reduces the resources available to the Government, the inevitable consequence is the creation of a parallel state which will eventually undermine democracy as we know it today. It is in this context that we have to recognise tax evasion for the serious crime it is.

SAFARI IN CEYLON

REACHING THE VEDDAHS

Indigolla, Kandy, Mahiyangane, Bibile, Dambane, Bintenne
JAN. 19 - 30.

By Alkardi Mugana

Leaving Colombo in the evening, I thought how lucky we are that there has been a shortage of foreign exchange these last few years, for that alone has stopped the doubling or even the trebling of the number of cars that we might have had on the road now. Our roads in Colombo are still pleasant, for the owner driver by not eating up too much of his petrol by enforced halts along the way because of an overload of traffic on the roads, and for the pedestrian much for the same reason. There are by-products of having too much traffic—dirty air, poisonous fumes, a perpetual roar of engines, hooting of horns, and money spent unnecessarily on gas.

Of course, the foreign exchange shortage has meant that we have an enormous load of foreign debt round our necks, but the one did not necessarily have to follow from the other, and it seems we are on our way to increasing this debt to others instead of reducing it or paying it off. It is not as if we have had no exports. Nor is it as if we have no imports! Where there is a will there is a way, and I suppose it is only a question of finding the right people to do one job without crippling any section of the nation. Fiery mouthed utterances and crippling legislation is not what is wanted. It is not a matter which calls for hate nor should it

entail selling any part of our independence in a so-called cold war. We must find a new way to live.

The road along which I travelled skirted the Kelani ganga in many places but we could not really see the river, just its big banks. These were very high in places and started me wondering whether the level of the river was higher than the road. The bus, of course, was crowded, people standing crowded most of the way and it was not until we had gone a very long way that they started to thin down. We could not think of the unfortunate tragedy on the last day of the Kelani Perahera, after it was all over. It involved an elephant and caused a woman death, so the word went round.

The contrast between a village in the Kelaniya region and one in the Wannu, as regards the vegetation is that in

one it is controlled profusion, while the other has just rank growth; but it is not always so, because the older villages in the Wannu, those I suppose belonging to a higher caste, are impeccable, and so also are the very old colonies started twenty and more years ago.

I crossed the Kandy road at Miriswatte, the buses often very crowded. One of the surprises of my life was what I got finding a large workshop, airy, not cramped for space, where string instruments are made, at a price but not, probably, as musical instruments go. There were ones of a peculiar shape called *sithars*, quite long with a bulbous end. The gourd from which this end is made is imported from India. Then there were a number of guitars, and some very finely made violins. The wooden facial piece of this violin is imported from Germany. I should imagine that the finished violin would be an invaluable export. Repairs are also carried out here, and the whole place is staffed by young men. Everything for the instruments is made or grown in Ceylon, and only parts that are imported are the two I have already mentioned. The instrument cases looked as if they had been imported, so good were they. But they also were made here of local stuff. This place is in Indigolla.

Very neat were manioc and plantain trees

I saw grown under coconut. Surprised was I, because fallen coconut branches usually make such a mess of everything.

The church of St. Jude has *Gon-thambili*, king coconut and coconut growing thickly in front of the church. I was surprised, not so long ago, to hear that an octogenarian Anglican cousin of mine visits the lone relic there of the saint. He has been my patron for thirty-six years, and he is usually depicted with a club because he was beaten to death.

Coming away from the church, I noticed some very fine trees, fine because of their foliage, which was thick and dark green, the trees small, twenty to twenty-five feet high. They were *mangos-teen*. I thought, what a delightful handsome tree.

It was a packed bus during the short distance from Indigolla to Yakalla. The express bus from there to Kandy was full, and it became even more full as we went on. We soon passed the *Bandaranaike Estates*. There is an island on the property with a bridge leading to it. Years ago, when I was a boy we used to stop there and cross on to the island. I think Sir Solomon was alive then. When I came back after years away, I was delighted to see the island, but it all looked so neglected, and judging by the barbed wire, visitors were no longer welcome. This time

it had been tidied up, but the bridge, though standing, was broken in one place, probably making access to the island difficult, if not impossible, unless you were prepared to jump the gap, or do a balancing trick.

From Kadugannawa to Kandy there are two places with delightful names, *Kiribathkumbura* on the main road and *Wathurakumbura* leading off it. As for the paddy that I saw, or what little I could see from a standing position in the bus, harvesting had not yet started, but some of the paddy was already lying flat. Much was green, and there was also paddy that must have been sown a short time ago. There has not been rain for quite some time, and although the weather looks dull, no rain is expected. This is probably a good thing for the paddy that is flat.

There is a lot of talk about the high price of goods, but when one looks around, people do not seem to be doing so badly. There is a big gap between the country depicted by the newspapers and the people as they really are.

At Kandy, I missed the *Minipe* bus and caught the *Bibile* bus to *Mahiyangane*, I was shown the place where the *Mahaweli* is to be diverted, and I saw a damn built partially across the river. We could not see close up the actual point of departure for the new river bed,

but we travelled along it for a little distance. It is a narrow valley. This was beyond Katugastota. From there till Teldeniya we passed cocoa plantations for miles, the cocoa trees dwarfed by much taller trees which are needed for their shade, and on some of the taller trees there were pepper creepers. Ultimately we also passed some coffee. Later on all this was displaced by tobacco growing in patches on the steep hillsides, and later still the valleys broadened out. I saw some teak growing at this altitude, and we saw our first tea since leaving Kandy. My impressions were too many to record them all. What paddy I saw in the valleys was grown in fields that were narrow stripes. There was not much coconut at first, but I did see some more coconut trees on a hillock. I also saw a Kitul tree, but this does grow in hilly country.

From Hunasgeriya onwards my impressions were few, the bus travelling very fast on a very windy road. I have done the eighteen hair-pin bends before, but this was the first time any vehicle I have travelled in did all the bends without having to reverse once, and at the bottom of the hill we caught up the bus that had left Kandy half-an-hour before us. Just after the commencement of the hair-pin bends, a tractor had gone over the side of the road, crashed across

the same road lower down, and we saw it wedged against a tree on the slope below that. We gathered the driver was unhurt.

The paddy fields in the plain were still being sown, some of them, all by transplanting, and we could see how much better this method is than broadcasting by the few fields that had been done the other way.

It has not rained for some time, but fortunately the heat is alleviated by the haze that obscures the sun.

In the Dambana area, I saw a fine specimen of a young satinwood tree. It stood alone in a clearing. The leaves were quite a light green and the trunk of this tree was almost a rose colour. Near it was an even younger *Kadumberiya* tree. This tree does not grow large as the satinwood and its tender leaves are used to make beedies, to wap up the beedie, as paper is used in cigarettes. The young leaf is green or almost orange, and the leaf turns a dark green when it grows older, and it looks quite different then. To get the tender leaf in more profusion the tree is pruned. Young *illuk* looks almost like paddy here, and I confused the two.

If you want to see Veddahs, easily the place to come to is Dambana. They all speak Sinhalese well, but they will speak nothing but Veddah if they

get the chance, and the excuse is always the presence of a stranger. Even if the language is corrupt it sounds convincing, but *poja* which means thing, can be heard frequently. But then, what language is not corrupt? In Swahili paper is *katatasi*, table is *meza*, and tea is *chai*; so one may ask, Did Swahili get these words from Sinhalese, or did they both get them from some other language? *Chai*, of course, is not Sinhalese, but Urdu or Hindi.

Kallaipoja is jungle in Veddah and "I'm off" would be *mung-guoh-choer* and *Hura* can be anything from friend to Mr., so put these three words together, and you get, "I'm off to the Jungle, chum".

The Veddahs at Dambana no longer live the life of the traditional Veddah, but you can always recognize them just as you would a Celt by his long head and black hair, or a Saxon by his round face and fair hair. You would recognize a Veddah by his features, but I would be blowed if I could say how. In the Maha Oya, Pollebedde area, you find two clans of Veddah, the *Bingoda*, one numbering only a few, and made famous by Dr. R. L. Spitelis book, and the *Morana* clan, who outnumber them, and who have been agriculturalists for longer. There you will still find small parties of Veddahs who will go out for a week or a few days and live the tradi-

tional life of their ancestors. Now and again Veddahs like to marry Veddahs, so there must be something in their life that they will not readily give up. With his few possessions, the Veddah is more free from the man who has much.

A few miles from Mahiyangana, I saw a group of people round what I thought was a co-operative, and I said as much to some one standing near. I got the surprise of my life to hear that they were not out shopping, but that they were there to receive food. I have heard of youth colonists getting gifts of free food from donors abroad, through the Government but I have not heard that adult colonists and families received it. I was told they got flour, tinned food and milk: that they had been getting these for about two years and that they were "new colonists", and received their ration of food every two weeks. Whether the food is from abroad, or not I would not know.

Seeing the country from a vehicle is different from seeing it on foot. The countryside has a quite a sameness about it seeing it from a moving vehicle. On foot, at the pace of a walk, it all looks different. You not only see the same scene from near angles, which you would do both in a vehicle and on foot, but you have time to see that each place is quite different.

It is not a question of a coconut tree in one place and a jak tree in another but the relative positions of two coconut trees. The beauty of a place has to be observed, and this takes time. Walking, each place has almost a breathtaking beauty. At 20 m.p.h. it all looks much the same and very dull. Sometimes the best views can only be seen from a particular square foot of earth. Go fifteen yards, and you have lost the magic of that particular scene.

Half-way between Mahiyangana and Bibile, paddy fields were still being prepared for sowing. As we approached Bibile, we saw quite a number of Kitul trees. Young rubber had been planted out of sight of the road, as I saw when I ventured off it at one place. There were massive ranges of hills to be seen to the west. It was at Dambana that I heard quite by chance from a man I had met working at Balana Talawa that Dr. Spittel's famous Tissahamy's photograph was in a certain house in a village called Ellagoda, a few miles from Maha Oya. I had always wanted to see his likeness, and I had an opportunity of visiting the village. The photograph is a group one with Sir John Kotalawala in it. The owner of the photograph was able to identify other people in the group. The book about Tissahamy, and the sequel to the story, are among the finest books I have read, and they give a very

good idea of what life used to be like in these parts. The photograph is in a real village, in the jungle.

Somebody said, "Do not go along that road now, there were elephants when I came along just now. Wait till the sun gets up a bit." I know enough about elephants and I have had a little experience evaluating these stories. I paused, and another said, "Go, go, it will be alright now." I said severely to the first man, "Where are you from?" He said he was from the village where I wanted to go. So I said, "If you have just come from there, then I can go along the road, too." I admit I have still to meet my first elephant alone, on a road, and until I do it I shall continue to be brave.

One can see some fine, exciting looking hills on the road from Bibile to Maha Oya, and on the new road, too, which leads from there to Amparai, and even to Inginiyagala. These hills can be seen from Kaimunai on the coast and, one particularly fine peak stands out clearly, Walimbe or Friar's Hood, Tissahamy's own peak, which lies near Balana Talawa and the long-abandoned village of Golmede. Badulla and Moneragala districts are about the most exciting districts in Ceylon and they would still be so if only for the Veddahs. I have a feeling that

Safari.

Ceylon's future is going to be here.

About fifteen years ago, I am told this village of Ellagoda in Bintenne besides being very ancient as ruins testify, had about two hundred families. It also had a tank. Then a crocodile got stuck in the outlet, and the tank burst its bund. About five years ago there were about fifty families that year but many left for the teak allotments which were distributed, and now there are only ten families left. The previous Government had started an irrigation

scheme which involved a tank with a bund three-and-a-half miles long, but for some reason it was stopped, and this government, I was told, did not seem interested in resurrecting the scheme. Elephants come into the middle of the village now and knock over the coconut trees. The P.W.D. took over the approach road to the village many years ago, more than ten, and promised to tar it then, but in all these years the progress made in this matter had only been one and a half miles.

Something I just overheard reminds me, and I do not remember mentioning it before, that rice pounded in a mortar tasted much better than husked in a mill. The pounding has to be done at home.

The weather looks dull again, ideal for walking. Now that there is no sun, I shall have to rely on what wind there is to dry any clothes I wash.

The children here are talking about elephants, and how they destroy the crops in the cheras.

FROM THE EASY CHAIR

HOLD THE LINE, PLEASE

By
CANAX.

NOBODY KNOWS the troubles I've had. But to hear the *Times* tell it, their switchboard was flooded with incoming calls from lunch-time on the day the Speaker gave his ruling on the Press Council Bill. So I have to reluctantly revise my conclusion—all right, it wasn't everybody who bothered me, but let me say that the few who did were Very Important People. To me. Like my barber, my bookie, my grocer, and my wife. (I was hoping to paraphrase someone-or-the-other and say that never in the field of telecommunications has so much been asked by so many of few, but now I won't, thanks to the *Times*.)

To judge by the *Times* report (that public enthusiasm was much more than on Budget Day) we appear to be as much a nation of phonecallers as we are a nation of letter-to-the-editor writers. We are also a nation of petition-writers, as some would have it, and if we are not engaged in the good-neighbourly exercise of shooting off a petition about the man next door, we keep ourselves in trim concocting an anonymous letter to the man two doors next or, better still, one about him to the Customs, or Inland Revenue, or....well, I could go on and on, but I won't.

My barber was the first to call me. "What happened?"

"He's become a capitalist," I announced matter-of-factly.

"Truly?" he asked somewhat surprised, "or are you pulling my hair—or.. I mean, I'm all confused.."

"I thought you loved capitalists," I shouted into the phone.

"It's not that", he answered. "I'm so happy, I'd love to cut his hair, for free, and for life."

"I know some people who're not-so-happy," I said, "and they too would like to cut his hair, among other things, also for free, but on a once-and-for-all basis like some of NM's taxes."

AFTER THAT conversation I was wishing he'd offer to cut my hair for free, which is the least he could

do considering he's been learning his trade on my head all these years, when the phone rang again.

"How's the going?" my bookie wanted to know.

"The race is over," I informed him, "and the going was pretty hard. Press Bill nearly got left at the post, but after gaining ground tripped on a Constitutional hurdle and broke its leg. The jockey managed to stay in the saddle through it all, but a few enraged punters now want to unseat the judge, goodness knows why. It's a mug's game, all right."

"All good things must come to an end," he lamented. "I suppose they'll put the Press Bill to sleep?"

"Hell, no!" I cried, "those punters want to do that to the judge instead and keep the Press Bill alive, possibly kicking as well."

"Ah, well," he said, sounding dejected, "I'm a fool...."

"I know," I said sympathetically, "but how did you discover it?"

"I should have accepted bets on that race," he sighed. "Press Bill was tipped a sure winner, so I could have laughed all the way to the Bank."

"Don't take it so hard," I consoled him. "There's always a tomorrow, so look to the future. Think of what you'll do now."

"I have already thought," he announced, "I'll put myself to sleep."

"No! no!" I shouted, but there was a click, and the phone went dead. Pity, reliable bookies are so hard to come by these days.

MY GROCER was next on line, and he came on just when my mind was full of dark thoughts of my bookie's imminent demise.

"Any news?" he asked, panting audibly. The *Times* was certainly right about public enthusiasm. My grocer didn't even bother to ring me on Budget Day. He was so apathetic to the whole fiscal exercise. He merely slapped on a 20 per cent mark-up on all items in anticipation the night before and slept all through the big day. But now he sounded an eager beaver.

"What's your card?" I demanded to know. "I didn't think you could blackmail the Press."

"It's a vital piece of legislation," he lectured me earnestly, "and it affects the lives of everyone of us."

"Not mine, as far as I can see," I laughed, "but that's probably because I can't see as far as you can."

He confirmed my point. "I'm very far-seeing," he confessed, "and I can see an immediate 10 per cent increase in my profits if the Press Bill goes through but only 5 per cent if it doesn't."

"You mean, as a customer of yours I lose either way," I yelled, bristling with anger. "Then you're

just up five, damn you, and I'm down five."

He didn't speak for several seconds, while no doubt he mentally computed his gross takings on the Press Bill blockage. "Mm...mm... must be thankful for small mercies no?" he said finally, and cut off.

MY WIFE didn't phone me till well after the event. Two days after, in fact. In her world the only news that travels fast is the kind that's not fit to print.

"What's all this about the Press Bill?" she asked.

"Why, don't you read the papers?" I retorted.

"No point both of us wasting time," she said simply. "It's enough if one person in the house reads. So you can tell me all about it."

"Well," I said, "the papers say our Marxists are playing up."

"I didn't know Groucho had a following here," she replied somewhat uncertainly. "Why, don't they think it's funny enough?"

"No, no, you've got it all wrong," I explained with as much patience as I could muster. "We're talking of Karl, not Groucho."

"Who he?" she asked seriously. "I haven't seen any of his pictures."

"Karl didn't make any films because he thinks a joke is a serious thing, but not vice versa. He went into live contemporary theatre, though,

yet his one major production involves a cost of thousands drawn exclusively from the working classes, so small places like the Lionel Wendt can't ever dream of staging it."

"Oh," she said, and I knew her doubts were clearing, or I thought I knew, until she added, "Is that why they are staging it in the National State Assembly?"

Well, it took some time, and some explaining, but I finally put her in the picture. She wouldn't believe it at first, that they don't play-act in the Assembly, at least not any more, and that the whole unseemly wrangle was because opinion was divided on whether to uphold the Constitution or uphold the Press Bill.

"True, Colvin threatened the Speaker?" she wanted to know next. "What did he use, a pistol?"

"Stop imagining," I reproached her. "Colvin never carries a weapon except his mouth, and that, too, because he can't help it. But he didn't threaten anybody. You can't but accept the word of a gentleman like NM, surely, and he has explained it neatly. Colvin merely reminded the Speaker of who he was, and how he came to be, not where he got off. Because, when one carries such heavy burdens of office, one tends to forget the little things, like one's beginnings. There was nothing more to it."

"Then, didn't NM also threaten the Speaker?"

"Who's telling you all this nonsense?", I shouted.

"Ranee phoned to say NM's vowing to get rid of him."

"Heavens!" I said in exasperation, "the things our leaders are up against. NM didn't want to get rid of the Speaker. It's just that the Doctor wants to be fair by all. With so many Members in the Assembly, and only one Speaker's post, he feels it's time the others also had a chance of sitting in the august Chair. What's so wicked about that?"

"Nothing", she said, "but Ranee says he also called him a reactionary. Is that a nice thing to call anybody?"

"No, not anybody, but the Speaker is different," I shouted.

"She says he also called him a capitalist stooge. What does that mean?"

"It means that he's not a socialist stooge."

"But why does he say things like that?" she persisted.

"Because those are the first words NM uttered as an infant," I said, defending the Doctor, "and he's probably very fond of them. Anyway, will you start cooking dinner and stop asking so many silly questions?"

"All right," she said softly. "At least now I

know why you've been giving me all these silly answers."

BRACELET CULT

Is there anything in this copper bracelet business? The craze had been sweeping the country for some time and more people, particularly more men, are flaunting the magic bangle these days claiming mysterious properties for it. One Bombay organisation which used to distribute 100 bracelets a day last May found the demand had risen by September to 7,000 a day and has to discontinue distribution since it cannot cope with the demand.

Basically, one supposes, it is a question of mimicry and keeping 'with it' the word-of-mouth propaganda having enormous pull. But there are several reports of bangle-wearers having got real relief from aches and pains. Whether this is psychological or not, it is hard to say. Scientifically speaking, the general motions of neutralising static electricity and benefiting from the effects of magnetism are absurd.

Since no harm is done—and perhaps some good comes out of it so far as some people are concerned — why not a copper bracelet cult? That metal, however, is in short supply in this country.

A Diary of Events in Sri Lanka and the World as compiled from the English-language dailies published in Colombo.

The last instalment of the *Chronicle*, December 1-21, had appeared in the *Tribune* of December 30, 1972. Though a little delayed, the sequence is being maintained, as many of our readers, in Colombo, in the outstations and more particularly abroad, have been writing to us about this feature—they say that it is an invaluable guide, and say they look forward to it in every issue.

December 22, 1972

—January 11, 1973

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 22: The Prime Minister yesterday called upon all sections of the population to come together and make 1973 a "production Year": she said this in the National State Assembly replying to debate on the vote for the Ministry of Planning and Employment.".....The lazy people will have to go—we can't let people idle in offices....." Two square miles of land had sunk in the landslide in the Ragala area and 50 persons were buried alive and it was doubtful if their bodies could ever be recovered. The Soviet Union today celebrated the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics. The US continued to bomb North Vietnam mercilessly.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 23: Sri Lanka and China signed the 1973 protocol for rice and rubber prices: and this country will obtain her supplies of rice at approximately £ 2 per ton less than the prevailing world price. Sri Lanka will receive 200,000 tons of rice valued at £ 157,000 sterling for the supply of 57,000 tons of rubber against the value of the rice: (the amount of rubber bartered for the same quantity of rice in 1972 was 39,000 tons.) The second Criminal Justice Commission to try violators of the country's exchange control regulations during the period of ten years—from December 14, 1962 to December 14, 1972—has been set up, consisting of three

Supreme Court judges with Mr. Justice G.P.A. de Silva as Chairman. American planes continued to blast Hanoi. An air crash near Teneriffe in the Canary Islands, which caused the death of 155 passengers, was said to be due to an error made by the pilot.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24: Housing Minister has announced what he considers "attractive terms" to persuade private house-builders to launch a vigorous programme of building. The landslide at Ragala had opened up a new watercourse. More firearms, according to a government source were being illicitly manufactured in this country more than ever before. Everything was quiet today even though it was X'mas eve: it was austerity with a vengeance. A White House spokesman stated that President Nixon will continue bombing North Vietnam until a settlement was reached. The Pope in the X'mas message, referred to Vietnam (for the fourth time within a week), and appealed for a quick end to the war.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 25: Christmas Day was celebrated by Christians in Sri Lanka quietly and under conditions of great austerity. The SLFP Ministers who met on Friday, according to the *Daily News*, had discussed the constitutional crisis arising from the Press Council Bill but took no final decision. A plane crashed near Oslo and only 10 of the 45 people on board survived the tragedy. A devastating earthquake yesterday flattened the Nicaraguan capital of Managua. Ex-President Truman had gone into a coma and was not responding to any kind of medical stimulus. The Indian leader C. Rajagopalachari died today in Madras.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 26: Minister Felix R. Dias Bandaranaike has set in motion a clean-up campaign in the city of Colombo and has instructed the Colombo Municipal Council to enforce laws strictly and break up all shanties which disfigure the city. The *Times* reported that the cream of the country's high-yielding milch cows were being sold to the butcher because owners could not maintain large herds because of the new land ceiling: even sheep were being sold off in this way. Meanwhile according to the

Observer, Mr. M. E. Perera, Deputy Director of Agriculture-Animal Production, had pointed out that approximately one thousand head of cattle was being slaughtered every day to cater to the country's meat requirements and that unless the present rate of slaughter was reduced for a period of time, by a number of beefless days in a year, Sri Lanka's national herd of cattle will soon disappear. The US continued its bombing blitz against Hanoi. Stunned refugees fled out of the city of Managua and its surrounding areas after the earthquake which had caused death and destruction in Nicaragua. A Christmas service was held in Peking yesterday after six years. Ex-President Truman died today: he was 88.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 27: The Prime Minister according to the *Daily News*, has called a top level conference for January 4 to discuss how local production of rice and sugar could be increased to meet the food crisis posed by rising world market prices of rice, sugar and flour. Fisheries Minister George Rajapakse stated in the Assembly that an agreement with the Soviet Union to exploit the country's fisheries resources would not threaten the country's security. The US resumed the intensive bombing of Hanoi after a comparative lull over X'mas. Troops fired on looters in the doomed city of Managua in Nicaragua.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 28: Mr. Felix R. Dias Bandaranaike said that the Prime Minister will soon make a full statement in the National State Assembly regarding the dangers to internal security. In the Assembly, the SLFP Member for Gampola, Mr. D. M. Jayaratne, created a mild stir yesterday when he launched a bitter attack on the Minister of Education, Dr. Baduidin Mahmud. Poultry food and forage dealers have jacked up prices of all their products by 15 to 22 percent beginning this week and the Ceylon Oils and Fats Corporation has introduced a ration system. The Tamil United Front will hold black flag demonstrations in protest against the visit of Ministers of State to the Tamil speaking areas. Chairman Mao Tse Tung was 79 yesterday, but there was no sign of any public celebration. According to the Deputy Minister of Health, Mrs. Siva Obey-

sekera, two babies were born every minute in Ceylon, and that unless checked the present population will double itself in the next two decades. Over 375,000 had fled Managua, and only 24,000 were left: and because the heart of the city was contaminated, it was decided to end the city by dynamiting it. American jets continued their blitz on North Vietnam. The newly elected Labour Government in Australia has decided to end the white Australia policy. Israeli planes attacked guerilla bases inside Syria yesterday.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 29: The third reading of the Budget for 1973 was passed in the National State Assembly by a majority of 97 votes: 113 voted for the Budget whilst 13 voted against: the Government had its full strength, but the Opposition was only able to muster 13 members at division time. The Vice-President of the World Bank, Prof. Hollis Chenery, arrived in the island yesterday on an official visit. Imports for 1973 will be slashed to over Rs. 400 million because of a rise of world market prices. The deadline for handing in forms for identity certificates likely to be extended for another month. Arab guerillas took over the Israeli embassy in Bangkok and threatened to shoot five hostages unless 36 Palestinian commandos held in Israel were released. Canada's former Prime Minister, Lester Pearson, died yesterday, aged 75. A crisis was reported to be brewing in the USA over the continued bombing of North Vietnam: anti-war demonstrations were being called out again. In the meantime, there were hints that peace talks may began anew in Paris.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 30: According to the *Sun*, the Cabinet was not still decided what it should do about the Press Council Bill especially when the National State Assembly resumed sittings on January 2. The deadline for Identity Cards was officially extended until January 31. The Arab Commandos released the Israeli hostages and the commandos were flown back to Cairo as a result of the intervention of the Thai government. President Sadat of Egypt declared that his Government was ready to go to war with Israel.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 31: By a Gazette Extraordinary, the Government increased the retail prices of the products handled by the Petroleum Corporation: super petrol by 50 cents a gallon, regular petrol by 50 cts a gallon, kerosene by 24 cts a gallon, diesel and fuel oil by 33 cts a gallon and bitumen by 33 cts a gallon: the increase in the prices of the lubricating oils had not been worked out: this price increase was decided upon because oil producing countries had increased prices. President Nixon ordered a halt in the bombing of North Vietnam (north of the 20th parallel) and it was believed that peace talks would be resumed in Paris early in January.

1973

MONDAY, JANUARY 1: The Government, it is reported, will allow the import of drugs free of FEECs... A Petroleum Corporation spokesman said that the price-hike has been kept at a minimum. The *Sun* and the *Times* both frontpaged stories that people in Sri Lanka faced a bleak and dismal 1973. It was reported that the Vietnam peace talks would be resumed in Paris on January 8. President Thieu of South Vietnam was hopeful about a ceasefire.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 2: The Prime Minister inaugurated Production Year 1973 at the Ratmalana Workshops yesterday when a programme was launched to build railway carriages: "if the Ceylonese are to live as a free nation the people must work harder," she had said, also that "...1973 would be another bleak year for the people of Sri Lanka..." According to the Ministry of Agriculture, the Government was hoping to collect a bumper harvest of about 7.8 million bushels. An armed gang ambushed and robbed a Trincomalee-bound CTB bus at Mamaduwa on the Vavuniya-Kebilitigollawa road on last Friday night and robbed the passengers at gun point. The Government Parliamentary Group this morning decided unanimously that the Sri Lanka Press Council Bill should be taken up for debate in the NSA as early as possible. The accumulated loss of the CTB since in its inception in 1958 up to the financial year 1969-70 was over Rs. 78 million. Britain became a full-fledged member of the European Economic Community as from

yesterday. White House circles were hopeful about a peace settlement in Vietnam.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 3: Mr. Felix R. Dias Bandaranaike yesterday announced that the Cabinet would today decide the date of presentation of the Press Council Bill: the Opposition was expected to raise a point of order regarding the Bill. A Bill to place a limit on the ceiling on the ownership of houses was introduced in the Assembly yesterday: a man and his wife could own two houses and each dependent child one house: all surplus houses had to be sold within two years. The Assembly passed the Bill unanimously. Technical experts from the US and North Vietnam began parleys yesterday in Paris as a prelude to the major talks on January 8. Sicily was blasted yesterday with high winds and storms and there was much destruction.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 4: When the Press Council Bill was taken up for debate today in the NSA, the Opposition raised a point of order which stalled the debate on the main resolution: the House adjourned without the debate being concluded. The Opposition wanted the Government to hold the KKS by-election without further delay. The state-owned Bank of Ceylon made a record profit of 19.8 million in 1972—the highest recorded in the 33 years of the Bank's existence and Rs. 4.6 million more than in 1970. Violence erupted again in big way in the Indian state of Andhra with demands for its bifurcation into two parts: Telegana and Andhra. Students in Cairo staged a major anti-government demonstration and the police and the troops had to open fire to break up the rampaging crowds.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 5: The point of order on the Press Council Bill was discussed in great length in the National Assembly today, and the Speaker announced at the end of the day he would give his ruling on January 9: the point at issue was that the Bill had to be referred to a Constitutional Court as the last reference was invalid because the Constitutional Court had not been properly constituted in terms of the Constitution—its rules had not been gazetted as required. Student-police clashes continued in Cairo

yesterday. President Nixon was hopeful of an early in Vietnam.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 6: The Prime Minister will launch the agricultural sector of the 1973 production year on January 8 by participating in a tree-planting ceremony at the Nursery, Torrington Square. The Mahanayake Thero of Malwatte, the Ven. Madugalle Sri Sumana Siddhartha Dhammasiddhi, died yesterday in Kandy. Cairo students carried on struggling against the police and the troops but were waging a losing war.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 7: The Armed services too are expected to join the production year (grow more trees campaign) to be launched tomorrow. The Government was planning to launch a bigtime offensive against all smugglers. Rail fares are to be increased soon at least by two cents a mile. According to the *Sun*, the Government was having second thoughts about the Fisheries Agreement with the Soviet Government. The funeral of Malwatte's Mahanayake has been fixed for Thursday January, 11. According to press reports, the Petroleum Corporation has threatened to stop supplies of fuel and other oils to the CTB unless arrears amounting to over Rs. 30 million were paid up this week. President Sadat of Egypt has set up several committees to prepare for war against Israel. The Pope in a special message stated that the drugs-and-sex-culture of the the Permissive Society were Satan's own creation.

MONDAY, JANUARY 8: The *Daily News* revealed that Sri Lanka had bought sugar at £ 104 a ton whilst the highest price it had paid in 1972 was only £ 80. Former Education Minister Iriyagolla died at Kuliapitiya yesterday after a short illness: he was 66. The Ministry of Fisheries has arrived at an agreement with a Japanese firm for the use of the Galle fisheries harbour on a joint collaboration basis. The Vietnam peace talks were resumed today in Paris between Kissinger and Le Duc Tho. The Indian Prime Minister stated yesterday that drought caused distress in several states—as a result of food scarcity.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 9: In a speech in Attanagalla, the PM stated that Sri Lanka

should make herself self-sufficient in rice before the end of 1973—as no rice would be imported next year. The *Sun* spotlighted the fact that wheat prices had shot up “by a phenomenal one hundred percent within the space of one month—end of November to end of December...”: that the wheat prices had shot up from £ 57.25 per ton to £ 114. A man had poured kerosene on himself and set himself ablaze opposite the PM's residence, *Temple Trees*. It was reported that observers believed that France will be Europe's most powerful and richest country in Europe by 1965.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 10: The Minister of Internal and External Trade, Mr. Illangaratne, revealed on Monday night in a broadcast speech that the country was getting more and more into debt in its efforts to repay old debts: that the full debt accumulated up to the middle of 1972 was higher than the full foreign exchange earnings for the year. The man who set himself on fire opposite Temple Trees died of his burns in hospital: it was held that he was a person of unsound mind. The *Observer* reported that all import licences of private sector industrialists for the first half of 1973 had been temporarily suspended. The *Times* stated that several Mahanayake Theras had appealed to the Prime Minister to withdraw the Press Council Bill. The Vietnam peace talks were continued in great secrecy “in a chilly atmosphere”.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 11: The Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike, made a strong case for regional co-operation amongst Southeast countries when she inaugurated the ten nation conference of Governors of South East Asian Central Banks at the Central Bank auditorium in Colombo yesterday. The Paddy Marketing Board hoped to supply all the paddy for the rice ration from its purchases from local cultivators this year. The *Times* pointed out in its frontpage that the State Pharmaceutical Corporation had increased the price of drugs from 100 to 200 percent. The Vietnam peace talks were continued reportedly in a “cold atmosphere”.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

BY ARIEL

The Vietnam Peace Agreement

US, USSR, PRC Statements

THE VIETNAM PEACE AGREEMENT, initialled by Henry Kissinger and Le Duc Tho on January 23 and later simultaneously announced from Washington and Hanoi, is undoubtedly one of the most important turning points in the contemporary history of Asia, America and the world.

The ceasefire became effective from January 27, and after some desultory fighting inside South Vietnam, the agreement is well on the way towards being implemented. The agreement itself is a long and bulky document, but it is based on the basic principles which all signatories have claimed has brought them "peace with honour" and each party in its propaganda broadcasts declare as a complete victory for whatever they were fighting for. In this sense it is a remarkable document: it means so much to so many people.

It would be best to place on record what was said by those whose words matter in regard to the future of Vietnam. It is only proper to refer first to the statement of President Nixon when

he announced the peace agreement.

This is the text of the address delivered by President Nixon January 26 announcing the Vietnam cease fire agreement.

"Good evening. I have asked for this radio and television time tonight for the purpose of announcing that, we, today, have concluded an agreement to end the war and bring peace with honor in Vietnam and in Southeast Asia. The following statement is being issued at this moment in Washington and Hanoi: At twelve-thirty Paris time today, January 23, 1973, the agreement on ending the war and restoring peace in Vietnam was initialled by Doctor Henry Kissinger on behalf of the United States and and special adviser Le Duc Tho on behalf of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. The agreement will be formally signed by the parties participating in the Paris Conference on Vietnam on January 27, 1973, at the International Conference Center in Paris. The ceasefire will take effect at twenty four hundred Greenwich Mean Time

January 27, 1973. The United States and the Democratic Republic of Vietnam express the hope that this agreement will ensure stable peace in Vietnam and contribute to the preservation of lasting peace in Indochina and Southeast Asia. That concludes the formal statement.

"Throughout the years of negotiations we have insisted on peace with honor. In my addresses to the nation, from this room, of January 25 and May 8, I set forth the goals that we considered essential for peace with honor. In the settlement that has now been agreed to, all the conditions that I laid down then have been met: A ceasefire internationally supervised will begin at seven p.m. this Saturday, January 27, Washington Time. Within sixty days from Saturday, all Americans held prisoners of war throughout Indochina will be released. There will be the fullest possible accounting for all of those who are missing in action. During the same sixty day period, all American forces will be withdrawn from South Vietnam. The people of South Vietnam have been guaranteed the right to determine their own future without outside interference. By joint agreement the full text of the agreement and the protocols to carry it out will be issued tomorrow.

"Throughout these negotiations, we have been in the closest consultation with President Thieu and representatives of the Republic of Vietnam. This settlement meets the goals and has the full support of President Thieu and the Government of Vietnam as well as that of our other allies who are affected.

"The United States will continue to recognize the government of the Republic of Vietnam as the sole legitimate government of South Vietnam. We shall continue to aid South Vietnam within the terms of the agreement and we shall support efforts for the people of South Vietnam to settle their problems peacefully among themselves.

"We must recognize that ending the war is only the first step toward building the peace. All parties must now see to it that this is a peace that lasts and also a peace that heals. And a peace that not only ends the war in Southeast Asia but contributes to the prospects of peace in the whole world. This will mean that the terms of the agreement must be scrupulously adhered to. We shall do everything the agreement requires of us and we shall expect the other parties to do every thing it requires of them. We shall also expect other interested nations to help insure that the agreement is carried out and peace is maintained.

As this long and very difficult war ends, I would like to address a few special words to each of those who have been parties in the conflict.

"First, to the people and Government of South Vietnam: By your courage, by your sacrifice you have won the precious right to determine your own future. And you have developed the strength to defend that right. We look forward to working with you in the future, friends in peace as we have been allies in war.

"To the leaders of North Vietnam, as we have ended the war through negotiations let us now build a peace of reconciliation. For our part, we are prepared to make a major effort to help achieve that goal. But just as reciprocity was needed to end the war so too will it be needed to build and strengthen peace. To the other major powers that have been involved even indirectly, now is the time for mutual restraint—so that the peace that we have achieved can last.

"And finally, to all of you who are listening, the American people: Your steadfastness in supporting our insistence on peace with honor has made peace with honor possible.

"I know that you would not have wanted that peace jeopardized. With our secret negotiations at the sensitive stage they

were in during this recent period, for me to have discussed publicly our efforts to secure peace would not only have violated our understanding with North Vietnam, it would have seriously harmed and possibly destroyed the chances for peace. Therefore I know that you now can understand why during these past several weeks I have not made any public statements about those efforts.

"The important thing was not to talk about but to get peace and to get the right kind of peace. This we have done. Now that we have achieved an honorable agreement, let us be proud that America did not settle for a peace that would have betrayed our allies, that would have abandoned our prisoners of war, or that would have ended the war for us but would have continued the war for the fifty million people of Indochina. Let us be proud of the two and a half million young Americans who served in Vietnam—who served with honor and distinction in one of the most selfless enterprises in the history of nations..."

THE SOVIET UNION welcomed the agreement. On January 26, Tass the official Soviet news agency, issued the following statement. Below is the text of the statement "The public of the Soviet Union regards the reaching of the agreement on the

cease-fire in Vietnam as a historical victory for the heroic Vietnamese people, won under the leadership of the Vietnam Workers' Party and the South Vietnam National Liberation Front. This is said in a statement of the Presidium of the Union of Soviet Societies of Friendship and Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries and the Central Board of the Soviet-Vietnamese Friendship Society. They stress that the reaching of the agreement on ending the war and restoring peace in Vietnam is at the same time a remarkable result of internationalist solidarity of the Soviet Union, the socialist countries, the international Communist and working class movement, all the progressive forces of the world that resolutely and consistently declare in support of the just cause of the Vietnamese people.

"The Soviet people are proud that the CPSU and the Soviet Government always took a firm and consistent stand on the side of heroic Vietnam. The statement says that in the years of the heroic struggle of Vietnam, the Soviet people showed by their deeds that they are on the side of Vietnam and now that the agreement has been reached on ending the war and restoring peace in Vietnam, the fraternal Vietnamese people can count on the all-round support of the the Soviet public. A state-

ment of the Soviet Afro-Asian Solidarity Committee was also published in Moscow. In the statement, the Soviet people welcome the remarkable success of the Vietnamese brothers. The Soviet people, loyal to the Leninist principles of internationalist solidarity will continue strengthening and developing friendship between the Soviet and the Vietnamese peoples, the statement says.

"Cordially congratulating the Vietnamese people, the Soviet war Veterans' Committee on behalf of millions of former war veterans and partisans sent warm fraternal greetings to the heroic Vietnamese people, to its courageous fighters and defencemen whose exploits filled pages in the history of the struggle of the peoples against imperialism, for freedom and independence.

Realising that the reaching of the decision to sign the agreement marks an important stage on the way to the just settlement of the Vietnam problem, the Soviet war veterans are well aware that what is needed is not only the signing of the agreement but also its strict observance, the message says.

"The ending of war and restoration of peace in Vietnam is an important step toward establishing durable peace and security in Indo-China and on the entire Asian continent,

says a statement of the Association of Soviet Lawyers. The Soviet Lawyers urge the democratic lawyers of all the countries to continue tirelessly rendering all-round support to the Vietnamese people so as to ensure their legitimate right to decide their affairs by themselves without foreign interference, in conditions of peace, democratic freedoms and independence."

THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA also welcomed the Agreement, and in a statement issued on January 29 1973 through Hsinhua, the New China News Agency stated as follows: Mao Tsetung, Chairman of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, Tung Pi-wu Acting Chairman of the People's Republic of China, Chu Teh, Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China and Chou En-Lai, Premier of the State Council of the People's Republic of China, in a message today extended warm congratulations and paid high respect to the Party and State Leaders of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam and the leaders of the South Viet Nam National Front for Liberation and the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Viet Nam on the occasion of the formal signing in Paris of the agreement on ending

war and restoring peace in Vietnam. The message was sent to Ton Duc Thang, President of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, Lê Duan, First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Vietnam Workers Party, Truong Chinh, Chairman of the standing Committee of the National Assembly of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. Pham Van Dong, Premier of the Government of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam; Nguyen Huu Tho, President of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the South Vietnam National Front for Liberation, and Huynh Tan Phat, President of the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Vietnam. The message reads in full as follows.

"On the occasion of the formal signing in Paris of the agreement on ending the war and restoring peace in Vietnam, we on behalf of the Chinese Communist Party, the Chinese Government and the Chinese people, extend our warm congratulations and pay our high respect to you and, through you, to the Vietnam Worker's Party and the Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam to the South Viet Nam National Front for Liberation and the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Vietnam and to the People in North and South Viet Nam.

"For the sake of the independence of their fatherland and the liberation of their nation, the heroic Vietnamese people, holding high the banner of President Ho Chi Minh's call for 'firm resolve to fight and win', carried on a staunch fight against U.S. imperialism for a decade and more and eventually impelled the U.S. Government to sign the agreement on ending the war and restoring peace in Vietnam, agree to withdraw all the armed forces of the United States and its allies within a fixed time and recognize the Vietnamese people's fundamental national rights and the South Vietnamese people's right to self-determination, and as a result conditions have been created for the Vietnamese people to solve their own problems free from external armed intervention, and a vista has been opened up of the realization of the peace, independence, unity, democracy and prosperity of Vietnam.

"The signing of the Paris agreement is an important achievement scored by the Vietnamese people through their protracted struggles on the military, political and diplomatic fronts. It is a great victory won by them through self-reliance, arduous struggle and perseverance in a protracted people's war. It is a great victory for three Indochinese people's united struggle. It is also a common victory for the

people of the whole world, the American people included.

"The Chinese people heartily rejoice at the victory of the Vietnamese people as at a victory of their own. The tenacious revolutionary spirit and dauntless heroism you displayed in your protracted war of resistance have won you the admiration and praise of the people of the whole world. Your brilliant example proves that a small nation can win victory over a big, and a weak nation can win victory over a strong. It is a great inspiration to all the oppressed nations and oppressed peoples of the world in their anti-imperialist revolutionary struggles. Your heroic struggle and great victory will be written into the annals of history as a shining model of the contemporary war of national liberation."

(To Be Continued)

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