

TRIBUNE

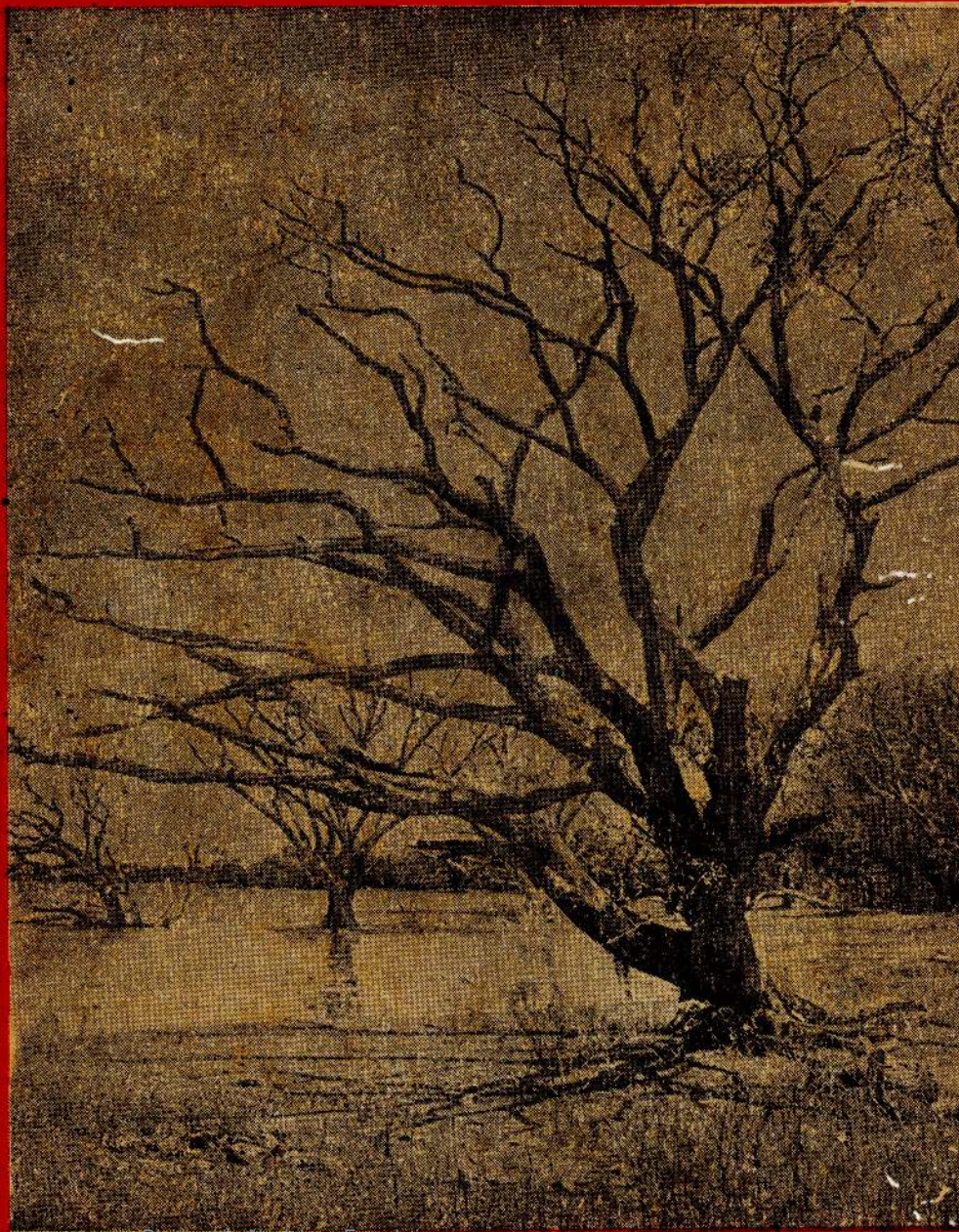
CEYLON NEWS REVIEW

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Tribune

BARREN LEAVES

AS ANTICIPATED in the *Tribune* during the last two years, and more especially in its recent issues, the situation in Sri Lanka continues to get bleaker and bleaker—bleaker than ever before in the recorded history of this island. Never before, perhaps, in the long history of Ceylon (or Taprobane, or Serendib or Sinhadipa, or Illangai), have the people of this country been deprived of their staple diet of rice so completely as today. Colonialism had transformed the economy of this island, from one of contented fullness stemming from self-sufficiency in food based on a rice economy to the seeming affluence of an export plantation economy which imported all the food required by the people from abroad. Only during the two world wars did the country find it difficult to import rice, and there were therefore efforts to grow more food in the island, but even at the height of such wartime scarcity (and austerity), this country did not find itself in the plight in which it is placed today.

Ever since 1930, this country has had adult franchise and a kind of "home rule" which blossomed out in 1947/48 into the political independence

of a Dominion in the British Commonwealth and in 1972 into the sovereign and independent Republic of Sri Lanka. Ever since 1930, there has been talk about eliminating the imbalances which arose from the lop-sided colonial-type plantation economy and about making this country self-sufficient in food—and thereby ensuring a tremendous saving in foreign exchange. In these forty years, the Senanayake system of agriculture was heroically carried forward by all Senanayakes, Kotelawelas, Bandaranaiques, (Philip) Gunawardenas, de Silvas, Bandas and even the Kobbekaduwas. The system has been the same, but there have been variations; there have been ten and five year plans. Interwoven into the basic Senanayake fabric of agricultural development, but there has been no real change since the thirties. The talk about ceilings mean little. The Kobbekaduwa remedy for the ills of Ceylon's agriculture is land reform in the form of ceilings and a regimented compulsion to ensure production based on the Agricultural Productivity Act.

Ever since Kobbekaduwa took over agriculture under the United Front Government, emphasis was

placed on ceilings and compulsory restrictions (and not growing or producing more food), and as *Tribune* had predicted, this country is today only reaping the harvest of the dragon's teeth which had been sown in the last three years. There is no rice, no chillies, no nothing....and we are not in a position to import them either.

There is quaint belief in government circles that there are large and concealed stocks of trice which must be unearthed, and that if this were done, everybody will be able to draw the rations of two measures a week indefinitely. But this belief is based on the false assumption that there were and are stocks to conceal, and bureaucrats placing reliance on official statistics of paddy and rice alleged to have been produced

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RAMBLING NOTES

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Crisis over the Speaker: Major Defeat for the LSSP

IN THE ERA OF THE UNITED FRONT, this country has moved from crisis to crisis, big and small and all efforts of the Government to increase production and productivity (and wealth) have so far ended up as soap bubbles bursting with the first touch of reality. Scapegoats and excuses have been paraded as the reasons for the crisis and the failures: sabotage by reactionaries, UNP subversive intrigue, international reaction, leftwing insurrectionary elements egged on by domestic and foreign reaction, the separatist machinations of the Tamils, hostility of Thondaman-led plantation workers, the infernal Prés—and other similar devilish organisations—determined to destroy the UF. The golden brains of the United Front have not yet sat down to a bit of self-critical analysis of the disaster which has overtaken the Government. They are still in an arrogant mood looking for enemies behind every bush who could be branded and liquidated with the dirty word "reactionaries."

OPERATION SPEAKER
STANLEY TILLEKARATNE

is an outstanding example of the self-assured self-righteousness of important persons in the Government who have been really running the affairs of the government since May 1970. The weekly paper *Nation* reflects the thinking and actions of this group. Centred on the LSSP it reaches deep into the SLFP (and even into the CP), and it has had everything its way ever since the UF was formed in 1970. But it has a come a cropper over *Operation Speaker*. It is the first big political-defeat suffered by the LSSP led group within the UF, and it would be interesting to see how they will utilise the strategic retreat they have now made in view of the firmness of the Prime Minister in a new bid to stage a political comeback to the dominant position they had occupied before this episode.

Let us examine the efforts of the *Nation* to unseat the Speaker after his now famous ruling on January 19. In its issue of January 26, under the frontpage banner headline of LIE UPON LIE—FURTHER LIGHT ON 'PRESS FREEDOM', the *Nation* declared: "The Mudalali newspapers have literally run mad. They have broken into a furious campaign of vilification and misrepresentation of the Government. The record of falsification, concoction of news and incitement of passions, for which

they were always notorious, has been surpassed this time by the obvious desperation which appears to be moving them. Lie follows lie, concoction falls over concoction and frantic demands are addressed to the Prime Minister to toe the line of the newspaper proprietor.

"We carry elsewhere an exposure of one extremely crude attempt to falsify a speech of the Minister of Foreign and Internal Trade, Mr. T. B. Illangaratne. Two more barefaced lies, one of them a stark invention, have followed in the same newspapers....."

There was no direct attack on the Speaker because intense lobbying was going on in the Government Parliamentary Group for his removal!

The *Nation* in its issue of February 2, 1973 carried on its front page an article entitled WHERE THE SPEAKER ERRED by Dr. Colvin R. de Silva, Minister of Constitutional Affairs (and also of Plantations). It was a studied article on the Speaker's ruling and the opening gambit of this rather lengthy legal opinion read as follows: "We are still in the midst of the reverberations and the repercussions of the pronouncements of the Speaker on 'the point of order raised by the leader of the opposition' in respect of the Government's effort to proceed with the second reading stage

of the Sri Lanka Press Council Bill. Nevertheless or precisely because of this it would seem necessary to focus attention on the precise issue which has arisen in respect of the Speaker's ruling.

"In the first place it should be clearly realised that there are in the Speaker's pronouncement not one ruling but two rulings in fact....."

THIS ARTICLE then went on to explain why the Speaker had erred, but more significantly in the same issue (*Nation*, 2/2) in the column on the last page entitled *Notes & Comments* (in which very important ideological pronouncements are made), there was a terrific onslaught on one of the partners of the UF, the Communist Party. The attack was apparently provoked by a CP statement about rising prices and the acts of commission and omission of the government on the economic front, but the real motive for the attack came at the end. It began with the complaint: "The Dr. S. A. Wickremasinghe faction of the Communist Party (Moscow), in its recent Press Statement is striving to make opportunistic gain out of the economic crisis that confronts the Government. By shedding tears for the people burdened with rising prices the CP hopes to wash away any blame that may be attached to it as a part of this Government. It talks of *ad hoc* increases in prices of essen-

tial commodities made through gazette notifications, dishonouring the promises given to the government members of the National State Assembly" It is implied that the Minister of Trade and his Cabinet colleagues have done this behind the backs of the MP's and, of course the CP! The fact that the CP has a Cabinet minister is conveniently forgotten.

"The CP as well as the *Mudalali* Press are quite aware that the Government is not to blame for the economic crisis. After all these are the basic problems of the capitalist economy that exists in Sri Lanka and which this Government inherited. In fact though the major culprit is Imperialism, some blame might be attached to the Soviet Union and other Socialist countries on whom the CP pins all its faith. It was the demands made on the world market following crop failure in these countries that has caused the prices of flour, sugar and even rice to rocket."

The columnist then went on to preach a sermon on how socialism could be achieved, and pointed that "sacrifices" had to be made. "Without a doubt the ultimate solution lies in Socialism. But as any serious socialist knows there is no short and easy road to Socialism. The history of the Soviet Union itself bears ample testimony to this. Does the CP close its eyes to the sacrifices the people of Cuba, a

small island like ours, have had to make to carry their revolution forward? This is in spite of the considerable Soviet Aid, which she can scarcely hope to repeat in another Third World country at the same time

"Thus it is not surprising that the CP fails to see that the State Bureaucracy cannot be defeated by Governmental decree alone but needs the participation of the masses through organs like Advisory Councils. Much of the CP statement consists of general pronouncements which by not being concrete lose relevance and become mere socialist platitudes. They would sound better from the ranks of the Opposition."

The *Nation* also took the opportunity to have a swipe at the Soviet Union, presumably because the CP held out the USSR as a supreme panacea. It was an interesting comment which revealed the ideological orientation of the columnist under the seemingly objective smokescreen of non-partisanship. But this is neither here nor there.

But what the official columnist of the *Nation* has to say about the Soviet Union is most revealing: "The only concrete suggestion (which one suspects is the motive for the CP stand) is that we throw ourselves at the mercy of the Soviet Union. We certainly welcome more trade and aid from

the Soviet Union but not to the extent that we replace one economic dependence with another. The latter would pose a threat to the non-aligned stand that our people value. But concretely, if we sever our links with Imperialism altogether, can we compel the Soviet Union to buy our tea, rubber and coconut? When we are short of foreign exchange can we expect her to supply us with flour, sugar and even rice? Recent appeals to US and Japanese "capital" suggests that the Soviet Union has its own problems too. May we also ask the CP, why is it that Rumania (a member of the Soviet bloc) has joined IMF and two others have applied for membership? There are limits to Soviet benevolence in spite of the wishful thinking of the CP."

But the last paragraph of the article showed that it was CP "intransigence" (from the Nation's point of view) in refusing to support the LSSP move to censure and remove the Speaker which had evoked the wrath of the Nation. "The hollowness of the CP stand emerged with the recent crisis over the Speaker's ruling. When a clear class issue was posed the CP was on the side of reaction. Are we seeing a slide back to 1946? It is time the CP realised it can no longer run with the hare and hunt with the hounds. The CP must act with greater responsibility."

THE COMMUNIST PARTY had made it abundantly clear that it was not willing to join any move to remove the Speaker. The CP refused to participate in public meetings organised by the LSSP and certain elements in the SLFP to condemn the Speaker. But, the PM was adamant, and she refused to be blackmailed by the **widespread sentiment created among SLFP backbenchers by LSSP lobbying that the Speaker should be removed.**

But the campaign was carried on with vigour during the weekend of February, 3/4. Big rallies were held which were addressed by LSSP leaders as well as some SLFP Ministers like T. B. Subasinghe and T. B. Illangaratne. But the PM would not budge. On Wednesday, February 7, there were ugly scenes in the National State Assembly when certain LSSP-SLFP elements refused to respect the Speaker and take his rulings. There were unruly incidents and the Speaker adjourned the sittings and the proceeding had come to an abrupt end.

Thereafter the PM, it would seem, had taken a firm stand and made it clear to the LSSP that if they could not control their backbenchers it would be difficult to continue the partnership. She had also applied the whip with a vengeance to SLFP backbenchers, and it was noted

that the proceedings of the NSA on the 8th and the 9th went off very smoothly; the members outraged by the Speaker's ruling and conduct were quiet and had sat in the seats like dumb lamb.

But, in the meantime, the *Nation* had evidently had gone to press. In its issue of February 9, the paper carried a stirring headline: **RULING AND SPEAKER MUST GO: HOUSE HAS NO CONFIDENCE.** And the article read: "If ever a Speaker has lost the confidence of the House it is Mr. Stanley Tillekeratne. The events of the past week have made this clear to the whole country. He followed up his earlier blunder on the Constitutional Court issue by virtually running away from a decision of the House on a matter of routine procedure. This is the only interpretation possible of what transpired after the row between the UNP Hiriyala MP Mr. Herat, and the Kirielia MP, Mr. Vasudeva Nanayakkara.

"When neither was taking any notice of his appeal for order the normal procedure was for Mr. Tillekeratne to have had whomever he thought the offender named. A Minister has to name the member and then a vote has to be taken. It is not certain whether he feared both steps but he should not have had much difficulty in getting a Minister

to name the member. He probably feared taking a vote because the mood of the House right from the time he entered had been hostile to him. The Speaker's arrival had been heralded by sounds of displeasure and many members remained seated. Some SLFP and LSSP members walked out while others carried on desultory conversations paying no heed to the Speaker. He had clearly lost the confidence of the House.

"He chose instead to order Vasudeva Nanayakara to leave, and when he did not do this, to request the Sergeant at Arms to forcibly eject the member from the House. Immediately several Government MP's surrounded Vasudeva Nanayakara and refused to permit him to be taken. The House was in uproar! A shaken Speaker adjourned the sittings for ten minutes and fled, surrendering his authority in the process. After hurried consultations with Government and Opposition leaders, the Speaker resumed sessions after forty five minutes only to adjourn proceedings for the day.

"When things come to such a pass any self-respecting Speaker should resign. The Government will be compelled to take a decision on this question before long!"

The article then went on to state: "But more important than the future of Mr. Stanley Tillekeratne is his ruling which could

have tremendous repercussions on the subsequent functioning of the National Assembly. As Dr. Colvin R. de Silva pointed out in the last issue of the *Nation*, the Constitution clearly separates the functions of the National Assembly and the Constitutional Court. The duty of the (so-called) Court is to decide whether any sections of a Bill before the House contravenes the Constitution. That decision is binding on the Speaker only if it is received within two weeks. By his ruling on this point, the Speaker not only rejected the contention that the Court was not bound by the two week's time limit, but he also recognised the existence of a duly constituted Court. His subsequent ruling that the Court had not been properly constituted was, to say, the least illogical—as pointed out by Mr. Felix Dias Bandaranaike.

"The matter of procedure to be followed by the Constitutional Court is a matter for that Court. It is not a matter for the Speaker to take-up or decide on. By doing this he creates a precedent whereby endless queries could be raised in the House regarding the procedure and conduct of the Court. This will permit further opportunities to reactionary forces within the House, by means of legalistic wrangling, to delay the passage of progressive legislation. The Speaker has no right to

take upon himself the function of an Appeal Court to interpret the Constitution!

"Looked at from a legalistic point of view or from the spirit of the Constitution, the Speaker has blundered. He has in addition ignored the unanimous opinion of the Government Parliamentary Group and a Cabinet decision. The massive rally of the organized working class, looking at the question from the angle of the march to socialism, vocally condemned the reactionary role of the Speaker.

"Verdict of the political leadership of the country as well as the progressive forces is clear. The Speaker and his wrong ruling must go!"

The *Nation* categorically stated that the "political leadership of the country as well as the progressive forces" wanted the Speaker and his Ruling to go.

But he did not go.

ALL MOVES to throw him out have now faded from the horizon. This was indeed the biggest political defeat suffered by the LSSP and its allies within the United Front since this Government was formed.

There is no doubt that the LSSP had expected a different end to the campaign. The *Nation* was also furious that the rally held during the previous weekend had not been adequately reported by the SLBC. Not very long ago, the Radio Ceylon

had echoed all that the LSSP wanted and the Nation had set out in its pages.

A frontpage box in the Nation of 9/2 indicated the depth and extent of LSSP's disappointment with the SLBC. (Incidentally, in the same issue, in the last page column, there is an ideological exposition which is most interesting and is worth a careful examination by a knowledgeable student of Marxist dialectics).

This is the Nation comment on the state-run Radio under the heading: SLBC STRUCK DUMB. "There were many, both in Colombo and the provinces, who were eager to know what transpired at the mammoth JCTUO meeting held at Hyde Park on Monday evening. Here was a meeting that was addressed by four prominent Cabinet Ministers and the best known trade union leaders in the island, on burning issues like the fate of the Speaker, the fate of the Press Bill and the fate of Lake House. Many of them switched on their radios that night expecting the SLBC—the State radio services—to provide an objective, accurate resume of the meeting. But to and behold! the SLBC had been struck dumb—it did not even refer to this meeting, let alone comment on it.

"Instead listeners were served with the usual hogwash that the news-reporters churn out at Torrington Square. To

wash it down we had the tripe that Dayananda de Silva dishes out with the help of his patrons. It is strange but true that the petty little pansies at Torrington Square still refer to the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Vietnam contemptuously as 'the Viet Cong'. While the Administration of Van Thieu, which the United Front Government of Sri Lanka does not recognise, is referred to in most endearing terms.

"It is obvious, even to the half-wit, that the SLBC is well and truly in the clutches of the Western propaganda apparatus and their local agents. In fact it is standard practice for the SLBC to specially monitor the BBC and VOA news bulletins and to prepare our news broadcasts on the lines that these agents of Imperialist Governments take. Things were bad enough during Mr. Susil Moonesinghe's time, but since his departure the SLBC has graduated from the gutter to the sewer."

It was an anti-climax.

The LSSP and the vociferous elements in the SLFP who wanted to "skin" the Speaker (metaphorically) have relapsed into silence on this question. But it is a deceptive silence. The radical elements in the UF led by the LSSP want a palace coup in which the so-called Rightists in the Government and the UF

could be pushed out. For a long time, the rightists were on the defensive. They had been pushed back on many matters. Carried away on the crest of ebullient radicalism, the leftwingers in the UF had been so far able to carry the PM with them, even on self-defeating and undoubtedly nationally suicidal legislation like the Land Reform Act, Income Ceilings Act and the like.

Having succeeded in carrying the PM along in these economic measures, the attempt was made to stampede her into a political decision of the first magnitude in wanting the removal of the Speaker for having given a Ruling which did not accord with the views of the LSSP. Earlier, on many economic matters, the PM had succumbed to SLFP backbencher pressure, even though the position taken by them was wrong and against the best interests of the nation. And they had no doubt hoped that the PM would succumb once again.

But she did not. It is yet too early to say what the political implications of this development will be, but it is something worth watching.

However, to make people forget the political defeat suffered by the LSSP and certain elements in the SLFP a major melodrama was staged in the weekend of February 11 over "rice". It was an altogether unnecessary panic-station exercise. Our columnist Pertinax deals with it in his column.

Tribunania

OPERATION RICE, RICE.

The February Eleventh Exercise revealed that nobody had concealed paddy and rice, but only that Government had concealed facts.

by PERTINAX

WAS OPERATION RICE, executed with great melodrama on Sunday February 11, necessary under the circumstances? Was it not a panic-stations exercise which served little or no purpose? Was it not a fact that everything

which was to be known about the rice situation was known earlier and the options before the Government were also known?

If the Sunday, February 11, exercise was to serve

any purpose it was to bring out concealed stocks and to prevent traders and stockists from pushing stocks into the hoarded underground. But, everybody except the purblind who had deluded themselves into accepting the bogus and exaggerated "official" production figures of locally grown paddy as correct, knew that there were no concealed stocks in any sizeable quantities. Furthermore, rice, unlike gold and gems, cannot be easily concealed: it is liable to deteriorate and also likely to be

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in the years 1970, 1971 and 1972, have persuaded political and ministerial big-wigs that there are large (concealed) stocks floating around in the country. Operation Rice, carried out with ruthless brutality on February 11, where the police and troops exceeded their powers at every turn, proved to be a hopeless failure. In the city of Colombo, where the Government believed they would unearth a few thousand tons of rice, they could find no more than 200 tons. The story was the same in the provinces and the outstations. It is the same story as the Operation Chilli exercise carried out about the time the Budget was presented. The armed forces and the police now, as then, were sent to look for stocks which were non-existent.

THE PICTURE on the cover depicts the barrenness of everything we do. History will not hesitate to say that the bulk of the troubles which have now descended on this country were man-made and specially-tailored by the United Front. The trees we plant, either refuse to grow, and perchance they grow they refuse to bear. Even the luscious trees which were there before have now shed their leaves and are withering away. Neither the Land Reform Act (with ceilings) nor the Agricultural Productivity Act (with diktats) seem capable of making the trees bloom once again, and more importantly bear fruit. It is a sad and gloomy story and if *Tribune* underlines the stark realities confronting this country, it is not out of a sadistic delight in asserting *I-told-you-so*

but because it is necessary to awaken the thinking sections of the community (where *Tribune* is avidly read and is passed from hand to hand) to the great dangers staring us in the face.

The Editor in his *Rambling Notes* concentrates in this issue on matters domestic: the political crisis revolving round the Speaker and the economic crisis centred on rice. Set in the context of the world currency (and monetary) crisis, Sri Lanka is indeed in a bad way. Alkardi Mugana continues his Safari, whilst Canax contemplates of the virtues of vegetarians and vegetables from the comfort of his Easy Chair. Ariel's article on the Vietnam War is further continued in this issue. We also publish articles held over from the last issue on Bangladesh, LBJ and Beggars.

attacked by rats and other pests.

In the circumstances, only panic can set in motion an exercise like *Operation Rice* using the armed services, police and top officialdom in order to unearth allegedly concealed stocks. The results of the *Operation Rice* show that there were no big stocks in the country. Only trouble and great inconvenience was caused to the public and a sense of hostility against the Government was infused into the common people.

The police and the army at every turn exceeded their powers. They "took over" stocks without weighing the rice or the paddy. No receipts were given in most cases. Even a few measures with individuals were grabbed and thrown into the heap in the lorries. A hindu priest taking four measures for a temple ceremony was asked to hand over the rice at the gates of the temple in the heart of Colombo—because the armyman insisted that no one could transport any rice at all. When a complaint was made to a top official, he apologetically intoned that it "seemed that the army had exceeded their powers" and had added he would look into it. As no receipts were given for stocks taken over, the "inquiry", if any, would be farcical. Such abuse of power occurred even though it had been announced that an individual could take

5 bushels of paddy or 2½ bushels of rice for his use without a permit.

OPERATION RICE did not yield any hoarded stocks. Only legitimately held stocks were seized. This caused a great deal of inconvenience and resentment. If this operation was genuinely motivated. (i.e. for the purpose of finding out the stocks and bringing it under the control of the Government and the PMB), then it was an exercise which has done great political harm to the Government. The same results could have been obtained by less obstreperous means.

There are persons of consequence and responsibility, however, who think that *Operation Rice* was a deliberate gimmick by interested parties to cover their retreat after the major political debacle they had suffered over the attempt to compel Speaker Stanley Tillekeratne to resign. On February 7 the big *Operation Purge* to get rid of Speaker Stanley Tillekeratne had been set in motion—in the NSA after the attempt to get the UF Parliamentary Group to sponsor a censure motion had failed. A few vociferous backbenchers had started a campaign of "disobedience" and "disrespect"—making it difficult and impossible for the Speaker to discharge his functions in the NSA. Then LSSPer Vasudeva Nanayakkara had openly defied him, and

there was pandemonium in the NSA for a while, until Speaker Tillekeratne had adjourned the meeting

The LSSP and a few SLFP backbenchers felt that these demonstrations would compel Tillekeratne to resign. But the PM thought otherwise. She would not tolerate such indiscipline, discourtesy and downright obstruction. She was so firm that the LSSP and its allies had to beat a retreat. They were like chastised little mice in the NSA on February 8 and 9. It is in this context, it is said, that **OPERATION RICE** was staged as a diversionary interlude to make people forget **OPERATION REMOVE STANLEY TILLEKERATNE**.

Whether *Operation Rice* was a gimmick or not, it has served as an open sesame into the hidden mysteries of the rice situation in this country.

It has not brought forth concealed stocks of paddy and rice of any sizable significance, but it has shown that what was concealed were facts and not paddy and rice. Facts had been concealed in a way that called for the resignation or the sacking of a few Ministers and their officials would have been knocked out like ninepins after an exercise such as *Operation Rice*, but in Ceylon the Ministers who deserved the "sack" plumed their feathers and paraded before the public as heroes who

had been sinned against by a "vicious capitalist press."

IF NO "concealed" hoards of paddy and rice were unearthed, was there anything else which had been concealed? Yes.

FIRST, it had been concealed that rice imports which should have come before December 31, 1972 had not come. Burma, which should have shipped 44,000 tons under the 1972 China-Sri Lanka Agreement (on the basis of a China-Burma Agreement) had defaulted. A private contractor from Pakistan who should have shipped 20,000 tons had also defaulted. He cannot even be traced.

SECOND, it had been concealed that the Yala harvest had been a failure. The Government had hopefully expected to collect at least 37 million bushels of paddy from the Yala harvest, but the Food Commissioner has now stated that the harvest had yielded only 19 million bushels.

THIRD, it had also been concealed that the 1971-72 Maha was a failure. It has been stated that the 1971 Yala had failed because of the insurgency, but the partial drought in December 1971—January 1972 was said by officials to be the cause of the failure of the 1971-72 Maha. But these facts were concealed.

When Tribune had brought these facts to public notice

the paper was accused of being alarmist and was told that such "exposures" only undermined the position and prestige of the Government.

FOURTH, facts about paddy production for the current Maha were concealed. It was known as early as November 1972 that on an average about 30 per cent of the land sown with paddy in the 1971-72 Maha was not sown for the current Maha. In the Mannar district, over 14,000 acres were not sown and in the Vavuniya district over 24,000 acres. The figures for other rice growing areas would not be any different.

Why were these acres not sown? Basically, it was due to the increase in the costs of production, (in the costs of inputs, tractor spares, tyres, etc. etc.) With production costs running at high levels, it was uneconomic (with the GPS price standing at Rs. 14 a bushel) to sow fields which could not produce over 50 bushels an acre.

If the new price of Rs. 18 had been announced in last October, then at least half the abandoned acreage would have been sown.

But the price increase announced on February 15, 1973 comes too late for the Maha of 1972-73 and is too small for the Yala of 1973 or the Maha of 1973-74.

Since January, 1973, the price of diesel, kero-

sene and lubricating oils have gone up. Other costs have also gone up. And at the price of Rs. 18 a bushel, it would yet be uneconomic to cultivate fields which do not bring in a yield of 70-80 bushels an acre. There would soon be a further reduction in the acreage sown—unless remedial measures are taken.

Dr. Government officials and their Ministers know that, at present it costs anything from Rs. 800 to Rs. 900 to cultivate a acre of paddy on scientific lines. Gone are the days when an acre could be cultivated on Rs. 200. Two years ago it cost about Rs. 300 an acre. Last year the costs had mounted to well over Rs. 600-650. And in 1973-74 the costs will soon reach Rs. 1000.

A FARMER needs adequate returns. It is foolish to talk about socialism or co-operatives to farmers at a time like this, when socialist agriculture elsewhere has not shown remarkable success and the co-operative movement in Ceylon is a by-word for corruption and inefficiency.

FIFTH, the greatest amount of concealment was by the Ministry of Agriculture. All their estimates for paddy production have been proved to be false in the light of actual achievements. And real facts were concealed. It was never revealed, until now, by officials that the Yala harvest was a failure.

Not so long ago, arrogantly enthusiastic "spokesmen" of the Ministry of Agriculture had declared that the minimum the PMB would get for the 1972-73, of the 56 millions expected as the total Maha harvest, was 42 million bushels. (Then there were plaintive and apologetic re-appraisals because of drought conditions, it was said—the drought was less than in the previous year—and other causes), and now Minister Kobbekaduwa in an hopefully enthusiastic interview to the Observer on 14/2 had stated that the PMB was sure of hitting the Maha target of 26 million bushels. (The 42 million bushels talked about a few weeks ago has been forgotten, or concealed.)

BUT THINKING PEOPLE will ask why the Maha target is only 26 million, when the last Yala (anticipated) target was 37 million? Should not the Maha harvest be always greater than the Yala? What was not revealed was that the 37 million for 1972 Yala was the boastful exaggeration of the Agricultural Ministry, but the 26 million for Maha is the reduced target (with the earlier target of 42 million happily forgotten.) Of the 37 million for Yala; 19 million bushels were collected by the PMB.

How much of the current Maha will the PMB collect? If the target was set at 42 millions as earlier, the PMB should have collected

about 20 million if the last Yala was any yardstick. But of the 26 millions, how much will the PMB collect? If the figure of 26 million is anywhere near the truth (for argument's sake the columnist is willing to concede that), then the question to be asked is just how much the cultivators will now be willing to hand over to the PMB.

After the scare created by the February 11 *Operation Rice*, it is likely that the farmer will make every effort to retain for seed paddy and for consumption of his family and the labourers who work on the farm as much as he can afford to retain. So far, every cultivator was sure that he could buy seed paddy and off-ration rice for his own needs. But now, everybody has been warned that there will be no off-the-ration rice, and farmers and cultivators will not be inclined to sell to the PMB the same quantities as in the past. Even with the increase of price to Rs. 18 a bushel, the impact of *Operation Rice* will be such that farmers will not part with stocks unless they need the cash. They will sell to the PMB only to the extent they need cash.

It must be realised that the selling outlets of Co-ops, Marketing Department stores and other official agencies are not enough to service the demand for off-ration rice.

Will the Government add to the miseries of the people by shutting out private traders from the rice trade?

AFTER THE HIMALAYAN heights in scare-gimmickry attained by the Ministry of Food and the Ministry of Agriculture on Sunday February 11, what happened on Wednesday February 14 was an anticlimax. Burma it appeared had undertaken to send the delayed shipment of 44,000 tons quickly. A shipment was expected from Pakistan. The immediate crisis, we were told, had been averted. And the free measure would stand for the non-income tax payers. Tax payers will now get the first measure at Rs. 1.60, and the second measure will be sold to both taxpayers and non-taxpayers at Rs. 1.60 a measure, if stocks were available.

In one sense, the compulsory ration has been cut down to one measure a week to every ration book holder. Non-taxpayers will continue to get this measure free, whilst taxpayers will pay Rs. 1.60 for the measure. But the second measure is conditional on availability of supplies.

In the face of the mighty crisis, the Government did not think it fit to end the free measure of rice. The greatest good the Government can do to the moral ethos of the people

now inhabiting the Republic of Sri Lanka is to end the first measure of free rice.

And the daily papers have now woken up to the facts of paddy production. Earlier they had swallowed the figures provided by the Ministries and Departments. These Ministries spend lavishly on "supplements", and daily papers publish the boastful and false statistics provided in banner headlines without examining their validity in critical articles. If these supplements and banner headlines, over the last one year, are believed, this country must be a land of plenty. If the paddy production figures published in the daily papers (and also provided over the Radio) were totted up, it would seem that Sri Lanka should by now be well able to export paddy and rice.

But today, the papers sing a different tune, after the Government staged the alarmist scare-gimmick on February 11. The *Sun* on 13/2 hinted that the Maha crop would be 50% off target. The *Sun* again (on 15/2) asked the question DID SOMEONE BUNGLE THE PADDY DRIVE? There is no need for the question mark. *Tribune* has been emphasising over the months that the food production drive (if there was a drive at all) had been bungled: that everything was being done to make

production and productivity go in reverse gear.

THE GOVERNMENT'S FOOD DRIVE will end up in a farce if the drive is allowed to go in the way it is going. The most essential and basic thing for the increase of food production is that there must be a change in the working hours in government farms and the rural areas—back to the traditional working hours of the farmers.

The 8.30 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. rule is good enough for factories in urban areas. It is good enough for industrial factory units, anywhere. But in the agricultural sector in Ceylon the 8 to 4 (or 8.30 to 4.30) rule is suicide. Government farms pay overtime by the millions, because on a farm work has to begin by 5 a.m. and it goes on at least until 7 p.m. But in traditional farming, there is really no work done between 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. There are variations districtwise but, the underlying principle is that work must be done to suit the climate and the cultivation. Moreover cows are not milked during industrial working hours—unless in large mechanised units which this country cannot afford.

There cannot be an unbroken 8-hour day, in the agricultural sector, but for the week agricultural workers will not have to work more than 42-44 hours a week. During

the year, they will get adequate leave owing to the vagaries of the weather and the imperatives of the planting cycles.

But in the Sri Lanka of today, the rules of industrial labour and working time have been pushed into the rural areas. In the Government farm schools, the 8 to 5 day has been made the order of the day. The result is that there cannot be a Green Revolution in this country. In the USA, work is paid for in terms of an hourly basis and shifts can be arranged in the agricultural sector to suit the needs of farming. But in Sri Lanka, the Government favours the 8 to 4 rule. Until this is changed, legislatively and in every other way, there will be no breakthrough in agricultural production, whether it be in the state sector, or the co-operative sector, or the private sector.

In these circumstances, the announcements over the Radio that trained "home gardeners" were available for the fashionable patrons of the Nursery at Torrington Square from 8.30 am to 4.30 pm at Rs. 7.50 for a male worker and Rs. 7.00 for a female worker. What about their lunch break and their tea breaks?

A fashionable home gardener works in his plot before going to office and after he returns from work. Moreover, chilli plants must be transplanted

either before 7 am or after 5.30 pm when the heat of the sun is not so fierce. That is how successful traditional chilli farmers do the work. But our experts in the Torrington Square think that everything could be done between 8.30 am and 4.30 pm.

This is another gimmick which will flop.

And furthermore, the new price of paddy will also not prove the incentive the Government hopes it will be. The taxpayer will pay Rs. 1.60 a measure and even the non-taxpayer will pay this for the second measure whenever available. At Rs. 1.60, a bushel of paddy is Rs. 24, and even if one deducts the costs of milling and other handling charges, (which will be no more than Rs. 1 to Rs. 2 a bushel even at the exorbitantly high overheads of the Paddy Marketing Board), the farmer will expect a price nearer to Rs. 22 a bushel than even Rs. 20. If the price of ration rice is Rs. 1.60, the price of off ration rice, sanctioned by the PMB, will be higher. Will the peasant then not be tempted to sell his paddy, even bushel by bushel, without the authority of the PMB, into the open market? And it must be also remembered that Rs. 18 a bushel is no incentive at the present level of costs of production.

What is worse is that the Government is setting

up false values in labour charges by wanting its Torrington Nursery workers to be paid Rs. 7.50 for working between 8.30 am to 4.30 p.m. Paddy cultivation, even when the season lasts, cannot be done within the 8.30 am to 4.30 pm time limit and the workers who have to work longer hours will demand overtime payments. Farmers who work will also want a return commensurate with the Rs. 7/50 a day for a 8.30 to 4.30 day. On this basis, the Rs. 18 a bushel becomes a dis-incentive. Only farmers who can reap at least 100 bushels an acre will sow paddy because only then can he get a return for himself and others at Rs. 7.50 a day for a 8.30 to 4.30 day.

This Government has a strange and supreme capacity to devise measures which are self-defeating, and to proclaim "incentives" which turn out to be disincentives ab initio.

And as this piece is being written, there is a news report that survey teams from the Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs will go round the countryside to find out why paddy production has dropped. For a beginning they will do well to read the copies of *Tribune* published during the last eighteen months. And if the report is correct, is this not a blow to the pundits of the Ministry of Agriculture?

TEN-FOLD FISH YIELD

The new technology of composite culture of Indian and exotic fishes which has yielded phenomenal results at the latest experimental cultivation by the Central Inland Fisheries Research Institute researchers at Kalyani, may help in a big way in the near future in giving a successful challenge to the fish famine in the country.

In the trial-growing by application of this technology in one of the Institute's experimental ponds at Kulia fish farm in Kalyani, scientists engaged in the All-India Coordinated Project on Composite Culture have produced a record yield at the rate of 6,464 kg. per hectare per year which marks a ten-fold increase of the maximum achievement by the traditional methods from such waters.

The fertilisers used were ammonium sulphate, super phosphate and muriate of potash and their quality was worked out after detailed analysis of water and soil. Supplementary feeding daily with ground nut oil cake and rice bran in the ratio of 1:1 at the rate of 1 per cent of the body weight of the fish was given. Gross carp was fed with Hydrilla which is an aquatic weed infesting the adjacent Kulia beel.

(The Amrita Bazar Patrika)

Vegetables of the World, Arise!

BY CANAX

You have nothing to lose but your Vitamins.

THE PRESS recently devoted a good bit of front page space to a meeting of true minds held in Colombo. To the media-conscious, the publicity fell into two categories, the first and by far the larger being well in advance, in much the same way NM is squeezing us for taxes even before we've earned the money. According to the blurbs, delegates from all over the world were to attend. The one thing the participants had in common was that by no stretch of imagination could they be damned as representatives of '20th Century meat-eating savages'. They were, to a man (and even a woman), proud reps of '20th Century vegetable-eating savages.'

The Press, never having quite lost its savage instinct, naturally played it up. But what the Press ignored, and the public know nothing about, was another get-together, fairly enough, also in Colombo, just about the time the vegetable-eating savages were holding their pow-wow.

The little-known meeting was the First Regional Vegetable Congress, and was organised by the international Vegetables Union. No official report of the proceedings is available but, thanks to my

flair for investigative reporting, not to say anything of my unparalleled speculative ability, I am able to present you with a fairly accurate picture of what's been going on.

THE FIRST thing I gathered was that a really fantastic turn-out was expected from the world over, representing just about every member of the plant world savaged by man since Eve offered Adam the apple and invited him to take a bite. ("There's a first time for everything," she's reported to have said, and fool that he was, Adam believed her. Incidentally, this was the first recorded instance of what is now popularly called, in vegetable circles, as Setting A Bad Example.) But, it seems, many delegates failed to show up because they were 'conscientious objectors'.

They objected most vehemently, and in conscience, to being compulsorily fumigated on arrival at Katunayake before being let past the immigration barrier. Most of the foreign vegetables considered the requirement degrading ("Beastly to the point of being human," one delegate is said to have cried on hearing of it and promptly cancelled the trip), while a few of them, all females, felt

fumigation would also ruin their make-up for good.

Despite the poor overseas participation the conference was described as a great success and a step in the right direction although, as one delegate had put it, "we know our meeting won't achieve anything in practical terms and certainly won't reduce, even slightly, Man's inhumanity to Vegetable."

The Chief Guest at the conference, I hear, was Mr. Top Weight, a name that came to him as one of the last in the line of descendants of a vegetable family of Carrot. Sprightly despite his age, he certainly didn't look his 90 days. Mr. T. W. kicked off the conference with a challenging bit of food for thought. "We all have to go sometime," he had said, "but we don't have to be willing victims of foul murder."

He had added: "I have just heard of a barbaric, carotene-curdling statement by a savage that he would rather kill a carrot than a cow or baby lamb and, thereby, commit the least possible harm. I can't quite put my finger on it, but the sentiments expressed somehow remind me of a Marquis notorious in history and literature."

Mr. Top Weight had made an impassioned plea to the conference to act decisively to end the mass slaughter of its membership. "Speak now", he had implored the gather-

ing, "or forever end up in the pot." The vegetable world, by its silence throughout the ages, had propagated the erroneous idea that it was incapable of feelings, be they of joy or pain. "If you have any feelings to show," he had concluded, "prepare to show them now."

THE MEETING showed its feeling of oneness by breaking into thunderous applause, which died down only when a handful of delegates decided to also break into song. For a impromptu performance, without rehearsal, it was a most agreeable rendition of 'We Shall Overcome'. There was a minor diversion at this stage when the singing was drowned by a sudden shriek from among the audience. "She's fainted!" cried a voice. "No, she's been touched!" yelled another. It turned out that the lady in question (but also in distress) was not a delegate but an observer well-known for being sensitive to the point of exhibitionism. Seems Miss Touch-Me-Not never missed an opportunity to show her feelings.

Mr. Crimson Globe, a local delegate from up-country, looked red in the face, but not merely because he was furious. He was from a very red-blooded family of Beet-root. He noted sadly, his whole well-rounded figure shaking with emotion, that no less a savage than the Catering Manager of Air India had prepared

—"and I quote his very words," he said, choking with emotion, "five-hundred tasty dishes from vegetables." Mr. Globe, it may be noted, was capable of a fascinating range of emotional responses, from shaking with emotion to choking with it. At his urging, a Select Committee was appointed to study the possible effectiveness of economic sanctions, including a total boycott of the Flying Maharajah and his Magic Carpet. It takes an experienced airline like Air Ceylon to know that what sells seats is not tasty vegetable dishes, or even good, reliable aircraft, but shapely, sexy hostesses. Which is why they don't have any. But Air Ceylon's management could teach Air India a thing or two, like how to make an omelette without breaking the egg.

The way things are going we savages had better watch our step, our weight and our vegetables. I think we are in for hard times and are likely to be faced with a more militant, aggressive vegetable population from now on.

USUALLY RELIABLE sources (of rumour) indicate the possibility of an international campaign on the lines of the spontaneous demonstrations so efficiently organised to protest America's brutal aggression against the helpless peasantry of North Vietnam. The theory appeared to be that if the Viet Cong, with more than its fair

share of murder and mayhem, could elicit worldwide sympathy for its cause, the vegetable world, never having done anything to harm anybody, could surely expect as much if not more support for its survival.

Another story going the rounds is that the conference discussed a proposal to set up a guerrilla organisation to achieve its ends. Seems some of the membership were all for it since there were enough vegetables with life-long experience of underground activity, like carrot, beet-root, potato, yam, radish, manioc and Bombay Onion. But the majority view, which apparently won the day, was that violence in the pursuit of justice was an indefensible principle except among human savages.

Among the retaliatory measures considered by the meeting, I hear, was the possibility of vegetables making themselves bitter wherever possible, thus putting the savages off them. The idea was to cultivate bitterness as an effective survival mechanism. "Do your damndest to leave a bad taste in the mouth," one delegate had exhorted those present.

"We've done that all our lives," wailed one vegetable, not even bothering to stand up and be identified, "but where has that got us?" The conference agreed that Mr. Bitter Gourd had a lot

to be bitter about, but urged him to carry on the good fight, alone if need be, to the bitter end.

During the 'any other business' stage, the meeting considered a proposal to seek United Nations intervention to dissuade the Press, printers and publishers from putting out ideas that were undeniably inflammatory and an open incitement to violence. Numerous examples were cited from women's page recipes and cookery books published both here and abroad. The matter was considered urgent and vital enough to justify sending a delegate to call on the Secretary-General in person. But the mood got somewhat ugly when the meeting got down to making the choice, since everybody wanted the plum job. Of course, Mr. Plum said he wasn't interested because he was feeling terribly dehydrated. Local delegates made out a strong case why the choice should be from among them. One of the points urged in support was the acute shortage of foreign exchange, making overseas travel a luxury locals could ill afford. Only pre-paid-and-all-found jaunts like this one were allowed. The conference accepted this as being reason enough to pick a delegate from Sri Lanka.

MANY NAMES were considered for the job which, it was stressed, required diplomacy, tact and a per-

suasive manner. Mr. Jak Fruit was ruled out as being too outwardly prickly while his close kinsman, Mr. Durian, though acceptable in most respects, was dropped because it was felt the Secretary-General's sympathies could hardly be won if he had to discuss their problem while holding his nose.

Someone suggested that Mr. Mango was the ideal choice, and only then did the gathering realise that Mr. Mango was not even one of the participants at the conference. Another delegate explained, with obvious envy, that Mr. Mango was abroad most of the time anyway, thanks to the Marketing Department's generous travel grants to him for being an active foreign-exchange earner. And so the whole idea was canned.

Finally the conference turned to an overseas delegate, Mr. Olive, but he said he couldn't take the job for personal reasons (he had accepted several invitations to cocktails), but agreed to send a Branch instead.

The conference ended, I'm told, with every member taking a solemn oath and giving a personal undertaking, written in his or her own Vitamins, to do everything vegetably possible to rid the earth of the horrible idea that 'One Man's Meat is another Man's Vegetable.'

I don't know if this journalistic 'scoop' of what

went on at the First Regional Vegetable Congress will put me in the running for the Pulitzer Prize, but I feel duty-bound to acknowledge my source, without which this exclusive report would not have been possible. All that I've told you came to me down the grapevine, one which I have known for nearly ten years now, residing as it does in my garden. Growing grapes certainly has its advantages, especially at times like this.

UNDERGROUND MOTORWAY FOR LONDON

London's first stretch of underground motorway, which will be Europe's longest stretch of motorway to be built underground for purely environmental purposes has been approved in principle by the Greater London Council's Environmental Planning Committee.

The proposed motorway, stretching for 11 miles in south-east London, would be made up of four separate deep-bored tunnels, each carrying two lanes of traffic. Each tunnel would have an internal diameter of 37 feet and an overhead clearance of 161 feet. The cost is estimated at more than £ 39,000,000.

ON THE MOVE

Amparai: Inginiyagala: Batticaloa: Mannampitiya

by
ALKARDI MUGANA

IN A NORMAL YEAR, there would be rain in January in these parts, but there has been no rain for a long time now, and I understand that the paddy sown in the chenas has died. I had heard that this was the position in Bibile, too.

On the way back, in a distance of two-and-a-half miles I counted no less than four springs, two of which had formed rivulets (I could not see the outlets of the other two), and two stagnant pools (inlets and outlets, if there were any, were hidden by scrub), and I also had to ford a river where a car could easily have got through. The old Maha Oya rest-house, which I shall always associate with Dr. Spittel is again a rest-house, after being a police station for some years. The two miles to Maha Oya were well lined with big *Mara* trees giving adequate shade. There were some fine jungle trees to be seen past the bridge, really tall ones.

From the junction of the Batticaloa and Amparai roads near Maha Oya, there was some very fine looking *illuk* stretching out along the Amparai road on either side for some miles. It was not

long stuff. Cattle will eat this short *illuk*. From the turn-off to Balana Talawa, there was some very fine teak forest, with *illuk* again between the forests and the road. It looks as if *illuk* will not allow any weed to come through. Where the teak came up to the road there was rubbishy weed between it and the road, all looking very untidy. Balana Talawa is an enormous glade, very undulating, miles inside the jungle. The teak stretched for at least five miles in the Amparai direction. Young teak has been put down for miles inside the forest, too. It has been farmed out to people to look after, and these people have interplanted it all with plantains. There is much Indian corn or maize which is being sown in chenas here, and much manioc too.

ANYBODY who wishes to see some fine samples of Ceylon art should visit Inginiyagala near Amparai. Go to the Fatima Shrine. In life size figures there are depicted the fifteen mysteries of the Rosary with the flight into Egypt thrown in and on life-size Tableaux certain scenes from Fatima. Outside the arena there is a striking and media-

tative Sermon on the Mount, that time when people were told to love their enemies. The central theme, the one that is in the centre of it all, is Christ bestriding the world. It is quite fitting that overlooking the whole and in a prominent position is the dagoba from the local Vihara and Pan-sala. All of this is in the open air, if anybody wants anyone to show them their way around, it might be better for them to call first at the church in Amparai, if they wish, and this will not always be necessary.

It was while I was at Inginiyagala that the weather broke. On the same day at Amparai it started raining again, and the rain has been quite heavy. Amparai and Inginiyagala both have the feel and the look of new towns, but Amparai of course is much bigger. Inginiyagala is little more than a village, but it has a big rest-house. The new town at Anuradhapura can never be new in quite the same way because it is part of a very old city. Kalmunai I thought, has also this feeling of being new, and I have an idea that it has become what it is because of the Gal Oya scheme. Polonnaruwa has an air of being new because the area of the ruins is quite restricted, the ruins being almost museum pieces, unlike as at Anuradhapura, where the ruins seem to be everywhere

and so are most part of one's life there

The rain seems to have eased off, which is more to our convenience because you can have too much of a good thing. I had not written this long, when the heavy rain started again and it does not look much like letting up. Kalmunai too had rain when we got there, and there was a very strong wind.

A lorry had knocked a new bridge construction and its steering seems to have been broken. It was blocking the road to Batticaloa. I thought we would be there all night the way matters were going, but two trousered men took charge and speaking very gently to the driver, and giving him a helping hand when necessary and, even doing some of the work, they got him to use his heavy jack to lift the front of the vehicle, while they man-handled the wheels around. When the wheels were pointing the right way one of the men himself reversed the vehicle to the side of the bridge which had nothing between it and the water and the traffic got through. I thought it a wonderful example of what we can do in Ceylon. Our bus driver set himself to make up for lost time, and we fairly flew along. It was lucky we met only one other vehicle on the road.

Batticaloa is a nice place at night. Places keep open late, especially pavement men who do a trade in cooked food which they cook on the pot, so that you know it is good. It is a nice idea. Batticaloa had had only a little rain. From Valaichchenai onward I noticed teak forests—older forest because the trees were well thinned out. There was usually a screen of jungle between the teak and the road. The teak left behind, we came across iluk and paddy, a tangle of both, with some fields, more obviously paddy, not yet cultivated.

At Mannampitiya, which is short of Polonnaruwa, I was told there is a Milk Board factory. What I did see from the moving bus was an enormous open stretch of grass very pleasing to the eye, because it was real grass. The fields looked tough as if they needed rolling. An English hayfield would have to be rolled.

Kaduruwela and Polonnaruwa are really almost twin towns, not quite joined together. Kaduruwela would almost seem to be the more important and all long distance buses ply to Polonnaruwa.

From Polonnaruwa to the only really prominent tank all the way from Batticaloa to Habarana is the tank at Giritale, the land looks well habited, with coconut trees a many, and tall ones, show-

ing that this area has been well populated for quite some time. After Giritale there was jungle all the way to Habarana, but I was told there is also teak.

(To be Continued)

NEEM OIL-FERTILISER MIX

The fertilising capacity of nitrogenous fertilisers can be substantially increased by mixing the fertilisers with neem oil, according to a study made at the College of Agriculture, Poona.

Ammonical nitrogen fertilisers, which undergo chemical and biochemical reactions in soils, lose nitrogen significantly at the root zone of plants. At present, certain costly imported chemicals are used to prevent this loss of nitrogen from the nitrogenous fertilisers.

The Poona study has shown that these chemicals can now be effectively substituted by neem oil, which can be produced cheaply from indigenous neem seeds.

Pre-election Party Lines in Bangladesh

By A Special Correspondent

Dacca,

THE PACE of political developments in Bangladesh has picked up perceptibly with only a little more than 2 month left for the country's first general elections to be held on 7 March. The elections have assumed a significant dimension recently with the emergence of the Rab-Siraj group formally as a political party—the National Socialist Party—and the Awami Yuba League as the "political youth wing" of the ruling party.

The earlier doubts about the character of the Rab Siraj group are now being confirmed by the open assertion of its line of political thinking every day through generous declarations by the joint conveners—A. S. M. Rab and Major M. A. Jalil—of the newly-formed party. The complexion of the party, which used to baffle many, has been clarified to some extent by the entry into it of Major Jalil who recently resigned from the Bangladesh army and has been looking at India with anything but a friendly eye.

A confirmed "extreme nationalist and follower of Islamic socialism" as he himself puts it, he has been cruising in Maulana Bhashani's orbit till now and has been almost in the vanguard

of the tirade against India for the last few months.

THE POLITICAL line that the NSP is going to toe has been made amply clear in its policy statement; its conveners, Mr. Rab and Maj. Jalil, announced at a macabre press conference a few days back where they appeared with the bullet-ridden corpse of one of their followers. Assailing the Government of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and all that it represents, they pointed to their dead comrade as "a victim of the present fascist rule."

Their policy statement sought to demolish verbally the present Government by saying that it has belied the expectations of the people as "it is a puppet regime installed by neo-expansionist powers, making more than obvious hints at India and the Soviet Union. They said that their mission was against "big brotherly dictation from these powers". In their assessments the foreign policy of Bangladesh has been a miserable failure as it has surrendered before these powers.

It is interesting to note that one of their main demands is the scrapping of some secret treaties which Bangladesh, they alleged, has entered into with India.

This demand Maulana Bhashani has also been making for months. The main political and ideological objective of the party was announced as establishment of "scientific socialism" by causing "a full blossoming of the concept of Bengali nationalism."

IT IS INTRIGUING that while on the one hand the National Socialist Party has projected an anti-India posture, a whisper-campaign has simultaneously started that this party is being patronised by India. And there are indications that this campaign has emanated from NSP circles themselves.

One of the widely spread rumours in interested circles is that Mr. Sirajul Alam Khan, guide and philosopher of NSP, visited Calcutta twice recently to meet Congress leaders there.

THE FACT is otherwise. He did visit Calcutta but for a dialogue with some top CP-M leaders. And it is reported that he has returned with some assurances of support from them.

Although overtures are being made by Maulana Bhashani and his recently formed coterie and the extreme right and left groups to the newly formed NSP, this new party is right now hesitant to become a partner in the Maulana's crudely-styled communal campaign. Despite the hesitancy it is displaying now in joining

hands with the Maulana openly, the logic of the political line it is pursuing will ultimately lead this new party to some sort of understanding, direct or indirect, with Maulana Bhashani.

Meanwhile sober public opinion has viewed the birth of the Awami Yuba League on the eve of the elections with apprehension, especially in view of statements made by its convener, Sheikh Fazlul Haq Moni who is Prime Minister Sheikh Mujib's nephew. His pronouncements that the Yuba League will contain Marxism and Communism and 'maintain law and order' have led many to apprehend application of strong arm tactics.

ALREADY following the formal emergence of the two organisations, NSP and Awami Yuba League, there has been a spurt in political murders in the country.

In such a context, it is also intriguing that the ruling Awami League even now seems to be in no mood to fight the NSP's disruptionist political line. Instead, the Awami League leadership has chosen the NAP of Professor Muzaffar Ahmad, which has been pleading for united action of all parties since liberation to rebuild the war ravaged country, as its main political opponent.

A section of the Awami League leadership makes no secret of its fear that if the NAP of Prof. Muzaffar Ahmad is not fought

out in the next elections, it is likely to emerge as "a challenging force to the Awami League" in the next few years.

ALTHOUGH Prime Minister Mujibur Rahman has reiterated time and again his determination to curb anti-secular and anti-democratic forces, reports reaching Dacca from different districts indicate that sections of the ruling Awami League are acting there in a way which only extends tacit patronage to disruptive forces.

There is hectic activity in all political camps and the political parties are getting down to the business of the election. The Election Commission is likely to finalise voters' lists by the end of next month.

The ruling Awami League will officially launch its campaign on 10 December with a public meeting at Dacca Race Course Maidan which the Sheikh will address on Victory Day, commemorating the first anniversary of Bangladesh liberation.

The Awami League's National Council, consisting of over 1,500 members will meet for two days in the third week of December to form a parliamentary board which will decide the party's nominations and poll strategy. According to the top Awami League leadership, the main election issues of the party will be the party's achievements, including giving a constitution to this new nation

within the shortest possible time and stability to the country, nationalisation of 85 per cent of national wealth in keeping with its declared policy of a socialist order, in the national economy and its successful leadership.

THE NATIONAL AWAMI Party of Professor Muzaffar Ahmad, the second biggest political party in the country, will decide its poll strategy by the end of this month. The party's working committee will have its two-day session from 19 November which will be followed by its national council session. Meanwhile, Prof. Muzaffar Ahmad has announced that his party will contest all the 300 seats of the Bangladesh Parliament.

The central plenum of the Communist Party of Bangladesh is scheduled to be held in the first week of December to decide its poll strategy and the party will launch its election campaign on 10 December with a public meeting at Palton Maidan.

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Farm Graduates Without Jobs

WITH THE recognition that manpower planning constitutes one of the most challenging gaps in the overall methodology of planning, a high priority has to be accorded to manpower planning in the agricultural sector. It is here that the baffling problem of reconciling extensive manpower utilization projects with the most advanced agro-technology, poses many questions.

Agriculture plays the most crucial role in India's economy. Apart from providing food, it accounts for about 50 per cent of our national income. It provides livelihood to 70 per cent of our population. It produces raw materials for large sections of national industry and, for the first time, provides sizable output for exports.

AN IMPORTANT objective of the fourth Plan is to achieve a sustained growth rate in agriculture of about 5 per cent per annum. Another objective is to enable as large a rural population as possible, including small cultivators, farmers in dry areas and agricultural labourers to participate in the process of development and share its benefits. Accordingly, developmental priority programmes in agriculture fall broadly into two categories, namely, those which aim at maximising production and those designed to remedy imbalances.

The breakthrough in the agricultural sector has stepped up the demand for trained manpower. In the first two years of the fourth Plan, the agricultural sector achieved an aggregate annual growth rate of 5 per cent, although progress in respect of various programmes was not uniform.

THE PROCESS of modernization of agriculture entails provision of improved and high yielding varieties of seed, chemical fertilizers, plant protection measures, additional irrigation facilities, extensive credit arrangements etc. This points to the growing need for agricultural manpower.

For the fourth Plan, a sum of Rs. 2,728 crores was provided as the public sector outlay for schemes in agricultural and allied programmes. This worked to 17 per cent of the total outlay earmarked for the public sector as against Rs. 1,068 crores (14 per cent) provided in the Third Plan.

At the time of Independence in 1947, India had a pool of about 5,000 agricultural graduates. This number increased to 9,000 by 1952. The Third Plan document estimated the stock of agricultural graduates at 14,000. In 1968-69, on the eve of the Fourth Plan, the stock was estimated to be 51,000. It is estimated that by the end of 1972, there will be

67,000 agricultural graduates, and indications are that the number will increase to 78,000 and one lakh in 1974 and 1979 respectively.

THE INFRA-STRUCTURE for the building up to agro-technology is provided by the Agriculture Universities established all over India. At present there are seventeen Universities in India. But the problem of student wastage has assumed considerable importance with the uncontrolled growth of agricultural education. The Fourth Plan, visualizing supply and demand imbalances in respect of agricultural manpower, stressed the need for ensuring educational planning.

The large expansion in the number of agricultural, veterinary and agricultural engineering colleges has resulted in the output of agricultural engineers and veterinarians far in excess of requirement. The All-India Conference on Agricultural Education, sponsored by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research recommended that the teacher should be exposed to modern methodology and techniques in teaching and that periodical review covering the course-curricula, and accreditation of agricultural universities and colleges should be carried out by ICAR.

For implementing the Intensive Agricultural Production Programme, especially the high yielding varieties and multiple programme, the extension

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

BY ARIEL

THE VIETNAM AGREEMENT

IN THE LAST ISSUE, we began the story of the Vietnam Agreement by setting out the statements of President Nixon, the Soviet Government and the Chinese Government. These three parties constitute the most important outside factors involved in the Vietnam imbroglio.

Owing to the exigencies of space, an important extract from the Chinese statement was left out and it is appended below to make the record complete.

"China and Vietnam are close neighbours linked up with common rivers and mountains. Our two peoples have always supported and encouraged each other and forged a profound revolutionary friendship in the protracted struggles against imperialism. The Chinese people have always regarded your struggles as their own struggle and taken as their bounden internationalist duty to support and assist your just cause. This we have done in the past during your war against U.S. aggression and for national salvation, and we will in the future continue to stand together with the fraternal Vietnamese and

the other fraternal Indochinese peoples and give resolute support and assistance to their just cause.

"We sincerely wish that the people in north Vietnam under the leadership of the Viet Nam Workers Party and the Government of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam, will achieve new successes in consolidating and building the socialist north. We sincerely wish that the people in South Viet Nam under the banner of the South Viet Nam National Front for Liberation and the Provisional Revolutionary Government will, together with the other two political forces, set up speedily a national council of national reconciliation and concord and councils at lower levels and, through consultations, hold general elections and decide the political future of the south and make a continuous advance along the road of independence, democracy and national unity. We are convinced that the Vietnamese People's aspirations to re-unify the fatherland will surely be realized and that their just cause will surely triumph.

Mao Tsetung,
Chairman of the Central
Committee of the Com-

munist Party of China.
Tung Pi-wu,
Acting Chairman of the
People's Republic of China
Chou Teh,

Chairman of the Standing
Committee of the National
People's Congress of the
People's Republic of China.
Chou En-lai,

Premier of the State Council
of the People's Republic
of China.

Most editorial writers and commentators round the world, welcomed the end of the US involvement, paid the greatest attention to examining the likely impact of the cease-fire agreement on the future course of the internal struggle for power in Saigon. A few went into wider perspectives and examined the future American outlook on world affairs, and the possible repercussions on the conduct of other big powers either in relation to Asian affairs or their global interests.

The *Spectator* had this to say: "No Pax Americana can now come about—Viet Nam itself has seen to that. But what is now possible is a white man's

(Continued from Page 20)

machinery at different levels is being streamlined. To augment the professional competence of the VLWs, particularly those employed in intensive agricultural areas, selected gramsewak training centres have been upgraded.

peace based securely if improbably upon Russo-American understanding, if not accord... There remain threats of war and causes of war, in the Middle East, on the Sino-Soviet border, between east and west, and between white and coloured. Nevertheless, provided optimists and ideologues are kept from power, the sceptical spectator is today, for the first time in this century, entitled to hold the view that major warfare is unlikely and that, with the humbling of America, peace in our time is breaking out."

The Paris newspaper *Les Echos* thinks that from Washington's point of view the inevitable adjustment to a new world situation bristles with difficulties. It says: "There once was the America to the Americans, for which Monroe established the charter; then the America, gendarme of the universe, Richard Nixon now promises a middle course: an America accepting the sharing and allocating of responsibilities. This third way is not necessarily the easiest for a nation still wavering between the contradictory temptations of neo-isolationism and imperialism. For Washington, it primarily requires reliable allies willing to act as so many relays of American power. But it is precisely at this level that the Achilles tendon of the 'Nixon doctrine' is located."

The commentator of *The Asian* (Hong Kong) on

Far Eastern affairs, Mr. Juan Gatbonton, pertinently draws attention to the conflict between state-level diplomacy and approaches to revolutionary movements of recent years. He says the superstates have come to agree that their proper pursuit is to prevent these revolutionary movements from embittering relationships among themselves and upsetting the international power balance.

"Constructing this delicate structure," he adds "has been the primary occupation these past four years of President Nixon and his resident Machiavellian Henry Kissinger. The Chinese are the most unlikely partners in this emerging coalition of the status quo. But for sometime now China's ideological militancy has been dampened by the deadly rivalry with the Russians. Peking's anxiety about the war on its southern borders has abated in proportion to the pace of American withdrawal. Neither Peking nor Washington is likely to do anything to stir up these anxieties again—at least not for sometime."

The Daily Telegraph, too is inclined to take a hopeful view of future power alignments. "The future depends, first and foremost, on whether China, in order to develop her relations with America to offset Russian pressure, is prepared to exercise a restraining influence on Hanoi. China certainly

wants to eliminate Russia's influence as Hanoi's main-arms supplier in a continuing war. Russia, which has much to gain from increased co-operation with America, may also cooperate in making the peace agreement work after a fashion. The portents are not all grim."

Le Monde looks at the ceasefire from the point of view of French interests in these terms: "The post-war situation offers France a new chance in what was for long one of its colonies and for which the French have remained nostalgic. The condemnation of the American intervention, first by General De Gaulle and later, more discreetly, by President Pompidou have earned for it sympathies in the Viet Nameese population."

While speculating on the shape of American policies to come, it is not irrelevant to reflect again on how and why Washington came to be drawn into the disastrous engagement in Viet Nam. *New Statesman*, for instance, has done well to discount the cosy belief that "somehow the American military—those convenient monsters in the Pentagon—had their wicked way with a collection of political and academic innocents, first of the New Frontier and then of the Great Society." The responsibility for the Viet Nameese tragedy, it says rests four square on the shoulders of elected poli-

ticians, enlightened businessmen, even fashionable and celebrated academics.

"It was because the men who came to Washington in the early 'sixties,' the British weekly notes, 'were determined to change the world—and were so sure that they knew how to do it—that the entire tragedy began.

Was the moral blindness, then, there from the beginning? According to the war's most persistent Congressional critic it probably was. Over seven years ago, Senator J. Fulbright published a small volume of speeches. It was called *The Arrogance of Power*. If Viet Nam, offers any sort of lesson it is perhaps that liberals, above all are specially susceptible to it."

It will be seen that the general trend of opinion is cynically critical about the Vietnam Agreement though most people are happy that there is a ceasefire. Whilst the general weight of opinion is still chiefly against the USA, on several grounds, eg: the fact that war carried on for so long, the many bombing outbursts particularly the last, etc. etc., there are also commentators who are also critical of China in regard to Vietnam. They stress that in the historic victory of the people of North Vietnam over American Imperialism an enormous role was played by the support of all "peace-loving forces",

particularly the socialist countries and more especially the Soviet Union which had given Hanoi a constant and steady supply of economic and military assistance ever since the beginning of the US intervention. It is pointed out that the Soviet Union remains to be a genuine supporter of all people struggling against aggression and imperialism.

Such commentators also stress that the peace settlement in Vietnam had shown that US Imperialism can no longer maintain the policy of *diktation* from a position of strength. To make amends, it is suggested, that the US should compensate Vietnam with damages for the "inhuman and barbarous air raids" by supplying equipment and machinery to rebuild the country. The damages are conservatively estimated at 6 to 8 billion dollars. But apart from condemning the US imperialism for waging war, these commentators take the opportunity to declare that the war would have been over sooner if China had followed a more constructive and positive policy. It is emphasised that China had rejected successive proposals by socialist countries for united action in support of North Vietnam, that China had placed obstacles in the movement of supplies from Russia to Indo-China and that Peking had even downgraded its support for North Vietnam in its

attempts to establish a *detente* with the USA. There is no doubt that Peking would have liked Hanoi to have come out of the war fully dependent on China.

But the ceasefire agreement has turned North Vietnam into an independent power entrusted with an important role to ensure peace and security in the region, in the whole of the Indo-China peninsula and thereby in Asia itself. How far this will fit the geopolitical calculation of China is yet to be seen, but China has now to contend with a new setup in the Indo-China area with states (Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos) made independent by the support of USA, USSR and also China and other big powers.

(To be Continued)

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FOREIGN POLICY PROBLEMS

Nepal, Bangladesh, China, USA

From A Special Correspondent

New Delhi,

Early in February, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi paid a visit to Nepal. This is Mrs. Gandhi's second visit to Nepal—the first being in October 1966. The stress was on strengthening goodwill and also establishing a dialogue with the new 27-year old King Birendra.

It is well to remember that India is committed to utilising Rs. 43 crores in Nepal through the Indian co-operation mission by 1976. Nepalese leaders also want a new highway and also hydel projects and had also requested Mrs. Gandhi for goods transit facilities to Bangladesh ports, like Chittagong, through the Radhikapur railhead. King Birendra is known to be keen on a middle-level highway across Nepal, estimated to cost Rs. 35 crores.

The demand for an alternative roadway towards India from Kathmandu, reducing the existing mileage on Tribhuvan Rajpath to about two-thirds, is a matter of urgency.

Diplomatic interest is being evinced in the mammoth Rs. 300-crore Karnali project, deep in Nepal, which was discussed by Mrs. Gandhi with Nepalese leaders. The project will be capable

of supplying 80 million kw. of power.

DURING the four-day state visit to India's neighbouring Himalayan kingdom, the Indian Prime Minister re-iterated the need for stable peace in the sub-continent which would help Asia in emerging as a region capable enough "to inhibit military alliances and great power politics." Mrs. Gandhi underlined that the two countries share a similar cultural background and outlook on international policies and said: "We stand for sovereignty and equality among nations. We both subscribe to the policy of non-alignment and peaceful co-existence."

She also took the opportunity to emphasise that while mobilisation of internal resources alone could be the true answer to any country's development, India was glad to co-operate in Nepal's economic progress. India would always be prepared to share with Nepal whatever economic gains India had made or would make.

Nepal spread the red carpet for Mrs. Gandhi and in welcoming her the Nepalese Prime Minister Bista had stated that Nepal cherished the feelings of deep affection and esteem of the people of India and its Government.

He hoped the present visit will result in further mutual understanding and co-operation. Mr. Bista said personal contact such as this between leaders of the two countries would enable them exchange views both on matters of common interest as well as international problems.

During her stay in Nepal, the Indian PM had hinted that India was willing to extend even greater aid to Nepal than contemplated before. The Nepal PM had also expressed satisfaction with the visit and Mrs. Gandhi on her return to Delhi had declared that her visit to Nepal was valuable. She did not think there were any real misunderstanding between the two countries, and she had added that if some misunderstandings arose they could easily be smoothed out through discussions.

In this connection, it is important to realise that China has been wooing Nepal most assiduously in recent years. And Nepal too has got a great deal from China. A recent issue of the Hong-Kong based *Far Eastern Economic Review* said.

"Prime Minister Kirtinidhi Bista's visit to China in the last week of November 1972 marked another turn in the politics of aid surrounding Nepal. Bista said nothing about what transpired between him and Premier Chou En-lai or what was discussed when he met Chairman Mao for 90

minutes. But it was known that he returned with renewed assurances of Chinese friendship and assistance. An economic aid agreement signed with Peking will see China promoting four new projects in Nepal. The most prized is the building of a modern textile mill. The exact size of this investment has not been worked out but informed sources suggest it could be in the region of US \$18 million.

"Another project is the construction of a 60 kilometer road, which will link the recently completed East-West Highway with Gorkha and Narayanghat in Central Nepal. It will open up the most productive areas in the Central region, thus giving the economy a boost. The other two projects are the setting up of an electric trolley-bus service between Kathmandu and Bhaktapur and the expansion of the Chinese-built brick and tiles factory.

Chinese aid to these projects will be outright grants. Six Chinese-aided projects have already been completed.

"The new Chinese commitments follow a negative report by a Soviet experts' team on four projects on which Nepal sought Russian assistance. They had been found feasible by local experts. The Soviet report rejecting all of them at the same time has raised speculation here whether political considerations played a part in the affair.

"Things have changed since Bista visited Moscow a year ago. It is believed that Russia has since proposed a long term peace and friendship treaty along the lines of the treaties the Soviet Union has with India and Bangladesh. Bista is said to have argued that a treaty between the countries already existed and no new one was required. It appears that Moscow is taking up a tough bargaining stance while Peking is emphasising its readiness to stand by Nepal through thick and thin. Bista has stated categorically that his Peking visit has further cemented relations between the two countries and that there is full understanding in Peking of Nepal's problems and aspirations."

Successful development of relations between Nepal and China will no doubt benefit both sides. Chinese assistance is an important factor in the development of Nepalese national economy. It facilitates social progress of the country by promoting and strengthening up-to-date forms of developing economy. Due to the increasing ties with China, the Nepalese foreign policy of non-alignment becomes more diverse and the country can more freely afford to pursue an independent foreign course.

But mutual appreciation alone is not enough for true friendship, mutual interests should also be considered. Assum-

ing this is the only right criterion of Sino-Nepalese relations it is felt by many neutral observers that Nepal had tilted a little heavily in favour of China, and it is moot point whether the February visit of Indian PM will rectify matters.

ONE THING which has caused great concern in India was the attempt made by Peking to draw Nepal to join an anti-Indian campaign. Such a campaign would have adversely affected Nepal's long-term interests, because Nepal cannot afford to discard India altogether. Understandably she cannot afford to quarrel with China, but there was no need for Nepal to tilt too much towards China during recent years.

It was noted that a bias too strongly in favour of Pakistan had been until recently one of the weakest links in Nepalese foreign policy. And it is not unlikely that such a bias in favour of Pakistan, with overtones of anti-Indianism, was inspired by China. It is known, for instance, that sometime ago the Chinese Embassy in Kathmandu had succeeded in switching the bulk of the export trade of Nepal from Calcutta to Chittagong, the main port of what was then East Pakistan. In return, China had agreed to supply Nepal with their own goods at reduced prices. Furthermore, it is also well

known that Peking had endeavoured to delay and prevent Nepal from recognising Bangladesh. So close had Kathmandu and Peking got at one stage that there were suggestions that Sino-American discussions at ambassadorial level could be held in Nepal—and this was before Nixon went to Peking.

There have also been other matters which have caused deep concern in India. Recently, for the first time in all the years of economic co-operation the Chinese representatives asked Kathmandu, and were insistent in their request, for permission to send their experts to the regions of Nepal that border on India. And though Chinese experts are only there for an experimental programme of growing cotton, their very presence on the Indian border can cause well-grounded apprehensions in India.

It is also reported that several hundreds of Biharis, Muslim refugees from Bangladesh, have found their way into the territory of Nepal. They are said to be all kept in special reservations situated close to hydropower-stations built with the assistance of Chinese experts. Refugees from among the Biharis can easily get jobs at these hydropower-stations, but the secrecy around their presence in Nepal is what causes concern.

NONE OF these facts referred should normally cause alarms if not for another matter which has been spotlighted in the world press. Reuter had reported that Premier Chou En-lai had told Mendes France, former Prime Minister of France, that a fire was flaring up on the Indian borders and that this important Chinese enemy would burn down in the fire. Chou's statement has been understood to mean that Peking was in some degree responsible for a fire between India and Nepal. It is not clear how Mendes France himself has understood this statement of the Chinese leader. But there is not the slightest doubt that Nepal herself should be cautious about her relations with India. Geopolitically, Nepal should exercise the greatest care in starting fires which can damage India.

The visit of the Indian Prime Minister is no doubt intended to ensure that Nepal is not led into adventurist policies which will cause unnecessary tension in the subcontinent.

In geopolitical calculations, one cannot disregard rumours that China will resort to extreme measure like the occupation of Nepal if the latter does not join in an anti-India front. Those who know Nepal realise that the position for Kathmandu is dangerously precarious. On the Sino-Nepalese border live people who are ethnically

cally closer to the Tibetans than to the Nepalese. Many of them are refugees from Tibet. It is also note worthy of the two highways built with Chinese assistance, the main one runs from Kathmandu to the Tibetan border, and this can easily be used for transporting heavy loads including tanks and artillery.

All these fears will prove to be groundless if China will normalise her relations with India. Indian leaders have expressed their willingness to enter into a dialogue with the Chinese to re-establish normal relations, but there has been no response as yet from Peking.

WHILST Prime Minister Indira Gandhi is busy paying special attention to her immediate neighbours, the question about her relations with the United States was also brought into sharp focus. On the day before she had left for Kathmandu she had addressed the One Asia Assembly, and in the course of her remarks had wondered how good the Vietnam Agreement really was—because it did not ensure the end to all fighting. She has also asked whether the ruthless bombing and fighting in Vietnam would have been tolerated so long if the people concerned had been "European". These and other remarks had caused a *furor* in the US and she was criticised for being catty and cynical

about the "historic" Vietnam agreement.

It was reported that official quarters in Washington had re-acted with "anger, shock and pique" to the Prime Minister's remarks. The authoritative version of the speech which had caused so much agitation in the US read: "Indian tradition has always spoken of one world—I have grown up in this belief and I abhor chauvinistic nationalism or racialism of any colour and type but I would like to ask a question: Would this sort of war or the savage bombing which has taken place in Vietnam have been tolerated for so long, had the people been European."

In a speech at Kathmandu and in other subsequent speeches, she had stated that the Vietnam remarks was not directed against any particular country, they were not intended to offend any particular country, but was only an objective assessment of the situation and its implications for the future.

Observers feel that the over-sensitive reaction in the US was due to the fact that Washington expected much greater cordiality and support from India than she has got in recent times. India has however been stung by repeated references in the US linking her current desire for good relations with the US with India's food situation. Indian sensitiveness is perhaps due to the fact that there is

a great deal of truth in this just as the USA is sensitive because of the muddle she had made of her South Asia policy.

There are also many other unspoken suspicions about US intentions in the subcontinent, especially the current US enthusiasm to partake in the work of reconstructing Bangladesh—considering the attitude the US had shown during the Bangladesh crisis. US policy *vis a vis* this sub-continent had really got itself into a muddle and its dangerous potentialities had become apparent during the short Indo-Pak war in December 1971. The US policy sought to "balance" one power against the other so that the "vacuum was not filled by either, but by the US itself. But this policy failed because the old rulers of Pakistan did not pursue a realistic policy. On the contrary, US support and military assistance contributed to their arrogance and ultimate downfall.

The Bangladesh debacle for Pakistan had come in the midst of President Nixon's plans to visit Peking, and the US made every effort to maintain the status quo in the subcontinent. The US sent the 7th Fleet to the Bay of Bengal and this encouraged Yahya Khan's soldiers into continuing their senseless resistance and thereby caused heavy human losses in Bangladesh.

Being pragmatists and realists, the Americans changed their policies and were prepared to have a subcontinent with three countries, Pakistan, India and Bangladesh. The propaganda machine was set in motion to make people forget US share of guilt in the bloodbath in Bangladesh, and a new South Asia policy was reluctantly outlined.

But, to all intents and purposes, it is the same old policy in a new garb: how is the US to restore its influence in the area?

This is a legitimate objective for any big power, but countries like India cannot be blamed for being apprehensive about much that is happening, especially in Bangladesh. The US poured assistance into the new Bangladesh even before Washington officially recognised it. The Bengalis anxious to maintain friendly relations with the world welcomed this assistance—but could they forget the past?

WHAT ARE the secret goals which the Americans are pursuing in Bangladesh? Their activities indicate that one of the main goals is to prevent Bangladesh from establishing really friendly ties with India. This reflects the policy the Americans pursued in the past to "balance" Indian influence in this region as well as the US current irritation with India.

To provoke a quarrel between Bangladesh and India, the Americans have resorted to various ways and means. Thus, they have established close contacts with the right and left-wing extremist forces opposed to the ruling Awami League and hostile to India. The circles in Dacca which are in a position to know believe, and not without reason, that these opposition groups would have been clearly unable to line up their forces, oppose the Government and directly attack Mujibur Rahman, had they not enjoyed direct American support.

There is a great deal of concern that certain US diplomats are interfering with the internal politics of Dacca and Bangladesh. There was a notable example of how the recent student demonstrations against US bombings against Vietnam was made into a spearhead to attack the Mujibur Rahman government. Will these foreign elements attempt to create political instability inside Bangladesh just before the elections due on March 7? It will be a disaster of the first magnitude if the government of Mujibur Rahman is disrupted—because it is the only government which can bring Bangladesh back to some normality.

It is time Washington realised that the old theory of "balances" is

now outmoded. India will not go hat in hand to the White House because of the food crisis. Nor will India surrender if things are made hot for her in Bangladesh. India is yet capable of saying what she wants about Vietnam and also about CIA activities in the India.

India believes that the US should abandon the old theory of "balances" in the subcontinent if US-Indian relations are to be normalised. There are indications that the US still believes in this theory and it was because of this she had not accepted the Simla Agreement between India and Pakistan with enthusiasm.

L. B. J.

From Texas Ranch to Architect of "Great Society"

by Frank Kuest

Lyndon Baines Johnson, 36th President of the United States, left the Nation a legacy of progress in civil rights, education, medical care, space exploration, and efforts to end poverty. But he did not live to see the achievement of the most important goal of his administration—a peaceful settlement of the Vietnam war.

Mr. Johnson—popularly known as "L.B.J."—died

on January 22, almost four years to the day after leaving the White House for retirement at his beloved ranch near Austin, Texas. He will be buried at the ranch on January 25 after lying in State at the capitol in Washington. He was 64 years old.

No President ever assumed office under more dramatic and tragic circumstance than Mr. Johnson. Less than a half hour after President John F. Kennedy died from an assassin's bullets in Dallas, Texas, November 22, 1963, Lyndon Johnson was sworn in as the 36th President on the Presidential plane at Dallas Airport.

Informing Congress officially of Mr. Johnson's death, President Nixon said: "Millions of Americans will always remember a bitter day in November 1963 when so many of our people doubted the very future of this Republic, when so many were stunned at the very idea that an American Chief of State could be assassinated in this age, and so many abroad were fearful about the future course of the American Democracy.. Lyndon Johnson rose above the doubt and the fear to hold this nation on course until we rediscovered our faith in ourselves."

As Vice President and President, Mr. Johnson was one of America's most travelled leaders, visiting more than 30 foreign coun-

tries. A man of very humble beginnings in his native Texas, Mr. Johnson never lost the common touch.

After encountering Bashir Ahmed, a camel driver during a visit to Pakistan in 1961, he invited him for a visit to the United States. He treated leaders and the masses alike during his foreign travels introducing what was to become known as "shirt-sleeve diplomacy" on his trips abroad. In countries where the climate was tropical, he removed his coat and stopped his motorcades so that he could alight and shake hands with the throngs that gathered to see the American President.

As President, he set the wheels in motion for detente with the Soviet Union, reaching agreements with Moscow for a cutback in fissionable materials, on reciprocal civil air flights, on outer space and a non-proliferation treaty which prevented the spread of nuclear weapons.

His greatest disappointment in foreign affairs was the war that would not end in Vietnam. This unpopular involvement of the United States in Southeast Asia caused great division at home. His efforts to seek a settlement through negotiations at Paris did not succeed. His decision not to seek re-election in 1968 definitely marked him as a casualty of the war in Vietnam.

His dream as President was to create the "Great Society" in the United States as a model for mankind. The landmarks of domestic legislation that formed the foundation of "The Great Society"—the Civil Rights Acts of 1964, 1965 and 1968; Medicare (medical aid for the Elderly); aid to Education; the War on Poverty, and Consumer Protection, all designed to improve the quality of life in America—represented a gigantic breakthrough in a Congressional stalemate of that period that had stymied the passage of much social legislation for years.

U.S. Senator Mike Mansfield, who succeeded Mr. Johnson as the Democratic leader in the Senate said at this death: "He was the greatest President in the area of social and domestic reform this country has ever known. The Great Society will be his monument to history."

Mr. Johnson once said of the Presidency: "You want to be very careful, apply yourself, conserve your strength, be alert and try to envision various situations here and there. No man ever became President who didn't want to be the best President the country ever had. I've tried to do right. The big problem is knowing what's right. One says, 'Full steam ahead', and another says, 'Let's take a siesta and talk about it tomorrow'. When you duck, dodge hesitate and shimmy, every man and

his dog gives you a kick. I expect to get kicked, but I don't expect to duck".

In the field of civil rights, Mr. Johnson has been credited with doing more than any other President in seeking to achieve racial equality in the United States. During his administration, the voting rights act and other important civil rights legislation were enacted.

A distinguished legislative career preceded Mr. Johnson's entry into the executive branch of the U.S. Government. He left the Senate in 1960 to win election as Vice President, running with his fellow Senator John F. Kennedy, who was elected President.

A member of the Democratic Party, Mr. Johnson served in the House of Representatives, winning a seat in the 1936 election as an ardent supporter of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt. While serving in the House, he, as a naval reservist, was the first Congressman to enter the Service after the attack on Pearl Harbour on December 7, 1941.

After completing Navy Service, he returned to his seat in the House, serving until 1948 when he won election to the Senate. It was in the Senate that he distinguished himself and went on to become what many Americans acknowledge as the greatest and most effective Senate majority leader

in history. Although always a Democrat, Mr. Johnson worked closely and smoothly as majority leader with the late Republican President Dwight D. Eisenhower during the latter's two administrations. And as majority leader, Mr. Johnson was in the forefront of America's drive to conquer outer space and to maintain a strong America. He followed this course in the Presidency.

In retirement, Mr. Johnson continued to be a firm supporter of President Nixon's policy in Vietnam, even though he announced he would vote for Senator George McGovern in last November's Presidential Election.

Mr. Johnson himself credited his wife, Lady Bird, who survives him, with the inspiration for his successes. She shared these successes and the disappointments with him.

Mr. Johnson was born August 27, 1908, on his parents' farm between Stonewall and Johnson city, Texas. His father was a farmer and state legislator and the family was of British Ancestry. The late President received his schooling in Texas and was graduated from southwest Texas State Teachers College.

Mr. Johnson's death leaves the United States without a living ex-President for the first time in 40 years.

For only the second time, flags are being flown

at half-staff for two former chief executives. Mr. Truman died on December 26. The only other time when flags were flown at half-staff for two Ex-Presidents was when Thomas Jefferson and John Adams died on the same day—July 4, 1826.

A FOLK TALE

Unequal Partners

A CROCODILE and a jackal decided to buy a farm in partnership and share the produce between them. The first crop they decided to sow was potatoes. Now everybody knows that the fox is a very clever animal, but this the stupid crocodile did not know. The crocodile did not know that potatoes grew under the earth. He thought like fruits it grew on the branches, he told the fox, as soon as crop was sown: "Friend, let us divide the produce now. Whatever grows on top of the ground is mine and what is below is yours."

The fox smiled and agreed. When the potato plants were fully up, the crocodile cut off all the green leaves on top and took them home. He was disappointed not to find a single potato. Running back to the field he saw the fox digging up all the potatoes. "I've been cheated this time", he thought, and decided to get the better of the fox next time.

THE SECOND CROP they chose to grow were grains. This time the crocodile again said: "Friend this time I will take the roots, you may take what is above the ground. When the grain was ripe, the jackal cut off all the stalks and took it home. He crocodile was very happy, he was sure the fox had been tricked properly. He went to get the grain and found only dry earth. There was nothing beneath, The was very angry. He felt sure the fox had tricked him and was determined to teach him a lesson. This time they decided, to grow sugarcane. The crocodile angrily demanded the plants and the jackal feigning that he was reluctantly agreeing, said yes.

When it was time for the sugarcane to be cut he took all the sticks on top, leaving the knotty lower portion to the fox. Getting down he decided to eat the sugarcane, but munch as he might, he found it all bitter. Angrily, he went to the fox's and found him chewing the sugarcane.

Throwing the bitter stalks at him the crocodile said: "Our partnership is over, Every time I lose. You get the best of the crop". "But you take whatever you want" said the fox. "I know", said the crocodile, "but every-time something goes wrong. You are too clever to have for a partner." Saying this he went off home and there was no further farming.

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