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(48)

# TRIBUNE





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## Letter From The Editor

ON THE COVER, this week we have a picture of one of the semi-excavated sights at Kudiraimalai on the North-Western coast of Ceylon, somewhere between Pomparippu and Mannar. This is a rich territory for the archaeologist and the anthropologist. The Sunday Observer of February 27, 1977 had a front page story about a Swiss project to start excavations in this area. This is what the report stated: "A team of Swiss experts will start excavations in Pomparippu on the South Western Border of the Wilpattu Wild Life Sanctuary, as part of an international project in anthropology, sponsored by the Saracin Foundation, Basle, Switzerland, one of the major research organizations of that country. Saracin has been founded in memory of two cousins who visited Sri Lanka and did a study of the Veddahs in the late 19th Century and early 20th Century. Pomparippu is in the area historically connected with the landing of Prince Vijaya and his meeting with Kuveni." The newspaper report then gave brief bio-data sketches of some members of the Swiss team. The head of the team had been in the island earlier and had written a thesis on the Veddahs. The Sunday Observer then went on to say that: "The Archaeological and Wild Life Conservation Departments here will assist the Swiss team in the excavation; and studies of bronze age and iron age relics. They will spend three weeks in the jungles of Pomparippu and surrounding areas. These experts have undertaken similar work in North Africa where they studied ancient caves used by primitive tribes. The excavations are a part of a gigantic project of research into behaviour patterns and culture of various tribes and communities throughout the world. This is expected to give a deeper insight into the evolution of human society. Once the excavation work here is over, the Swiss team will hold an exposition comparing modern Sri Lanka with the old. The exposition will be held in Switzerland. The Basle Museum's Research Institute was founded by Dr. Kaufmann along with the Professor Roland Bay." Does this mean that all, if not the major portion, of the antiquities and objects excavated at these sites will be taken to Switzerland? Will such antiquities become the property of the Swiss team for them to take away to their own country? We do not know the answers to these questions because the newspaper did not enlighten us on the subject and also because no answers were forthcoming from some authorities from whom we made inquiries. One thing that has puzzled us is why the responsibility in Sri Lanka for "helping" the Swiss team has been divided between the Archaeological and the Wild Life Conservation Departments. It is not clear where the Wild Life Conservation Department comes into the picture. From what we know it is only the Archaeological Department that should have been given any responsibility in regard to the excavations. It is no doubt true that part of the area in which the excavations will be made will be inside the Wilpattu Sanctuary but this does not entitle the Wild Life Conservation Department to have equal responsibility with the Archaeological Department in this matter where excavation of archaeological and anthropological sites are concerned. Readers know that there has been an outcry against the export (and the smuggling) of antiquities and other cultural objects from Sri Lanka. Objects of archaeological, anthropological and sociological interests should be included in the list of articles not to be taken away from the island. There is one special reason why Tribune has many apprehensions and fears about the work of this Swiss team. A glance at the book entitled "A CATALOGUE OF ANTIQUITIES AND OTHER CULTURAL OBJECTS FROM SRI LANKA (CEYLON) ABROAD" by Dr. P. H. D. H. de Silva of the Department of National Museums reveals that one of the largest collections of Ceylon antiquities and cultural (including archaeological and anthropological) objects is in Switzerland. The list in the book extends from page 421 to page 466 and the persons who had collected most of them at the turn of the last century were Drs. P and F. Saracin. The collections listed are from museums in the leading towns of Switzerland. Some of the finest masks of Ceylon are also found in the museums in that country. In addition to this it is common knowledge that there are even greater collections amongst certain private Swiss citizens who have had and still have connections in Ceylon. It would be useful if the Government will make it clear whether the objects excavated by this team will be returned to Ceylon after the exhibition and exposition in Switzerland. The time has also come to make the demand for the return of all those Ceylon antiquities and objects of art, anthropological, archaeological and sociological interest in Switzerland to Sri Lanka. Adequate precautions must be taken to ensure that members of the team or their "friends" in this country (Swiss or otherwise) do not smuggle the most valuable finds out of the island. There has been a great deal of "gossip" among responsible and knowledgeable circles about the continuing outflow of antiquities to Switzerland from Sri Lanka to this day.

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## EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

## More On Revaluation

Readers will recall that in this column, in the last issue, we had published a statement that the Minister of Finance, Mr. Felix R. Dias Bandaranaike in support of his action revaluing Sri Lanka rupee upwards by twenty percent on March 11/12. We had, thereafter, published Dr. N. M. Perera's statement in the *Sunday Times* criticising the revaluation exercise. We also published a statement from the *UNP Journal* pointing out that the revaluation exercise was only a political gundu and a gimmick. (Mr. Pieter Keuneman of the Communist Party had characterised the revaluation as a grim joke).

In this note we are citing in extenso Mr. Felix R. Dias Bandaranaike's reply to Dr. N. M. Perera in the *Sunday Times* of March 27. The question and answer session had carried a headline entitled "AFTER DR. 'NOAH' PERERA, THE DELUGE HAS ALREADY HAPPENED". We are publishing this interview more or less in full because we think that the question of revaluation will be one of the main issues in the forthcoming General Elections. It will not be a mere exercise in academic casuistry so far as the voter is concerned. He will be concerned with what revaluation means to him in terms of rupees and cents so far as his wages and the cost of living are concerned.

"I thought that after Dr. 'Noah' Perera the 'deluge' had already happened! I succeeded in avoiding the 'deluge' of gazetted price increases that brought unhappiness and misery to our people", said the Minister of Finance, Mr. Felix Dias Bandaranaike. He was commenting on Dr. N. M. Perera's remark in the course of his statement on the revaluation of the rupee (reported exclusively in this paper last Sunday) that Mr. Bandaranaike's philosophy seems to be "After me, the Deluge!" Mr. Bandaranaike replies to Dr. Perera

and Mr. Pieter Keuneman in this exclusive interview with "the *Sunday Times*".

Q—Dr. N. M. Perera states that your recent revision of the exchange rate was a hasty and ill-considered step. Do you like to comment on this?

A—It was neither a hasty nor ill-considered decision. Of course, with any decision there would be people affected by it adversely who would like to call it hasty or ill-considered. This is quite understandable. The only people affected adversely by this decision would be big business interests, gem exporters, large industrialists, trading interests, blackmarketeers and hoarders. Dr. Perera surely would not want to protect their interests! The beneficiaries of the altered exchange rate are the ordinary consumers of the country who can already see the effects of the altered exchange rates in the form of a downward price trend, though its full impact has still not been felt. Dr. Perera seems to think that decisions which have not been endorsed by the Central Bank or the IMF are hasty or ill-considered decisions. This is a point of view to which I cannot subscribe. During the time when he was the Finance Minister, Dr. Perera had many unkind things to say about the Central Bank and the IMF but it would appear now that for all his bold statements, he believes that a slavish adherence to Central Bank and IMF advice constitutes sound economic and financial policy.

Q—Dr. Perera seems to think that because Sri Lanka has failed to obtain IMF permission for this step, Sri Lanka might lose her membership of the IMF, what is the position?

A—So long as there are binding agreements between the IMF and a member Govt. in force, a member Govt. is not free to take certain decisions affecting exchange rate parities without prior consultations with the IMF. At a time when Dr. Perera and I had recourse to the IMF for certain tranche drawings, Letters of Intent were issued which were tabled in Parliament showing the exact obligations that Sri Lanka undertook. I have seen to it that from and after July 1976 there were no such binding agreements. In these circumstances our present

actions do not constitute a violation of any agreements with the IMF and the consequences envisaged by Dr. Perera are merely the result of wishful thinking on his part. The IMF would naturally be interested in judging the effects of what we have done as a member country, and we shall of course as a member country be ready and willing to co-operate in every possible way with the IMF in giving them the fullest information, statistical and otherwise in the same manner as we have always done.

Q—Dr. Perera seems to think that the articles of the IMF require prior consultation between member country and the IMF before a par value of a currency is altered by more than 10 per cent. Is that right?

A—It is quite true that in the articles of the IMF at the time of the Brettonwoods Agreement soon after the Second World War there was such a clause in the articles of the Fund. This, however, no longer has any validity after the United States by its unilateral action decided to delink the US dollar from gold and to float the dollar. For example, during the past 12 months the British pound has been fluctuating within a range of about 25 per cent, and for this they did not seek IMF sanction. Likewise, we too are under no obligation to seek IMF sanction if we wish to revise our exchange parities. Even Dr. Perera did not seek IMF sanction when the value of our currency depreciated by 29 per cent. when he followed the disastrous course of linking our currency either to the US dollar or to the British pound sterling depending on whichever was the weaker currency. If it is any consolation to him Dr. Perera can rest assured that we remain respectable members of the IMF. Dr. Perera's current philosophy seems to be "use any stick with which to beat Satan" and in pursuit of this policy he has sought to find allies in his erstwhile enemies the IMF and the Central Bank. I feel he is going to be disappointed because I do not think the IMF will want to rush in to support him.

Q—Dr. Perera says that your philosophy seems to be "After me, the Deluge!" Do you care to comment on this?

A—I thought that after Dr. "Noah" Perera, the "deluge" had already happened! I succeeded in



avoiding the "deluge" of gazetted price increases that brought unhappiness and misery to our people. What I have done has not imposed burdens upon the people, since September 1975, except in respect of liquor and tobacco. The price of flour has been reduced from Rs. 1.20 to 75 cts. per pound in several steps. The price of sugar off-ration has been reduced from Rs. 7.50 to Rs. 5. The sugar on ration has been increased in quantity. Rice has been reduced in price on ration from Rs. 2.20 to Rs. 2 while the price of off-ration rice has been considerably reduced from the high levels in Dr. Perera's time by the lifting of the rice barriers resulting in its present price of about Rs. 2.30 or even less in some other areas. This mind you against Dr. Perera's confident prophecies that as a result of my lifting the barriers rice prices would rise off ration to about Rs. 10 or Rs. 12 per measure. A whole host of other items were reduced in price in 1975 and 1976 and with the present exchange rate change a downward trend is now discernable whose full effect is yet to come. However, against one of the last recommendations of the Hon. T. B. Subasinghe in December 1976 the Government decided not to increase the price of kerosene, petrol and petroleum products. Instead the appreciation of the Sri Lanka rupee has resulted in an immediate reduction of 60 cts. per gallon on kerosene. Surely even Dr. Perera would not say that these benefits to the people are a "deluge" of misery inflicted by a Satanic personality. Dr. Perera need have no fears that the SLFP would not know how to handle the economic affairs of this country when it is re-elected to power, even if he appears to doubt his own capacity to do so in the unlikely event of his being recalled to office.

Q—Dr. Perera has said that the adverse effects of the exchange rate change has already resulted in a drop of 50 to 60 cts. per kilo gram on rubber and that the tea prices also dropped at the first auction after the change. What do you have to say about that?

A—I am afraid Dr. Perera's hopeful anticipations in respect of tea have already been belied in the subsequent auctions where prices rose by an average of Rs. 3 per kilo. In regard to rubber the duty rates have been adjusted to minimise the reduction in rupee

earnings. He is gravely in error however, if he thinks that this amounts to a loss of foreign exchange for Sri Lanka. The f.o.b price for RSS No. 1 immediately prior to the rise of the value of the rupee was Rs. 7.32 per kilo or US dollar 0.84 cents per kilo (converted at the old rate of exchange of Rs. 8.70 to the dollar) as against Rs. 6.10 per kilo or US dollars 0.84 cents. (converted at the new rate of exchange of Rs. 7.28 to the dollar) fetched on March 17 when the new schedule of export duties became operative. In other words our rubber exports continued to earn us the same foreign exchange per kilo. Dr. Perera has tried to mislead the public by trading on his reputation as an economist in confusing falling rupee prices with a loss in foreign exchange.

Q—Both Dr. Perera and Mr. Pieter Keuneman have said that the exchange rate change has already drawn a retaliatory response from the Conference Shipping Lines which has put up freight rates by a surcharge of 12 per cent. Is this correct?

A—Although Dr. Perera was not a member of the Government in December 1976. Mr. Pieter Keuneman will be able to enlighten him that the question of the surcharge on freight rates had been under discussion from December 1976 though the announcement was only made on March 17, 1977. These freight surcharges apply not only to Sri Lanka but also to the neighbouring countries such as India, Pakistan and Bangladesh and it therefore follows that it could not have been a retaliatory decision

against Sri Lanka's exchange rate change.

As an economist I should have thought that Dr. Perera would have examined the question as to the effect of the exchange rate change upon freight rates. This he has apparently not done. Let me illustrate his by a simple arithmetical example. Assuming that we had to pay £ 100 as freight charges on a shipment before the freight surcharge, this would now be increased to £ 112.50 as a result of the freight surcharge. At the old value of the rupee (£ 1. equals Rs. 14.60) we would have had to pay Rs. 1,642.50 as freight for that shipment. As a result of the increase in the value of the rupee however (£ 1 equals Rs. 12.50) we now have to pay only Rs. 1,406.25 which represents a rupee gain of Rs. 236.25. Assuming that the freight rates had remained unaltered without the surcharge and assuming that the exchange rate had also remained unchanged at the old rate we would have had to pay Rs. 1,460.00 as freight for the same shipment. Since we are only paying Rs. 1,406.25 with the exchange rate alteration and the freight surcharge, it surely follows that there is a net gain for Sri Lanka of Rs. 54 on every £ 100. Thus the true result of the revaluation has been to more than offset the increase on freight rates in rupee terms. Why then should Dr. Perera complain?

Q—Dr. Perera finds fault with you in using the figures of gross reserves as distinct from net foreign exchange reserves in determining our exchange rate policies. Do you care to comment on that?

COVER

HORSE'S HILL

THE PICTURE on the cover, this week, as mentioned in the *Letter from the Editor*, is a view of a recent excavation at Kudiraimalai—meaning, in Tamil the *Horse's Hill* or the *Hill of the Horse*. Though not very distinct the outlines of a Horse's leg can be seen in the picture at one end of the excavation. Will this horse's leg—or what remains of it—be taken away to grace some Museum in Switzerland? How many other antiquities and objects of cultural, archaeological, anthropological and sociological will be taken away by the Swiss Team for the "exposition" in Switzerland is not known. The Swiss are a good and friendly people and when the countries of the Third World (who have suffered most in this respect) make an appeal to the advanced countries to return the antiquities and other treasures they had taken away, Switzerland, we are sure, will be among the first to respond and return these antiquities. It may be good for the "tourist" business in Switzerland to have such antiquities to attract visitors, but the era of such exploitative business is fast coming to an end.



**A**—Our net reserves have been negative for many years ever since our terms of trade started falling in the early 1960s. But present payments falling due have been amply provided for as only a very small fraction of our international liabilities fall due from year to year. I do not agree with Dr. Perera that we should wait until our net reserves become positive before we think of exchange rate adjustments, because if we do, it would mean a complete surrender of control of our national economy to international market forces and international currency speculators. What is relevant in regard to external assets is the liquid portion of our external reserves; and not merely the part directly held by the Government which has always been small. Dr. Perera is perfectly well aware that the foreign exchange which has been used to pay for our imports has been drawn from the reserves held by the banking system as well as the Central Bank and not only from the small portion held by the Government.

**Q**—Dr. Perera while being critical of your exchange rate change upwards does not express himself clearly whether he is for it or against it. What do you think is his true attitude.

**A**—I believe that Dr. Perera does not like revaluation. He prefers devaluation. In fact while in office as Finance Minister he wrote a letter to Mr. Schweitzer the then Managing Director of the IMF that he was in agreement with Mr. Schweitzer's suggestion that the Sri Lanka rupee should be devalued "subject to the agreement of the Cabinet". Fortunately for Sri Lanka the Government did not accept this proposal. With devaluation the people hardest hit are the poor people of this country who have to pay more and more for their daily needs. The principal beneficiaries of revaluation on the other hand are the same people who will find that their daily expenses are going down progressively.

**Q**—By about when do you expect the full effects of the exchange rate change to reflect itself in price reductions?

**A**—This will be a continuous process and I expect the full effect of the price reductions will become manifest throughout the economy during the next few weeks.

**Q**—Dr. Perera is critical of your inflationary policies. To what extent do you think his criticism is justified and what effect does the present exchange rate change have upon inflation?

**A**—Dr. Perera has been trying to frighten people with the bogey of inflation ever since I first held office in 1960. He has in some ways allowed his own beliefs to stifle Sri Lanka's economic development. It is true there has been an increase in the money supply in 1976 of which nearly half is accounted for by the build-up of external reserves. One reason for the under-utilization of our external reserves was the unrealistic rate of exchange which made manufactured articles overpriced in Sri Lanka; and one reason for the present exchange rate change is the need to make this adjustment, thereby bringing down the money supply. Of course, I have always maintained that Dr. Perera's attempt to relate money supply increases to the cost of living has been naive and therefore faulty.

**Q**—Have you anything to add to the statement you made when this step was taken?

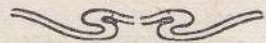
**A**—Not really. The rationale of the recent exchange revision cannot be attributed only to the improvement in our external assets position, though the Govt. could not have contemplated such a step had not our reserves position improved in very real terms.

Hitherto, owing to the inadequacy of our reserves we were not able to pursue an independent exchange rate policy fixing an appropriate value for the Sri Lanka rupee. Fluctuations of sterling and dollar values in international markets were the determining factor. The result was that our prices reduced in line with conditions of inflation and recession in the highly industrialised countries in the world. It was as a result of these factors which are really irrelevant to our circumstances, that the US dollar costs Rs. 7.32 in March 1977 as against Rs. 5.90 in December 1970. The current revision in the exchange rate to what the Govt. considers a more appropriate level will safeguard the people of this country from fluctuations in world currencies and insulate against the escalating foreign costs of imports which have hitherto impeded the optimum use of our foreign exchange.

**Q**—To turn to tangible practical results, we are aware of complaints by sections of the business community who have been caught so to say in midstream. Would the Government consider giving some relief to such persons?

**A**—With any exchange rate change there are always elements in the business community who will be affected to the extent that they are caught in mid-stream assuming they have not taken the normal business precaution of forward dealings in foreign exchange. This is a normal business risk on which in the past the business community has only gained advantages at a time when rupee value were declining in consequence of Government policy. The traditional exporters are cushioned against losses by the commodity boom. The non-traditional exporters generally have so many incentives and advantages provided though some of them like garment exporters might require some special consideration. Importers would be judged in a selective manner depending upon essentiality, the extent to which they have responded to the Government decision by effecting immediate price reductions without the need of governmental intervention.

I myself have received some representations on this matter and I shall consider them after I can judge more accurately the full impact of the exchange rate change. I shall of course also look into the parallel question whether the benefit of past devaluations which the trade received have not more than compensated for the present loss which they now complain of. In the past when rupee values were steadily declining the trade did not pass on these benefits they received to consumers and it would be unrealistic for me not to take that factor also into account in deciding for instance where selective rebates should be granted. To sum up the Government's primary concern is with the interests of the consumer more than the interests of the traders.





## Mar. 25 — Mar. 28

A DIARY OF EVENTS IN SRI LANKA AND THE WORLD  
COMPILED FROM DAILY NEWSPAPERS  
PUBLISHED IN COLOMBO.

CDN—Ceylon Daily News; CDM—Ceylon Daily Mirror;  
CO—Ceylon Observer; ST—Sunday Times; DM—Dina-  
mina; LD—Lankadipa; VK—Virakesari; ATH—Aththa;  
SM—Silumina; SLD—Sri Lankadipa; JD—Janadina.

**FRIDAY, MARCH 25:** Mr. Morarji Desai was sworn in as PM of India by the acting President Jatti; the ceremony was boycotted by Mr. Jagjivan Ram, Chairman of Congress for Democracy, his main rival for leadership. The Presidents of Bangladesh and Sri Lanka have discussed areas of co-operation in various fields between the countries and have expressed satisfaction at the recently concluded trade agreement; this is mentioned in a joint communique issued after the conclusion of the recent talks between both the presidents. Dried fish imports from India are to be increased from 40 tons to 100 tons a month for the next three months; the minister of Food and Co-operatives has authorised the increased imports. The government will soon place orders with Philippines for 5,000 tons of poonac which will be distributed to institutions and farmers engaged in dairy husbandry. The Examinations Department has brought in the CID to probe an alleged leakage of certain question papers of the last GCE 'O' level Examination according to Education Department sources. A rich harvest of cowpea, kurakkan, maize and chillies is now being gathered in the Batticaloa, Trincomalee, Vavuniya and Killinochchi areas; the Food Ministry has directed the Agricultural Production Committees to buy up the produce to prevent it falling into the hands of middlemen. A slight improvement in the condition of the TULF leader Mr. S. J. V. Chelvanayakam was reported last night after he was operated on earlier in the day at the Jaffna Hospital—CDN. There seems to be a shortage of medical officers at the Cardiology Unit of the Colombo General Hospital, for many patients are being turned away daily. The General Council of the Ceylon Bank Clerk's will stage a three day general strike on April 5 demanding a revision of the terms and conditions of service. Employees engaged in the textile trade and hitherto members of Industrial and General Workers Union have organised themselves under one banner namely 'The Textile Industry Employees Union' in order to strengthen themselves to win better wage, condition of services and other legitimate rights—CDM. The US should realise that they should not have their activities here; we should also see that the Soviet Union should not have its activities here; we should have equal treatment for both; this is what India's new PM told a crowded press conference just after he was sworn in. India's veteran Pacifist leader, Jayaprakash Narayan, is continuing talks with the Janata Party and the Congress for Democracy seeking to iron out differences that have arisen over the choice of Mr. Morarji Desai as PM of India, All India Radio said. There is a likelihood of the proposed strike by the government medical officers scheduled for Monday being called off; the two associations of medical officers are expected to meet on Sunday and consider the negotiations with the Ministry of Health and take a final

decision. Large stocks of imported cotton textiles were seized by Price Control Department Officials this week; this follows the clamp down by the Ministry of Food and Co-operatives on sales of imported cotton textiles by unauthorised dealers—CO.

**SATURDAY, MARCH 26:** All co-operative societies and other outlets for distribution of essential items will be obliged to display prominently a list of goods available for sale to consumers along with the prices; these lists will be checked daily by officers of the co-operative department; the Minister of Food and Co-operatives, has ordered along with the implementation of this suggestion, that there should be a stricter supervision of the Co-operative distribution scheme. Five hundred tons of garlic are now in the go-downs of the CWE and will be despatched to the co-operatives soon; every ration book holder will be issued half an ounce of garlic during April; householders will be issued canned fish too, according to a CWE spokesman. The three day bank strike has been called off as a result of an agreement reached last night between the Finance Minister and the Ceylon Bank Employees Union; the strike was scheduled for the 5th of April. Several government trading and manufacturing are busy re-scheduling their price lists with a view to passing on to the consumer benefits that have accrued as a result of the revaluation of the rupee; substantial reductions upto 20% can be expected soon on a wide range of goods, both foreign and local. A statement issued by the MOH, Jaffna hospital about the condition of Mr. S. J. V. Chelvanayakam, states that there is an improvement in his condition, but he has not regained consciousness yet. Mr. Morarji Desai, PM of India, told his first news conference after he was sworn in that his country would maintain its stance of non-alignment and would not join any power blocs; India would also remain committed to a peace zone in the Indian Ocean area—CDN. Additional allowances will be paid to all grades of medical officers soon for extra work; according to informed sources, the government has in principle agreed to pay an allowance to doctors for working additional hours and on holidays. A campaign to demand the release of all political prisoners, the abrogation of the public security and Criminal Justice Acts and the release of two persons condemned to death and seven youths sentenced to life imprisonment will be launched soon; the inaugural meeting of the launching of this campaign was attended by a large number of people. The Ceylon Estate Staff's Union and the Sri Lanka Plantation Worker's Union have given notice of strike action commencing on May 11 if their grievances are not redressed. The Federation of Teachers' Associations of the University of Sri Lanka have forwarded a memorandum to the Minister of Finance pointing out that their salary scales had not been revised since 1955 and seeking clarification about the University—CDM.

**SUNDAY, MARCH 27:** Sri Lanka's tea prices are spiralling in the US—one of the most affluent consumer markets in the world; last week tea traders from New York announced that tea from seven producing countries had registered an 80% increase in wholesale price. The Committee of the AMS and the GMOA which met yesterday, decided to postpone strike action until they meet again on March 30. Mr. H. G. S. Ratnaweera, a leading member of the CP of Sri Lanka and the editor of the 'Aththa', the party daily, was remanded on Friday night in connection with an alleged case of smug-



gling of currency and making payments outside Sri Lanka in contravention of the provisions of the Exchange Control Act. A further improvement in Mr. S. J. V. Chelvanayakam's condition was reported yesterday morning by hospital authorities in Jaffna, where he is now warded following a fall. Lakspray sweepings sold by the National Milk Board to livestock farmers have found their way into packets being sold as the genuine thing for infants; the Board which was informed of this malpractice by its security staff has now decided against issuing it, discards to livestock breeders. A fourteen-member cabinet was sworn in at Rashtrapati Bhawan yesterday morning after Mr. Jagjivan Ram and Mr. H. N. Bahuguna of the Congress for Democracy, who were among those named for Cabinet rank, defected at the last minute; they kept away from the oath ceremony and asked to be excused—SO. I thought that after Dr. 'Noah' Perera the 'deluge' had already happened! I succeeded in avoiding the 'deluge' of gazetted price increases that brought unhappiness and misery to our people, said the Minister of Finance; he was commenting on Dr. Perera's remark in the course of his statement on the revaluation of the rupee that Mr. Bandaranaike's philosophy seems to be 'After me, the Deluge!' The United Socialist Front is well under way; the top leaders of the three main participating groups will meet mid-week to review the progress of the talks which have been held at two levels—leaders and experts. The Government Dental Surgeon's Association has unanimously decided to strike from midnight on March 30 if its demands are not met. The Executive Committee of the Ceylon Bank Employees Union yesterday discussed the conditional offer made by the Finance Minister after the final round of talks with him last Friday—ST. The Ceylon Administrative Service Officers Union has sent an appeal to the PM to look immediately into the matter of promotions to the second grade of the Administrative Service; according to them, seniority has not been given preference; and discrimination against Tamils and Muslims has been taking place—VK. The Income Tax Dept is launching a campaign against many individuals and companies who have been hoarding money without declaring their assets and thus evading taxation—SM.

**MONDAY, MARCH 28:** The CID investigating into alleged exchange control violations on the part of some of those connected with the directorate of the Ceylon Ceramics Corporation and its subsidiary Lanka Porcelain Ltd. took another turn on Friday when a director of a leading mercantile firm was taken into custody; Mr. Nihal E. Weeratunga, a director of Lewis Brown and Company Ltd. was produced before the Chief Magistrate and remanded for a month. Mr. Felix Dias Bandaranaike will lead an eleven member Sri Lanka delegation to the Co-ordinating Bureau meeting of non-aligned nations in New Delhi next month. The PM speaking on the occasion of the opening of a new hall for the Kandoluwawa Kamburugoda Rural Development Society in the Attanagalle electorate agreed with the earlier speakers that an unprecedented amount of work had been done in all parts of the country due mainly to the de-centralisation of the budget; massive development projects had been started, the production war had been successful, and the government had found jobs for about 400,000 youths. Around 13,000 GCE 'O' level and NCGE candidates have asked for a re-scrutiny of their answer papers of the last exams; the Examinations Department expects to begin re-scrutiny of

these papers during the course of this week. At Wenappuwa there is now a flood of fresh coconuts at thirty five cents a nut where a while ago they cost over a rupee. Mr. S. J. V. Chelvanayakam regained consciousness yesterday morning and he was showing clear signs of improvement, according to Jaffna hospital sources. Mr. Jagjivan Ram, leader of the Congress for Democracy Party, announced yesterday that he would join the new Indian government under Mr. Morarji Desai. The All-India Anna DMK which contested the General Elections with the support of Mrs. Indira Gandhi's Congress Party yesterday announced it would support the Janata Party government in Parliament—CDN. Although the price of sugar has been reduced, prices of a large variety of sugar-based products remain unchanged; many hotels and cafes sell a cup of tea at the old price; only a few hotels have reduced the price of a cup by five cents. The Association of Administrative Service Officers has urged the PM to cause an immediate inquiry into the abuses and irregularities perpetrated in the process of filling 60% of the vacancies in Grade II of the Sri Lanka Administrative Service and also to cancel and withdraw the present list of promotions. The tea market strengthened further and substantial price improvements were recorded. Smuggling activities between Sri Lanka and India have shown signs of increasing within the past week, Police and Customs sources said yesterday; they attributed this to the release of over 2,000 big time smugglers in India when the emergency was revoked and a drop in the price of the black market rate for the Indian rupee—CDM. Two jumbo jets collided at the airport at Santa Cruz, Tenerife yesterday, killing 563 people, making it aviation history's worst crash, the Spanish National News, CIFRA, reported. On the orders of the Minister of Food and Co-operatives, the Co-operative Development Department has organised a new scheme for distribution of foodstuffs by which every co-operative outlet in the island will receive its requirements without fail and every consumer assured of his quota of rations. The prices of aerated waters, biscuits, jams and cordials will be reduced with effect from tomorrow. Government Parliamentarians have been summoned a special meeting on March 31: this is their first meeting since last month's prorogation. Mr. Jagjivan Ram was tonight placed in charge of the Defence Ministry in a move that ended three days of deep political uncertainty here over the stability of the new Indian government; George Fernandes, the militant trade union leader was also given a portfolio—CO. The leader of the TULF, remains unconscious for the fifth consecutive day in the Jaffna hospital where he is receiving treatment; however, there is a slight improvement in his condition, it was reported—VK. The government has decided to pay Rs. 663 for the rupee estates that they took over; but the companies have so far not given their approval. Coconut fertiliser has gone down by Rs. 50 a ton in order to increase production—LD.





DISALLOWED IN 1971

## Who's Behind The Insurgency

### —A Flashback Report—

By A Special Correspondent

The article we publish below was one that was disallowed by the Competent Authority on July 6, 1971 under the censorship rules under the Emergency proclaimed on April 5, 1971. The article itself was written around July 1. The Special Correspondent had planned to write a series of articles on the Insurgent Movement at that time; but when this first article was disallowed, he had abandoned the whole project. Since that time much water has flowed under bridges (as the saying goes) and much has been written on the subject locally and abroad. The judgement of the C.J.C. has been printed as a Sessional Paper, and one of the trial judges, Mr. A. C. Alles, has also written a book on the 1971 Insurgency. Much more has been written abroad. We publish this article to give our readers an inkling of the information available at the time and how unsuccessful the writer was in his attempt to tailor it to secure the approval of the Competent Authority. —Ed.

July 1, 1971,

Readers will realise that it is not possible at this moment for anyone to examine the whole of what is to be known, and that until the state of Emergency is lifted and the censorship rules are relaxed only those matters which do not violate the ground rules of the Competent Authority can be discussed in any newspaper article today. This series will therefore be a developing and continuing one—commenting on and discussing the problems connected with the insurgency on a wider and more detailed basis as more information becomes available. But the writer is satisfied that some of the main features and characteristics of the movement have already surfaced, although many groups and persons who were involved may not all have surfaced into the open as yet. But that there is adequate material in official statements, ministerial pronouncements, parliamentary debates and

newspaper reports to enable one to arrive at a few preliminary conclusions.

To help readers to have some understanding of the current developments, *Tribune's* Calendar-Chronicle, the second instalment of which has appeared will provide a background which is essential. It is a chronological record of events relevant to the April 1971 revolt. This article will examine in detail, critically and analytically, the views and theories which have been put forward about the responsibility for the revolt in the context of what this writer is able to gather from all available sources.

Understandably, it is not possible to discuss names and personalities involved in the revolt at this stage. The Government is now investigating the matter with a view to bringing the ringleaders to trial. Until the charges are filed and the persons are brought before the Courts, it would be wrong and unfair to refer to names and other particulars concerning them. It is more important at this stage to examine the political motivation and the strategic methodology employed by the insurgents.

Questions which are relevant to the insurgency are:

**Who was responsible for the revolt of April 1971? Was it one individual or was it a group of individuals? Who conceived the idea that an armed insurrection could be utilised to effect a change of power in this country? If it was one individual what was the political motivation which led him to start a movement that has led to an unprecedented event in the annals of the island's history? Who was he? What is his background? How did he succeed in getting his original band of followers? How did he obtain the money for all these activities? And, if the initiators were a group of persons, the same questions have to be answered on a much broader canvas covering many persons coming from different parts of Ceylon.**

The first step is to examine the theories and views held at the moment about the persons behind the revolt and about the causes which made it possible for them to stage this revolt. Views

fall under several heads in chronological sequences, *firstly*, those made before April 5th, and those after that date. *Secondly*, it is also necessary to examine separately views and theories put forward in Ceylon and also those held abroad. What was said before is an excellent curtain-raiser for April 5, and what came afterwards has added confusion to an already complex mix-up of views and theories.

REFERENCES to the insurgent movement, originally called the *Che Guevara Movement*, started in and around 1966 and 1967. At first, it was only whispered and talked about in political circles. Some said that it stemmed from the *New Left Movement* which had begun to sweep sections of the youth in America and Europe; others said that it was derived directly from the personality of *Che Guevara* himself whose writings, teachings and actions are said to be distinct and different from those of other well-known revolutionaries of this epoch, Lenin, Stalin, Mao, Trotsky, Ho Chi Minh and Fidel Castro. A few books about *Che Guevara* and his writings were sold in Colombo and some of the out-stations.

But nobody took much notice about this so-called *Che Guevara Movement* at that time and the references to it in the papers were few and far between. By the end of 1968 however, there began to appear references in local newspapers about some of the activities of the *Che Guevara Movement*. Headlines and comments in the right-wing press branded them as subversive leftists and revolutionaries, and they were described secret ultra-rightists in the left-wing papers. But, even then, no serious attention was paid to them. The Rightists regarded them as a loud-mouthed excrement of the Left movement, whilst the Leftists patronisingly referred to them as infantile slogan-shouters of rightist vintage with no mass basis (and without any hope of ever having a mass basis.) Political observers who had tried to impress leaders of the Right and Left that this youthful movement had tremendous potential in view of the deep-rooted sense of frustration which was creeping upon the youth of this island, were laughed at as alarmists and panic-mongers. *Tribune* was one of a few which had poin-



ted out the potentialities of this movement and readers who read the *Tribune* in the period 1968 and early 1969 will see how true our prognostications have turned out to be.

In mid-1969 began a major *furor* about the *Che Guevara Movement*. Sensational front-page reports and stories began to appear in all the daily papers of the big groups proclaiming that the *Che Guevara Movement* was spreading its tentacles right through the country. Arrests were made of persons having explosive materials, guns, bullets—but more importantly with maps and sketches of police stations and other key government buildings and installations. It was clear that this newspaper uproar had been inspired at an unofficial briefing by the then I.G.P. Mr. Eleric Abeygoonewardene, who thought it his duty to warn the Government and the public about this "menace". The names of Rohana Wijeweera, Mahinda Wijesekera and others were mentioned. About this time too, the Che Guevarists began to hold small public meetings. Up to that time, according to all reports, they had only conducted study classes not only in remote jungle areas but also in schools and Buddhist temples.

By mid-1969, the election fever for the 1970 General Elections had begun in real earnest. At one point of time, later on, there were reports (reliable and true) that leaders from the UNP, the SLFP and also a Left Party had individually and separately alerted the IGP: that they had heard that the Che Guevara Movement was out to disrupt the elections. The Rightists (UNP) believed that this was a Left-orientated movement which was being used as an extra-parliamentary spearhead by the United Front in order to create chaos to prevent a UNP victory in the 1970 elections. The SLFP and the Left on the other hand were convinced that this movement was Right-inspired and that it was created in order to subvert the United Front and stage a coup in case the UF won the 1970 elections.

In retrospect, it is interesting to speculate as to who had inspired this spate of complaints from the top political leaders of all the important Parties. There is a belief that the source was from within the Che Guevara Movement itself, to get the publicity such sensa-

tional newspaper reports would bring the movement. The simple fact is that the insurgent movement cut across all party lines. It had already at that time, attracted the youth from the UNP as much as it had from the UF. It is for this reason that some political quarters believe that the Che Guevara Movement had loyalists who were in a position to reach top political leaders of all parties without any suspicions being aroused as to their connections with the Che Guevara Movement itself.

Following this major uproar, there were references to the Che Guevarists in Parliament and the Senate. It was reported that the IGP had submitted a full report on the situation which demanded that stern action had to be taken to curb the illegal activities of the movement (i.e., in making bombs and accumulating arms). Though the UNP government ordered the arrests of a few Che Guevara leaders, no concerted action was taken to deal with the problem of student and youth unrest. This made many Leftists to suspect that the Movement was of Rightist persuasion and that it was being nursed as a secret storm troop battalion in case the United Front won the elections. But others pointed out, that the Right was cautious about making arrests lest they create a new breed of "political heroes."

Heated arguments about whether the UNP Government had taken adequate action against the Che Guevarists in 1969 took place when Parliament met after the April 1971 revolt. Mr. Dudley Senanayake indignantly protested against the charge made that his National Government had failed to take any appropriate action on the IGP's and police reports about this Movement. Mr. Senanayake had claimed that Wijeweera and others had been held in custody since the middle of the second half of 1969 and that he was released only after the UF Government had come to power in May 1970.

The fact is that the Che Guevara Movement underwent a major qualitative change in 1969. Up to that time, it had criticised the UNP, SLFP, LSSP and the CP with equal vehemence as parties of the Establishment which could do nothing to help the country to develop politically or eco-

nomically. They had no use for any of the established parties. They had no use for elections or the parliament. They described elections and the ballot as some kind of hoax intended to fool all the people all the time.

But suddenly, the Che Guevara Movement changed its tactics. A major offensive was launched by them to change the name from that of the Che Guevara Movement to that of the People's Liberation Front, that is, the *Jatika Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP)*. From the underground where they trained cadres, they moved on to public platforms from which they sought mass support. Their slogans, though demagogic and populist, had the magic of appeal to the ordinary Sinhala Youth and rural peasant. But the most important change was its decision to support the UF in the election campaign. Why did the Che Guevarists, now calling themselves the JVP, decide to support one of the existing front of political parties so vehemently and determinedly? What did they go into the election fray for when they did not believe in elections at all?

There is no doubt that the JVP and the Che Guevarists threw themselves heart and soul into the election campaign of the United Front in order to get a new status for their movement. The JVP felt that it was strong enough to come out into the open, at least into the semi-open. They were a dedicated band of workers and it is acknowledged that the magnitude of the UF victory was in a large measure due to the grassroots election work of the JVP supporters in many electorates. Several of them were arrested at this stage and it was pointed out that these arrests were evidently motivated by the complaints of those who found them a nuisance in certain electorates. Why and how each group of arrests were made in the pre-General Election period is not important because the primary question which must be answered is why the JVP plunged headlong into the election fray at all.

It is a fact that the election campaign provided the JVP with an excellent opportunity to come into

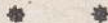


## Why Family Planning ?

contact with the masses. It also enabled these JVP election workers to come into close personal contact with leaders of the UF and this was utilised when the UF came to power to secure jobs for large numbers of the JVP. Whoever the real top leaders of the JVP were, they knew what they were after when they decided to plunge into the election campaign in support of the UF. They took a calculated risk in backing the UF, but the JVP's political expectations proved to be correct and it had backed a winning horse.

It would be interesting to examine the views and theories as to who was behind the Che Guevara Movement made in Ceylon and abroad in the Pre-May 1970 period both in Ceylon and abroad in the context of what was said immediately after the elections right up to April 5th or at least until Emergency was declared on March 16, 1971. The next article in this series will appear in our next issue.

That article was not written at that time. —Ed.



## POVERTY

### Is It Caused By Population Growth?

By H. M. Desarda  
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*"The economists explain to us the process of production under given conditions; what they do not explain to us, however, is how these conditions themselves are being produced, i.e. the historical movement that brings them into being."*

—Karl Marx  
in Poverty of Philosophy

CURRENTLY a crusading campaign is under way in the country to curb what is called "over-population". Somewhat naively one may ask what has contributed to this new concern and concept of solving national problems?

Did we not "discover" *de novo* in 1971 the problem that plagues the country? Poverty! A pet and perennial theme pervading all policy statements. At long last the diagnosis is done and culprit is caught: who else it could be—the poor themselves!

Diabolically, the notion has been nurtured not only to associate but attribute poverty mainly—rather solely—to "over-population". Unfortunately, even many critics of the Government, including some of socialist hues, independent observers and intellectuals unequivocally subscribe to the view that our failure to curb population growth laid the country in the present morass.

Many are groaning under a belief that growth of population in India is phenomenal, surpassing all world records, and we are inevitably heading towards a catastrophe. Ordinarily, one may not take up cudgels against such inane generalities. Do we not witness many things bereft of any rational basis passing off as gospel truths? After all, in a class society, rationality means "rationality" of particular class—the ruling elite and their Western mentors and aid-givers.

But now that population control has been singled out as the top priority, "target-oriented and time-bound" action programme, the minimum that any serious section should do is to expose this bogey. In the midst of the present euphoria, any attempt, however scientific and rigorous, would be far from palatable to those in power. Amen!

Somehow, a picture has been painted that all that we need to do to banish poverty and unemployment is to launch a war on population. And those who fail to grasp this "simple" fact must be suffering from ignorance, illiteracy or religious superstitions.

Certainly no taboo or superstition should be allowed to strangle any sound measure in promoting welfare and development. Further, no one altogether disregards that in a stratified society like ours, measures such as family planning encounter in some way socio-cultural hurdles. However, it is fatal to characterise all disagreements to the present approach to the "population problem" as obscurantist.

Particularly disturbing is the "role" of many in our academic community (of course, with a few notable exceptions) who have chosen to shun their responsibility of scientific study and analysis. But then is this not precisely the purpose of education, training and foreign trips of our academic lum-

inaries to the Western centres of "liberal" learnings?

THE PRIMARY PREOCCUPATION of our "value free" scholars is to seek solution feasible in the existing socio-economic set-up. And it is these high-ups who make intellectual profession an auxiliary in the service of political line of those in power.

As such, population control being sorted out as the single most necessary step towards socialist goal is a grim reminder of what kind of polity we are in. Once population growth is held out as the cause of poverty, implications are "clear": control it by measures even coercive.

Apparently, among the umpteen causes of poverty—officially listed—population is the most easy to manipulate.

It is no more than truism to say that people are poor because they are too many. It is one thing to relate population growth to per capita income, savings, resources, etc., but quite different and strange to argue that high population growth is cause of low economic development.

This reminds one of a story of a health expert who, on observing incessant rush of patients in a newly opened dispensary, ruefully remarked: "Doctor is the cause of disease!"

Of the two well-known approaches to population problem, Malthusian and Marxian, former is widely upheld in most of the Third World countries (TWCs for short) Malthusian postulates are simple, posing a direct relationship between resources (particularly land) and population. Malthus failed to foresee the advent of technology and man-power demands entailed by it, and even decline in fertility as the quality of life improves.

All in all, he could not visualise the imminent need and possibility of radical reorganisation of the existing socio-economic institutions. Not altogether fortuitously, the pessimistic prognostication of Malthus had been belied by the experience of England and Europe in the specific context of which he was prompted to pro-found his celebrated theory.

The major flaw in the Malthusian formulation is that it does not question the prevailing mode of utilising



resources. In other words, the given production relations are rational and hence no room for increasing production by realignment. *Ceteris Paribus*—the raison d'être of classical economic theory—population growth turns out to be the main cause for poverty of the masses.

According to Marx, there could be no universally applicable law of population. Reproductive behaviour is a response to production conditions and, therefore, it is production relations that ultimately determine the rate of reproduction. This, it is not the absolute size of resources but the access and power of decision to use them that present a formidable obstacle to productive use of human resources.

Unfortunately, after Marx, these theoretical perspectives on population were not vigorously pursued. Only recently some scholars have grappled with this vital issue and produced some very striking studies. Among others, mention must be made of a study by Mamdani, and the debate raised by journals like the *Monthly Review* (New York) and the *Economic and Political Weekly* (Bombay). Indeed, this essay would have more than fulfilled its purpose if readers are prompted to peruse some of these valuable contributions.

**CENTRES OF POPULATION STUDIES** in advanced capitalist countries are engaged in purveying the neo-Malthusian ideology of population to TWCs. Why are the capitalist camp, their multinationals and their "philanthropic" foundations so much concerned about the "population" problems? Why are they pouring millions of dollars to bolster up "populations control" programmes in the TWCs representing their actions as nothing but sheer "altruism"?

Undoubtedly, the aim is to divert the attention from exploitation which they have carried on for centuries through colonialism, adverse terms of trade, the investment and collaborations of multinationals in the TWCs. Thus, it is a capitalist camouflage to create scare of over-population and demoralise poor masses from acting in their own interest. Most arguments advanced by the development economists and demographers to explain "over-popu-

lation" as the chief cause of poverty, misery and unemployment, are not only untenable but shrewdly fabricated and distorted.

In most TWCs, the rate of growth of population ranging between 2 to 3 per cent per annum causes alarm, and a comparison with the advanced capitalist countries growing at 1 to 1.5 per cent makes it more scaring. But if statistics of birth rate are placed in historical perspective, it can be discerned that at one stage countries like England, USA and Japan have experienced population growth rates ranging between 3 and 4 per cent.

Moreover, a secular trend reveals that between 1950 and 1957—over a period of three centuries—the share of Asia and Africa in world population declined by 15 per cent. Also during this time population in Africa grew only 2½ times, in Asia 4½ times, in Europe 6 times and in USA 189 times. Further, the density of population is much higher in the developed countries, for example, it is 164 per sq. km. for India and 67 for Pakistan, whereas it is 324 for England and 317 for Japan.

**NEXT AND VERY CRUCIAL** is the question of resources. Most

strategic and precious resource is the cultivable land. Land-man ratio in most TWCs is much higher than world average, and distinctly better than what it is for China, Japan and Europe (excluding USSR.)

Surely, it would come as startling revelation that no more than 10 per cent of the total land in the Third World is under cultivation, and there is considerable scope for extending cultivation.

Besides, in the most populous TWCs like India, over 2/3rd of its mighty 150 million hectares are easily irrigable. In fact, half the sown area in the country falls in the region where annual precipitation exceeds 50". Even today as much as 25 per cent net sown area comes under the command of perennial irrigation.

A recent stimulating study on "Food" by Dr. V. M. Rao projects that with the application of known (proven) production technology, it is possible to safely quadruple the agricultural production, with foodgrains production touching a mark of 400 million tonnes. He observes: "The long-term agricultural potential in India can be regarded as being adequate to provide food and, more importantly, gainful occupation to a growing population."

#### MIDDAY NAP, A SUCCESS SECRET

Churchill and Adenauer both recognised the secret powers of a midday nap. Even the Blitz did not prevent Churchill from taking his afternoon snooze which kept him fit for taking important decisions as war-leader. However late into the night political conferences lasted, it was impossible to outwit Konrad Adenauer, even when he had reached an advanced age. His secret was the midday nap that refreshed him halfway through the day. The midday nap was not just a personal whim of theirs. Scientists who have conducted research into the phenomenon of sleep have long agreed that persons who take a midday nap are able to achieve greater performances than those who don't (says a report in *Stutte-garter Nachrichten*).

Dr. Uros Jovanovic, well-known researcher from Wurzburg University Psychiatric Hospital spoke on this question at the tenth Lindenfels Medical Conference for doctors from Baden and Hesse. "People who are unable to take a midday nap achieve less." Dr. Jovanovic claimed. The drop in performance begins around noon and reaches its peak at about five o'clock in the afternoon. Persons who take a 15-minute or, at most, half-hour nap at one or two o'clock in the afternoon will be able to overcome this drop in performance without feeling tired. They will also remain fresh until late in the evening. Researchers believe that some of the 19,000 road deaths a year recorded in the Federal Republic could have been prevented if the victim had not had to drive home after a day's work at the office. After a hard eight-hour day without any opportunity of taking a refreshing midday nap, they are too tired to react quickly enough to the dangerous situations that often crop up on the roads.



## Why Family Planning?

In addition to land and water, most TWCs abound in mineral and metals necessary for rapid industrial growth. Furthermore, resources are not static known stock, but a steadily rising flow depending on development of science which, in turn, is facilitated by reorganisation of the social order and release of productive forces. Many resources are renewable with human endeavour and many others are replaceable by ingenious scientific inventions. In the annals of scientific explorations one can find innumerable instances of this.

Even non-revolutionary Gunnar Myrdal admits: "There is no such thing as over-population in an absolute sense, that is, independent of direction of the speed of development of the economic resources of its population in question. And it is to be clearly understood that production resources are not a quantity given and unchangeable."

Thus, it is not the niggardliness of nature that can explain the poverty and misery of the vast masses but the socio-economic system based on exploitation which obstructs the efficient harnessing of natural resources. Legitimately, it may be asked hitherto to whose benefit the bounties of nature in the TWCs, have been used? Has not the development in the metropolises produced underdevelopment in the periphery?

Path-breaking studies by Amit Bahaduri, Pradhan H. Prasad, Wolf Ladjeinsky and others have pointedly brought out how in the resource-rich eastern region of the Semi-feudal land institutions are barriers to technological breakthrough.

Now we come to "surplus labour". Of all the arguments advanced in support of "over-population" thesis, most misleading is that of surplus labour in agriculture. With all our glib talk of ubiquitous unemployment, one should simply visit the villages during sowing, planting and harvesting season to be shocked (!) by the acute labour shortage and realise what an exacting demand is there on manpower.

THE INTENSE WORK and arduous strain on their muscles is much more than mere compensation for slack season. What else can explain the employment of children in an overwhelming measure. The

observation of Government's Rural Labour Enquiry that "what facilitates the absorption of child labour in rural market is the shortage of labour in the peak agricultural season" is particularly noteworthy. Of course, low technical basis of production accounts for such a periodic rhythm in agricultural activities—intense phases of work alternating with no work or very little routine work.

Hence it is misleading to argue that at lower density and slower birth rates development would have been much more rapid. On the contrary, there are innumerable instances where on account of decline in population owing to calamities like famine, flood and war and out migration production suffered. Bengal famines and migration of slave-labour from Africa are glaring examples of this.

Besides, it has been powerfully demonstrated that the rapid rate of growth of population has been the prime source of development. The most conspicuous example is that of Europe and North America where phases of high population growth were marked by the phases of unprecedented rate of economic growth.

Even for India a recent study by Dr. C. H. Hanumanth Rao asserts that "in past two decades a good part of growth (in agriculture) is traceable to autonomous factors such as population growth."

Thus the argument that with a smaller population economic growth would have been greater is not empirically true. In fact, as a corollary one may ask why the sparsely populated but resource-rich Africa and Latin America and many parts like Jharkhand and north-eastern regions in India are economically so depressed?

In an area like Bastar in a bountiful Chhatisgarh region of Madhya Pradesh (State with the lowest density in the Indian Union)—with iron ore mines of Bailadilla, treasure of high quality teak timber and fertile soils, and vast water resource of Mahanadi and now in the neighbourhood of the industrial complex of Bhilai—one comes face to face with what is proverbially called "poverty amidst plenty".

Extreme form of exploitation has made the majority of the Adivasis "the hewers of wood and drawers of water". Geographically,

the district of Bastar (Jagdalpur) is as big as the entire Kerala State and the latter is most densely populated region of the country and yet it is there the lot of poor is comparatively much better. What explanation the ardent advocates of overpopulation thesis has to offer for this paradox of plentiful resources, sparse population and stark poverty?

Finally, we shall take up the problem of proximate interest in current contest. Why do the poor households desire larger family? The reason is very simple. In subsistence agriculture, with low technical basis of production, the only input to which a poor household can resort and look forward to maximise income (or minimise starvation) is labour. In such a setting a household with a larger number of family members is at an advantage—securing the land on lease, getting larger share of harvest contracts, etc.

A close observation of the nature of employment in agriculture would enable any one to grasp the practical fact that a larger number of children are an asset in poor households. This certainly goes a long way to explain why as many as 100 million children in the age group of 5 to 14 either do not enter the school system or drop out too soon; despite schooling being free at this stage.

The reality is that children are the only source to maximise income in attempt to stave off starvation, and more than that, they are the only hope—a kind of insurance—for old age. In a social situation characterised by feudal and semi-feudal exploitation, the desire of the poor to prefer a large number of children is a quite rational response to adjust to the given system of production. To quote the findings of Rural Labour Enquiry: "They (children under 15) are pressed into employment mainly to supplement the meagre income of chronically poverty-stricken rural households."

That is why we observed in the beginning that in a class society there cannot be universal rationality. And the ruling classes and their urban middle class allies, who comprise the bureaucracy and the elite professions, including the academic one, think what is good for them—a norm of small



family—should be per se good for the peasants and the poor also.

Mamdani has pointedly underlined the causes of poverty: "It is not high population growth that explains India's poverty but the contrary, that this poverty itself is not a natural but historical phenomenon: its reproduction cannot be understood unless we analyse it as the result of social relations which themselves must be placed in the context of a system of oppression, imperialism."

From the foregoing it should be evident that the alleged over-population is not the cause but the consequence of poverty. And reproductive behaviour is not natural but a historical and social phenomenon. Otherwise what else is the explanation of varying fertility rates of different socio-economic groups in the same territory.

To grasp the truth of this one has only to look to the facts: how in the wake of prosperity and advance in the standard of living, the birth rate declines? This has happened not only in the advanced countries but can be noticed in case of groups within the TWCs with assured employment and incomes flowing from ownership of means of production.

Whatever advance we have registered on family planning front should be attributed to improvement of health facility (particularly decline in infant mortality) combined with increase in income of some groups in the wake of the planning process. This, however, should not create the impression that population policies are not needed. The need for augmenting the health measures and even a fairly efficient family planning services is as expedient as other social welfare measures.

The experience of the USSR is worth noting. There, in spite of incentives for larger families, birth rate declined from 43 per 1000 in 1926 to 25 in 1959. By a curious coincidence this is what our population policy envisaged—bringing down the birth rate from 44 to 25 thousand, but with what success is well-known to all.

Our basic disagreement is with the hullabaloo that isolates population control from other—and more fundamental—measures.

Equally expedient is the need to expose how the ruling classes in the country, in league with foreign monopolists, are making a slick attempt to sidetrack attention from the exploitation by raising the bogey of "over-population."

The remarks of Jawaharlal Nehru should serve as a reminder to this bandwagon of "over-population" in ruling circles. At opening session to the ECAFE Conference of 1948, he declared: "I am in favour of population being checked, but I think there is great misapprehension when so much stress is laid on this aspect. We are over-populated if you like because our productive capacity is low. If we increase production, agricultural and other, if this population is put to work, then we are not over-populated."

In conclusion we may reiterate that the only way to solve the problem of poverty is to change the exploitative socio-economic structure which acts as fetters on productive forces. But then, as Joan Robinson remarks: "With most problems nowadays the economic answers are only political questions." And to face political questions, to use again the phrase of Joan Robinson: What is needed, is not so much the wisdom but courage."

## WORLD FORUM—2

### Of Peace Forces

by T. Duraisingam, J.P., U.M.  
Attorney At-Law,  
Member, World Peace Council

THE DISCUSSION GROUPS dealt with different subjects, but all round the central theme of detente, its development and consolidation, its expansion and strengthening, overcoming the impediments in the way to its becoming irreversible. This procedure enabled each group to single out specific aspects of the problem and to go to the root of it. The members of the Sri Lanka delegation decided to participate in three different discussion groups. Rev. Medagoda Sumanatissa participated in the discussion group on "Problems of co-operation of peace forces", Uvais Ahamed participated

in the discussion group on "Non-use of force in international relations; problems of banning mass destruction weapons, reducing conventional weapons and carrying out other partial measures on disarmament" and I participated in the discussion group on "Detente and the non-aligned movement."

Rev. Sumanatissa actively participated in the discussion group on "Problems of co-operation of peace forces" and several of his suggestions were included in the Communique issued by the Forum at the end of the sessions. This group discussed and agreed upon different proposals for continuing and carrying forward the dialogue and co-operation. Seminars, symposiums, study groups, conferences on a number of issues have been planned in this connection. In the discussion group that I participated, which was on "Detente and the non-aligned movement", I was called upon to lead the discussion. I pointed out that the non-aligned countries from the time that they started functioning as a movement have worked for the reduction of international tensions, for the elimination of military bases and for world peace.

I TRACED the history of the Non-aligned movement from the Bandung Conference, which was the first representative forum of the newly emerged independent Asian and African countries. This conference reflected the striving of Asian and African peoples for common action against colonialism, neo-colonialism and imperialism, for social progress and strengthening of national sovereignty of independent countries in Asia and Africa. Jawaharlal Nehru, who was one of the prime movers for the holding of the Bandung Conference was inspired by the vision of a united and re-nascent Asia and Africa. One of his first acts as the Prime Minister of India was to convene, in March 1947, an Asian Relations Conference in Delhi. It was the success of this conference that led to the holding of the Asian-African Conference in April 1955, at Bandung in Indonesia, and popularly referred to as the Bandung Conference. The ten principles adopted by this conference as the basis for international relations were based on the Panchaseela principles of mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty, non-aggression, non-interference in



## In Moscow

each others national affairs, equality and mutual benefit and peaceful co-existence.

I further stated that the non-aligned movement can rightly be called the direct successor to the Bandung Conference. I referred to the five summit conferences held in Belgrade (1961), Cairo (1964), Lusaka (1970), Algiers (1973) and Colombo (1976.) The Bandung spirit was reflected in all these summit conferences. The Algiers Summit declared: "Imperialism is still the greatest obstacle to the emancipation and progress of the developing countries which are struggling to achieve levels of living compatible with the most basic standards of well-being and human dignity. Imperialism not only hampers the economic and social progress of developing countries, but also adopts an aggressive attitude towards those who oppose its plans, trying to impose upon them political, social and economic structures which encourage alien domination, dependence and neo-colonialism. Thus the developing countries, in general are still subject directly or indirectly to imperialist exploitation. Colonialism and imperialism have been unable to withstand the vast political liberation movement marked by the historical turning point of Bandung, but they have adopted themselves in order to perpetuate in another form their stranglehold on the resources of the developing countries and to ensure for themselves all kinds of privileges and guaranteed markets for their manufactured products". I also referred to the active part taken by our Prime Minister Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike, in trying to make the Indian Ocean a Zone of Peace. It was at her initiative that the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted, on December 16th 1971, its historic "Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace."

A NUMBER OF SCIENTISTS participated in the discussion group on non-use of force in international relations; problems of banning mass destruction weapons, reducing conventional weapons and carrying out other partial measures on disarmament. It was pointed out by the participants that the arms race was not only fraught with the danger of a destructive war but was swallowing up enormous material and man power resources. Fifteen years ago the

armed forces of the world numbered 20,000,000. Ten years later, despite considerably greater mechanization and an unprecedented increase in the effectiveness of armaments, they have increased to 23-24, 000,000. According to United Nations exports, the number of people directly involved in military production and in military institutions, fifteen years ago, was 30,000,00. But today more than 50,000,000 people all over the world are directly involved in the military sector.

The cessation of the arms race is the prime task on the road to disarmament. Fifteen grammes of TNT are enough to kill a man. It is a known fact that the TNT equivalent of the present world stocks of nuclear bombs and warheads works out to more than 15 tons of high explosives for every man, woman and child in the world. Therefore, no responsible politician or public personality has the right to lose sight for a moment of the colossal danger presented by the mountain of arms mankind is sitting on.

This enormous expenditure on armaments is incurred when many countries sorely need funds to meet their most urgent needs. About 500 million people live on the verge of starvation, and they could be fed for \$ 8,000 million. It would cost the same amount to teach 700 million people, now illiterate, to read and write.

The following from the message of Leonid Brezhnev, the General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, to the participants in the World Forum of Peace Forces expresses in a nutshell the hopes and aspirations of all partisans of peace: "The main thing today is to act, to find rational solutions that would lead as rapidly as possible, without procrastination, to real disarmament, to the materialization of detente and its transformation into a universal and absolutely irreversible process. Much in this endeavour can be done by political parties, trade unions, women's and youth organizations, parliamentarians, scientists and cultural workers, all public peace forces actively engaged in the struggle against the threat of a new world conflict, builders of lasting peace and reliable security. It may be said without exaggeration that right now is the time that new and broader prospects are opening up

for their activity. The worldwide campaign in support of the new Stockholm Appeal against the arms race and for disarmament, which has now gathered more than 400 million signatures, attests to the firm resolve of the peoples to strengthen peace."

Concluded

## COCONUT CRISIS-3

### Land Reform

—Consequences affected—

By R. Kahawita

WHEN LAND REFORMS became the topic of the day after the insurgency movement was suppressed, a group of people who were interested in saving the economy of the country undertook a study of Land Reforms and its impact on the economy of the country and its effects on foreign exchange earnings. This was in the latter half 1971. The conclusions of this report were circulated to members of parliament and to others who could influence and warn the powers to be the adverse effects Land Reforms would have on the economic life of the people if the Land Reforms were to be carried out without proper plans and schemes to maintain productivity to improve the economic life of the people. As it turned out to be, "Ideology" and politics were more important to the Minister than the welfare of the people and the state.

What is being experienced today in the coconut industry and on the other plantation crops was visualized by this particular study group. So it cannot be said that the Government was not warned. But nothing would change the attitudes. And now that the country's economy is in such a mess, our Prime Minister is left high and dry with the defection of the major partners of the United Front and some of her own party Ministers and members of the National Assembly saying that the finances of the country are in a bad way. These events are a more convincing verdict of the economic chaos than all the criticisms of the Opposition group in the NSA. It is an admission of the economic collapse of the country. The group that con-



tributed to the study wishes to remain anonymous. However with their approval I reproduce below what was forecast then and the recent events prove it.

"Ceylon's main problems are due to its foreign exchange difficulties and the population explosion. This has resulted in an inability to import essential commodities, a rise in the rate of unemployment, and a lack of national development. The Government, therefore, proposes to impose a ceiling on the ownership of land as a means to solve these problems, by re-distributing the already developed land holdings. The Finance Minister in his Budget Speech on 10th November, 1971 stated that:— 'It is not possible to allow a large accumulation of wealth in the shape of landed property. The Government has, therefore, decided to place a ceiling on the ownership of land. This will apply to all individual owners of land as well as private companies. This ceiling will be imposed on paddy lands as well. Estates belonging to companies both foreign and local would not be fragmented but would be brought under the control of Government through the Plantations Ministry."

"NO CONSIDERATION APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN GIVEN TO THE EFFICIENCY OF PRESENT LAND USE. IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT A FULL SCALE LAND USE SURVEY BE CONDUCTED OF BOTH CULTIVATED AND UNCULTIVATED LAND BEFORE ANY ATTEMPT IS MADE TO IMPOSE CEILINGS ON THE OWNERSHIP OF LAND. (Note: Fragmentation was the key note of land ceiling then under consideration by the Government)

"FORM OF CEILING. The imposition of a ceiling on the ownership of land by individuals and private companies means that public companies, incorporated both in Ceylon and abroad will be exempt from the ceiling. 174,000 acres of tea, i.e. 30% of the total acreage under tea is owned by foreigners and foreign companies. In the case of rubber, 80,000 acres i.e. 12% of the total acreage under rubber is owned by foreigners and foreign companies. Since the percentage

owned by foreign individuals is extremely minute, we may assume the above figures to be equivalent, for all practical purposes, to the percentages owned by foreign companies, which in terms of the proposal are to be completely exempt from the ceiling".

"Coconut land is entirely owned by Ceylonese individuals and private companies....."

"IT APPEARS TO BE THE POLICY OF THE GOVERNMENT THAT PRACTICALLY ALL LAND OWNED BY FOREIGN COMPANIES WILL BE EXEMPT FROM THE CEILING AND THAT THE CEILING WILL APPLY ENTIRELY TO LAND OWNED BY CEYLONESE INDIVIDUALS AND CEYLONESE PRIVATE COMPANIES. THE GOVERNMENT OF CEYLON WOULD THEN BE THE FIRST SOCIALIST GOVERNMENT IN THE WORLD TO GIVE PREFERENCE TO FOREIGNERS AS AGAINST ITS OWN CITIZENS."

"The proposal would, therefore, result in the incidence of the ceiling being dependent purely upon the mere legal technicality of the form of land ownership."

Note: The object was to destroy the middle class Ceylonese in keeping with the book of words to take the country to communism.)

"ABUSE OF THE FORM OF CEILING. It should be noted that in both Ceylon and British Company Law only seven shareholders are required in order to incorporate a public company (which need not necessarily be a company quoted on a stock exchange). An individual could thus easily evade the ceiling

by incorporating a public company with himself as one shareholder and six others merely as his nominee shareholders."

"LARGEST LAND OWNER. Ceylon's land area is 16.2 million acres of which 3.87 million acres are cultivated in the following manner:

Tea	596,000
Rubber	574,000
Coconut	1,200,000
Paddy	1,200,000
	<hr/>
	3,570,000
Shifting chena cultivation	300,000
Total cultivated area	<hr/>
	3,870,000

Of the 12.33 million acres not presently cultivated, the land available for future agricultural development is 3.25 million acres which includes 105,000 acres of abandoned rubber land (after deducting urban areas, streams, roads, forests, land above 5,000 ft. elevation and over and land unsuitable for cultivation etc.)"

"THE GOVERNMENT IS THE OWNER OF THESE 3.25 MILLION ACRES AND IS, THEREFORE, BY FAR THE LARGEST LAND OWNER IN CEYLON. THERE IS, THEREFORE, AN IMMEDIATE OBLIGATION ON THE GOVERNMENT TO DEVELOP THIS LAND IN VIEW OF THE LAND HUNGER AND LACK OF EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES." (Note: The special leases land implemented by the last U.N.P. Government was a measure adopted to develop these lands at no cost to the Government, and at the same time to fulfil its responsibility to the people. The lease was for 12 years

#### STRAW PELLETS TO FEED CATTLE

Berlin (ADN),

A quarter of a million tons of pelletised straw for feeding cattle have been produced in the German Democratic Republic since the beginning of the year. This is more than the entire production of 1974. The production of straw pellets is a relatively young branch in feeding stuff production, which will increasingly guarantee fodder supplies for cattle and milk cows above all at industrial fattening plant. Chopped straw is being enriched with grain, sugar-beet shreds and various minerals and is being compressed into pellets, about five to ten centimetres long and as thick as a thumb. The increasing use of straw—in part often an undesired by-product of grain production—for feeding plays an important part in the search for more intensive exploitation of all feeding stuffs available from national production. GDR scientists have found out that earlier analyses had underrated the value of straw for feeding by twenty per cent, whereas that of grain was overrated by ten per cent. This has meanwhile been clearly proved by results achieved in fattening cattle by using straw pellets.



## Land Utilisation

and at the end of 12 years Government was to take over the developed land without compensation and establish Colonisation Schemes.

To establish one peasant family on a three acre farm costs the Government Rs. 25,000/- per family as direct cost today. Under the special leases scheme it would have saved the Government almost five million rupees and would have added 200,000 Acs. of additional productive land to the wealth of the nation, and settled 75,000 families in developed agricultural land and produced 780,000 bushels of extra paddy annually.

"The distinction between the Dry and Wet Zones has produced the impression that agriculture in the Dry Zone is impossible without irrigation. However, in terms of average rainfall the Dry Zone has about 57" per annum, and the Wet Zone about 95" per annum. In the context of both South East Asian and world rainfall figures and agriculture it is not realistic to treat the Dry Zone as arid."

"THE ESTATE AND SMALL-HOLDING SECTORS. The estate sector is here defined to mean holdings of 100 acres or more in the case of tea and rubber; and 20 acres or more for coconut.

The estate sector holdings are as follows:—

	Tea	Rubber	Coconut	Total Estates
	490,000	265,000	400,000	1,255,000
	i.e. 8.25% of the total land area.			

The small-holdings are as follows:—

	Tea	Rubber	Coconut	Total Small Holding Sector
	106,000	304,000	800,000	1,210,000
	i.e. 7.47% of the total land area"			

The utilisation of labour in the estate sector is approximately as follows:—

	Tea	1.5 labourers per acre
Rubber	0.5	— do —
Coconut	0.125	— do —

This would mean that the total labour force presently employed on the estate sector is approximately the following:—

Tea	735,000
Rubber	137,550
Coconut	50,000
	<u>922,500</u>

If it is conservatively assumed that each labourer has three other persons dependent on him or her, this would mean that 3,690,000 PEOPLE i.e. 30.8% OF THE ENTIRE POPULATION OF CEYLON IS DIRECTLY DEPENDENT FOR ITS LIVELIHOOD UPON THE ESTATE SECTOR IGNORING THOSE ENGAGED IN THE EXPORT TRADE."

"EXPORTS. The percentage and values of export earnings are as follows:—

The registered acreage of rubber exceeds the sum of these two figures by the 105,000 acres abandoned.

Produce	Export Earnings Rs. million	Percentage
Tea	1,116.3	54.5
Rubber	439.7	21.6
Coconut	294.5*	14.5
	<u>1,850.5</u>	<u>90.6</u>
Other Items	182.7	9.4
	<u>2,033.2</u>	<u>100.0</u>

\*The total value of the entire coconut production would be about Rs. 800 million. Note: earnings based on 1971 prices.

The value of the three main agricultural products exported constitutes 90.6% of total exports and is sufficient to cover 72.5% of our imports.

THE REDUCTION in the level of productivity of the coconut estate sector to the present low level of the small-holders will result in a fall in the total crop from the present level of 2,444.5 million nuts to 1,800 million nuts. Since the internal consumption at the present population level is 1,564 million nuts, the exportable nuts will fall from 880 million to 236 million nuts, and the foreign exchange earnings will drop from Rs. 295 million to Rs. 19 million. AT THE PRESENT RATE OF POPULATION INCREASES OF 2.3% PER ANNUM IN SIX YEARS THE TOTAL CROP WILL NOT BE SUFFICIENT TO MEET THE INTERNAL CONSUMPTION, LEAVING NOTHING FOR EXPORT. EVEN AT THE PRESENT YIELDS CEYLON WILL HAVE TO IMPORT COCONUTS WITHIN 20 YEARS."

(Note: The present coconut crisis is directly due to drop in production and bad management arising from Land Reforms which have been implemented without any plans except to redistribute productive estates at 20 to 30 perch

units and thus put the acreage so distributed out of production. Today we consume all what we produce and no nuts are available to export—though the forecast then was 236 million nuts for export.)

"In the case of the coconut industry alone the proportion of production at present locally consumed is significant at approximately 2/3rds of total production leaving 1/3rd of total production for export. Since the quality of the product i.e. nuts and copra from the estate sector is much superior to that of the small-holder sector, it is the production of the estate sector that is purchased by millers for conversion into coconut oil and desiccated coconut and purchased for export as copra. Since the estate sector produces 50% of the total crop and only 35% of the total crop is exported, it is evident that the balance 15% of the total crop which is produced by the estate sector is used for local consumption."

To be Continued



## THE CONSTITUTION

### As If A Single Swallow Can Make A Summer

by R. B. Thammita

OUR REPUBLICAN CONSTITUTION went on stage in the leadership columns of a daily newspaper some time in May last year. Was this the first showing? What I have gathered since is that the United National Party wanted to see how this Constitution would look under a President elected by the people. Opponents of that Party seemed very cross at this at the time. The actors bowed out; the cry died down. But not for long, though! For, on January 9, we saw it taken up in the *Sunday Observer* by the (Permanent) Secretary to the Ministry of Justice. The empathy is incredible! But political geni move in mysterious ways their wonders to perform. The Voter, who should really matter but does not, is bewildered to ask: Has Reason fled Lanka and is Patriotism dead to her? He cannot otherwise conceive why he has to live from day to day with his



every sensibility outraged by high jack-politicking.

We are a house-divided! And yet the endeavour is to keep the broken family apart! Things were not thus eight-score years back in time. Can alien-rule, that brief, make us so disown two thousand years of zealous nationhood and the good living it gave to one and all and the right conduct it endeavoured to beget and nurture? As a Voter myself I weep, not because we have no kingdom, but because we just cannot by the tools we pick up and use weld our peoples and reinstate our civility. Our sovereignty was not fashioned in the image of other peoples and their nostrums. We had but three directives: the dharma of the Buddha, the selflessness of the patriot, and the vision of the idealist. And these were mutually pre-creative of the individual's worth in a coherent society. We cannot but feel sad that during the past quarter of a century the individual has been deprived and the society dismembered. The brotherhood of man—Sinhala, Demala, Marakkala, Lansi—can we then talk about?

WITH MONARCHY laid to rest, Democracy, what passes for it, is since become our option of social order in the course of the evolutionary process of the human animal. And this order is got going presently by the operation of a CONSTITUTION. A Constitution is itself evolutionary process. Its career cannot be fixed in time. We may not say it shall last one year or ten. What must be expected of it basically is its flux in keeping with the changing needs of its adherents, the People. It has to be their servant and servicer, never the master.

This evolutionary process was for a time best illustrated in the American polity. It was consistently active until this new nation became about the close of the first quarter of the present century what is described by and large as the Affluent Society. Since then the American polity is become passive and degenerative. The Viet Nam involvement and Richard Nixon to a likelihood of the evolutionary process being reinvoked. In Britain, Jeremy Thorpe, until his recent eclipse, likewise endeavoured to expose the face behind the mask. In the two nations professing pre-eminently the doctrine

of Rule of the people By the people For the people there is thus a quiet questioning taking heed in consequence of an increasing awareness of the individual person's fossilisation through systemic Rule Of The People by the plaguey viruses of Party Politics.

THIS DEMOCRATISM verily is as far as we have scrambled toward the goal of Democracy. Evolution has had more brakes put upon it since by the rotatory and revolutionary aggregates of Elitism, Communism, and now Socialism, each a unit imposing its peculiar cynicism upon the feckless society which it artfully subjugates. Can we not break clear of these plagues? Evolve, not revolve?

A people's Constitution (a nation-state's) must be supple and resilient to admit of change not at any given time *but at any time*. You are doubly unfree if also you let yourself be fettered by its frills of conventions and practices, writ and unwrit, old and new, that are tacked on to dress it up with a second-line of sacramental inviolability. If a Constitution is not avidly alive to called-for change, bury it and be done with it. The only Constitution locally contrived to date is of this genre. Why, otherwise, the uproar of protests raised against the rudimentary desirability of having a Head Of State who is the elected of the people?

A Constitution is the master-key in man's self-civilizing process. Whenever this key warps or wears out, as often must it be repaired or replaced. Whoever procrastinates offends commonsense. He who perseveres with misfits is without patriotism, a risk to his fellow beings. Indeed we think too lightly of this matter. Else, we would not so easily, nay, repetitively, be taken in by our Greeks. Isn't it time we got to beware of their gifts?

I HAVE BEEN an anxious witness of the political games from the sidelines of four different legislatures: the Legislative Council; its successor the State Council with its Committee System; that under the Soulbury self-governing arrangement with its Cabinet Responsibility; and the one-chamber Assembly of a Republic with a ceremonial President of State. Since the first three installations were

basically the handiwork of an alien master coerced by winds of change to loosen our fetters, we need look at them now only in the light of curiosities and with a forgiving smile at their imperial archness not to let go their hold altogether. In proclaiming the present Republic, however, we did impel the alien master, so it is thought, to let go. But did we, in fact? Truth answers No.

Our concern therefore is and should be with the pretensions of the installation we ourselves have contrived, the Republican Constitution, for which it is claimed that it is a Free People's Charter, meaning thereby the redemption and revival of the sovereignty of the people of our land. How I wish I could say these claims are just! I felt deeply shamed, on the contrary, when more than one knowledgeable Briton in quite recent days said to me sardonically, "How free are you, really?" The innuendo was inescapable: that our Constitution, whatever of its predecessors' infirmities it had shed, has re-embraced their holiest of scriptures, namely, the imperial policy of Divide And Rule.

This made me look even more sharply at current Britain operating its system of government, the wreckage, moral as well as economic, that it has reduced it to, and the utter helplessness of a people to evolve. Soon there a Bill may pass into law upgrading to full womanhood every fourteen-year-old schoolgirl so that she may be saved the present odium of child-bearing without a license. The pub, the meat-kill, the fish-kill: these aliens we already are succumbing to. Heaven help we may not go on to brothelize the classroom!

Harvestings of such and similar virtues—how many more are in the offing for our people from this ruthless game of divide-and-rule? With cruel deliberation large segments of the nation are pitted in meaningless rivalry against other large segments—as at present one half against its other half—in perpetuity; and with a reckless mindlessness the economic endeavour is in the same proportions blighted. What is to view, one may ask, in this gargantuan see-saw; a nation, a rabble, sadducean tragedy or stark comedy of errors? Certainly what is on view is not patience upon a monument!



## High Cost Of Drugs

Perhaps it is this vision disturbs J. R. Jayawardene and makes others cross that he is so disturbed. Selflessness, its merest flicker, ever and always disturbs. The Buddha disturbed. And in our own day, the Mahatma. Each precepted and practised not the pretence of change but change: the one one's nature; the other a nation's way of life. We are the heirs to that first change; in no other people can be found our kindliness and our simple decency. Our signal misfortune is that we have not begotten a Mahatma in our time. And yet because of our culture ours is the soil culturable for the growth of a Democracy of the People. We have cultured instead two genocides within a 25-year span of renasced self-rule. This is a fact to remember. The people may forget it at their peril.

On the 25th of May last year, the newspaper I have earlier referred to reproduced an article by Joe Appiah from a leading Indian newspaper. Said the writer: "Perhaps, given the chance, the developing countries may give to the world that ideal democracy which has eluded even the West after thousands of years of experimentation—from Plato's Athens to Nixon's America. Who knows!"

We ought to know we best have that chance; made, perhaps without her being aware of it, in this day and time for us by the Prime Minister regnant. The shifting of the pulley back to its middle positioning was an act of well-wishing, heartwarming for the millions whose inheritance is the Middle Path.

### DRUG INDUSTRY—I

## Perspectives In Developing Countries

By U. Karunatileke

This is the first part of talk delivered at the Commonwealth Pharmaceutical Conference in Colombo in 1976.

THE TITLE of this talk can be more correctly given as "Developing Countries/Perspectives in the Drug Industry." Shall we dwell briefly on the developed countries

to be more exact, on the developed Western countries where depression is the main theme of these times. The 70's of this century have seen recurring failures in the much publicised systems of business Management, Marketing and business economics. We now stand in the full blast of a roaring recession, which some people try desperately not to see.

As far as the Drug Industry is concerned, somebody said it all began with Orson Welles in 'The Third Man'. Here was high endeavour and achievement in the scientific laboratory, yielding fortunes via the sewers and seedy alleyways of Europe. What began with the penicillin racket has ramified beyond the under world. It led on to the Federal investigations on antibiotic marketing in U.S. It led on to the Monopolies Commission sittings on the price of fashionable sedatives in the U.K. It led to the clamp down on brand names in many parts of the world.

The sociological debate has progressed quite some way from the primitive, post war, picture painted in the 'Third Man'. It has become, incidentally, a debate on how much must be raked back for pharmaceutical research and development. This is alleged to be the main cause of high price.

The statement that has been repeated over and over again, that has been repeated before the various commissions inquiring into drug marketing, is that R & D is a very costly factor in drug overheads. The costs have been presented as so enormous that recently someone in Britain analysing the published figures of Swiss and American companies came out with the theory that Britain could not afford it anymore. It has suggested that Britain drop out of the rat race in drug research and export her brains instead.

Britain as well as many other countries have however been responsible for a large amount of genuine therapeutic innovation. This is mainly of the non spectacular variety. Hence there must be a fallacy somewhere in these conclusions. To root out the fallacy one has to introduce an unpopular co-efficient. This, in applied research, is the ratio of unit success to expenditure. In this light, some of the other countries which have perhaps not achieved spectacular

marketing results with innovations, have all the same steadily added to the range of therapeutically useful substances. They do not come out too badly at all.

THE PICTURE becomes quite complicated when reviewed from the angle of marketing success. Here one has to resolve the question of whether it is the aim of R & D to produce best sellers or useful drugs. One has also to look closely at the marketing techniques by which a best seller is launched to decide whether the consumer is ultimately paying for these techniques (some of them questionable) or for the actual cost of research.

It was recently pointed out by WHO that the various Pharmacopoeias are littered with drugs that may not be all that necessary. This is the aftermath of the barnstorming campaigns of international marketing. It raises an interesting question. How immune medical men are to various selling claims disguised in scientific language?

What then is rational investment on Research and Development? Is it to be decided on the attractive return from a Whirlwind marketing campaign on a questionable therapeutic agent? Or is it what stolidly remains in the Pharmacopoeia after all the excitement has died down. The best results in research are undoubtedly obtained while alert minds range free. However, wrong directions in research may be set by injudicious marketing decisions. This has probably inflated the cost of R & D very much more than the steady routine cost of operations.

There is this story of one of the big companies summoned before the Monopolies Commission. It had come out rather lamely with the story that one of their researchers who pioneered a molecule that is today a household name had previously produced nothing commercially acceptable for 20 years. What was implied was that the public had to pay back that 20 year investment. The tragedy might be this. If that scientist had not been held captive by a private profit making organisation for 20 years, but had collaborated in an internationally planned assault on this particular problem, he may have sparked off the discovery a decade earlier. Perhaps in a laboratory where the approach would have been quicker and more decisive.



RECENTLY there has been another angle on the cost of research. The high pressure marketing of analytical instrumentation and automation equipment has made people suddenly take a closer look at the capital cost of research budgets. What had earlier been fatalistically accepted as a high ratio of expenditure to return, if there was any return at all, is definitely being classified as poor investment. Earlier it was vaguely glorified as economic martyrdom in the cause of Science. To make this outlook entirely correct of course, return has to be assessed, not in terms of private profit, but in terms of human progress.

What opportunities has the Drug industry to contribute to the bettering of living standards in a developing country? This is what will make the mass of people a healthy driving force in building up their country. This is primarily the aim of Health Services. The Pharmaceutical industry is an adjunct of the Health Services. It has to align itself to this task.

The total Drug bill, we are told, is now in the region of Rs. 70 million. How much of this Rs. 70 million requirement can be produced locally in order to effect a substantial saving, if not in absolute cost, at least in foreign exchange. Should the local production units exhaust their capacity on churning out low cost antibiotics, analgesics and sulphonamides. The imported raw material sometimes costs more in foreign exchange than the finished drugs that are offered on Government to Government barter deals. Why not obtain these if possible in these deals that involve no foreign exchange? Local manufacture can be limited to cost intensive drugs that take concentrated bites out of the 70 million rupees. What is the break down of this 70 million rupees?

The State Pharmaceutical Corporation (SPC) is more competent to give an up-to-date breakdown of our drug bill in terms of the various categories. I will therefore not go into details. A look at such a breakdown should indicate areas where manufacture will not exhaust installed capacity but will yield at the same time, substantial quantities of high cost drugs. There are some areas which need comment. I understand that the total value of injectibles imported, including transfusions,

comes to nearly ten million rupees. Transfusions account for nearly four million rupees. If these figures can really be justified on the basis of rational therapy, then the time is ripe for creation of a unit to manufacture injectibles. We must of course make certain that the figures on transfusions for example are not a mere reflection of the recent cholera epidemic or an indication of the medical wizardry by which dying people are kept in a state of suspended animation and suffering for months on end, in our major hospitals.

Galenicals represent another interesting area. Alcohol is a key material in the manufacture of Galenicals. Unless cheap, high quality, alcohol is available, galenicals become an uneconomical item of production. The price of B.P. alcohol in the World market today is Rs. 3,000/- per ton. The authorities however insist that pharmaceutical manufacturing firms obtain their alcohol from the Sugar Corporation at a price of Rs. 9,000/- per ton plus approximately Rs. 1,400/- per ton duty. At this price alcohol is not an industrial solvent, it is a luxury.

On the other hand, the State Distilleries Corporation which does not use alcohol as an industrial solvent but converts it into liquor is permitted to purchase large quantities of alcohol in the international market at very favourable prices. Their products obtained by the conversion of this imported alcohol is made available on the market under a variety of labels ranging from Coconut Arrack and Rum to Scotch Whisky. They are not compelled to buy their alcohol from the Sugar Corporation. They can, in fact, buy up the entire output of the Sugar Corporation and still convert it into these liquors at a profit. The pharmaceutical companies on the other hand cannot convert Sugar Corporation alcohol into galenicals at a profit. The price is far, far above anything that would permit even some thinking on a galenical project.

This is a pity because Ceylon is rich in botanical material, which on the basis of traditional, indigenous, usage can find a respectable place in any Pharmacopoeia. After all, the British Pharmacopoeia, the European Pharmacopoeia, the Soviet Pharmacopoeia, the Indian Pharma-

#### MASS MEDIA IN THE USSR (FACTS AND FIGURES)

- \* The Soviet Union publishes 7,985 newspapers in 56 languages of the Soviet peoples. Their total circulation (one edition of each) is over 168 million copies.
- \* The annual circulation of the 4,700 magazines and journals is more than 3,800 million copies.
- \* Slightly more than four periodicals are printed per family.
- \* The circulation of popular newspapers and illustrated magazines is going up every year. The newspaper *Pravda* has a daily edition of 10.6 million copies, the newspaper *Izvestia* 8 million copies and the newspaper *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, about 10 million copies. The two women's magazines—*Rabotnitsa* (Woman-worker) and *Krestyanka* (Peasant-Woman)—have a circulation of 13 million and 7 million respectively.
- \* Last year about 2,000 million books (80,000 titles) were printed.
- \* More than 100 powerful TV broadcasting stations have been built over the past five years, and the Orbita receiving station network considerably expanded. Now broadcasts from Moscow can be seen across the entire country.
- \* There are 74 TV sets per hundred families. Ten years ago there were 24. For radio the figures are 79 and 59 respectively.
- \* Radio programmes are broadcast on eight principal channels in 68 languages spoken by the Soviet peoples and 70 other languages. More than 1,300 hours of programmes (country-wide, local, foreign) are broadcast every day.
- \* The *Tass* news agency prepares and transmits about 500 newspaper pages of information in six languages every day. Besides Soviet subscribers, 300 agencies, newspapers and magazines in 76 Countries receive *Tass* reports.



copoeia, and U.S.P. have all thought fit to include botanical material on the basis of proven traditional efficacy. With all our sunshine and fertility spawning millions of chemical compounds, that coal and petroleum and the most brilliant synthetic chemists cannot put together, must we go half way round the world for B.P. and U.S.P. galenicals? Our own country's Pharmacopoeia has the botanical equivalents selected and proven over centuries of therapeutic practice. Several such items are already in the Indian Pharmacopoeia. Why cannot we for a start, make the corresponding galenical preparations in Ceylon?

ALCOHOL, as I said, is the key. It should open the door to a vast area of employment, as in India where the fine skills in plant-propagation are being used in the medicinal plantations. There medicinal plant identification and selection and plant breeding for high yielding varieties is making Botany a living science for school leavers. At a practical grass roots level, galenicals should create a demand for workers trained in soils and fertilizers, pest and weed control, breeding and selection. It could also mean expertise in forestry and the scientific exploitation of wild species. What a field opens up for adventurous job seekers if we create the economic base by planning for the manufacture of tinctures and liquid extracts and dry plant extracts in Sri Lanka.

In Sri Lanka, it is unlikely that sugar cane and molasses at their present high price can be the path to production of industrial alcohol. It was reported recently that growers of manioc and sweet potato were becoming frustrated as there was no demand. Could we turn to starch bases for industrial spirits? An agronomist can probably provide the answer as to whether this will be a new field for employment. Until industrial alcohol can be produced economically and in large quantities, I would suggest that a galenicals project be planned on the basis of imported industrial alcohol which costs only a negligible amount in foreign exchange. Just now there is a world shortage of liquorice (*Glycyrrhiza Glabra*). Ceylon has the climate and the soil for this plant. But we do not have the horticultural know-how. Is this not a challenge to our Botanists? It must not be forgotten that apart

from its traditional uses Liquorice is a source of the intermediate in the production of Carbenoxolone. Carbenoxolone has been shown to be valuable in the treatment of gastric ulcer. Carbenoxolone is the Succinic ester of 18 B-Glycyrrhetic acid (*Glycyrrhetic acid* is the aglycone of glycyrrhizic acid).

To be Continued

## Inania of this, that and the other

By INNA

### Christian! Hey, Look, Another Communism?

I WAS on the verge of calling this *inania*, "Defunctus adhuc loquitur: meaning, Though dead, yet he speaks", but let all readers, christian or others, enjoy this one on Antonio GRAMSCI who founded the Italian Communist Party in 1921. He died at the age of 46, in 1937 having spent ten years in fascist jails. Lenin, Rosa Luxembourg and Gramsci have translated the idiom and the method of action of Engels-Marx. The former were in the very vortex of action while the German intellectuals were exiles. Gramsci was of a modest origin: knew grave infirmity in body and as disturbed in spirit. He wrote a large part of his work in prison, died tubercular.

In November 1926, Gramsci was arrested, condemned to 20 years of prison. The irony of fate led him to reflect on the experiences he underwent and on the futility of the international socialist revolution. His *Quaderni* (Cashiers or Exercises, Jottings) are difficult reading; uses the term *hegemony* to signify dictatorship, in order to avoid censorship. Gramsci's great contribution was that he modified the classic scheme by giving greater place and importance to the different elements which constitute the ideological superstructure.

Civil institutions have a decisive role, said he: the school, the University and Religion. These, situated between the political and the economical, have a clear say in society, for they carry the *sine*

*qua non* of durable maintaining of power, and that is, the consensus of public opinion. The superstructure, according to Gramsci, has only a relative autonomy, exercising an action on the relationships of production by the interplay of the dialectic. It is determined by, and in its turn, determining, for it is not enough to take political power. All must be made to accept the new values which the working class brings with it, values which must become dominant values in place of those of the former governing class.

There is something transitional but sure in Gramsci's thrust: *historic compromise*: if after correct analysis, the PC leaders (Comm. party) realise that the old values still prevail, too strongly for the takeover of power to be real then, they must be patient, make alliances, wait until a better understanding of socialist values comes about as part of public opinion. Perhaps this is what Berlinguer and the PCI are doing today. Popular values must take into account, something more than book-Marxism, if it is to be real. Isn't this not only strategy, but the truth? The new dominant class (in Gramsci's thought) must take up certain basic values of the country in question, that in which socialism wishes to operate. The historical role of that party would be to integrate that which was the nation's patrimony in the past. The International may not have envisaged such intricacies, nor had Marxism a theory of nation. Not all the theses of Gramsci are tenable by all. Some take some, others, others. Georges Hourdin, writing in ICI, 511, says of Gramsci:—

"The work of Gramsci represents the third generation of Marxist thought, the most modern and the most adapted to actual problems of western society. Despite the difficulties it presents, a little deeper contact with it, opens up new perspectives" (ICI, 511, fevr. 77, p. 48).

Matter is true, but to one who believes in the Incarnation, in Christ the Holy Spirit is at the beginning and at the term of History. Perhaps, that is the one thing necessary in Gramsci's case. I hail any Christian, or anyone and ask him to take another look of Communism. It is in query-form. Take it or leave it.



# Confidentially

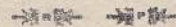
## • Canned Goods

IS IT NOT A FACT that common (poor) people and also the uncommon (rich) people had expected a major price reduction in a number of consumer items in the first week of April? That the fantastically high prices, based on CRA-premiums and FEECs levies, of imports made under cover of the August 1976 Non-aligned Summit, had made people think that the prices of imported items (which only a few years ago were within the reach of the common man) had reached dizzy heights which could never be scaled? That to give our readers an idea of CRA-FEECs-Summit prices we set down below (also for the record) the local prices of thirty such items? (1) Campbell's Asparagus Soup Paste (10½ oz. tin serves 4-6 portions) Rs. 22/50; (2) Burton Mushrooms 16 oz. tins Rs. 17/50; (3) Asparagus Tips 10½ oz. tins Rs. 29/-; (4) Capers 3 oz. jars Rs. 17/50; (5) Gherkins, 13 oz. Bots. Rs. 21/-; (6) Anchovies Fillet 2 oz. tins (Minerva) Rs. 12/-; (7) Sardines in oil 4 3/8 oz. tins (Isabel) Rs. 8/50; (8) Sardines in Tomato Sauce 3½ oz. tins (Seashell) Rs. 10/-; (9) Green Peas 29 oz. tin (large) Rs. 25/-; (10) Baked Beans 16 oz. tins (Heinz) Rs. 17/50; (11) Cooking Oil 4 gallon drum Rs. 250/-; (12) Strawberries in Syrup 15 oz. tin Rs. 25/-; (13) Cherries Dry 11 lb. tin Rs. 412/50; (14) Caviar 3 oz. jar Rs. 40/-; (15) Apricots 29 oz. (large) tin Rs. 25/-; (16) Gelatine (500 grms) Pkts. Rs. 72/50; (17) Nescafe (250 grms) Jars Rs. 100/-; (18) maraschino Cherries in Syrup 15 oz. jars Rs. 40/-; (19) Cocktail onions Rs. 40/-; (20) Pickles, Caledonian Rs. 42/50; (21) Red Club Orange Essence Rs. 7/50; (22) Rayners Lemon Essence Rs. 7/50; (23) Parmesan Cheese per kilo Rs. 140/-; (24) T-Bone Steaks per kilo Rs. 80/-; (25) Ox Silverside per kilo Rs. 60/-; (26) Boneless Beef per kilo Rs. 50/-; (27) Lamb loin per kilo Rs. 55/-; (28) Fillet Steak per kilo Rs. 165/-; (29) Smoked Salmon per kilo Rs. 300/-? That the price list will show the unbelievably high prices the CRA goods were

sold at? That visitors from other countries were amazed at the prices charged? That compared to the prices in their countries, the Ceylon prices were marked up 500% to 1000% even on a blackmarket rate of exchange? That the CRA premium was anything from hundred to two hundred and fifty percent? That FEECs imposed an additional sixty five percent? That there was a high import duty on some of the "luxuries"? That thereafter the CRA importer added his profit? That in regard to profits the sky was the limit? That the rich elite of UF creation, thirsting for such goods and prepared to pay any price, were ready-buyers of such goods? That the tax-free affluence and the status-symbol buying mania of this class was the yardstick on which the prices were fixed?

IS IT NOT TRUE that the CWE had set out to compete with the CRA boys at least on one item of such imports viz., canned fish? That there was a great deal of press publicity that the country would be flooded during the Sinhala New Year with canned fish at cheap (cheaper than CRA) prices? That everybody was led to believe that with the CWE coming into the picture that prices would tumble? That there is no doubt that the prices have indeed come down in regard to canned fish but there are whispers that the prices could have been cheaper further if the CWE had bought the canned fish from the cheapest source? That it is not known whether there is any truth in the whisper that the CWE had not purchased the canned fish from the cheapest source? That the "gossip" is that the original idea was to import dry fish from Bangladesh or Pakistan or some Gulf state? That even before the "investigations" regarding the availability of dry fish was investigated, the tenders for the canned fish were rushed through and closed in great hurry? That the gossip goes further and states that the canned fish ordered was a 15 oz. tin? That it was bought at a higher price than a 16 oz. tin offered at a substantially lower price? That the excuse for rejecting the lower-

priced 16 oz. tin was that this tender had been received "late"? That is said that this "lateness" was only an excuse for accepting the 15 oz. higher-priced tin? That in this category 125,000 crates had been ordered? That it is said that the buying organisation in Ceylon, being a State Agency, had forgone \$ 4.00 a crate commission normally paid on these purchases at the price finally agreed on? That this meant an additional profit for the supplier? That a vigilant Sri Lanka purchasing mission could have got a further reduction of US \$ 4.60 on a crate? That it is impossible to check and verify on the truth or otherwise of the "gossip" relating to this canned fish order? That some of our readers may be able to enlighten us on the matter? That the CWE or the S.L.S.T.C. will do well to issue a communique to clear up the mystery surrounding this order? That this question has been raised in this column not because *Tribune* wants to go "muck-raking"? That we have raised it because there is a great deal of "talk" about this in knowledgeable and important circles and unless the correct facts are made known the "gossip" will snowball on a national scale? That in the interests of the Government it is best that the untruths in the "gossip" should be laid to rest once and for all? That unless this is done every tin of CWE imported canned fish will leave a bad taste in the mouth of the consumer?



### NEXT WEEK

- UNIVERSITIES  
—And Continuing Education
- COCONUT CRISIS—4  
—Land Utilisation



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