

V. Wijayananda
8/5/84

Saturday Review

SRI LANKA

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5th May 1984

HERE WE GO AGAIN

ROUND AND ROUND THE PALMYRAH GROVE!

The Roundtable Talks intended to find a permanent solution to Sri Lanka's National Question will be resumed on 9th May.

Will there be a breakthrough at least this time? must be the question on the minds of every person who is genuinely interested in a United Sri Lanka.

So far, the on-off talks, which began on 10th January, have yielded no concrete results, belying the hopes of those people who believed our leaders would act as statesmen and not as mere politicians.

So far, none of them has displayed that quality of statesmanship which alone could bring about a rapprochement between the two main communities inhabiting this little island.

There are many people who despair that a solution would ever be found.

There are even some people—among them several prominent politicians of the ruling United National Party—who say that, after all, ours is a 2,500 year-old dispute and a solution cannot be found in a hurry!

Yes, and so let this problem simmer, so that, especially from the point of view of the Jayewardene Government, people's minds could be distracted from the equally pressing problem of the daily bread and pol sambol.

But how long can we go on like this? Surely, there must be a bursting point? And are we not very far from it?

We regret to say that we doubt the bona fides of quite a number of representatives invited to the Roundtable Talks. They—and this includes several representatives of the clergy—are simply playing politics, displaying a chauvinism unbecoming of persons who claim to be the nation's leaders. This may

seem to be a harsh statement but that is our assessment of the proceedings so far.

We have one suggestion to make: let the non-Tamil participants visit the North to assess the mood of the Tamil people before they come to any final decision.

We at the SATURDAY REVIEW are willing to welcome them and look after their physical comfort and safety.

And we say that any "final decision" must take into

account the determination of the Tamil people to live with dignity and self-respect. Just as Sinhalese nationalism has come to stay, so has Tamil nationalism: it cannot be ignored or despised or defied.

A solution to the National Question, in our view, would involve the repeal of the Prevention of Terrorism (Special Provisions) Act, the grant of a general amnesty to all those concerned and direct negotiations with the youth leaders.

Just like a solution to the Palestinian problem cannot be found without the participation of the Palestine Liberation Organisation, so cannot a solution to the National Question be found without the participation of those directly concerned.

Let not the participants at the Roundtable Talks—as we have already said in a letter to President Jayewardene—go down in history as men with puny minds who by their lack of foresight contributed to the disintegration of Sri Lanka.

The following letter must be self-explanatory to our readers:

The Government Agent of Jaffna,
Competent Authority for Censorship
in Jaffna under the Emergency
Regulations.

30th April 1984.

Dear Sir,

The SATURDAY REVIEW of 28th April 1984 carried an item on Page 1 under the headline "Sun's Damn Lie".

This copy was submitted for censorship but due to an unfortunate breakdown in communications—the blame for which must lie entirely with the SATURDAY REVIEW—we went to press before it was approved.

We very much regret this incident. There was no intention at all on our part to defy the official regulations, but it must be understood that we also have an obligation by our readers to bring out the paper by Saturday the latest and the censorship, which is applicable to only our paper of all newspapers in Sri Lanka, is hampering our functioning.

Yours respectfully,
Gamini Navaratne,
Editor, SATURDAY REVIEW.

(Please also see Page 2)

CENSORED

All news and views appearing in the SATURDAY REVIEW have been subjected to censorship by the Government Agent of Jaffna, Mr. D. Nesiah, who has been appointed Competent Authority for this purpose by the Secretary to the Ministry of State, Mr. Douglas Liyanage, acting under Emergency regulations.

This is a special censorship that applies only to the SATURDAY REVIEW of all newspapers in Sri Lanka.

In addition to the constraints imposed by the censorship, the Sixth Amendment to the Constitution, approved by Parliament on 6th August 1983, states under Article 157 A (1): "No person shall, directly or indirectly, in or outside Sri Lanka, support, espouse, promote, finance, encourage or advocate the establishment of a Separate State within the territory of Sri Lanka."

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A BANKER PAR EXCELLENCE

The third death anniversary of Mr. Chelliah Loganathan fell on 4th May.

He was an illustrious son of Sri Lanka who was famous as a banker both nationally and internationally. He lived during an era when it was considered an achievement of the young to earn a university degree and enter the civil service or enter one of the professions like law or medicine. He was chosen to take up banking as a career, in which he excelled beyond measure.

He became the first Ceylonese General Manager of the Bank of Ceylon in the year 1953 and occupied that position for sixteen years with distinction. During his stewardship as General Manager, the Bank of Ceylon grew to become the leading commercial bank in the country.

He was not content to be just a chief executive of the bank. He believed in the economic development of the country and, he was the author of the famous Loganathan Plan for mobilising sav-

ings and harnessing them for development. He was a member of the National Planning Council in the sixties.

On his retirement from the Bank of Ceylon in 1969, he was for two years Director-General Manager of the Development Finance Corporation. In 1971, he went abroad taking up an assignment as adviser in the World Bank. It was during this period that he published the book titled "Development Savings Bank and the Third World."

According to them, "a banker has a sacred trust to creditors and depositors of the institution, and therefore has to be cautious in his lending policies, carefully assessing the risks involved. The institution cannot earn its profit and pay the interest to the depositors if one always looked for gilt edge securities. The skill of a banker is the 'ability to assess the risks correctly'. It is this caution and his absolute loyalty and dedication to whatever job he undertook, that at times earned him the displeasure of a few

for he fought shy of politics and politicians and he brooked no interference from them in the discharge of his duties. He despised the empty rhetoric and the demagoguery.

His commitment to economic development was so deep that even after his return to Sri Lanka in 1976, that he did not wish to rest in retirement but established two institutions—Consultancy and Finance and Development Ltd and Merchant Finance Ltd. to assist in the economic development of the Northern and Eastern Provinces and guided the destinies of the companies, without reward, at great inconvenience to himself. In short, he reached the stage of the real Karmayogi and realised the goal of a peaceful renounced life.

It is destiny that he is not with us a few more years to guide the institutions he founded and alive to see them come into their own.

S. Supiramaniam.

Forest office Lane,
Jaffna.

APPROVED TRASH

Some of our readers appear to have missed the first issues of the resurrected SATURDAY REVIEW.

This is probably why some of them have written in to complain that their contributions, particularly on the National Question, have not been published.

For their information, we reproduce the "Guidelines to the Censor" under which our newspaper—alone out of all publications in Sri Lanka—have to function.

This should be sufficient explanation to them why we are sometimes forced to publish "approved trash" just to fill up our paper.

1. No reference will be permitted to the current security situation, including assessments of damage or casualties, except through the daily press briefing.

2. No reference will be permitted to matters relating to internal security.

3. No reference will be permitted to the situation at care and welfare centres, including the number of such centres and the number of occupants of such centres.

4. However, appeals for assistance from the Government or voluntary organisations will be permitted. No reference will be permitted to movement of displaced persons or modes of transportation.

5. No statements will be permitted on any subject by political parties or political personalities other than statements arranged for broadcast through state media.

6. No comment will be permitted by any person on the present security or political situation.

7. No direct reference will be permitted to any foreign country even by implication as being responsible for the current situation.

Competent Authority,
Ministry of State, 14, Sir
Baron Jayatilake Mawatha,
Colombo 1.

Breast - feeding — mortality down

GENEVA — By banning the bottle in favour of breast-feeding, a Filipino hospital paediatrician reduced infant mortality by 95 per cent and infant diarrhoea by 93 per cent virtually overnight.

The analysis of four years of case records marks the first time that a systematic comparison of bottle and breast-feeding has been carried out on a large scale.

"Our experience with newborn babies", asserts Dr. Natividad Relucio-Clavano, Chief of Paediatrics Baguio General Hospital, demonstrates that if breast milk, with all of its immunological advantages and protection, is withheld from them, there is a high incidence of infection and death. Breast milk is crucial to the survival of infants in developing countries".

The startling results emerged from a study of records involving nearly 10,000 babies (9,886 to be exact) born in Dr. Clavano's hospital over a period of four years and four months. Bottle-feeding predominated in the first half of this period (January 1973 to March 1975)

until supplanted by breast-feeding during the second period (April 1975 to April 1977).

During these 52 months, 67 babies died. Of them 64 were bottlefed and only two had been breastfed. One had been partly bottle and partly breast-fed. The drop in infant mortality was a dramatic 95 per cent, with the results beginning to show immediately.

These results give weight to global efforts to emphasize the critical role of breast-feeding for the developing world's children. James P. Grant, Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), described Baguio Hospital's radical changes in baby-feeding and mother-to-child practices as "a model for health, not only in the Philippines but in all developing countries".

No less impressive than the infant mortality figures was a better than 88 per cent drop in the cases of clinical infection, with the incidence of infant diarrhoea down more than 93 per cent.

— Paul Evan Röss

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Contact

S. Krishnananda, 'Thiruchelva Vasa', Kulipan, Vaddu-East, Vaddukodai.

Puny Dutugemunu!

Since the SATURDAY REVIEW was allowed to resume publication in February, I have been more in Jaffna than Colombo.

During this period, I have re-travelled the length and breadth of the Peninsula, meeting people of all walks of life. I have sipped toddy at Annaicottai and Palaly; I have bathed at Keerimalai; I have worshipped at Nagadipa Temple and Nagapoooshani Kovil and also at Nallur Kandasamy Kovil—the equivalent of the Kataragama of the South—which I have visited on many a morning and participated in the traditional poojas.

I have generally travelled alone, making do with my little spoken knowledge of Tamil.

I have asked for and got water to drink from many an unknown house, contrary to what some Sinhalese leaders tell their people.

Again contrary to what some Sinhalese leaders say, misreading the Thesavalamai

POLITICAL CAUSERIE

by Gamini Navaratne

law, I had had offers of lachchams of land—provided I could cough out the price—now about Rs. 200,000 per lachcham (one-sixteenth of an acre):

I am humbled by the thought that, despite all what has happened in the past, especially the violence in the South in July 1983 and the violence in Jaffna in April 1984, I am one of the few Sinhalese civilians still living in the Peninsula.

I cannot resist asking: Where are the Gamini Iriyagolles, the Gamini Dissanayakes, the Walpola Rahulas and all the others who are trying to pose off as modern and puny—Dutugemunu?

In the context, I raise my hat off to Mr. Cyril Mathew: he is the one politician who has taken a consistent stand over the last so many years on the National Question, however much I deprecate his stand.

I wish most of our other politicians could be equally honest.

What has been happening in Sri Lanka from even before Independence is that politicians have been playing pandu with people's lives.

For their personal aggrandisement, some of them would even sell their mother's souls.

But, then, that is politics down the ages in Sri

Lanka as elsewhere (just as our politicians say that inflation is a world-wide phenomenon). We have to learn to live with our politicians. And what a mediocre lot they are!

To come back to the Jaffna situation, here I find a dispirited, disillusioned and despondent people. They placed great faith in certain leaders; what they have experienced is a great betrayal, perhaps the greatest in their modern history.

Sinhalese leaders cannot take pride in this fact. What have they brought Sri Lanka to, after 36 years of Independence?

Probably for the first time in our much-priced 2,500-year history, even pol sambol has become a luxury!

With that remark, like SATURDAY REVIEW philosopher Diogenes, I will take the reader's leave.

The UNP Government has brought the country to a point of economic bankruptcy. Its policies have also culminated in a serious threat to the country's unity as a nation. It is incapable of finding solutions to any of the crises the country is faced with. The only democratic alternative left to it is to resign. But it is clear that this is not a course of action it intends to take. And this despite the fact that Parliament has outlived its period by almost an year.

Under cover of the present communal situation, the whole country and the entire population are being brought within the net of repressive laws and procedures. The curtailing of the democratic and human rights of the people of Sri Lanka—which has been a continuing process under this Government—is being carried further and wider under regular laws, emergency regulations and everyday administration. We are moving towards the extension to the whole country of the military-police regime that prevails in the North. The state instrument for this purpose has been created in the shape of the Ministry of National Security.

The process is being carried forward under the two-fold plea of a threat to the security of Sri Lanka—both internally and externally. The internal threat is encapsulated in the insistent declaration that the top priority task in Sri Lanka today

'GOVT. EXPLOITING COMMUNAL CRISIS'

is the eradication of terrorism—meaning Tamil terrorism in the North. The new Minister's appeal is to Sinhala chauvinism. His undertaking is to crush the militant political movement in the North by the straight forward use of the armed forces of the State if he is not distracted from his task by event in the South. Such distraction need not of course originate in communalism at all. It can, in the present economic situation emanate from the accumulating and mounting discontent over prices and the inadequacy of income to meet the cost of living. It is in the interest of the Government to besmirch such convulsions in advance as being pro-terrorist in character.

The external threat is being propagandised more and more directly and openly as an alleged danger of interventionist invasion from India in support of the Tamils in Sri Lanka. This propaganda is a diversionist manoeuvre to cover a foreign policy that is taking Sri Lanka away from non-alignment and nearer and nearer to alignment with U. S. imperialism. The move is in accord with the need of capitalism in Sri Lanka for it is aware that the only remaining road for it is one that leads to a military-police

dictatorship or a dictatorship that rests on military-police powers.

That the Government is exploiting the communal crisis in the interests of this political turn is now becoming increasingly clear. In fact the Government's immediate manoeuvre is by its own actions and statements to effect a polarisation of views at the extreme end of Sinhala communalism and Tamil separatism, and itself emerge as the saviours of the nation. The manoeuvre is aimed at justifying the Government's increasingly authoritarian rule and its turn away from parliamentary democracy.

A mere call for a general election is by itself not adequate to meet this developing situation. The mere call for an election will only help keep the masses in a state of passivity. The prevailing torpor of the masses and the muted state of the class struggle is an indication of this passivity. The deepening economic and financial crisis will perforce push the masses increasingly into struggle against the regime. The only guarantee against the imposition of dictatorial rule over the country rests wholly on the development and strength of that struggle.

This Government will hold

a general election only if it sees no other alternative in the face of the development of the mass struggle. And it is the strength of the mass struggle that will foreclose for the Government any further movement towards the alternative which in its complete form is dictatorship. The task of resuscitating and reviving the mass movement to the point of it being made capable of engaging in this struggle is the immediate task of the political left in this country. That is also the only means of leading the country out of the all-sided crisis in which she is plunged.

The LSSP stands ready to engage in that task. And view that took the LSSP recognise that the pressing political needs of the days are (1) an alternative programme which can unite the nation and set it on the road to progress and (2) the mobilisation of the necessary political forces around that programme which can reach out to governmental power at the head of a revived mass movement which has confidence in that formation's capacity and determination to implement such a programme. Such a formation can have no path that is not also socialist. The LSSP calls upon the pro-

gressive forces generally to rally against a bankrupt and oppressive regime that is taking Sri Lanka to catastrophe and destruction. It is a long road before us to progress and socialism. But history is on our side.

Our agitation in the present period will have to concentrate on the following issues:-

1. The Government's move away from Parliamentary democracy and to increasingly authoritarian rule.
2. The Government's present policy of moving away from the task of seeking a political solution to the minority question and substituting for it military repression.
3. The need for a united nation and to that end the need to end discrimination against the minorities and to extend to them the same rights as those of the majority community.
4. Prices and the cost of living.
5. Wages to match the rising cost of living and tied to the cost of living index.
6. The defence of democratic and human rights, especially the right to peaceful living.

The LSSP, agitating on these issues, will work to rebuild the mass organisations, especially of the working class, and to revive the mass movement.

Statement issued by
L.S.S.P.

JAFFNA'S WATER PROBLEM

The Editor,
Saturday Review.

I was very much pleased to read a letter which appeared in your paper written by Mr. R. Manomohan of Jaffna regarding the urban drainage problem and especially regarding the problem of deteriorating ground water quality of Jaffna.

I am very much concerned regarding the sewage disposal practice in Jaffna, and also regarding the excessive use of chemical fertilisers by the farmers of Jaffna. As I was preparing to write an article on these issues with the intention of publishing in SATURDAY REVIEW, I read the letter written by Mr. Manomohan in your paper.

I am an environmental engineer, doing my Ph. D. in the Department of Civil Engineering at the University of Toronto. Before I started pursuing my higher studies. I was attached to the National Water Supply and Drainage Board of Sri Lanka. From that time, I was very much interested in doing research regarding the ground water deterioration in the Northern peninsula.

I was trying to find an organisation(s) which is prepared to collaborate with a few universities in Canada to carry out a research project on these aspects. But, the responses have not been good so far.

So, if it is possible can you be kind enough to contact Mr. Manomohan, and ask him to contact me so that he can act as a liaison between the efforts here and any interested organisation(s) there in Jaffna.

Also, he may be interested to meet interested people on this issue and generate enthusiasm among them.

If a strong proposal from an institution in Sri Lanka in collaboration with the Department of Civil Engineering of the University of Toronto is acceptable to a few funding organisations here, the possibility of getting a substantial amount of funds to carry out this project seems to be bright.

I have become slightly disheartened by the lack of response from people whom I tried to contact. Some of them have left the country too. So, if you can enlighten this problem in your paper and also if you can ask any interested people (particularly from the University of Jaffna), to contact me on this regard, I would greatly appreciate your help.

S. Suthersan
University of Toronto,
Toronto.

Expatriate's Woe

The Editor,
SATURDAY REVIEW.

I enclose herewith a copy of a letter dated 25th November 1983 sent to the Editor, Sri Lanka News, a weekly published by Lake House. Up to date they have not published this letter. You could make use of this letter in any suitable manner.

V. T. Saravanapavan
920-20th St., N.E.,
Medicine Hat,
Alberta,
Canada T1C 1M4.

About a month ago I read in the Sri Lanka News that Dr. Arthur C. Clarke has suggested that Sri Lanka should adopt the time G.M.T. plus six hours. His reasons are that this time change will become ideal for short-wave radio listeners, commerce and trade, air Travellers, etc. This is an excellent suggestion and Sri Lanka should go it alone even if India is not prepared to change its time.

It will be of interest to know that the town of Maple Creek is one hour ahead of Medicine Hat. This is fact and not fiction. Why not Sri Lanka change its time as suggested by a reputed person like Dr. Clarke who is very well known here.

Speaking of shortwave radios, I must say that on and off I have very clearly heard Hindi and Sinhala music from the Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation on my short-wave radio-(Sony ICF-2001). But unfortunately I have not heard Tamil music on the shortwave frequencies as given in the 1984 edition of the World Radio TV Handbook. Will the SLBC explain why I cannot hear the Tamil programmes? My radio is programmed to receive any language broadcasts. I wrote to the SLBC twice by airmail several months ago but still I have not heard from them.

Sri Lankan Government departments, especially the Widows and Orphans Pension Office, are notorious for not replying to letters. I prematurely retired in 1974 and over Rs. 15,000 is due to me as W. & O. P. refund. Now for 10 years I have been writing by registered airmail to the Secretary and the Accountant of the W. & O. P. but still I have not even received an interim reply. I have spent a fortune on postage. I even wrote to the President and

the Ministry of External Affairs but I only received the usual casual reply "that it has been referred to the Ministry of Public Administration for necessary action", "You may seek the assistance from the Sri Lanka High Commission in Canada", etc". What a game of musical chairs? Some friends have even told me that as a Tamil I will not be getting a refund from the W. & O. P. Office.

I believe your paper stands for freedom of expression, and justice for all, and hope you will publish this letter.

"Let's Face Facts"

The Editor,
Saturday Review,

I had put forward a scheme to solve the Ethnic problem, in that scheme I had suggested, among other things, that Tamil also should be given official status, supporting my arguments by saying that the Communist Party and the Lanka Sama Samaja Party always stood for parity of status. 'The policy of the LSSP on the language question is well-known but, unfortunately, when they had a chance to implement it, they miserably failed.' This was the only place where I had mentioned the LSSP. Mr. Mansoor Raseedin has made use of this sentence to ask in his letter which appeared in the Saturday Review of 14th-21st-April, 1984 'Why Blame the LSSP? Mr. Mansoor Raseedin says that, 'nothing can be further from the truth than this statement. I merely stated a fact, but not to blame them. Mr. Mansoor Raseedin is emphatic that what I wrote was not true. But in the next paragraph by implication he admits that what I wrote is true and gives explanations and excuses. 'First, it has to be admitted that the LSSP never had a chance to implement its programme through a Government of its own. The party, along, with the Communists, had sat in Governments led by the Sri Lanka Freedom Party. In such a set-up, one cannot act in the manner one desires. One's actions are circumscribed by the interplay of various forces both within and outside government.' Thus goes on his explanation and we accept his explanation but explanations cannot hide facts of history.

Dr. Colvin R. De Silva of the LSSP was appointed Minister for Constitutional

LETTERS

Affairs when the three parties obtained a two-thirds majority at the General Election of 1970. He was said to be the architect of the Republican Constitution of 1972 which was adopted at the auspicious time of 12.43 p.m. on May 22, 1972. Perhaps, Dr. Colvin R. DeSilva's position as Constitutional Affairs Minister might have been similar to that of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, who was the first Law Minister in the Nehru Cabinet after Independence. He was said to be the architect of the Indian Constitution. But, later, he confessed that he had merely carried out what he had been asked to do, meaning that he could not do what he wanted to do. One wonders Dr. Colvin R DeSilva's position also was the same.

Mr. Mansoor Raseedin has narrated some past history which is not relevant to the article I wrote. The country is faced with a serious problem—that is what many people seem to think—and I put forward a scheme as a solution. It was, and is not, my intention to deny or to palliate or to defend the failures and mistakes of the Tamil political parties or those of other parties. A discussion of the mistakes or commissions and omissions of all the political parties is not going to help in any way in the present political situation, nor can it be done in letters to the Editor of a Newspaper. What is important now is that concrete proposals should be made and implemented.

It is no pleasure to rake up past unpleasant events at a time when an attempt is being made, so it is said, to solve a serious problem, but it is important, now that Mr. Mansoor Raseedin has raised this question, that I should mention here one of the important unpleasant events. When the new parliament of 1970 converted itself into a Constituent Assembly to draft a new constitution for this country Mr. S. J. V. Chelvanayakam sent to Mrs. Bandaranaike, the Prime Minister of that time, a letter in which he mentioned six moderate demands and if those demands could be em-

bodied in the new constitution the parties representing the Tamil people would also be involved in the constitution-making process. Alas! that letter was not even acknowledged. Arrogance of power! Their constitution could not last even for a decade and the constituent parties were virtually wiped out at the subsequent general election, they having mutually destroyed themselves earlier.

Let us not blame anybody; let us face facts honestly, boldly and courageously. Man learns nothing from history except that he learns nothing from history. Nothing happens by accident. Events have a meaning and an inevitability if we can only decipher it.

T. Subramaniam

Colombo
27-4-1984

Open Letter

The Editor,
Saturday Review,

I read your open letter to the Sinhalese Sisters and Brothers in The Island newspaper of April 20th.

You have brought out the real facts for them to ponder. If our people the leaders and our Maha Sangha, take these facts into serious consideration and bring an amicable settlement to our worrying national problem, not only will it be possible to have ever-lasting peace among the various nationals who live in this country but it will also be a good example to the world.

Every right-thinking citizen of this country would definitely agree with your point of you.

I am neither a Sinhalese nor a Tamil, but of Telugu origin and a loyal citizen of this country who wish very much for the unity, peace and prosperity of our common motherland, Sri Lanka.

(Mrs) S. T. Naidu

Ramagiri,
Uduwera,
Demodera.

A Children's Revolution

NEW YORK In the last 12 months, the equivalent of the entire under-five population of the United States has been wiped out! On a European scale, says this year's State of the World's Children report from UNICEF, the number of children who have died in the developing world this year is the equivalent of the combined young-child populations of Britain, France, Italy, Spain and the Federal Republic of Germany.

Despite these dark statistics, the 1984 report holds out a new hope to millions of children. Drawing together examples from 20 different countries, the report documents four low-cost breakthroughs which it says could bring about a "children's revolution" and save the lives of half of those who now die.

Oral Rehydration: From villages in Guatemala, Honduras, Egypt, India and Bangladesh, the report announces that child deaths have been halved by a simple technique called oral rehydration therapy. By far the biggest killer of children in the world today is dehydration—caused by ordinary diarrhoea. Previously, it could only be treated by intravenous feeding. Now it can be prevented or cured by a mixture of salt, sugar and water given to the child by the parents. If mothers know how and when to use this oral rehydration method, says UNICEF, then most of the five million child deaths a year from dehydration can be prevented. The technique has been described by The Lancet, Britain's leading medical journal, as "potentially the greatest medical breakthrough this century".

At least 34 countries have now begun industrial production of the oral rehydration salts. So far, 80 million packets a year are being produced—well short of the billion or more which would be needed if the sachets are to be available for all children at risk. "But a shortage of packaged salts," says UNICEF, "need not prevent a rapid spread of the treatment. For if parents know how to mix sugar, salt and water in the right proportions, an effective oral rehydration solution can be made in the child's own home".

Growth Monitoring: The second of the low-cost breakthroughs is the use of simple 10 cent growth charts to monitor children's weight gain. With regular weighing and the advice of health workers, UNICEF believes that the

charts could help parents prevent up to half of the malnutrition which underlies the deaths of several million children a year and the growth of many millions more.

"Most malnutrition is invisible—even to the child's mother", says the report, "and its very invisibility is one of the main barriers to its prevention or cure. More than half of all cases of malnutrition are to be found in households where there is no absolute shortage of food".

Regular monthly weighing and the entering up of the result on a growth chart, says UNICEF, can make malnutrition visible to the parents—warning them that the child needs supplementary foods, more frequent feeding, medical help.

Breast-feeding: Several million young children may be falling into malnutrition every year because of the trend towards bottle-feeding in poor countries. Although breast-feeding is more hygienic and more nutritious, and also "immunizes" young children against common infections, millions of mothers are turning towards the more "modern" artificial substitutes which they cannot afford, do not need, and are unable to use safely. Often without clean water, or sterilizing equipment, or fuel and time for boiling, or enough money to buy enough of the milk powder, the mothers who turn to feeding bottles are unknowingly risking the health and lives of their infants. Drawing together 33 comparative studies from around the world, the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine has recently concluded that the risk of death in infancy is approximately five times greater than for babies who are breast-fed.

A third element in the "children's revolution", says UNICEF, must therefore be the rapid promotion of the present knowledge about the advantages of breast-feeding and the dangers of bottle-feeding. Already over 100 nations have begun campaigns to promote breast-feeding and to restrict the marketing of artificial substitutes. Eleven countries have completely banned all advertising of infant formula.

Immunization: The fourth of the low-cost techniques is the immunization of all children against the "big six" communicable diseases of childhood—measles, whooping cough, tetanus, diphtheria, tuberculosis and polio. Together, these six infections kill an estimated five million children a year and disable five million

more. Protection against all of them costs approximately US \$5 per child. Yet less than 20 per cent of the developing world's children are immunized each year.

Apart from problems of money and management, the main barrier to immunizing all children is that parents often do not realize how important it is to come back two or three times for the full course of injections. It is not uncommon, says the report, for only half of the children to return for the second injection and for only half of those to return for the third.

Recession: For the rest of the 1980s, predicts UNICEF, it is unlikely that there will be any significant increase in the real resources available for improving child welfare. Maintaining progress for children will therefore depend upon making more of the resources which are available. The four techniques brought together in the State of the World's Children report, says UNICEF, could streamline the effort to improve the lives of children so that progress can be made even against the headwind of world recession.

"Coming together at this time," says the report, "these breakthroughs in technique and knowledge could soon be helping to save the lives of 20,000 children a day, to prevent an equal number from becoming disabled, and to promote the healthy growth of many millions more."

To allay the fears of those who imagine that a drastic reduction in child deaths would refuel the "population explosion", the State of the World's Children report also points out that the areas of the developing world which have done most to reduce child deaths are also the areas where birth rates have fallen most steeply. When parents are more confident that their children will survive, argues UNICEF, they are more willing to consider family planning.

The potential for a children's revolution has been welcomed by the Secretary-General of the United Nations and by the Presidents or Prime Ministers of Bolivia, Britain, Canada, Columbia, France, Haiti, India, Pakistan, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Tanzania, Thailand and the United States. In Rome, the Holy See has also announced that "the entire Catholic aid network in the various countries of the world will lend its maximum support to these im-

portant simple proposals to improve the health of hundreds of millions."

But potential, says UNICEF, is not enough. The challenge now is to translate the local successes which show that a child health revolution is possible into intensive national campaigns which will make that revolution a reality.

In many developing nations, the official health services reach only a quarter of the people. Bringing the benefits of these techniques to the majority of children, says UNICEF, will therefore depend on the health services lending their expertise to much more far-reaching campaigns involving every kind of organization — "the local officials and the community development workers, the teachers and the schools, the churches and the clergy, the mosques and the imams, the trade unions and the employers' federations, the politicians and the civil servants, the lawyers and the media, the voluntary organizations and the aid agencies, the women's organizations and the environmental groups, the family planning organizations and the youth movements, the tradesmen and the shopkeepers".

The mobilization of resources on this scale, plus the political commitment of a nation's leaders, says UNICEF, are what will "take the idea of the children's

revolution off the shelf of potential and put it at the disposal of people".

"That challenge is now primarily political rather than technical or financial," concludes the report. "The evidence leaves no room for doubt that low-cost techniques are available to act as a springboard for this great leap forward for the world's children. Any government which decides to make a serious commitment to saving the lives and protecting the health and growth of children can now move towards that goal. And any government, institution or individual in the industrialized world wishing to assist in that process also now has a clear opportunity to do so."

"Definite actions with definite results are available now at relatively low financial and political cost. And they are actions in which almost everybody can become involved. How much longer are we going to ask children to wait?" (Courtesy "Development Forum" published by the United Nations New York.)

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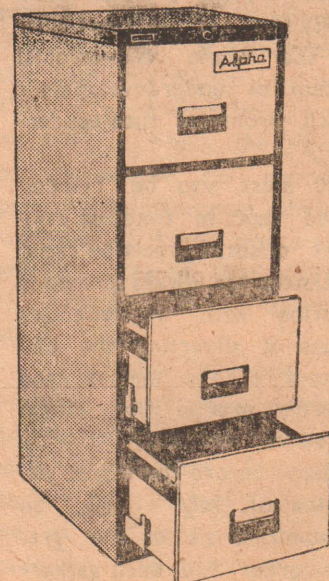
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An approach to the

The following are excerpts from a pamphlet issued by the Christian workers fellowship, Colombo, as its "own contribution towards the efforts being made to arrive at a workable solution to our 'communal' problem."

The contents in the original constituted a study document on the National Question in Sri Lanka made by the fellowship in December 1983, and issued in early January 1984 in cyclostyled form.

The Government's prompt action therefore (even contemplated earlier), in outlawing separatism constitutionally, while it helped to appease Sinhala sentiment, cannot be regarded in any real sense as settling the issue. What it has in fact done is to drive the politics of separatism underground within Sri Lanka and have it spread abroad through pro-Eelam Tamil expatriates. It is therefore fortunate that India in this situation has used its good offices as a friendly, though not disinterested neighbour, to help us reach a settlement of the Tamil problem.

Although the astuteness of President J. R. Jayewardene in dividing and thereby effectively debilitating the opposition forces has been successful to a remarkable degree, the ethnic issue he was attempting to manipulate to his advantage appears to have gone beyond his control. Racist feelings appear to have affected the ranks of the Armed Services to an alarming extent, while the way in which they have been deployed in the North has been one of their major grievances. For the first time since independence, the accredited Government of this country appears to have lost full control of its Armed Forces.

Indeed, the present level of politicisation of the Armed Forces can spell a new danger to our country and to democracy itself. This is all the more so in view of the ominous trend manifested in South East Asia itself for states to assume totalitarian and dictatorial features reflecting a major crisis of world capitalism and in particular of the whole neo-colonial system of underdevelopment which promotes such tendencies.

It must also be remembered that in times of capitalist crises, appeals to racist sentiment has always provided reaction with an effective means of diverting the discontent of the masses and cynically manipulating them to serve its ends.

Even before the ethnic explosion of July 1983, an economic crisis of the gravest order had been gathering momentum, largely as a

result of the Government's own "open-economy" policies and their implementation, quite apart from the effects of world capitalism with its recessionary tendencies.

Within the capitalist class in Sri Lanka itself, these very "open" economic policies have served to generate rivalries and conflicts between competing sections. The Sinhala trading and business interests now seek to forcibly dislodge their Tamil counterparts (especially those of recent Indian origin) in the sphere of wholesale trade.

This conflict has adverse repercussions today not only within the capitalist class, but also within its acknowledged party—the UNP, whose avowed objective it is to keep all these sections together in their own class interests.

For the purpose of combatting terrorism in the North, the Government has introduced the Prevention of Terrorism Act and certain Emergency Regulations, which could well be misused against any critics or opponents of the Government in any part of the country.

Now faced with all the critical conflicts set out above, there is a very real danger not only of the authoritarian and repressive trends shown earlier by the Government tending to increase but even to assume more hideous forms.

We must not forget that the Tamil problem should not be considered in isolation from or unconnected with the other ominous developments which have recently taken place in the country.

The "open" economic policies of the present Government have only indicated its ready subservience to neo-colonialism.

Its undemocratic deprivation of the civic rights of the former Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirmavo Bandaranaike, its ruthless suppression of the 1980 general strike, its repression of student agitation, the assaults by pro-government goons on critics of the Government, including academics, and even the storming of Supreme Court judges' home by them, have been some of the more alarming manifestations of the trend towards authoritarian forms

of rule, savouring even of fascism.

And all this notwithstanding President Jayewardene's recent boast of having a "five star democracy" in the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka!

Proper Perspective

All that has been said above goes to show the need for us to have a proper perspective on our National Question. To begin with, we have all to accept the hard historical fact that our country was effectively organised as a single administrative, economic and political unit under the British over a period of well over a century and has repressive and since. (While British colonial rule had its repressive and exploitative aspects, this at least was one of its progressive features promoting our advancement in the modern world.)

At the same time, it has to be remembered that British rule did not bring about a real national unification since it was not really interested in doing so, but only in effecting that administrative and political unification which was needed to serve its own ends.

However, through the dialectic of its own process of imperialist domination, British rule generated a movement which had the latent possibilities of achieving a real national unification, cutting across communal and other cleavages.

It was, indeed, this tendency which fostered both the bourgeois-led nationalist movement as well as the more revolutionary proletarian-based movement for the realisation of a socialist order. Hence the building up of a truly united Sri Lankan nation becomes for us a great contemporary task.

Whether therefore there was a Tamil kingdom in the North at the time of arrival of the Portuguese or whether the whole Eastern Province was under the Kings of Kandy even during Dutch times, appear in the ultimate analysis to be irrelevant and pointless for the present purpose, except perhaps for those who wish to "play politics" and excite racist passions.

Equally mischievous is the tendentious argument adduced by certain expatriates, professedly Marxist, of "a universal socialist principle of self-determination" which would entitle the Sri Lankan Tamils (12.6% of the population)

to agitate for and demand a separate state for themselves.

While of course Marxism does deal with the dynamics of social change it could hardly be said to lay down "universal socialist principles" without regard to the "specificity and particularity" (to use the jargon of the self-same "Marxists") of the conditions prevailing in a country in which the "oppressed masses" carry out their "liberation struggles".

In this period of ever-growing global inter-dependence and world capitalism and in the context of our having acquired unification administratively, economically and politically as noted above, a division of the country, or even an agitation for this purpose, can only serve to divert, distort and weaken our already weakened mass movement and play into the hands of reaction and Big Power Politics.

Only last year our journal "Christian Worker" had occasion to focus attention on the dangerous prospect of Trincomalee becomes an American facility. We may note in this connection that while it would be bad enough if Trincomalee becomes a facility for any Big Power, even without a division of the country into two tiny rival states, how much worse would it be if there was such a division! We would then only become the abject and powerless pawns of Big Powers, and be playing their politics.

In fact, separatism is a sterile type of politics and one that is not a feasible proposition in this country, either economically or politically. We must emphatically reiterate that racism, and the politics of separatism in our context can never serve to promote the cause of the liberation of the oppressed masses.

"Self-determination" in our context can only mean self-respecting regional autonomy so that the people in all parts of the island can meaningfully participate in conducting their own affairs.

Furthermore, for Sri Lanka, "self-determination" also means the preservation of its own identity, independence and sovereignty in the face of global capitalism which does not hesitate to exert interventionist pressures in the affairs of small nations, as was seen only recently in the case of Grenada.

We feel, therefore, that any moves or measures to undermine the basic concept of a single state and nation

should be deprecated and firmly resisted.

One such measure proposed more recently is the principle of adopting ethnic quotas for providing opportunities in employment and even higher education. Such as principle of ethnic quotas could only militate against the realisation of a united state and nation besides being counter-productive as well as morally indefensible as a violation of the inherent human and democratic rights of persons to be recognised on their individual merits.

We do not need to go into the exercise of determining the present ethnic quotas in relation to jobs, education, etc., or be alarmed about the alleged manipulation of mark in the Tamil medium examinations pin-pointed and documented by the Minister of Industries, Mr. Cyril Mathew. If such fears exist, they can surely be remedied as, for example, by the simple expedient of working out a system of aptitude and intelligence tests based on appropriate multiple choice question papers (where there can be no manipulation in the marking) in recruitment for employment and even perhaps if necessary, at the university entrance level in addition to recognition of academic achievements.

Minority Complex

A peculiar and significant feature of our "communal" (ethnic, linguistic, tribal and what not) problems is that although the Sinhalese are the majority community in the island, they are numerically as against the Tamil population of neighbouring South India, a comparatively insignificant minority, thus helping to generate fears that may normally be associated with a minority.

Such fears are heightened by the consciousness that the Sinhalese have that this little island is not only their traditional homeland but also the one country in which they could hope to live and develop their cultural identity as a people. Memories of devastating South Indian invasions from the earliest times and the introduction by the British of nearly a million South Indian workers in the midst of the Kandyan areas and the presence of Indian traders and businessmen has only served to keep alive such fears.

These fears, too, have to be taken into consideration in any attempt to effect any

National Question

settlement of the National Question.

Apart from this "minority complex" as it were, which influences the Sinhalese as a community, one has also to note the fact that there is a tradition of Sinhala-Buddhist guardianship to be reckoned with. This is a myth which goes back to the Mahavamsa Chronicle, which so greatly influences the minds of many Sinhalese Buddhist, and in particular the Buddhist Sangha.

The chronicle records that the Buddha's demise took place on the same days at the arrival of Vijaya and his followers in Sri Lanka, and that the Blessed One prognosticated on that day that his teaching would be preserved in its pristine purity in the island, and that he therefore entrusted Sakra the King of the Gods with the sacred task of protecting the island, Sakra in turn is said to have entrusted this task to Vishnu (Vibhishna),

So Sri Lanka has to be preserved, protected and upheld as the great "Dhammadvipa" (the land of the Dhamma) by the Aryan Sinhala people.

They, thereby, become a chosen people distinct from all others and ordained by the Buddha with the sacred mission of safeguarding the Dhamma.

The consciousness of such a mission prevails strongly amongst many a pious bhikkhu of the Sangha, while it is craftily and cunningly exploited by our unscrupulous, opportunistic and chauvinistically minded politicians to beat loudly the drums of communalism as and when they deem it opportune.

While all this helps to foster and intensify a recalcitrant Sinhala chauvinism and a communal antagonism towards the Tamils amongst the Sinhalese, the conduct of Tamil political leaders, themselves, has only helped to make matters worse.

By their international peregrinations they seek to win the battle for the rights of their people not by working and campaigning within Sri Lanka itself, but by their palaverings and operations in the U. S. A., Europe and, above all, in Tamil Nadu.

The Tamil Nadu leaders, themselves on their part, have only been too ready and willing to play this "Tamil card" to further their own ends.

Moreover, the misgivings and fears of the Sinhalese have been strengthened by the fact that since the holocaust of July 1983, prominent Tamil United Liberation Front leaders including ex-MP's,

appeared to have found a convenient haven in Tamil Nadu rather than in Jaffna, their professed homeland.

Main Demand

On the other hand, it is also important to respect the legitimate fears of the Tamil people and their demands for living as a self-respecting community. These demands may briefly be set out as follows;

(a) The Tamil people should be ensured security of life and personal property in the predominantly Sinhala South. At the same time, in the North there should be no resort to any form of repressive force or violence by the State directly or indirectly except that which can be shown to be really necessary for the purpose of maintaining law and order in the interest of the community as a whole. (In this regard, freedom and opportunity must obviously be provided for any citizen to expose any violation of the above conditions and secure the necessary redress).

(b) The Tamil language to enjoy the same status as Sinhala, both as a national language and as a language of administration. (This was in fact the accepted position of all political parties before 1955.)

(c) Tamil children to be educated in the Tamil language

(d) The economic development of the North and the East, so as to ensure adequate employment opportunities and so reduce the need for Tamils to seek employment in the South

(e) No forcible state colonisation of the North and the East which would alter the racial composition of the population of these areas.

(f) The preservation of the cultural identity of the Tamils.

(g) As regards the Tamils of recent Indian origin, especially the plantation worker, the grant of full citizenship on the basis of birth or a stipulated period of residence with genuine attempts to facilitate their integration with the rest of the population as citizens.

These demands can well be accommodated by appropriate institutional arrangements within a unitary or single state.

Real Devolution

In regard to the National Question, our position has been satisfactory settlement must necessarily involve an appropriate expression of self-determina-

tion within a unitary state and a self-respecting regional autonomy based on genuine procedures of a democratic devolution of power from the centre which will ensure the right of the whole people to participate in the responsibility of conducting their own administration throughout the island.

We are therefore glad that a possible settlement on these lines is being considered. It is also heartening to note that as a result of the consensus of opinion at the preliminary round-table conference of all recognised political parties held on 21st December 1983, the TULF, was to be invited, despite the earlier reluctance of the Government to so invite it.

Although players and negotiations can well open the way to a workable compromise based on the accord of recognised political parties and other interested groups, it needs to be underlined that such a compromise will only be possible if political reason and pragmatic prudence based on a very realistic appraisal of the situation and not on political passions fed by irrational racist and tribalistic sentiments and fears, are allowed to influence the process of decision making.

This of course, demands that the leaders of all the major different groups who matter in this connection must be effectively supported by enlightened public opinion without demagogical and inflammatory appeals to racist and "communalistic" sentiments, fears and prejudices.

In this connection, it has to be admitted that the proposal to have some form of regional autonomy as a possible solution to the national question is generally looked upon with strong suspicion by some sections as being but the first stage towards Eelam or a separate State and even merger with Tamil Nadu.

As pointed out already, the saying and doings of some TULF leaders themselves have only contributed to strengthening such fears and suspicions. Obviously then, any attempt to solve the Sinhala-Tamil conflict on the basis of the grant of regional autonomy to the North and the East is bound to encounter fierce opposition from these Sinhala sections.

It would therefore, be helpful if the subject of regional autonomy or administration was considered independently on its own merits as a means to advance popular participation in administration on a national

scale, and not regard mainly in the context of contemplated solutions to the Sinhala-Tamil conflict and the National Question.

But any such regional administration envisaged must necessarily be linked up with a genuine system of local government on a national level, if it is to have any meaning and be effective.

Cardinal sin

Unfortunately, the present UNP Government has seriously debilitated local government by doing away with the village committees and town councils - elected bodies which have in the past been at least responsive to the needs of their rural and semi-rural electors and have thus served as a proper democratic base of popular representation.

In place of these smaller local bodies, the Government has set up a system of district development councils by which the whole decision-making process has been unduly and heavily loaded in favour of the Central Government at the expense of the local areas

While ostensibly professing to promote local autonomy, through the district development councils, the Government has only brought about a virtual negation of the whole process of genuine local government based on an effective local autonomy.

The position and powers given to the district minister, together with the political influence exercised by the Ministers and the members of Parliament who ultimately are channels for the pressures exerted by the Central Government (and that with its present steam-roller majority) and what is more the fact that any bye laws made by the district development councils cannot have any effect without parliamentary approval, only serve to establish a decisive influence and control over the local areas by the centre, despite even the setting up of the much-vaunted grama-mandalas.

All this together with the appointment of MPs in place of bye-elections, has only further aggravated the situation and negated the very process of promoting a genuine development of local autonomy with the effective participation of the people in deciding matters relating to the local level.

In fact, this use of seemingly democratic and constitutional procedures to dilute the whole process of local government has far more

sinister implications. It enables the Government to use the issue of ethnic conflict as a convenient means of increasing its repressive powers and negating all real democracy which fosters at least some measure of genuine people's participation in the decision making process.

At this critical juncture what is really important is not merely the question of resolving the Tamil problem alone. An even more important task is that of having that necessary measure of decentralisation of power to counter the ominous trends towards authoritarian and fascist forms of rule.

The revival of genuine local government throughout the island would therefore be a sine qua non for any genuine devolution of power from the centre for any system of regional administration. Only in such a context, too, could one have an effective and properly constituted system of regional councils throughout the island which would then have to cover the North and the East as well. What the specific powers and areas of control would be for any such regional councils would surely be a matter for discussion and resolution by all concerned.

Suffice it to say that matters of national importance would obviously continue to remain directly under the control of the Central Government while day-to-day administration at a lower level could well be taken over to an appreciable and necessary extent by such regional bodies.

Such a process would be tantamount to a democratisation of administration if devised and implemented in a genuinely democratic manner and thus give greater power to the people vis-a-vis the Central Government itself.

In this way, many of the pressing problems now experienced by the North and that East in relation to the Central Government may well be eased. Thus, the right of the people to participate in conducting the administration of their own areas will be ensured, but within the frame-work of a unitary state.

Yet another problem in reaching a settlement appears to be whether the Northern and the Eastern Provinces should be separate entities or be combined to form one unit for administrative purposes. Our view necessarily

(Continued on page 10)

Astrology in the Pageant of history

When history affirms the claims of Astrology, sceptics must agree with us that "what fates impose, that men must needs abide". 1

Important national events as well as great world movements can be considered as the out-breathing and in-breathing of the planets. So there is a Destiny that shapes our ends rough hew them as we will. Thus sages have seen in the face of the stars fate of men and empires.

From B. C. 2722-2572 Egypt passed through a period of instability following the death of Pharaoh Mencheres of the IV dynasty, the builder of the third great pyramid of Gizeh. The Egyptians were not taken by surprise, for, an astrologer, a veritable oracle, living in the City of Bhuto, proclaimed that Mencheres was fated to die when he had completed 18 years on the throne. Then 150 years of suffering will darken the face of Egypt. History says that this was so. 2

Take another illustration from ancient Egypt. The Western Papyrus, detailed the origin of the Fifth Dynasty (B.C. 2715-2588), refers to a forecast made by Dedi, the state astrologer of Pharaoh Kheuf, the builder of the great pyramid. The occultist foretold that contrary to the wishes of the Pharaoh, a certain Lady Rudedet of the City of the Sun (later Baalbec) would bring forth three sons who were destined to be Pharaohs. Marvellous indeed! Userkef ruled for seven years, Sahure reigned for twelve years and Kekei for twenty-one years, all three brothers, sons of Lady Rudedet.

In India (Bharat) Astrology was a highly developed science untainted by the corrupting influences of Asia Minor like in Sumer, at one period, when women were prostituted before the planetary gods. Rishis of India made astounding prophecies. One such was by Vedavyasa regarding the birth of Gautama Buddha. What happened? On the night of May 1st B. C. 623 (as recorded in the History of the Chow Dynasty) a giant star appeared over the Himalayas on the Indian side. Chinese astrologers joyfully proclaimed the advent of a Spiritual Leader in India. And at Kapliavasthu, in Nepal, was born Prince Siddhartha. 3

The Sinhala chronicle Pujavaliya narrates that the baby Prince was shown to eight celebrated astrologers of Magadha. Seven of them judged that if he becomes a 'bhikku' he will attain Buddhahood, but Suddhantakon, the cleverest of them all, emphatically asserted that this was the Buddha of the Saramanda-Kalpa. As the several marks in his hands, feet, etc., gave the Jaya-Siddhartha-Yoga he was named Siddhartha. 4

The coming of the hordes of Ghengis Khan to China was foreseen as far back as B. C. 246—a statement recorded in the Shih-Chi, the first great history of China. Shortly after the Emperor, Chin-Shi-huang, ascended the throne the court astrologer prophesied that, at the end of 1400 years, one Hu' (barbarian) from the north will be responsible for the downfall of the Chinese Empire.

Chin Shin-huang, acting on the advice of his astrologer, completed the Great Wall

of China. 5 This wondrous piece of engineering (inspired by an occultist) withstood the assaults batteries of invaders till, as foreshadowed, Ghengis Khan brought fire and sword at the end of 1400 years. The Shih-Chi adds that the Emperor himself was a great exponent of astrology. At Hsien-Yuang he built palaces to reflect on earth the heavenly pattern of the stars of the Milky Way. When he died in B. C. 210, a mausoleum was erected on the ceiling of which were represented the constellations of heaven. 6

Let us switch on to the annals of the Aztecs of Mexico. Astrology was highly developed in this ancient land—a stage higher than in Egypt—the astronomical calculations being of a very high order. 7 Lord Kingsborough avers that the thirteenth plate of M. Dupaix. 8 Monuments (Part II) shows an Aztec astrologer holding to his eye an object like a telescope. 8. But the die-hard Catholic padre, Sahagun, emphasises that Astrology in Mexico "was a deceitful art, pernicious and idolatrous, and was never contrived by human reason". 9

The irony of it all is

that the destroyers of this ancient race and its hoary culture were the Roman Catholics themselves. And this colossal destruction was unequivocally predicted. During the reign of Montezuma there was a premonition among the statesmen that the return of the Deity of Destruction was near at hand. In 1510 the great late of Tezenco mysteriously overflowed its banks, flooded the street of Mexido and destroyed many a building—no earthquake, no tempest, no rains, no visible cause whatever.

The historian, William H. Prescott, writes: "In 1511 one of the turrets of the great temple took fire, equally without any apparent cause, and continued to burn in defiance of all attempts to extinguish it. In the following years, three comets were seen; and not long before the coming of the Spaniards a strange light broke forth in the East. It spread at its base on the horizon, and rising in a perpendicular

form tapered off as it approached the zenith. It resembled a vast sheet or flood of fire, emitting sparks, or, as an old writer expresses it, "seemed thickly powdered with stars". 9

"The Aztec monarch, terrified at the apparitions in the heavens, took counsel of Nezahualpilti, who was a great proficient in the subtle science of Astrology. But the royal sage cast a deeper cloud over his spirit by reading in these prodigies the speedy downfall of the Empire." 10

Between the rise and fall of the Roman Empire there were many signs and seals placed in the hands of the sons of men. A classic case is that of the assassination of Emperor Julius Caesar on March 15, B.C. 44. Empress Calphurnia warned him of the import of dreams, prodigies and celestial disorders which were the talk of Rome. But Caesar spurned such "superstitions", declaring that "the valiant never taste of death but once". 11 He laughed at the astrologer: "The ides of March are come." And when they did go Caesar was shrunk to a little measure—gone were his conquests,

glories, triumphs and spoils.

The Portuguese conquered the city of Ceuta in Morocco on Thursday August 31, 1415. The Moor King, Sala-Ben-Sala was aware of the impending ruin. How? The Catholic author of the Chronicles of Azurara states that a marvellous celestial phenomenon predicted the end of Ceuta. In July 1415 a large and brilliant star appeared near the Moon. It was "larger than any star of the thousand and twenty-two which the astrologers had numbered, whose altitude can be measured".

Not only this. A Moor fakir saw a dream during Ramazan feast. What was it? A cloud of bees humming over Ceuta—a lion wearing a golden crown appearing before the City with a horde of sparrows—the latter attacking the bees and destroying them.

A Council of Astrologers was summoned by Sala-Ben-Sala. The most famous seer at the conference announced that the remarkable star

as well as the vision indicated the approaching doom of Ceuta. 12 The dream was interpreted as follows: "In the days of the great Miramolim when, for the first time, he landed on the soil of Spain there was a Moor who was digging hard by this City. So digging he destroyed some ancient foundations, pulling away the stones, and he found a piece of marble on which was graven the image of our prophet Brafome, a native of Morocco, whose feet were resting on an inscription in four lines, which said thus: From the house of Spain will come forth a lion with three lion cubs, his sons, in company with a great fleet laden with many men, and he will oppress the noble city. Alas! his might will lead to the destruction of these regions of Africa. Moors, seek your safety in flight! Do not wait until he brandishes his sword! This prophecy accords with the dream of this Moor, seeing that he says that he beheld a lion crowned with gold entering by the Strait. We are the bees, and the sparrows represent the Christians. When Cordova was torn from us a Moor of that

city had the same vision in a dream." 13

When Sri Lanka (Ceylon) was suffering greatly under the Portuguese yoke and a few years before the Jaffna Kingdom was destroyed a huge three-tailed comet appeared on March 7th, 1615. It occupied the heavens for over a month and Sri Lanka was turned upside down but was saved from destruction owing to the offerings made to the Sacred Tooth Relic of the Buddha and the four potent Guardian Deities. 14

The Jaffna Tamil history, Yavana Vaipave Malai, records that an Indian astrologer, Subbha Ditta, came to Lanka and was invited to the court of Pararajasekaran, ruler of the Jaffna Principality, circa 1478. The sage prophesied thus: "After destroying the dynasty of the Arya Singa rulers who ruled over the country of Jaffna, a regiment of Parangis (Portuguese) of the name of Phillip shall, from the month of June in the year Kalayukthi (A. D. 1618 - 19), rule with pride for a period of forty years with neither rectitude nor justice and committing acts of tyranny when the King of the Ulanthes (Hollanders) will rise like the Sun over the hill-tops on the East". This was fulfilled to the letter. The second portion of this clever forecast was confirmed on the 9th day of June in the year Vilambi (A. D. 1648 - 49) when the Hollanders massacred the Portuguese, 15

Parallel to this is the prophecy (now partly destroyed) inscribed on a stone door-jamb which once belonged to the historic Konesar Temple at Trincomalee. In the original state it ran thus: "This Temple built by Kullakkottan in ancient times will be later destroyed by the Parangis (Portuguese) and after successive reigns of the cat's-eyed, the red-eyed and the smoke-eyed (nations) it will be voluntarily revert back to the Tamils." 16

Although Great Britain has been the bastion of Christianity yet her history contains many instances when Astrology played an important part in national affairs. In the 16th century there was the great European prophet, Nostradamus, who predicted that in 1945 Great Britain will give up her Imperialist sway and concent-

(Continued on page 10)

HOME REMEDY TO FIGHT DIARRHOEA

Diarrhoeal diseases are one of the most devastating scourges in developing countries. World wide they account for an estimated five million deaths annually especially of young children. January 1981, Eva Doherty, an Australian nurse, began what has become a very successful programme to teach "urban volunteer to diagnose and treat diarrhoeal disease victims in their own communities, using a formula performed at the International Centre of Diarrhoeal Diseases Research, Bangladesh (ICDDR, B)

Caused by diverse bacteria victims and parasites, endemic diarrhoea diseases are debilitating but deadly. Deaths are caused mainly dehydration leading to shock of the body is drained of essential vitamins and minerals. Most such cases are eventable, if a patient is badly rehydrated.

Until a few years ago, due to the cause of a cheap easily disseminated of the remedy" it was not feasible for any developing country to treat for a local dehydration on a large scale. For a poorly-nourished diseased - ridden populations the time become diarrhoeal disease onset and which is often swift - matter of which or at most a few days by the diseases severely dehydrated, patients in a hospital, if their families can at the time an expense of taking them there it is often too late to revive the patient even by intravenous solution.

In the mid - 1962s an alternative rehydration therapy was discovered almost simultaneously by scientists in Calcutta and at the Cholera Research Laboratory in Dhaka. The new technique consisted of a salt/sugar/water mix a patient could drink. Additional research led, in the late 1970s, to an Oral Rehydration Solution (ORS) formula cited by the World Health Organization as one of the most significant advances in Third World health therapy. Today the HRS, perfected at the Bangladesh Centre, is used worldwide to treat diarrhoeal dehydration - not just in hospitals, but in rural villages and urban slums.

In Bangladesh and many other countries, ORS is made available in ready made packets distributed free. All a user need do is to mix it in a litre of water and use the solution within 24 hours, before it deteriorates and grows bacteria. Alternatively user communities are being taught how to prepare their own ORS, mixing set amounts of sugar, salt and water.

At the same time, in Bangladesh, ICDDR, B researchers are further perfecting ORS

by experimenting with a rice, rather than a sugar based solution, which appears to increase the nutritional as well as the rehydration value.

Over the past three years, ORS has been widely used in Bangladesh among target population, with concerted efforts to promote its use in homes. The result ORS appears to have been responsible for a dramatic drop in diarrhoeal dehydration deaths. Much of the success has occurred in Dhaka and appears to be attributable to Eva Doherty and her volunteers.

Eva Doherty's volunteer students, mostly woman, are poorly educated or illiterate slum dwellers who, for a variety of reasons, volunteer to help their friends and neighbours reduce the suffering and death caused by diarrhoeal disease.

"We started very slowly, one community at a time", recalls Eva Doherty. "Since as a woman I couldn't effectively approach community leaders, Jahir, the community contact man would get them interested, and would then explain the details.

by **Naomi R. Novak**

We'd point out that it's very difficult and expensive for people to reach a hospital. Then we'd say that, with a little cooperative, at no cost, the community could help itself at home, by finding a group of women aged 18 to 40, willing to work as diarrhoea! treatment volunteers. Out to say 15 or 20 candidates, we would choose ten, whom we'd train for five mornings over one week. After that, we would constantly monitor their efforts, and occasionally retrain them."

On the first and second days, the women are taught about diarrhoea in general, what causes it, how to prevent it, how to treat it, and what to feed a victim. The importance of prevention is emphasized - including personal hygiene and disposal of human wastes: boiling all river or pond water before drinking or cooking with it, covering left-over food and boiling it before eating it again, and giving new borns the breast immediately after birth, since mother's milk has been shown to contain antibodies that offer some protection against certain diarrhoeal diseases.

"In Bangladesh this last point often is a stumbling block. For there is a widespread belief that for the first 3 days, babies should be fed only honey or sugar and water - because the baby will get diarrhoea from mother's milk. Overcoming this belief is one

of our major battles".

The women also learn the signs and levels of severity of dehydration and the importance of rehydration. They learn not only how to make ORS, using the packet or measuring the components (8 teaspoons of sugar and one teaspoon of salt to a litre of water, or, where no spoon is available, four 4-finger scoops of sugar and two 3-finger pinches of salt) but how to administer it and what diarrhoea victims can and should eat (almost anything).

On the third and fourth days, after a review, the students "visit the treatment ward, question diarrhoea victims, feed patients ORS, and advice them about preventing and treating diarrhoeal disease.

They are then accompanied to their community, and go house-to-house seeking diarrhoea victims. This is their practical exam.

The last day is taken up by oral and written examinations at the Centre, and a final review of points

that still cause confusion. The women are given notebooks. In which they are to record their patients' names and pertinent symptoms are told that weekly follow-up visits will be made to monitor their progress.

There are ten such weekly sessions in succession, followed by five week-long review courses for volunteers trained three to 12 months earlier. During these review courses the volunteers also learn the importance of immunization against measles, tetanus, diphtheria, whooping cough and polio - so they will motivate people in their communities to be vaccinated.

"Overall" say Eva Doherty "we are extremely proud of our urban volunteers, who have made an enormous contribution to the health and survival of their communities. At the same time we are grateful to the communities involved for wholeheartedly co-operating with our effort. Such communities epitomize the goal of the programme: to help people help themselves"

Naomi Rock Novak is communication co-ordinator at the International Centre for Diarrhoeal Diseases Research, Bangladesh (ICDDR, B)

(Courtesy Development Forum New York)

Latest data on world population

The 1983 edition of the World population Data Sheet has been published by the Population Reference Bureau with the aid of the US Agency for International Development. This 21st edition of the Data Sheet includes all member countries of the United Nations plus all geopolitical entities with a population larger than 150,000.

The Data Sheet shows that the world's total population will probably reach five billion within the next five years, an increase of 333 million over the 4.67 billion as of mid-1983. Although significant fertility declines have occurred in some developing countries, over the past two decades they have been offset by falling death rates, thus total population continues to surge.

The contrast between the more developed (MDGs) and less developed regions (LDCs) of the world are demonstrated by the following trends:

* The birth rate in the less developed countries is twice that of the more developed countries - 33 compared to 15 per 1,000 population. Because of this and the much larger LDC share of world population, there are almost seven times more births per year in the LDCs than in the MDCs as a whole.

* While in the MDCs women can be expected to have fewer than two children during their reproductive life times - less than the replacement level of 2.1 children per family - women in the LDCs can still be expected to average between four and five children. As a result, if growth continues at present rate, the LDCs would double their population in the next 32 years.

* Crude death rates for the two "worlds" are similar: 10 deaths per 1,000 population in MDCs and 12 per 1,000 population in the LDCs, but these crude rates mask striking differences in mortality. For example, infant mortality is many times higher in the LDCs - 93 deaths per 1,000 compared to 19 per 1,000 in the MDCs - and people in MDCs can expect to live 15 years longer (to age 73) than people in LDCs,

Whereas in the MDCs, calorie supply considered realistically available averages 134 percent of a person's minimum requirements for moderate activity, in the LDCs, that supply is 101 percent - barely adequate.

One caution World population Data Sheets of various years should not be used as a time series. Because every attempt is made to use the most recent and reliable information available, fluctuations from year to year often reflected improved or revised estimates based on new data sources or studies rather than actual changes in levels. This is particularly true of countries in the less developed regions for which statistics are often computed from incomplete data and assumptions derived from demographic models.

Demographic data were provided by the Population Division and Statistical Office of the United Nations, the International Demographic Data Center and Foreign Demographic Analysis Division of the US Bureau of the Census, the International Statistics Office of the US National Centre for Health Statistics, and the World Bank. Figures on food supply were made available by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

The Population Reference Bureau is a private, non-profit educational and scientific organisation which gathers, interprets and disseminates information on the facts and implications of national and international population trends.

PASSED AWAY

Swamy Ji Gauri Bala, German Swamy Ji, otherwise known as Peter Schoenfeldt, Passed away at 5-30 Evening First May, 1984.

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Astrology in Pageant History

(Continued from page 8) rate on Democracy. He foretold the smash-up of the Spanish Armada and the rise of the British Empire under Queen Elizabeth (1558-1603). For this amazing forecast King Charles IX of France (1570) made Nostradamus a State Councillor as well as a Royal Doctor. His biographer says: "I should be too prolix were I to tell all the honours conferred upon him, and all the great nobles and learned men that arrived at his house from the very ends of the earth to see and converse with him as if he

had been an oracle".

The execution of King Charles I (1625-1649) of England was foreseen by William Lilly years in advance and repeated again at Hampton Court where the King was imprisoned. Lilly was the King's favourite astrologer, a native of Leicestershire. In his 47th year he prophesied the Great Plague and the Great Fire of London. Government thought that he was one of the anarchists who engineered the fire. Summoned before House of Commons he gave a classic reply. But he was

disbelieved. He was imprisoned as a cruel plotter against the state. This created a sensation throughout Europe. The King of Sweden intervened. The astrologer was released and the King sent him a gold chain with a medal struck in his (the astrologer's) honour. Two years later the Archbishop of Canterbury granted him a licence to practise as a Doctor of Medicine. 17

Coming to more recent history let me cite the case of Napoleon Bonaparte, translated from the original in the Government Archives, Paris, France. This document narrates that a Catholic padre, Abbe de la Clere living at Rue Puits de l'Ermite, saw a Lance Corporal of the French Army at the door of a sixth floor attic. The Abbe who was studying the Horoscope of France put it aside and asked: "Have you come for my counsel or my prayers?" "For your counsel," replied Bonaparte, "but I find I have no money and will retire." "Something in your face interests me," continued the padre. "Enter my son, Money is not always my reward. Let me see your hands. Fate writes her symbols there as well as in the stars."

The soldier gave his name and birth date as follows: Napoleone Buonaparte, August 15th, 1769, at 11-30 a.m. on the island of Corsica. The holy astrologer then made this remarkable forecast: "You were born on an island and the Destiny is that you are fated to die on an island, but far from your place of birth. A lonely rock it appears to me in the middle of an ocean. Between these two points of birth and death you will rise to the highest pinnacle of ambition and power. Four years from now instead of being a Lance Corporal you will have command of large armies. Your 27th year will be the turning point towards your greatest ambition. In 1800, a year which by its addition produces the single number 9, the symbol of the planet Mars (one of the most powerful in your horoscope next to Jupiter) will be a point signifying a Dictator who comes into his own. From this date onwards there will be no heights you will not reach, but beware warning contained in your new name (Napoleon Bonaparte) making the number 13 - a symbol of power which, if wrongly used, will wreak destruction upon itself." 18

Ibrahim-Abdual-Raman of Cairo was no ordinary as-

trologer. He was a master of the occult. Before World War I broke out a British engineer consulted him - a sage whose name was household word in the Middle East. He predicted that "five years from now the Nile will flow into Palestine". This was fulfilled when water from the Muhammadieh Canal (Nile) was pumped under the Suez Canal to Palestine. 19

The advent of a man named Hitler was foreseen by a monk who lived in a Brandenburg monastery in the 12th century. He wrote a poem predicting the fall of the Hohenzollerns. A part of it says: "Despite a period of peace the world will be greatly troubled by a man who will rise from obscurity to the highest position in Germany. This man will make a Great Germany, and will also drive many

Jews out of the country. But when he is at the height of his power, this leader will drag Germany into another Great War, out of which will emerge a ruined and smashed Germany. A new and glorious monarch will then reign over a smaller Germany and by his wise guidance a true and lasting peace will come on the world."

The stars changed Adolph Hitler from a house-painter into a dictator. The prophecy came true. It will not surprise us if West Germany elects for a monarchical form of government.

Lastly it is proper that I should refer to the several successful predictions on national and international affairs which have been made in The Astrological Magazine by Prof. B. V. Raman.

An approach to National Question

(Continued from page 7) means that the people of each province or region has the right to participate effectively in running their own affairs. In this context the question at issue of whether or not they should conduct their own affairs separately as a region or be combined with the Northern Province must surely be a matter for people of the Eastern Province to decide and this may well be effected through a referendum held in that province.

The problems relating to the Tamils of recent Indian origin are of a somewhat different order since they have never demanded a separate territory or state for themselves, but rather seek security and more favourable conditions to live as free, self-respecting and useful citizens of Sri Lanka.

This would, of course, demand the creation slowly, steadily and cautiously of an atmosphere of true communal harmony.

It would involve the grant of full citizenship rights to Tamils of recent Indian origin on the basis of birth or long residence and genuine attempts to facilitate the integration of these Tamils with the rest of the local population as a community able to live with dignity and self-respect.

This in turn must involve land settlement schemes to provide for rural settlements in place of line rooms with such common social amenities as health, education and transport which could be shared by both Tamils and Sinhalese alike.

However, as regards the plantation workers especially, an important constraining factor as regards the grant of citizenship to those who are yet non-citizens would appear to be the fears that the UNP and, now especially

the SLFP politicians have about the unfavourable effects that the enfranchising of these workers might have in the electoral sphere.

The intra-class sectional rivalries and conflicts of the native bourgeoisie could not be expected to bring about a satisfactory and lasting settlement to the National Question. While a genuine end to racism, as indeed to other social ills, would have to await a future socialist reconstruction of society, a modus vivendi can and must be found in the meantime. This becomes all the more important because the oppression and exploitation of our people along with their attendant tensions and conflicts really stem from the entire system of neocolonial domination of under-developed countries like Sri Lanka.

The elimination of this system therefore demands the unity of the masses, both Sinhala and Tamil, in their struggle against the common oppressor and enemy, namely, capitalist neo-colonialism and its local agents. A divided Sri Lanka could only militate against such a common struggle for liberation.

With this end in view, the building up of racial amity, vital though it is, will certainly be no easy task. It may not be possible or even practicable in the present context of things to bring about at once a cordial social intercourse and close mixing of the communities, but conditions have to be created in which to begin with, people can live in an atmosphere of at least tolerant co-existence and neighbourliness. The alternative is recurrent and unavailing tension and strife which must only sap the vitality of the entire Sri Lankan people.

'Let us Communicate'

The Editor,

Saturday Review.

It is with great pleasure that I read your unbiased newspaper but at the same time your even slightest intention of ceasing the publication was a shock to all. As a third writer himself put it, "it has the greatest significance even in its censored form."

The issue of 14th-21st April again contained articles of great interest to ALL communities "Tamils must have their own cultural home", "Jaffna - No Man's land" and "PM on Rampage" were all but a few of the excellent ones. And why not your own Trincomalee sell-out case?

At least, let us communicate to the other side through your newspaper. Then they will understand our problems and understand who the real culprit is!

N. Murugadas

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

The Editor,

SATURDAY REVIEW.

It is appalling to see Mr. S. R. Asirwatham, who once had the privilege of having his articles published in your esteemed journal, objecting to the publication of Mr. N. Sanmugathasan's

LETTERS

articles. The irony is that people like him are advocating the very same thing the Saturday Review is fighting against, namely, the suppression of freedom of expression. It is always the case that those who cannot logically or morally defend their own ideas become nervous about the ideas put forward by others. The Saturday Review should not give in to such intellectual subversion.

S. Vijayakumar

Dept. Chemical Engineering
University of Toronto
Toronto
Canada M5S 1A4

SENTIMENTAL TOSH

The Editor,
Saturday Review.

You have written a load of sentimental tosh in the issue of 7th April. That is the only way I can describe your "Open letter to the Sinhalese". What a waste of valuable space!

S. Balasubramaniam
Karainagar.

US wants Gamini to go

The United States is ready to downgrade its representation at the UN Conference on Trade and Development (Unctad), if it fails to achieve radical reforms.

The organisation is the world's largest forum for economic negotiations between rich and poor countries.

The US has also made it clear that it would like Mr. Gamini Corea of Sri Lanka, Secretary-General of Unctad for the past 10 years, not to stand again when his term expires at the end of this year.

A document, drawn up by the US Government and circulation informally here, makes the point, in reference to Unctad, that "we see some parallel in our experience in recent years with Unesco."

The US has already given notice that it wishes to withdraw from the United Nations

Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation, largely because it believes that it has become a wasteful ideological talking shop.

Washington has said it is withdrawing its contribution to Unesco, which amounts to 25 per cent of the organisation's budget.

The document regarding Unctad states that the US is faced with four options.

One is to get out, or at least serve notice of departure, as it had done with Unesco. The second is to downgrade representation—"to spend as little time as possible there," is one description by a Western diplomat.

The third is to carry on as usual and the fourth, to stay in and try to improve circumstances.

For the moment, the US Government appears to have

settled for a combination of the second and fourth options.

The document states that the US would also support any moves to turn Unctad into a specialised agency similar to Unesco.

If Unctad were to become a specialised agency, and no longer draw its resources from the general UN budget, it will be easier for the US to withdraw from it.

It would not be seen as delivering in a forceful way a condemnation of the UN itself.

Unctad, which employs about 500 people here, has an annual budget of US\$26 million (S\$54 million).

The US has become increasingly disillusioned with the operation of Unctad, which has 167 members. It believes that the organisation

has become too obsessed with political rather than economic issues.

It questions the ability of Unctad to make firm decision.

The document cites "widespread and deepseated management problems" within the organisation itself especially in its leadership."

It complains of "excessive amounts of documentation, which are often technically deficient and biased towards

particular viewpoints; wasteful and duplicative programmes; questionable financial management; and an inadequate flow of information".

Of the Unctad chief the document states that he cannot give the leadership that the organisation needs.

Unctad was established 20 years ago as the main UN forum for promoting Third World economic and social development. (Courtesy Straits Times)

CRM CONDEMNS LASHING

The following is a statement issued by the Civil Rights Movement of Sri Lanka on Sentence of Lashing on three men passed by the High Court of Matara:

"We refer to the report in the ISLAND of 21st April of the award by the High Court of Matara of sentence of lashing on three men convicted of rape, to be implemented on the 26th, possibly in public.

"Such punishment is not in accord with present day standards, whatever revulsion the crime evokes. It degrades not only the miscreant but also the person inflicting the punishment and others participating, including spectators. It is incompatible with the protection from cruel, inhuman or degrading punishment accorded by Article 11 of our Constitution.

"The preservation by Article 16(2) of punishments recognised by existing law should not be considered a justification, even if the sentence is to be carried out in more aggravated a manner than authorised by the law as it existed when the Constitution was promulgated.

"Such punishment is, moreover, contrary to Sri Lanka's obligations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights which allows for no such exception, and which was

signed by Sri Lanka after the adoption of the present Constitution.

"The Human Rights Committee established under the Covenant, at its 378th meeting held on 27th July 1982, specifically interpreted the prohibition of torture and other cruel inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment to include corporal punishment (vide General Comments under Article 40 Para 4 of the Covenant. ref CCPR/C/21: ADD 1.)

The Working Committee of the Civil Rights Movement accordingly requests you to use your powers under Article 34 of the Constitution to ensure that this sentence is not carried out."

Desmond Fernando,
Secretary,
Civil Rights Movement.

Govt. response

The following appeared in the State-Controlled Sunday Observer on 29th April.

No sentences of lashing ordered by judges and magistrates will be carried out.

Authoritative legal sources said that the Minister of Justice, Mr. Nissanka Wijeyaratne has recommended to President Jayewardene that such sentences should not be carried out and this has

been accepted. The sources pointed out that lashing was a violation of the International Civil and Political Rights Covenant to which Sri Lanka was a signator.

According to these sources, the reason why these sentences were still being imposed by judges was that lashing was still part of this country's law. It still appeared in the Penal Code for certain categories of offences like rape. The sources said that action would be taken soon to amend the Code so that the provision for lashing could be deleted altogether. A Committee, said the sources, might be appointed to review certain provisions set out in the Penal Code including lashing.

Legal circles pointed out that in the colonial days, sentences of lashing were delivered by judges often in rape case and carried out in the prison. In a sensational rape cases which was the focus of much publicity and attention, the late Mr. Justice R. F. Dias sentenced the accused to lashes with a cat-o-nine tail which is the weapon used for administering lashes.

It was a recent sentence of lashing imposed by the High Court Judge of Matara on an accused in a rape case that sparked off attention on lashing and the cat-o-nine tails called "Madu Valigay" in Sinhala.

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Saturday Review

SRI LANKA

COPS & ROBBERS

Excerpt from Sun, 3rd May
Tamilnadu groups backing extremists in Sri Lanka seem to have hired robber gangs to find funds for the Eelam Tigers engaged in a virtual war with the Jaye-

wardene Government, states the SUNDAY DAILY a Bombay newspaper.

A report datelined Bangalore in its issue of 29th April states: "Tentative evidence unearthed here

after the Bangalore police stumbled on one of the gangs whose bid to rob the Basavanagudi branch of the Bank of Maharashtra here yesterday was foiled by alert bank staff points to an organised effort at robbing people and banks to finance the extremists operations."

TRINCO OIL DEAL

No sell-out to US, says Daham & Miller

The following appeared in "THE ISLAND" of 26th April.

Sri Lanka authorities yesterday strongly denied reports in the Indian "Hindu" newspaper which alleged, that the Singapore-based consortium, which won the lease of the Trinco Tank Farm, was a front for a United States firm

The "Hindu" identified Oroleum (Far East) which the paper said was the prime partner in the Consortium-as a front for the US-based

Coastal Corporation of Bermuda.

Asked about the allegations, Ceylon Petroleum Corporation (CPC) Chairman Daham Wimalasena said: "They are baseless and without any foundation."

The oil storage facility was recently leased out to a consortium of three companies—Oroleum of Singapore, Tradinoft of Switzerland and Oiltanks of West Germany.

Sri Lanka has in the past denied allegations that the

storage facility will be given over to US authorities for military purposes.

Mr Wimalasena said the consortium had no connection with American companies. "Douglas Henry Miller, Managing Director of Oroleum, was one time Managing Director of Coastal Corporation but resigned to form his own company", the CPC Chairman said.

He agreed with the "Hindu" report which said Mr. Miller was involved in the earlier attempt by Coas-

tal Corporation to secure the lease.

"But now he runs his own company which has no American interests", Mr. Wimalasena said.

The following appeared in the state-controlled "DAILY NEWS" of 4th May

Mr. Douglas Miller, in a communication with CPC Chief Mr. Daham Wimalasena, has described reports in the Indian Press and a section of the Sri Lanka Press about the tank farm

deal as "scurrilous, malicious and preposterous".

He has denied any connection between Oroleum and his previous employer, the Coastal Corporation, a US company, or himself personally, in the tank farm deal.

Mr. Miller, who strenuously denied that the consortium was a "front" for Coastal, has told CPC that news reports implying that this was so had seriously damaged Oroleum's corporate and professional reputation and also harmed him personally.

Diogenes in Jaffna!

Poor Diogenes! What is happening in Sri Lanka now is enough to upset even the most philosophical philosopher.

One day last week he lost his composure so much that instead of his usual walk on Galle Face Green he strayed further on, past the big five-star hotels that are fast coming up (to be filled up with foreign tourists, of course), past the old Central Telegraph Office, past Premadasa's "attala" on Olcott Mawatha.

He finally found himself at the Fort Railway Station. The time was about 5.45a.m.

He saw a train. Absent-mindedly, he got into it. Then he fell asleep.

He got up six hours later to find that the Inter-City Train had reached Jaffna.

No ticket. No money. No spare clothes. Nothing. Just only his usual philosopher's garb.

Fortunately for him, Gamini Navaratne had gone to the station to buy a return ticket to Colombo. He had had enough of Jaffna. But he could not let down his old friend. He bailed him out. And they both decided to stay in Jaffna for a little longer.

Nestle boycott suspended

The seven-year international boycott against Nestle, the world's principal supplier of infant formula, is over. Sanctions on the Swiss-based company's products imposed by the International Nestle Boycott Committee, comprising labour, religious and health groups in North America, Europe and Australia, are almost certain to be lifted following an accord reached with Nestle over its marketing practices in the Third World.

Underlying the boycott has been a campaign against high infant mortality rates in developing countries. Illiteracy and poor sanitation. Including a lack of refrigeration and clean water, in these areas can lead to misuse of infant formula a substitute for breast feeding, causing dietary deficiencies and serious illness. Critics of Nestle have contended that it has been selling formula in poor countries without regard for its proper use.

Nestle has now agreed to change its marketing practices

to conform with voluntary guidelines of the World Health Organization, thus swinging the campaigners' decision (although these changes will be strictly monitored before the decision is made permanent). The company has agreed to curtail its promotional supplies of free infant formula to Third World hospitals and health care centres, and to stop favours to doctors in exchange for promoting the formula. In addition, they will place warnings of the hazards of formula feeding both on the packaging and in promotional literature.

(Courtesy Development Forum)

HUMAN MILK

Breast may indeed prove to be best. New research has revealed that, in addition to antibodies protecting infants from disease until their own immune systems are working efficiently, mother's milk also contains a very potent anti-parasite chemical

which could prevent diarrhoeal attacks (*Science*, vol. 221).

Giardia muris is a parasitic protozoan that is a major source of gut disease particularly prevalent in children, preventing food absorption and causing diarrhoea. Research carried out at the University of California Medical Center and at the Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation has demonstrated that human milk has the ability to kill *Giardia*—an ability unmatched both by cow's and goat's milk.

The substance responsible for this devastating effect appears to be an enzyme called bile salt stimulated lipase (BSL). Although it is not yet known exactly how BSL works, nor whether breast-fed children suffer less giardiasis than those on the bottle, the enzyme does seem to be a novel antibiotic which has also been proved to attack other disease-carrying protozoa such as *Entamoeba histolytica* which causes dysentery.