

C E Y L O N  
AND THE  
G E R M A N  
DEMOCRATIC  
R E P U B L I C

With compliments  
of the author

BY

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*From:—*

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Parliamentary Delegation of the German Democratic Republic led by Johannes Dieckmann, President of the People's Chamber, received by the late S. W. R. Dias Bandaranaike, Prime Minister of Ceylon



# Ceylon and the German Democratic Republic

The German Democratic Republic is a geographical and political reality. One of the earliest public figures to acknowledge this fact despite the pressures of the Cold War was our late Prime Minister S. W. R. Dias Bandaranaike.

In April, 1959, when a large Parliamentary Delegation of the German Democratic Republic led by the President of the People's Chamber, Johannes Dieckmann, arrived in Ceylon, and was received by Bandaranaike at his office, at the House of Representatives, the latter made it quite clear to the Delegation that he saw no objection not only to concluding a Trade Agreement with the German Democratic Republic, but also to recognising it.

Unfortunately the Prime Minister was assassinated soon afterwards and the question remained unsettled. Had he lived, Ceylon would have had the distinction of giving a lead to many a nation by recognising the German Democratic Republic in the teeth of opposition from some of the protagonists of the Cold War. It would have been a step as significant and historic as the Ceylon - China Trade Pact that was signed in 1952, in defiance of the U.S.A. "Battle" Act that sought to intimidate this country to desist from exporting Rubber to China.

In November, 1960, the question of recognising the German Democratic Republic was raised in the House of Representatives by Pieter Keuneman. The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of External Affairs, Felix Dias Bandaranaike, categorically stated in reply as follows : "The problem of West Germany and East Germany has also been raised by the Hon. the Second Member for Colombo Central, and he made the point that if you are following a principle of non-alignment, indeed you ought to recognise the *de facto* existence of these German Republics. *I should like to indicate here and now that there is no objection in the mind of the Government of Ceylon to such a recognition.*" Well said !

Since this declaration was made a Delegation from the Ministry of Foreign Trade of the German Democratic Republic led by the Hon. Gerhard Weiss came to this country in April, 1961, following hopeful exploratory talks initiated by Erich Renneissen, Commercial Counsellor of the German Democratic Republic in India.

It is gratifying to note that a Trade Agreement was mutually negotiated and signed between the German Democratic Republic and Ceylon on the 22nd April, 1961. Today the flag of the German Democratic Republic proudly flies in the heart of "Millionaire's Row," in Cinnamon



Gardens, Colombo 7, in the grounds of the Office of the German Democratic Republic Trade Mission in Ceylon. This is some progress indeed.

Visible results of this Agreement are coming in, and substantial reciprocal trade has commenced with the German Democratic Republic buying considerable quantities of Ceylon Coconut products at the present juncture. For the smoother development of this trade it is time that the Ceylon-German Democratic Republic Trade Agreement is complemented with a Payments Agreement as was done recently when the Hungarian Payments Agreement with Ceylon was concluded.

The German Democratic Republic has Trade relations with more than a hundred countries. She has on behalf of her Government or her Government-sponsored Chamber of Foreign Trade signed Trade Agreements and Contracts with more than forty countries. She has her own accredited Embassies in the Socialist countries, and has also established Trade Representation (directly or through her Chamber of Foreign Trade) and Offices in Argentina, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Columbia, Denmark, Finland, France, Ghana, Great Britain, Greece, Guinea, Iceland, India, Iraq, Italy, Lebanon, the Netherlands, Norway, Sudan, Sweden, Turkey, Uruguay, Yemen, Yugoslavia and Ceylon.

Burma, Indonesia and the United Arab Republic have exchanged Consulates-General with the German Democratic Republic. In the case of Yugoslavia, she has recognised the German Democratic Republic much to the chagrin of the Federal Republic of Germany. At the Belgrade Conference, despite the intensive lobbying of the Federal Republic of Germany, almost all the countries represented at the Conference emphasised and underlined the fact that there are two Germanys, notwithstanding Federal Germany shutting her eyes to stark reality.

It will be noted that Nehru himself at the height of the Berlin controversy, following the taking over of full control by the German Democratic Republic of the border of West Berlin in August this year, was obliged to acknowledge that the German Democratic Republic is a separate State by itself, and that all the researches of the Historical Division of the Indian Foreign Ministry in New Delhi pointed to the fact that the legal position taken by the Western Powers (or the "free world" as they would choose to call themselves with their pharisaical sense of self-righteousness) in regard to the German Democratic Republic and West Berlin was not as conclusive or convincing as it was pretended.

Not all the plausible persuasion of Galbraith, the U.S.A. Ambassador in India, or the implied threat of an interruption of Foreign Aid from the U.S.A. or the Federal Republic of Germany could make Nehru change his position. This was a revealing and refreshing fact and symbolic of the triumph, sometimes, in this wicked world, of moral values in international affairs.



Our Finance Minister and Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Felix Dias Bandaranaike, who was recently in New York had himself added his voice at the United Nations forum on the 26th September, to the chorus of declarations made by several nations that existing realities could not be ignored, and that "one of these realities was the existence of two Germanys today."

It remains to be seen how soon after his return to Ceylon from his grand tour of the continents will our forthright Finance Minister translate his words into deeds, and make the recognition of the German Democratic Republic an accomplished fact in so far as Ceylon is concerned. Should he do so, such a step will win universal approval from the masses of the people in Ceylon, and it will be regarded as a historic achievement of the Government.

The German Democratic Republic has been the victim of a malicious, calculated and sustained propaganda organised by the Federal Republic of Germany and other misguided forces to wipe out the German Democratic Republic from the map of the world, and to direct the world into believing that there is no such State ; or in the alternative to those who refuse to be deluded by such make-believe, to paint the German Democratic Republic as an impoverished State, with a discontented population and governed behind the Iron Curtain by savages and goatee-faced tyrants, terms which are the synonyms in the political vocabulary of these traducers for Marxists and Communists.

The German Democratic Republic was founded on the 7th October, 1949. It consists of fourteen counties from the Eastern part of pre-war Germany that formed the territory of the Soviet Occupation Zone. The establishment of the German Democratic Republic was a counter to the move made by the Western Powers (or the "free world" if some will have it that way) to integrate the U.S.A., British and French Zones of Occupation through a process of economic union and unilateral currency reform into a separatist West German Government on the 20th September, 1949.

The German Democratic Republic lies at the heart of Europe. It has a territory extending to nearly 42,000 square miles, as large as Holland, Belgium and Denmark put together. Its population exceeds seventeen million and is equal to the combined population of Holland, Belgium and Finland.

The population is more or less homogeneous. There is a small racial minority known as Sorbs who live in the districts of Dresden and Cottbus. The development and preservation of the Sorb national culture and the free use of the Sorb language are guaranteed by the Constitution (Article 11), and the maintenance of Sorb rights assured by the Law of 21st March, 1948. For all national purposes, however, the Sorbs are integrated with the rest of the community.

Almost the entire population of the German Democratic Republic are Protestants. Only about two million of them are Catholics. This is an important factor that distinguishes the German Democratic Re-



public from the Federal Republic, where almost half the population numbering as many as twenty-five million are Catholics.

The German Democratic Republic has an outlet to the sea in the Baltic, and is fast developing excellent commercial ports and ship-building yards at Rostock, Warnemunde, Stralsund and Wismar. It has friendly neighbours in Poland, Czechoslovakia, and a frontier extending to eight hundred and sixty miles with the Federal Republic of Germany. In the centre of the German Democratic Republic a part of its capital city, Berlin, has been constituted into an hostile *enclave* known as West Berlin, sometimes described by Cold War upholders as the "front-line" city of the Western Powers (or the "free world"). It presently remains a smouldering volcano, and (mark you !) it could erupt at any time to destroy the world.

Unlike the territory of Federal Germany where all the industrial and mineral wealth of pre-war Germany was concentrated and developed for years, the territory that was handed over to the German Democratic Republic was mostly agricultural and, in many places, infertile. But during the twelve years of socialist rule, the German Democratic Republic has been transformed from a backward, poverty-stricken serf-land of the Prussian junkers into a remarkable hive of industry, a transformation that has not received the publicity it deserved, because of the over-powering flood of the subtle, systematic and diversionary propaganda of the Western Powers (or the "free world") led by West German tacticians, the lineal and spiritual descendants of Goebels, their great exemplar.

It is not generally known that the German Democratic Republic holds pride of place only to the U.S.S.R. in industrial production among the socialist countries. It holds fifth place in industrial production in Europe, and seventh in the world. This is a notable achievement considering that before the War the "bulk of German industry, especially its basic industry, was situated in the territory that now forms the German Federal Republic."

Before the War the land which now forms the German Democratic Republic was incapable of economic self-support. "In 1936," says an American writer, Milton Meyer, "what is now West Germany produced sixty-two times as much iron as the East, thirty-three times as much hard coal, seventeen times as much iron ore and twelve times as much ingot steel. But now the *per capita* consumption of butter, sugar and animal fat in the East is higher than it is in the West, rationed coal is half the Western price and even unrationed coal is lower than the Western price ; *per capita*, production of electricity surpasses not only West Germany's but Russia's and it is half as expensive as West German. Steel production, starting almost at zero, will surpass West Germany's in two years."

Is this not an economic miracle ? Meyer says it is. He declares "The real economic miracle of Germany is in the East not in the West."



"How was it done," enquires Meyer and proceeds to answer the question himself in the following words, "It was done in part with the assistance of Russian credits and imports that was niggardly compared to America's priming of the West. It was done with the frightening German energy, efficiency, and conscientiousness that did it in the West, *but without Krupps and without Nazis*. It was done with German genius. Without a drop of oil a pipe-line from Russia is being built. A whole chemical industry (including the production of all motor fuel) was built on soft coal."

Indeed one could see the largest movable piece of machinery in the world stripping the earth for soft coal somewhere outside Leipzig in the German Democratic Republic, which is the world's largest producer of soft coal (lignite) with an annual output of over two hundred million tons.

The German Democratic Republic holds fourth place in the world in the export of machinery. In chemical production the German Democratic Republic ranks second to the Soviet Union among the socialist countries, and holds seventh place in the world, although on a *per capita* reckoning the German Democratic Republic comes second in the world. But for the handicaps and obstruction placed by her enemies on her astonishing progress, the German Democratic Republic would have developed more rapidly and more securely under her socialist system.

Her present position is sufficiently strong and significant to indicate that she has a great role to play in world economy, and that under-developed countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America, with whom she is so anxious to associate as an equal partner, could turn to her eventually for considerable assistance in industrial and technical aid and equipment.

The German Democratic Republic is the answer to the prayers of outraged humanity for a new Germany at the end of the Second World War. Before the final collapse of Hitler, the Great Powers that combined against Fascist Germany had drawn up their plans for the final liquidation of Nazism and the eradication forever of German militarism, the scourge of mankind for several generations.

It was at Potsdam that the grand strategy found concrete expression. Several plans were discussed and the dismemberment of Germany was seriously proposed by the U.S.A. Amidst all the plans and counter-plans, on one thing all were agreed upon, and that was the banishment of Nazism and all that it stood for, such as Racism, Arrogance of so-called Nordic superiority, and Anti-Semitism.

Go where you will in the German Democratic Republic you will find Nazism dead. No goose-stepping — No *Deutschland Uber Alles* — no revanchism. The German Democratic Republic is satisfied with her neighbours and her frontiers. The Oder-Neisse Line which separates Poland and the German Democratic Republic is the boundary of Peace.



But on the other hand in the Federal Republic of Germany, the people have been roused to a frenzy of revanchism and irrendentism. West Berlin is a hot-bed of spies and saboteurs, and the mood of Federal Germany today is the mood of Hitler in 1938. They want to build a New Reich to last a thousand years.

I well remember listening to a direct radio broadcast of Hitler's frenzied outburst just before Munich in 1938 from the Sports Palast in Berlin. One Reich, One People, One Fuhrer. The echoes of Heil Hitler, Heil Hitler, Heil Hitler, Heil, Heil, Heil, keeps reverberating in my ears.

Everybody cheered to the last man in Germany. If there had been a plebiscite then, they would have all voted for Hitler, 99.999 percent. That is the bogey of self-determination. Reason fails before the avalanche of misguided chauvinist frenzy. But where are those who cheered now? Globke, Oberlander, Speidel, Strauss, all you Nazis stand up and be counted. They are all unashamedly bellowing and cockily goose-stepping in the Federal Republic of Germany, again wallowing in savage chauvinist gluttony, while their former compatriots, now living in the German Democratic Republic, are doing their utmost to atone for the brutal crimes of the Nazis. A visit to the former concentration camps (veritable chambers of blood-curdling horror) such as Buchenweld, Sachsenhausen and Ravensbrueck, situated in the German Democratic Republic, will convincingly prove this.

Adenauer should take a lesson from history. He should ponder over the words written by one of the greatest German dramatists of modern times, Bertolt Brecht, in an Open Letter to German Artists and Writers in 1951. He said, "Great Carthage waged three wars. It was still powerful after the first one, still inhabitable after the second. It was no longer traceable after the third." The fate of the mad man Hitler awaits those who dare to halt the march of human progress.

To us in Ceylon, who are in the fortunate position of being able to view all international problems fairly and independently, without allowing ourselves to be influenced either by favours or by threats, the obvious course open is to follow the policy of our former Prime Minister, S. W. R. Dias Bandaranaike, often reiterated by members of the present Government, and exemplified by the action of Yugoslavia, the host country of the neutralist Belgrade Powers, by giving due recognition to the New Germany that is symbolised in the German Democratic Republic. Such recognition, one must regretfully state, is long overdue.



## APPENDIX

On the 1st December, 1961, a new organisation entitled the German-South East Asian Society was inaugurated in Berlin. Representatives from all parts of South-East Asia were present on that occasion. Ceylon was represented by Mr. S. P. Amarasingam, Chief Editor of the "Tribune." The Hon'ble Max Sefrin, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Health of the German Democratic Republic, was elected its first President.

The President of the Ceylon - German Democratic Republic Friendship Association sent the following Message to this Conference :

" On behalf of the Executive Committee and the other members of the Ceylon - German Democratic Republic Friendship Association, I have great pleasure in sending you our warmest greetings on this historic occasion, and to express the hope that the Society which you and our colleagues are jointly inaugurating on the First of December, 1961, in your Capital city Berlin, will prove not only beneficial to its members and member-states, but also serve the cause of Peace and Prosperity for all mankind.

We commend this noble undertaking and congratulate you for organising this body, which will bind the new nations of South-East Asia with the New Germany in the heart of Europe in an unbreakable bond of friendship and mutual service.

" We recognise the German Democratic Republic as a Free and Independent State, as a growing Industrial Power of the first rank in the World, as a nation dedicated to the renunciation of War and the eradication of Hitlerism, Militarism, Revanchism and Racism — factors which besmirched the fair name of Germany in the past and which brought untold misery and suffering to the German people, to Europe and the rest of Humanity.

" Never more shall a Hitlerite Germany arise, thanks to your determined resolution. We salute you, we are beholden to you for the great stand you have taken for World Peace. We in this part of the world who are only now seeing the light of Freedom after long nights of colonial and imperialist oppression, we — more than any others in the world — want Peace to regain our rightful places in the comity of nations. We look up to you to save the peace of the world, not only for your own salvation but also for ours too. We are watching with eager interest the heroic efforts you are making to discredit the mad lust for power and revenge, and the hollow pretence of racist superiority that some of the dregs of Hitler's Germany are trying to revive.

" For Your sake and for Our sake, for Humanity's sake go forward with your mission with courage and confidence so that in the end we may from all parts of the world look towards Berlin as a living monument to World Peace.





