

TRIBUNE

CEYLON NEWS REVIEW

Vol. 28 No. 33 — September 29, 1984 — Rs. 4.00

Next Week

- ★ **POLITICIANS**
—More about them
- ★ **"NO-POVERTY" SOCIETY**
—by Dr. A. T. Ariyaratne
- ★ **FOREIGN PRESS**
—Sri Lanka
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—Rethinking wanted
- ★ **BOOK REVIEW**
—Constitutional Crisis

Are Politicians Responsible?

In response to what we said last week about the growing corruption in this country several readers have written to us giving us reasons why politicians should be held responsible for the growing corruption in the country. One reader from Kandy says "... the whole value system has been conditioned by the economic system which has sanctified not only the exploitation of one section by another but has also promoted the accumulation of gains without any consideration for the means in the hands of the few It is true that

people everywhere, especially those in authority, and the press have kept condemning and criticising corruption, but the growth of unaccounted money and its use has sanctified corruption...."

Another reader, this time from Colombo, has said that it is inevitable that politicians should be blamed because they have taken upon themselves the responsibility for the welfare of their fellow citizens. It is because of this claim and because they go to the people asking them to put their fate into their (politicians) hands that people expect them to observe a code of conduct. And if their behaviour deviates from the straight and narrow path, then people blame them for all ills including corruption. To make matters worse most politicians once the euphoria of an election is over, slowly sink into the comfort of enjoying power leaving the task of actual administration and even formulating policy to bureaucrats in pursuance of the dictum that politicians should not have a direct hand in the administration or the implementation of policies. With the result that once elected, a politician is only concerned with gathering the fruits of power to secure the wherewithal for the next election as well as the enjoyment of all that goes with the money power. In this way, we have created politicians whose value system revolves around strategies to win elections and acquire wealth.... The exceptions are so few that they do not count." We have received many more letters and comments on this question and we shall publish them in the coming weeks. One thought is common to all of them—that politicians and political parties, anxious to win elections to gain power, are responsible for most of the ills of the country; that the conduct and behaviour of politicians have brought disrepute and discredit to all governments and that this has deprived governments of the prestige necessary to run a competent administration and maintain law and order.

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Reference No. ATH 4/640

It is intended to acquire the Land described in the schedule below. For further particulars, please see the Extraordinary Gazette of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka. No. 315/41 of Dated 21. 9. 84

SCHEDULE

D. R. O's Division, : Hanwella.
Situation : Udugahapattu.
Village : Kanampella.
Name of Land : Gonbaruwatta.
Lot No. : 01.
Plan No P. P. Co. : 6158

H. C. Gunewardane
District Land Officer
Colombo District.

The Kachcheri,
Colombo.
Date:-19.9.1984

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*A Journal of Ceylon and
World Affairs*

Founded in 1954

Every Saturday

Editor: S. P. Amarasingam

Vol. 28 - No. 33

September 29, 1984

43, Dawson Street

Colombo 2.

Tel: 33172

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

DISENCHANTMENT about the liberalised imports of Sri Lanka's economy has taken root in the heartland of the Government and the UNP. It is now known that no less a person than Mr. Cyril Mathew, Minister of Industries and Scientific Affairs, has in recent times openly criticised some aspects of the prevailing scheme of liberalised imports. His view is it has done much damage to local industries. Minister Mathew at the annual awards "Nite" Dinner of the Plastics and Rubber Institute had said that too much liberalisation was not a good thing for the country's economy: "... The developed countries, he said, talked of a free economy and a liberalised economy but took care to protect their local industry. Sri Lanka ought to do likewise. Goods produced locally must be of reasonable quality reasonably priced and available in sufficient numbers, any industry which satisfied these criteria must be protected from competition from cheap foreign goods. The industrialised nations did not want our finished goods, he said. They wanted only our raw material. These countries did not give us the right technology either. The country must draw on modern technology through entering into more and more collaboration with foreign investors. If certain imports cannot be shut out altogether then, the competition from them must be consciously limited. A case in point, the Industries Minister said, were imports of polyurethane. This commodity which competed with the local coir mattress manufacturing industry was an instance where free imports were likely to stifle the growth of local enterprise. There were many other such imports which must be curtailed or stopped altogether. Plastics and Rubber Institute Chairman, Chulaka de Zoysa, said that their Institute had educated and trained large numbers in the rubber and plastics industry in the last 25 years, but they had maintained a low profile. The plastics and rubber industry had shown phenomenal growth in the last seven years. In 1977 the country consumed only 6,800 tons of natural rubber for end-products produced locally. This represented 5 percent of the total natural rubber produced in the country. In 1983 consumption was a record 17,500 tons which meant a 14 percent achievement. In plastics too there had been accelerated growth leading to a turnover of Rs. 1.5 billion. A turnover of Rs. 1.3 billion had been achieved in the rubber industry. But in Malaysia where the population was about the same as here, the rubber industry converted five times as much natural rubber as in Sri Lanka for end products, while in the plastics industry it was 10 times more. Mr. de Zoysa called for a policy by government that would help increase consumption of natural rubber from the present 17,000 tons to at least 40,000 tons in five years. In this way the revenue from exporting the converted rubber would be many times more than what was obtained from the raw rubber exports. Today there was a slowing down in the growth of the industry. From 1977 to 1980 local natural rubber consumption increased from 8,000 tons per year to 15,000 tons. But in the next three years the increase was only 2,500 tons. He said that if the same growth momentum from 1977 to 1980 was maintained the country's rubber exports valued at Rs. 157.3 million in 1982 could be pushed to Rs. 15,000 million in a few years. It is time that the Government starts on serious re-thinking on this matter. There is no doubt that the manner in which the system of liberalised imports has been implemented has not only inhibited the growth of local industries but has also undermined or virtually destroyed a large number of existing industries that could have made Sri Lanka more self-reliant and economically more viable. This question of the open economy is bound to be a major issue in the next election especially the damage done to the country's economy by the excessive imports.

On Corruption

With the by-elections campaigns in two electorates in full swing, one of the main issues that Opposition Parties and the vast number of Independents (82 of them in both) have raised is the charge that the free economy and Governmental practices have led to massive corruption at all levels. In its widest connotation, corruption includes improper or selfish exercise of power and influence attached to a public office or to a special position in public life. *It is true that in one form or the other corruption has existed from time immemorial.* Kautilya's *Arthashastra* refers to many ways in which officers may cause loss to the Treasury. Of embezzlement, no less than forty ways are enumerated. Securing some kind of pecuniary or other material advantage directly or indirectly for oneself or family, relatives or friends, constitutes the most common form of corruption. With the ever-increasing complexities of modern life, varied forms of corruption are being practised. In law, corruption is a criminal misconduct. It has five categories: (1) Habitual acceptance of illegal gratification; (2) Habitual acceptance of a valuable thing without consideration; (3) Dishonest or fraudulent misappropriation of property; (4) Abuse of official position to obtain a valuable thing; and (5) Possession of property disproportionate to known sources of income.

There are two pre-requisites for the origin of corruption. A mental preparedness on the part of an individual to accept illegal gratification and his occupation of a position of power and patronage. The extent to which corruption flourishes in a given society mainly depends on the attitude of the people. In Sri Lanka the public attitude is one of apathy. It is an unconscious sanction to corruption at various levels. The people of Sri Lanka have been under foreign invaders for 450 years. Except for some honourable exceptions, the rulers of the day remained unconcerned toward the behaviour of their officials as long as the requirements of their Treasury were met. Over the centuries the people came to tolerate corruption as a normal feature of public life. Before Independence, corruption existed in all provinces in some form or other. Public opinion had come to accept it as inevitable.

AFTER INDEPENDENCE the old bureaucratic framework has been retained. It was designed mainly to maintain law and order and collect revenue. The same system is not suitable to the needs of a developing economy. The senior officials are heavily burdened with additional work, with consequential slackness in the degree of supervision. Delays are a regular feature. When great deal of power is concentrated in the hands of low paid staff, and the public is ready to offer bribes to expedite their work or obtain undue favours, corruption is bound to flourish.

The attitude towards corruption has been aptly described thus: "A bribe taken by a peon is called *Santhosam* and by a clerk a *present*. It is a gift when accepted by a senior official. A Minister takes it in the name of *Party Funds*". After Independence attempts have been made to quicken the rate of development so as to make good the time lost over the last two centuries. A society changing at a fast rate has to pay a special price. There has come about a certain amount of weakening of the old system of values without it being replaced by effective new values. With the weakening of the social modes of the simpler society, signs of materialism and importance of status resulting from possession of money and economic power, are clearly visible.

The climate for integrity had been rendered unhealthy by the wartime controls and scarcities, and post-war overflow of money. Governmental activities in the new fields involving huge annual expenditure afforded to the dishonest elements in society unprecedented opportunities of acquiring wealth by dubious means. The low salaries in government services and the depreciation in the value of currency has also added to the aggravation of the problem. Though this cannot be pleaded to justify the fall in the level of integrity, it cannot be denied that economic necessity has encouraged some who could not resist temptation. Some consider modern high taxation as one of the causes of corruption. Henry George has observed that "taxation must not lead man into temptation, by requiring trivial oaths, by making it profitable to lie, to swear falsely, to bribe or to take bribes". *The procedures and practices in some of the Government offices are cumbersome and time-consuming.* The desire to avoid delay has given rise to the dishonest practice of "speed money". It has become a common corrupt practice, for example, in obtaining licences or permits. The bribe giver normally does not expect anything done unlawfully. He wants rapid movement of files and quick decisions. Some members of the staff have got into the habit of not doing anything till they are suitably rewarded. Some clever officials raise frivolous objections or queries to deliberately delay matters. The custom of "speed money" in addition to being a most detested corrupt practise, is also one of the most serious causes of delay and inefficiency.

IN INDIA, in June 1962, the Government of India constituted a Committee on Prevention of Corruption, headed by K. Santhanam, MP. In its unanimous report, the Committee found that the ultimate sources of corruption were (1) ministers, (2) legislators, (3) political parties and (4) industrialists and merchants who seek favours from these three. There is a widespread feeling that the fall in integrity is not uncommon among ministers. Some have enriched themselves illegitimately, obtained good jobs for their sons and

relations through nepotism. The Committee's recommendations regarding these ultimate sources of corruption have not received serious attention. A Commission or Committee of this kind is now a long-felt need for Sri Lanka. Commissions investigating corruption in the past were generally in respect of specific charges against particular persons.

One of the principal reasons for the steady increase in corruption in Sri Lanka is the rise of the get-rich-quick politicians. In addition to feathering their own nests, they have also encouraged corruption among officials to suit their own ends. It is no wonder that the profession of politics has attracted some self-seekers. Cicero, in his *Officers* has recorded that "the most wretched custom, assuredly, is scramble for office". No training or preparation is required for office seeking. Party honesty is based on expediency. Party strength is increased by bribery of office. People change their affiliations when a bigger bribe is offered to them. Corruption is not confined only to public servants and politicians. Employees of private firms are not free from it. Directors and members of staff of companies are indulging in substantial misappropriation of company funds. For purchasing raw materials or stores or selling scarce goods or awarding contracts or agencies, they charge secret commissions. There is a good deal of corruption and misfeasance in the co-operative sector too. One of the major contributory factors for the growth of corruption is the unwillingness to deal drastically with the corrupt public servants. The prevalent practice is to initiate action only when a complaint is received against an officer.

A COMMISSION should be appointed in Sri Lanka to investigate corruption at the political level. In many countries it was suggested a permanent authority to keep a continuous vigilance over Ministers, by setting up of an "Ombudsman" as in the Scandinavian countries. *The Ombudsman in Sri Lanka is a joke. He has little or no power to investigate a politician—and the very purpose for which an Ombudsman is wanted in Sri Lanka is defeated.* An Ombudsman should be able to act independent of the government. Action once started must not be dropped till it reaches its logical conclusion. And, action against corrupt politicians will create a very healthy climate against corruption.

Corruption in the private sector also effects the climate in the public services. It deserves some effective attention. Excepting a few, business houses are generally hesitant to take action against their erring employees. They prefer to put an end to the problem by getting rid of their services by mutual compromise. There is no effective machinery for punishing corrupt employees of private firms. An independent non-official organisation of merchants

should be formed as Vigilance Chamber against corruption in the private sector. It should be financially assisted by Chambers of Commerce. It should be able to investigate cases and even launch prosecutions. Experienced officers from Government and reputed companies may be seconded to the Vigilance Chamber to deal with corruption cases in the private sector. The threat to a business executive to submit to the scrutiny of such an organisation may be an effective deterrent. Employees punished or disgraced on the recommendation of the Vigilance Chamber, should not be eligible for re-employment by other business houses.

Corruption is an old disease. Its eradication is not easy but it can certainly be minimised by removing public apathy, creating strong public opinion against it, and educating the younger generation about the evils of corruption and virtues of honesty. It is necessary to launch a simultaneous three-pronged attack against corruption in the private, public and political sectors. It is necessary to destroy the influence of black money which is a major source of corruption. A curb on ostentation is also essential. Ostentatious style of living by a few tempts the simple and honest people to take to a wrong path. Preventive action at the source points is also necessary by streamlining forms and procedures. Finally, deterrent punishment and a reformatory approach are necessary as a practical cure for corruption.

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THE POLITICAL SCENE

IN SRI LANKA TODAY

The Ethnic Problem - 4

By S. P. Amarasingam

THE FUTURE, at the moment, seems dark and bleak. It is not likely that Tamil militants can be wiped out completely by military means. Many believe that they will at least be able to kill some army and police officers from time to time. The response from the Security Services (Army, Navy, Air Force and Police), it is thought, will continue to be on predictable lines: that they will rush into excesses. This is, as all knowledgeable observers know, exactly what the Tamil extremists want: because this will increase the quantum, tempo and momentum of the international uproar against the Sri Lanka government.

It is in this situation that frantic efforts are now being made by the government through the All Party Conference (APC) to find a political solution based on some kind of autonomy—district or regional or provincial or zonal—with a Second Chamber to give it an umbrella. The APC seems to be considering many other changes also in the matter of language, university admission etc., etc., to ease the Ethnic confrontation. It will be a major break-through if a constitutional formula acceptable to all parties is found for some kind of autonomy. This will at least help to initiate a cease-fire: for only a ceasefire will make it possible to formulate and adopt the fundamental changes that will keep the country a unitary state as well as bring lasting communal harmony and ensure the well-being of all people who have this country for their home irrespective of their race, religion, caste or language.

In this paper I can only briefly indicate a few of the changes which I think will help to usher in a new era in this country.

First, it is necessary to educate people in all walks of life that this country is traditionally a multi-racial, multi-lingual and multi-religious society based on interdependence and tolerance and that at bedrock it continues to be so in spite of efforts by our former colonial masters, their latter allies and other interested parties to make it otherwise. At the grassroots, in the villages in Sinhalese, Tamil and Muslim areas, it will not be difficult to convince people of this. In fact, it is still the dormant pattern though it has been disturbed in recent decades.

But it is in the upper stratum of our society, the so-called intellectual elite among the different communities, that the concept of mono-language, mono-race, mono-culture and mono-everything, based on

Western thinking and logic centred around a homogenous nation state, has taken deep root. It is this elite and its political-cultural hangers-on who refuse to accept the reality of "multi and interdependent society. They want Sinhala Only or Tamil Only—an integrated Sinhala Buddhist state or a Tamil Eelam state. Yet they also want a solution to the ethnic problem with all its attendant problems of language education, employment and what not.

What they fail to see is that in this country, only the acceptance of a tolerant "multi" society that can solve all ethnic, religious and language conflicts. Recent happenings have shaken many of the mono-cultists, but they are die hards. Very little will be gained by spending time and effort to convince or convert them. All efforts should be concentrated at the village level grassroots. It will also be useful to recall that the multi-racial, multi-linguistic, multi-religious and multi-caste society is based on tolerance. Every village may not have all these constituent units to make a comprehensive "multi" village. But the spirit of tolerance was universal. In earlier times, when caste was an integral part of the then of division labour, relationship was based on status and not on class as in developed capitalist societies. In new traditional villages of today, the Gandhian concept of caste equality as human beings would assume a new dimension just as equality with regard to religion, and race will have modern overtones. But the underlying unchanging bedrock must be tolerance.

It is this spirit of tolerance that was destroyed by the European conquerors who came as colonisers and civilisers. The British, and before them the Dutch and the Portuguese, did not have any use for the traditional system based on tolerance and consensus under the leadership of a panchayat of elders. The Europeans brought the intolerance of a mono-cultural and mono-religious system and imposed the dominance of a commander or a nominee of the ruling race—in later times it was a political party or a mafia, of thugs and wheeler-dealers (in sheep's clothing). They based their power on mobilising a strong force, recruited on race or religion, language or caste. They exercised power by force and believed in domination and the suppression of all others especially those who questioned their supremacy. *It is this concept of a mono-centric system to "rule" a multi-racial, multi-lingual, and multi-religious society that must be changed if a new Sri Lanka is to be built.*

There are 23,000 or 24,000 villages in the country and in them live the bulk of the population. I cannot say that I know everything about village grassroots, but I have some knowledge of them. In this connection, I must say that I have been impressed by what I have seen in the Sarvodaya Village Centres in Sinhalese, Tamil and Muslim areas—there are over 6,000 or hem so far—in all parts of the country. The Sarvodaya village is based on the Gandhian concept of the

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traditional society of a multi-level, multi-faceted character based on tolerance and inter-dependence. *What Sarvodaya wants to do, like Sarvodaya in India, is not to provide an "alternative" to what the British and its present-day allies have sought to build in our villages, but to leap-frog over the rather weak and uncertain superstructure that has been imposed on them into a new society based on the spirit of old interdependent traditional village tolerance. The old spirit still exists, but it has to be given new form and content to suit contemporary times.*

This is not easy to be achieved but I have seen it happen in practice in many places. I have also seen at these Sarvodaya Centres the concept of a multi-racial, multi-lingual, multi-religious and multi-caste society, with equality to all being accepted and practised. The Sarvodaya experiment may require many changes to make it acceptable in different parts of the island but it is a start.

To make this concept of a multi-lingual, racial, multi-religious society accepted in all parts of Sri Lanka is a long term objective, but unless this is achieved it will be impossible to sustain a unitary state in this island. But I see no reason why this cannot be done. If an endeavour is started along the correct lines there will be remarkable changes in the climate and atmosphere of the political life of this country. Racial, language, religious and even caste conflict will diminish and then disappear.

Second, as the present ethnic conflicts arose from the language question, the present language laws must be changed. Even the APC seems to be acutely conscious of this. In a multi-lingual, multi-racial society like Sri Lanka, both national languages Sinhalese and Tamil should have equal status. They should both be official languages. Even Dr. M. C. M. Kaleel has recently supported this proposal to make them both official languages. English should have a place as a world language. The existing language laws must therefore be changed. Bilingualism or Trilingualism should be voluntary. No compulsion is called for. People must be free and have the opportunities to learn one or both official languages. A new language package must be placed on the Statute Book. **This is the second requisite to keep this country a unitary state.**

Third, the present conglomerate of Citizenship laws must be scrapped and there must be one single law for all who already have this country as a home with special provision for aliens who wish to become its citizens. There must be only one class of Sri Lanka citizens and should have only two classes of residents—Sri Lanka citizens and aliens. **Only then can a true Sri Lankan identity be established.**

Fourth, the country should revert to its traditional policy of non-alignment. Sri Lanka must once again

be in the forefront of the mainstream of the Non-aligned Movement. Further, all misunderstandings with India, and other Non-aligned countries, especially the Arab countries, should be cleared up. No room should be given for suspicions that Sri Lanka was ganging up with certain powers hostile to India. This return to Non-alignment is extremely important if Sri Lanka wants to remove all geo-strategic compulsions that might tend to be militate against the territorial integrity of Sri Lanka.

These are four of the most urgent steps that must be taken to keep the country a unitary state and at the same time bring peace and harmony. It is only after this that it will be possible to work out a new constitutional framework for a multi-racial, multi-religious and multi-lingual society. And also an economic programme for a society without exploitation.

But even before steps are taken to adopt all these measures, it is necessary for the government to win the hearts and minds of the Tamil people. It would be unrealistic to say that this process can start only after Tamil terrorism is completely wiped out. The fact is that terrorism can disappear only if the hearts and minds of the Tamil people are won. Apart from the fact that Armed Forces and Security Services must learn to conduct themselves as they should, there should be massive investment for economic development.

I am convinced that if this country is to remain a unitary state, in the context of the internal political, external geostrategic realities, the measures I have suggested have to be adopted.

There are some people who demand that there should be a "return to democracy" as a pre-condition for any solution. But many can rightly ask as to what this "democracy" means and when such a desirable "democracy" was prevalent in Sri Lanka even after Independence. Before that, under colonialism, even under the Donoughmore home rule set-up, democracy had a special meaning and nobody would want a return to that.

It would be better for the "return to democracy" enthusiasts to concentrate on finding solutions. To insist on a return to anything in the past even under the magic term "democracy" is only to make implicit fault-finding a pre-requisite for any settlement. This is not the time for fault-finding whether it be in regard to events that took place in 1911, in 1915, or in 1931, 1936, or 1946, or 1951, or 1956 or 1958 or 1971, or 1977 or even in more recent years. Such an exercise will only detract from the present efforts to create the proper climate for a political solution. If the measures I have suggested are carried out, there will be an automatic return to democracy without flaunting slogans which will be regarded as sectarian.

I am conscious that many of you will disagree with the thesis I have set out in this paper. But I would earnestly request you to consider what I have said.

Concluded.

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CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT ON

THE ROLE OF SECURITY FORCES IN THE NORTH

Recent events in the northern province of Sri Lanka have caused the Civil Rights Movement (CRM) grave anxiety. It is greatly perturbed at the increasing levels of violence in this area.

A heavy burden lies on the government and the security forces to maintain law and order, and to protect the fundamental rights of all citizens. CRM is aware that in recent times the security forces have been severely provoked by the brutal premeditated murders in ambushes of several of their colleagues by violent Tamil chauvinist groups. Such murders are calculated to provoke the security forces to retaliate against the civilian population and thereby alienate them: the security forces must not play into their hands. The situation thus calls for the most rigorous, indeed iron discipline on the part of the security forces. CRM wishes to draw particular attention to two aspects of the present situation in solving the violation of fundamental rights:

- (1) *Damage and destruction to property of innocent persons as a result of retaliation by the armed services to the murder of their colleagues.*

One recent example was the destruction of several shops and houses in Mannar belonging to the Muslim population who could not by any stretch of the imagination have any connection whatever with the Tamil chauvinist militants.

CRM welcomes the decision of the government to pay compensation to the persons affected both in Mannar, and to passengers of Airlanka, a state corporation, who were injured in a bomb blast in Madras allegedly the work of Tamil militants. We ask that this commendable principle be applied uniformly and that the victims of recent violence in Valvettiturai be compensated. Further it is necessary that the law must not only take its course as far as the offenders are concerned, but must be seen to take its course. Action should be taken against those servicemen who broke the law in Mannar and Valvettiturai and the people must be informed of such action.

- (2) *The second aspect that is of concern to CRM is the mass arrest of all young men from a particular village in Jaffna.*

According to newspaper reports, over 500 young men have been taken into custody and are being held in camps in the south. In the

past those taken into custody fell into one of two categories: they were either persons who were suspected of having committed an offence, or were persons who were a threat to national security.

These young men fall into neither category.

While a government faced with a serious national security problem has the right to choose a technique that is best suited to deal with the problem it is facing, it must be remembered that a government which is committed to the rule of law and has guaranteed in its Constitution the fundamental right of freedom from arbitrary arrest is thereby limited in its choice. CRM is, of course, aware that many of the persons so detained have been released and those who had to sit examinations were released in order to enable them to do so. Nevertheless, the detention of persons who are admittedly innocent and who do not pose a threat to national security is indefensible.

It is important to re-state what is self evident: the role of the armed services in the north is to maintain the Rule of Law and to prevent a civilized society from sliding into anarchy. If the armed services themselves violate the Rule of Law, or resort to barbaric methods, then they have failed.

The increasing carnage in the north, the rising deaths, whether of young Sinhala soldiers, or Tamil militants, and the increase of ethnic tension have gravely affected our society. It is, of course, urgent that a political solution be found for the ethnic problem: more delay means more deaths.

The solution has to be worked out in a spirit of goodwill. It is important that such discussions should not be affected by extraneous considerations, such as the irresponsible anti-Sinhala racist propaganda of the Eelam lobbies abroad—it is an indication of the lack of the good faith of such persons that not even one document in Sinhala setting out the grievances of the Tamils has ever been published, while such documents have been published in several European languages. Further, we urge that our own leaders examine each solution, be it a Provincial Council, or a Second Chamber, on its merits, and that the discussion be carried on continuously rather than in an ad hoc and staccato manner.

*Desmond Fernando
Secretary CRM*

16/1, Don Carolis Road,
Colombo 5.

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FROM BRITAIN

SL's Ruling Party's Dilemma

London, July 14: The undeclared battle for the succession to Mr. J. R. Jayewardene, the 78-year-old President of Sri Lanka, has deferred any resolution of the conflict between the island's Sinhalese majority and its Tamil minority. President Jayewardene's own position is now very uncertain. A year after the blood-bath of July 1983, he has not repaired either his tarnished reputation or his eroded authority. The President's failure to solve the Tamil question has disappointed the moderates in both communities. The Indian government, which used its good offices last winter to bring the Tamils to the negotiating table, is also annoyed that Mr. Jayewardene allowed these talks to become an exercise in futility. The president returned to Sri Lanka on July 2nd, after discussions in Peking, Washington, London and Delhi, promising new proposals for devolving power. But nothing has emerged even a date for reconvening the all-party conference. The non-militant politicians in the Tamil United Liberation Front agreed to sit down with the government in the hope of securing a commitment to devolution through regional councils in the Tamil majority areas. But Mr. Jayewardene dismissed their demands, along with India's compromise proposal, leaving them looking like yesterday's men. Today it is the extremists in the Tamil north who command the loyalty of local Tamils.

Although the gulf between the government and the Tamils has not narrowed since last summer's fire-storm, the debris has mostly been cleared. Of the 124,000 Tamils who sought refuge in government camps only 6,300—the poorest of the poor—are still homeless. (Another 30,000 refugees are in the Indian state of Tamil Nadu and some 300 Tamil families have emigrated to the United States, Canada, Australia and Britain). More than half the homes which were damaged or destroyed by marauding mobs last July have been made habitable again. About 45 percent of the damaged Tamil businesses are operating. The only trade that has yet to show any recovery is tourism. Early this year, when the government's grip on the Tamil provinces in the north and east appeared to be slipping, the president brought in the ablest man in the Cabinet, a former Oxford Union President Mr. Lalith Athulathmudali, as Minister of National Security and Deputy Minister of Defence. Mr. Jayewardene himself, holds the defence portfolio (and has been pretty ineffective in this role since the army got out of control last July). The appointment

of Mr. Athulathmudali was intended to impose a firmer grip on disaffected elements in the security forces. It proved also to be a catalyst for a political realignment.

The Prime Minister, Mr. Ranasinghe Premadasa, right saw the promotion of his younger rival as a threat to his own prospects of succeeding Mr. Jayewardene. His chosen strategy was to outflank him on the right by taking up an anti-Tamil and anti-Indian position. Meanwhile Mr. Athulathmudali is trying to build a political base in the security services and among the non-militant majority of both Tamils and Sinhalese. First he set out to make himself acceptable to the armed forces. He went to the northern "front" in Jaffna and provided the soldiers with what they needed to do their job. Morale and discipline were slowly restored. This gave the new security minister the confidence to repeal some of the more obnoxious provisions of Sri Lanka's Prevention of Terrorism Act—such as the soldiers' right to dispose of the bodies of victims of violence without judicial inquests and to incarcerate suspected terrorists for long periods without trial. He balanced this concession to liberal sentiment by calling in advisers from Israel's intelligence agency, Mossad, to help curb the Tamil terrorist movement. By confining serious terrorism to the Tamil areas, and by preventing the kind of Sinhalese backlash that set Sri Lanka aflame last July, Mr. Athulathmudali has projected himself as a Sinhalese leader who can provide a modicum of security for the one million Tamils who live outside the pale in Sinhalese areas. Most Sinhalese also appear to have accepted him as the man who can ensure the survival of both the Sinhalese race and the unitary state of Sri Lanka.

But other forces are being stirred up. Over the past seven years the Prime Minister has been assiduously cultivating the penurious low-caste part of the Sinhalese population. Mr. Premadasa's scheme for building a million houses and his so-called village re-awakening movement were designed to appeal to this bottom half of Sinhalese society, which is divided into a dozen low-caste groups. The Prime Minister's hopes of welding these groups together to support his Presidential ambition were increased recently when the "old left" seemed to throw its lot in with him. The left includes the Trotskyite Lanka Sama Samaja Party, the pro-Moscow Communist Party, and a breakaway group of Mrs. Bandaranaike's Sri Lanka Freedom Party. What these groups have in common is not a shared ideology but a shared base among low-caste Sinhalese. Mr. Premadasa is low caste; Mr. Jayewardene and Mr. Athulathmudali belong to the high caste elite that has produced all Sri Lanka's presidents and party leaders. Political polarisation of the Sinhalese community along caste lines has now begun. The fighting within the ruling party is being contained for the present, largely because of the so-called external threat posed by the northern terrorist movement. The bogey of an Indian invasion serves

the same purpose. If these threats were to recede the Jayewardene government could tear itself apart in the process of finding an acceptable successor to the ageing president, even though his term has another five years to run.

The Economist

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FROM INDIA

The Sethusamudram Project

By N. S. Ramaswami

A PROJECT to deepen the shallow bay separating the pilgrimage centre in the South Rameswaram from the islet of Talaimannar in Sri Lanka is said to be under active consideration by the Indian Government, mainly in view of the now changed defence postures in the Indian Ocean. The ship canal project was, in fact, first conceived 120 years ago by the then British Government. The temple of Sri Ramanatha at Rameswaram is one of India's great pilgrim centres. Ships sailing from the west coast of India to the east have now to circumnavigate Sri Lanka. Only small vessels and fishing boats can pass from the Gulf of Mannar, off Kanyakumari, India's southern-most point, to the Palk Straits, farther north, as a result of the presence of sandstone reefs, which legends relate to the bridge Lord Rama built to enable his army of monkeys to reach Ravana's Lanka. It is also known as "Adam's Bridge".

The Bay of Bengal Pilot, published by the British Admiralty in London, described the Palk bay: "The general depths in the bay are from six to seven fathoms, but on its eastern side, depths of five fathoms and less extend as much as 15 miles from the coast of Ceylon, and within it are several islands, rocks and shoals; on the southern side are depths of less than five fathoms within five miles of the coast in places". To obviate these hazards, the canal project was first envisaged in the last century, but nothing has come of that effort and of many other such ventures in the present century. If the canal is dug, ships can save considerable mileage and expenses. Today, ships proceeding from Kanyakumari to Madras and to Calcutta have to sail 755 and 1,357 nautical miles, respectively. With the commissioning of the canal the distance can be reduced to 402 and 1,098 nautical miles. The project is more important in the context of the political developments in Sri Lanka. There are reliable reports, despite persistent denials by Sri Lanka, that the United States is going to build a major base in Trincomalee, a superb natural harbour on the eastern coast of that country. This is in addition to another base of the US in the Indian Ocean, the island of Diego Garcia. Unconfirmed reports are also circulating that Mossad, the Israeli secret service outfit, is actively involved in Sri Lankan affairs including

training of its armed forces, and that British mercenaries are present in large numbers in the island. The region immediately south of India, a bare 32 kms. from the mainland is now suddenly involved in potentially dangerous military politics. In an exigency, Indian ships may not be able to pass from one coast to another uninterrupted. A submarine or a naval air base situated in Trincomalee will also seriously hamper India's defence positions. The only via media then is to avoid the circumnavigation of the island and this can be achieved through a ship canal from the Gulf of Mannar to the Palk Straits.

The project was first mooted in 1862. Sir Robert Bristow who was the architect of the Cochin port, suggested in 1920 the need for such a canal. Since then a number of committees and sub-committees were appointed to work out the details of the project, and with a surprising unanimity, all of them have found it to be perfectly feasible. The first comprehensive technical survey after independence on the project was made by the Dr. A. Ramaswami Mudaliyar Committee which submitted its report in 1956. It recommended that the project now called Sethusamudram should be implemented along with the development of Tutukudi harbour under the second Five Year Plan. The proposed canal is 85 nautical miles long. The opposition to the project is reported to stem from some official quarters apparently over its economic viability. Protagonists of the scheme say that in similar canals elsewhere, the income from canal rates is not the only criterion to consider the yield on investment. For example, the US spent 1,952 million dollars on the Panama Canal project in 1912 but by 1966, it could recover only 1,252 million dollars. The Sethusamudram project officials quoted the Lieutenant Governor of the Panama Canal Authority as saying that canal tolls have never been set (for the Panama Canal) with a pre-determined expectation of yield on the investment. The project will lead to the development of the hinterland. This region is drought-prone and has only a limited industrial concentration at present. The canal will bring many ships, Indian and foreign, and that will stimulate the economic growth of the region. To the defence planner, a developed national seaway is gaining much importance. Developments in the Indian Ocean are ominous. Super power rivalry has reached this area and India's neighbour has become hostile. An indication of this was apparent in the award of a huge contract with defence and security implications in Trincomalee not to India, which had submitted the tenders but to a Singapore firm, which it is believed has western affiliations. A situation may arise when Indian ships may find it difficult to sail from one coast to another. That would prove to be a great liability during a war. The Sethusamudram project is vital to the nation's security: if not economy.—PT/.

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September 17 - 23

**DIARY OF EVENTS IN SRI LANKA
COMPILED FROM DAILY NEWS-
PAPERS PUBLISHED IN COLOMBO**

DN—Daily News; *DM*—Daily Mirror; *DO*—Daily Observer; *ST*—Sunday Times; *SO*—Sunday Observer; *DMN*—Dinamina; *LD*—Lankadipa; *VK*—Virakesari; *JTH*—Aththa; *SM*—Silumina; *SLDP*—Sri Lankadipa; *AD*—Janadina; *S*—Sun; *DV*—Davasa; *DP*—Dinapathi; *CM*—Chinthamani; *WK*—Weekend; *RV*—Riviresa; *DK*—Dinakara; *EN*—Elenadu; *IS*—Island; *DI*—Divaing; *IDPR*—information Dept. Press Release.

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 17: Participants from 28 countries will attend the three-day international rubber conference beginning today at 8.30 a.m. at the BMICH, Colombo. Andrei Gromyko's UN comeback after a year's absence and his rendezvous on September 28 with Ronald Reagan have turned the spotlight on the 39th General Assembly opening Tuesday amid revived hopes of a thaw in US-Soviet relations—*DN*. The intensive course in English for new entrants to the universities who are weak in this subject, is expected to begin in the first week of November—*DO*. President J. R. Jayewardene announced yesterday that the 90,000 stateless people would be granted citizenship as agreed at the all-party conference. Applications for the special intake to the universities and university college in Batticaloa for the 1984/85 academic year are being entertained by the University Grants Commission; all applications will be considered on merit a UGC official said. Education Minister Ranil Wickremasinghe said that whatever crisis the Jaffna peninsula has to face the school system should go on without disruption—*SU*. The CID is looking for a young man called "Ambalangoda Parakrama" who is believed to be having connections with certain northern terrorists, CID sources said. Tug boats were reported last evening rushing to the rescue of a Sri Lankan vessel which had sent distress calls reporting a bomb attack and fire from a position south of Iran's Lavan Island. Indian Prime Minister said yesterday that recent events in Sri Lanka is a matter of concern for the entire world. All India Radio announced last night on their night news bulletin. National Security Minister Lalith Athulathmudali clarified the difference between the insurrection of 1971 and the present terrorist problem in the country—*S*.

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 18: The Ceylon Petroleum Corporation is making emergency purchases of diesel oil from Singapore to ensure continuity of supplies following the attack on its tanker Royal Colombo carrying 12,000 m.t. of crude oil from Saudi Arabia. Israel's new Defence Minister Yitzhak Rabin in his

first public statement yesterday said Israeli troops might be withdrawn from Lebanon in the very near future—*DN*. Rice Millers and stockists in the producing areas appear to be reluctant to release their stocks of Nadu rice at the current wholesale price level though usually Nadu rice has the highest turnover at the Pettah Market—*DO*. A series of proposals which are expected to reflect the progress of the all party conference and also the consensus on matters under discussion, will be placed before delegations by Conference Chairman, President J. R. Jayewardene as the government's proposal on Friday. English will be the medium of instruction for all students following computer programming courses in schools, the chief adviser to the Education Minister D. A. Perera told a seminar on "Computer Literacy in Education" at the Sri Lanka Foundation Institute yesterday. Mothers in Jaffna have made an appeal to President J. R. Jayewardene to release all innocent youths taken into custody by the security forces for questioning—*SU*. Only three subjects to qualify for the GCE Advance Level; a student can sit only twice for the A-Level examination; the Muslim and the Indian Tamil students should be allowed admission with lower marks than now; these are some of the recommendations of the President's Committee which reviewed the University Admission Scheme. The by-elections for the electorates of Minneriya and Kundasale will be held on October 25, according to authoritative sources. The air of mystery centred around Justice Minister Nissanka Wijeratne's visit to Rosmead Place to meet Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike has somewhat been cleared. Plantation Industries Minister Montague Jayawickrema said at the inauguration of the International Rubber Conference at the BMICH yesterday that he was disappointed that rubber prices today hardly covered costs of production—*S*. The CID have questioned several sub-agencies of Foreign Employment Agencies in Jaffna in connection with the killing of 15 people travelling in a private bus near Vavuniya recently—*DP*.

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 19: The Israeli Interest Section under the US embassy in Colombo will not grow any further and will not be converted into a diplomatic or even consular mission, Transport and Muslim Affairs Minister M. H. Mohamed said in Saudi Arabia. Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres will meet with President Ronald Reagan on October 8, US diplomatic sources said in Jerusalem yesterday following a meeting between Mr. Peres and US Ambassador Samuel Lewis—*DN*. Sri Lanka is expected to figure prominently at talks at both the Inter Parliamentary Union meeting to be held in Geneva and the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association meeting to be held in the Isle of Man next week—*DO*. The right bank development of the Maduru Oya project is more than a year behind schedule due to a delay in the signing of a draft for financial assis-

tance; mystery shrouds the last-minute reluctance of the Saudi Fund to put pen to paper to commit itself to the tune of 171 million Saudi riyals for the construction of main canals and branch canals of the right bank. Prices "see-sawed", at yesterday's tea auctions in Colombo with the higher priced quality seasonal teas dropping sharply and poorer teas and off-grades meeting with a very strong market. Several key issues relating to the estate sector are to be taken up when the estate wages talks resume under the Chairmanship of Labour Minister C. P. J. Seneviratne today—*SU*. Mr. R. P. Wijesiri Second Member for Harispattuwa will send in his resignation from his present Parliamentary seat to the Secretary-General of Parliament by the end of this week according to a top UNP source. The mysterious virus that destroyed over 1,500 acres of paddy crop in the Hambantota district has now been identified as a contagious disease caused by a brown plant hopper. With the new Proclamation on the Emergency Regulations coming into effect from midnight yesterday several regulations under the emergency have been relaxed—*/S*. When students are selected for admission to Universities for the next Academic year, Kilinochchi will be considered as a separate district and students from that district will also be considered for admission to universities—*DP*.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 20: Government has decided to drop the proposed amendment to the Buddhist Temporalities Ordinance, changing the method of appointment of the Diyawadana Nilame of the Dalada Maligawa, Minister of State Anandatissa de Alwis announced after yesterday's cabinet meeting. It would be wrong for India to interfere in Sri Lanka affairs and he was totally opposed to such action, former Prime Minister of India Morarji Desai has been quoted as saying at a Press briefing in Madras this week—*DN*. The Duty Free Shopping Complex will remain closed to Sri Lankan Passport holders for probably another two weeks, DFSC sources said this morning; "it is likely to be opened to Sri Lankan customers around October 1", they said—*DO*. Police Chief Rudra Rajasingham has sounded a warning to police officers on transfer orders to the north and the east who are reporting sick. Deputy Inspector General Kingsley Wickremasuriya has called upon owners of hotels in the Eastern Province to check the identity cards and obtain other particulars of persons seeking accommodation. The Jaffna Students Committee has decided not to boycott classes till the end of December. Government yesterday decided to appoint a committee of experts to study representations made by local professional associations in the construction industry, who have expressed concern over alleged discrimination in the awarding of contracts, and the frequent employment of foreign contractors and consultants. The TULF is awaiting the government's proposals to the all party conference tomorrow

and would examine them carefully, its leader A. Amirthalingam said yesterday—*SU*. Attorney-at-Law Kumar Ponnambalam accepting a challenge from Defence Council, when the former appeared for the prosecution in a case of mischief told court, "I have complied with the Sixth Amendment to the Constitution of Sri Lanka opposing separatism". The Cabinet of Ministers presided over by President J. R. Jayewardena decided to have a control of donations that various state-owned corporations make to various bodies. Inflation is stubbornly lingering or increasing in many countries of the developing world although it has loosened its grip on industrialised nations, the International Labour Organisation said. The Chief Justice Mr. Neville Samarakoon will defend himself before the Parliamentary Select Committee inquiring into statements made by him at an awards ceremony held at a Commercial Tutor—*/S*. A motion has been filed in the High Court of Colombo under the provisions of Human Rights violations objecting the proscription of the JVP; the inquiry into this motion will be held at the High Court on 26th September—*VK*.

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 21: The Hotel Ceylon Intercontinental paid a water bill of Rs. 300,000 for January 1984 but the bill is now down to around Rs. 190,000 monthly, thanks to conservation measures. Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko has delayed his speech to the General Assembly by two days, a move regarded by western diplomatic sources as fresh indications the Soviet Union wants improved relations with Washington—*DN*. The Customs on Tuesday have detained at Talaimannar Pier 22 Indian Nationals who were found not in possession of the goods they had purchased at the Duty Free Shopping Complex—*DO*. Two alternatives suggestions to replace the Job Banks scheme have been made by Committee B in its report to the all party conference; they are revival of the old Employment Exchanges and the creation of a Placement Bureau for university graduates at all disciplines. A leading businessman, who allegedly had in his possession smuggled foreign goods worth Rs. 1.7 million has been fined Rs. 5.2 million by the Customs; according to Customs sources the goods found in the businessman's home belongs to a duty free shop he owns. Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M. G. Ramachandran has claimed that the Sri Lankan security forces have been trained by Israel's Mossad in the island of Kachchativu—*SU*. A broad set of proposals covering education, employment, cultural rights, housing and unit of power will be submitted by President J. R. Jayewardene to the Round Table Conference today for the consideration of the various delegations presently involved in negotiations to bring about a solution to the ethnic crisis that has gripped the country. Doctors at the Kandy General Hospital have threatened to stage a walk out today if the Police failed to produce before a Magistrate a Senior Police Officer who is alleged to have assaulted

a Doctor in Kandy town on Sunday and broken his tooth—/S.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 22: TULF Secretary-General A. Amirthalingam said that he was disappointed about the proposals President Jayewardene placed before the amity round table yesterday. Mr. Francis G. Knight, the Regional Director of Motion Picture Association of America has after investigations in Sri Lanka filed action against 14 video pirates in Sri Lanka on behalf of Paramount, 20th Century Fox and Warners Bros.—all million dollar companies of Hollywood—/S. Second MP for Harispattuwa R. P. Wijesiri will resign today to contest the Kundasale bye-election as the UNP candidate. Press photographers invited to cover yesterday's convocation of the Kelaniya University at the BMICH, were prevented by Police from taking pictures of the graduation procession outside the conference hall. A plan to macadamise main roads in towns at a cost of about 920 million rupees has been drawn up by the Ministry of Highways—/S. The *Hindustan Times* in a recent editorial has berated Indian leaders for overacting to the "goings on" in Sri Lanka, and crossing the line of propriety in warning Sri Lanka's President. Round Table Conference spokesman, National Security Minister Lalith Athulathmudali yesterday announced that government will consider consulting parties not present at the Committees and even inviting them to the talks. Lawyers of the North have appealed to President Jayewardene to find an acceptable political solution to the ethnic problems of the country—/S.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 23: All employees of the Kandy General Hospital and the House Officers of the Peradeniya Teaching Hospital yesterday walked out in protest against an alleged assault on a doctor. President J. R. Jayewardene on Friday tabled a report at the plenary session of the All Party Conference containing the proposals which had emerged with a large measure of support from all parties since the conference started in January 1984—/S. President J. R. Jayewardene yesterday reiterated the government's determination to wipe out terrorism which he felt would otherwise render the future hopes of the country a closed chapter. Despite numerous complaints from residents that water bills issued to them are faulty to the point of being ridiculed, the Water Supply and Drainage Board continues to issue these bills regardless—/S. "The entire gamut of development launched by this government for the present and future generations could be considered a closed chapter pending an end of the menace of terrorism. President J. R. Jayewardene told the Ceylon Planters Society at its forty-eighth annual general meeting in Colombo yesterday. The Ven. Madihe Pannaseha Thero, a member of the delegation of Maha Sangha to the all party conference, yesterday called upon leaders

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of the country to "stop debating, theorising and arguing" and to take immediate and practical steps to prevent a national disaster". The Bar Council of Sri Lanka is to seek permission from the Select Committee appointed to inquiry into the conduct of Chief Justice Neville Samarakoon to present their viewpoint before the committee—/WK. Government has proposed far-reaching amendments to the Universities Act with a view to establishing better rapport between Vice-Chancellors and student bodies. General Walters of the USA, roving ambassador of President Ronald Reagan, helped draft the agreement Sri Lanka signed with Israel last May, according to the *Economist* the influential weekly published in the UK. Moves are afoot to replace the National Milk Board by a private company drawn up of milk producers and private investors—/S.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

A WEEKLY COMMENTARY

By Ariel

• US-Soviet • Korea • Latin America

The Reagan-Gromyko meeting stole the show last week. Before they met on Friday September 28, there were a series of preliminaries which had attracted a great deal of attention. No sooner Reagan announced this meeting with Gromyko, Mondale arranged to meet the Soviet Foreign Minister on September 27. Both Presidential candidates competed with each other to show the American public that they were anxious to do business with Soviet Union. Mondale has said that he was in a better position than Reagan to deal with the Russians. After meeting Mondale on September 27, Gromyko flew to Washington to meet Reagan at the latter's invitation. Sandwiched between the two meetings were discussions with Mr. Shultz.

Before these scheduled meetings, however, President Reagan had stolen a march on his Democratic rival. At a reception held to greet delegates to the UN Assembly meeting, Reagan not only said some comfortingly welcome words about future US-Soviet relations but also exchanged brief pleasantries with Gromyko in the full glare of publicity. For Mr. Gromyko, it must be a new experience to find himself the most wanted man in the United States after having

been the most unwanted man last year. He skipped a UN visit last year after his plane was denied landing facilities at New York's JFK international airport as a protest against the downing of the Korean airliner by the Soviet security forces. Not only has the ban been lifted which enabled him to arrive in New York on the opening day as he customarily does, but he and the Soviet Union have also been receiving friendly signals from the Reagan administration which had followed a tough anti-Soviet line in the past three and a half years. What is more the Reagan administration, as a conciliatory gesture, it is said, has put off publication of a report about alleged violations of arms agreements by the Soviet Union. This was no doubt to remove irritants before the two sides hold talks.

Election time in the United States creates new imperatives and compulsions. Mr. Reagan badly needs to show the American voters that his administration is still on talking terms with the Soviet leaders. Mr. Mondale, on the other hand, is trying to see if he could improve his popularity ratings which are 15 to 20 points behind those of Mr. Reagan by meeting Mr. Gromyko and establishing his credibility that he favours dialogue and summit meetings with the Soviet Union instead of the harsh rhetoric he has accused Mr. Reagan of. As far as Mr. Gromyko is concerned, it is believed, that he will probably maintain a neutral and "non-aligned" stance between the two contenders in the Presidential elections. Inevitably, however, Mr. Reagan on balance may stand to gain from the Gromyko visit to the White House. By talking to Mr. Gromyko he will neutralise the criticism that he is the first President in 50 years not to have met any ranking Soviet official, let alone the topmost Soviet leader.

In his address to the UN General Assembly, Mr. Reagan abandoned his customary cold war rhetoric against everything Communist and Russian, and tried hard to take a middle path of conciliation. He called for holding institutionalised regular ministerial or Cabinet level meetings between the United States and the Soviet Union to promote better understanding and to avoid chances of a global confrontation between the super-powers. He affirmed his belief in peace and human dignity and made a strong plea for improved relations between the estranged super powers.

The President touched on almost all thorny issues like Afghanistan, South-East Asia, West Asia and Central America and in elucidating known American positions did not apportion any blame on the Soviet Union. On Afghanistan, especially, he spoke in low key without mentioning the Soviet military presence for the first time. He said the United States strongly supported the "dedicated efforts" of the UN Secretary-

General and his representative to find a diplomatic settlement of the dispute. "I assure you that the United States will continue to do everything possible to have a negotiated settlement which would give the right of establishing their own Government to the Afghan people."

Mr. Reagan reaffirmed US commitment to "allies and friends", support to NATO alliance and said the United States also respected "genuine alignment". He favoured greater flow of funds to developing countries and promised to deal with this in detail at his speech before the meeting of Governors of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund on Tuesday. Conscious of the presence of Mr. Gromyko, the President dwelt at length on improving relations with Moscow. He prefaced his comments on the Soviet Union with the remark that "America has repaired its strength", under his Administration.

The Russian response continues to be cool. Moscow does not see any real change in the US approach to international affairs. According to the Soviet news agency Tass Gromyko had told Shultz that the Soviet Union will "resolutely" oppose a disruption of the current balance of power between the two countries. Gromyko said no talks were being held on such issues as disarmament because of the present policy of the US administration according to TASS.

At the United Nations Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko in a bitter attack on the United States said that everything the Americans said was intended to secure unilateral advantage over Moscow. There fore from the very outset things were doomed to failure he said in an address to the United Nations General Assembly a day before he was due to meet President Reagan. Gromyko said that United States policy documents glorified American domination of the world, extolled arms and strength and "thus they set the stage for deadlocks in the solution of all the acute problems of today".

While the Reagan action last year to block the Gromyko visit to the UN Assembly meeting because of the South Korean plane disaster is still fresh in everybody's mind, reports from Tokyo say that the South Korean President Chun Doo Hwan during his visit to Japan early this month had invited the ambassadors of the Soviet Union and China to a reception although South Korea does not have diplomatic relations with either of these countries. This visit was the first by South Korea's head of State of Japan whose occupation and colonisation of the peninsula are still remembered with bitterness. The diplomatic invitation just a year after the shooting down of a South Korean airliner also indicates Seoul's interest in improving relations with Moscow. In fact, with his

country increasing its manufacturing and trading capacity fairly rapidly, Mr. Chun does have an economic interest in establishing links with socialist countries. He has made some gestures, including a proposal to have a high level dialogue with the North Koreans.

There is no doubt that the desire for a detente in the Korean peninsula is increasing. A positive factor is that the United States and the Soviet Union, as well as China and Japan, have expressed themselves in favour of moves towards stability in the region. China has backed a North Korean suggestion for tripartite talks involving the two Korean and the United States. Japan is likely to ask other countries in the United Nations later this month to support a plan for the simultaneous admission of the two Koreas. And a few days ago North Korean President Kim Il Sung had publicly declared he wants to end the confrontation with the United States and establish friendly ties with South Korea with a view to bringing reunification closer.

Twelve hundred delegates and bankers from 147 countries have gathered at the joint meetings of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund in Washington. But developing countries find themselves up against the complacency that has perpetuated itself among the industrial nations. The most vocal among the Least Developed Countries—LDCs—are the Latin American debtors who are seeking to debunk the latest view among the rich nations that the worst of the debt crisis is over and that the international financial system has weathered the storm. The Cartagena consensus group, as the 11 Latin American countries have come to be called after their recent conference in Colombia, has called for multilateral discussions and a more direct role for Western governments in debt rescheduling as opposed to the case-by-case approach adopted by the IMF.

The industrial nations still do not favour a multilateral approach. But they also fear the emergence of a debtors' cartel. This is probably why the IMF has now agreed to review the debt crisis at a special session next spring. There is growing fear among the rich industrial nations that if they persist in their rather short-sighted and unrealistic policy many debtor countries might repudiate their debts. Already the warning signals have begun to proliferate. They have so far come mainly from Latin American countries where the debts are greatest.

As it stands today Latin American debt is three times greater than the value of all exports. According to the Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLA) every year the nations of the region must devote 50 cents of every dollar earned from exports to make payments on the debt and interest rates which fall due. In 1983, there was a new transfer of 30,000

million dollars from Latin America to the industrialised West. Latin America absurdly provided capital to the capitalist powers, not the other way round. The debt problem is aggravated because countries are finding it increasingly difficult to find hard currency sources of income. Prices for basic export commodities have dropped. On the other hand, Latin America must pay ever higher prices for the goods it buys from the industrialised West. Thus they sink deeper and deeper in debt. The debts have reached such levels that countries are simply no longer able to pay.



IN SRI LANKA

Poultry Production

PRINCIPAL CONCLUSIONS

1. **GENERAL:** (1) The commercial system of poultry production was most widespread in the Colombo region (including the districts of Colombo, Gampaha and Kalutara extending from Marawila in the North to Beruwela in the South along the Western Coastal belt), acknowledged as the "poultry belt" in Sri Lanka. (2) The common flock-size in both egg and broiler production was 100-500 birds; (3) Indications are that broiler production is on the increase and that there appears to be a shift towards larger production units; (4) Broiler production seems to be more restricted area-wise than egg production and confined mostly to Colombo region.

II. **POULTRY PRODUCTION: Production Systems:** (1) Presently there are three major production systems (i): rural backyard, the sideline intensive and commercial. To this must be added a fourth system—special farms which are the Franchise Agency farms; (2) The rural backyard system does not depend on compounded feed or purchased feed ingredients while the sideline system depends mostly on feed rations mixed on the

farms. The commercial and franchise farms, on the other hand, depend entirely on compounded feed of high quality where imported feed ingredients are also included; (3) The quality, availability and cost of these compounded feeds are subject to frequent fluctuations. This has adversely affected productivity and expansion of production under these two systems.

Population and Distribution: (1) There is a positive trend indicating that poultry population which was concentrated within some restricted areas of the country is taking a more even spread throughout most parts of the country. The new trend may also be an indication of the impact that several development measures have had in areas under the intensive system as well as in areas under the traditional system; (2) There are also indications that religious and social constraints in respect of poultry keeping are not as important as they were in the past.

Production Output: (1) The rate of production is 20 and 30 percent for the backyard and the intensive system respectively. The government's egg production target is 24 eggs per person per year. This means that we should produce 348 million eggs per year at a population level of 14.5 million.

Action Plans by Government: (1) To enlarge the supply of month old chicks to the smallholder; (2) To expand the volume of feed production; (3) To increase the importation of parent stock to State farms to take a major share of the commercial chick market; (4) To embark on an expanded program of grand-parent stock importation with a view to eventually meeting the country's requirements of parent stock; (5) To strengthen the supporting services by the expansion of the network of field veterinary units; (6) Harnessing external assistance to finance development programs. For example, Asian Development Bank, Sri Lanka/Libya Agricultural/Livestock Company.

Production Constraints: (1) These constraints are essentially with regard to feed, free availability of chicks, credit for smallholders and availability of vaccines and medications and trained manpower to manage poultry enterprises.

III. POULTRY FEED: Compounded Feed: (1) The present requirement is around 100-110 thousand metric tons, while the total annual production is 75,000 tons; (2) The projected requirement till the year 1983/84 as estimated by the Ministry of Rural Industrial Development is 103.5 thousand metric tons, while the estimates of the Tropical Products Institute, London, are 129.6 thousand metric tons; (3) Requirements by year 1990 is 171,870 thousand metric tons. At present, there are no grades in poultry feeds marketed and no index of feed quality.

Feed Resources: (1) Sufficient quantities of feed resources are available in the country but they are not available for processing. Substantial quantities of these ingredients are fed straight to cattle in the raw, while considerable quantities are exported; (2) There are certain resources such as marine and slaughter-house wastes which are not being fully used for want of processing facilities.

Feed Processing Facilities: (1) Available feed processing facilities (provender plants) are adequate to meet present needs of the "poultry belt." They are, however, not being fully utilised for want of adequate quantities of feed ingredients; (2) Proposed expansion of feed processing facilities are adequate to meet projected feed requirements for the next decade.

IV. MARKETING AND PROCESSING: Egg Marketing: (1) Private sector handles 84 percent of the egg market (20 million eggs) while the Marketing Department handles only 16 percent (4.1 million eggs). Private sector marketing structure is organised around itinerant local collectors and middlemen who buy at the farm gate and regional collectors linked to the local village collector as well as the large wholesale stockists in the principal towns; (2) There is hardly any attention to cleanliness and appearance of the eggs marketed. Grading on the basis of size of eggs is only conspicuous by its absence. The only grading done is on the colour of the egg shell. It is heartening, however, to note the gradual change in the manner of offering eggs for sale in the super markets which pay special attention to cleanliness, appearance and size.

Poultry Meat Marketing: (1) Poultry meat comes from three sources, namely from the intensive system (hens at the end of lay); broiler farms and the non-intensive system (culls and cockbirds). Presently there appears to be no difficulty in marketing broilers or live birds from the non-intensive sector. As broiler production expands there may arise a marketing problem; (2) Poultry meat processing is not a separate specialised industry. It is an on-farm activity which does not entail, in the majority of cases, the use of special equipment or plants. There are no legal requirements governing minimum sanitary standards or veterinary inspection and certification of premises or products.

To be concluded.

These notes are based on a report prepared by the Animal Industry Consultancy and Services (Pvt.) Ltd.

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ENOUGH

Half An Egg A Day

A Sri Lankan, on the average, should eat 180 eggs a year, half an egg a day to get sufficient nutrients. Accordingly, Sri Lanka should produce at least 2,800 million eggs a year for the table. However, current production stands at around 525 million, according to the Marketing and Food Policy Division of the Agrarian Research and Training Institute. The report states that acute malnutrition among over 40 percent of Sri Lankans living in rural areas is due to the absence of animal protein in their diets. Eggs contain 23 grams of high quality animal protein. However, it is unavailability rather than affordability which inhibits consumption. The report says that the absence of a market development strategy in poultry development policies is a major setback to the poultry industry.—*Daily Observer*, 26/9/84.

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GARDENS OF TAPROBANE — 3

By Count De Mauny

Offerings

Taprobané, January 3; RAMAN, all smiles, proud as a peacock, has come up tell me that the Imperial Ipomoeas of Japan have 621 flowers.... The fisherman, my "brass-man" and my "cement-man" brought me this morning their offerings of cakes and fruits, on large trays covered with a white napkin.

At six o'clock in the evening the sun went down behind the forest of palms that fringes the Bay, and the night came suddenly, without transition, silent and stealthy as a thief; the moon, becoming lazy as she grows older, never rose till nine. The night was dark; the heavy silence was broken only by a temple bell and the tomtoms of a Buddhist procession on its way to a shrine. But soon, very soon, as the moon rose higher, the silence of the tropical night, which is made of a thousand noises, filled the darkness; the fifth of a vampire, so heavy that the air which it displaces makes a sound like a deep sigh; the rattle of the wind in the palm-leaves; its voluptuous shiver in the Casuarinas; the song of cicadas; the shrilling of the innumerable insects that drowse in the heat of the day, but leave their lairs in the coolness of the night, and express their *joie de vivre* in their incessant calls.

Garlanded with moon-flowers, we were sitting in the pergola, which was lit by festoons of lanterns, shaped like rosy lotus flowers, when I heard the

muffled tread of bare feet on the gravel of the path, and I saw shadows approaching me. Twelve young boys from the village in the jungle had brought me an offering of flowers, which they dropped at my feet. The eldest of them—a boy of twelve—asked if he might sing a Sinhalese poem in my honour, and his clear though untrained soprano voice rose like an incantation into the stillness of the night, each strophe being taken up by the chorus with an accompaniment of clapping hands. When it was over one of the boys clad only in a scarlet loin-cloth, stepped out of the group and performed a "Devil Dance"; the next, who was similarly clothed, joined in. The suffused pink light of the lanterns, falling on their honey-coloured limbs, gave them a patina of light bronze. A velvety twilight of pink lights and shadows enveloped the whole scene, which we beheld as through a curiously seductive veil of anticipation and wonder. We watched, breathlessly, the slow cadence of the dance and its gradual crescendo, and its crisis in a paroxysm, a whirlwind of pink and bronze. How fascinating it was to gaze on these children of Nature, primitive and unspoilt, unconscious of their charms, surrendering entirely to the pleasure of trying to please me!

At the close of the dance they fell at my feet, in an attitude of homage. At a sign from me they rose, and I listened to their receding steps on the path that leads to the pier, and the splashing of the water when, one by one, they dived in the sea and crossed the strait.

I sat in the pergola, until the last pink lantern flickered out. I thought of the comment of a friend of mine, "These Sinhalese race is approaching decadence without passing through the phase of civilisation," and I wondered if it were true. No, it could not be true, and I should be sorry to think it so. I love this race of children; I love the beauty of their youth, although it lasts only *l'espace d'un matin*: I love their innate, almost feminine, distinction, the way the head is set on their shoulders, and the grace of their carriage; instinctively I may not trust them, yet their eyes, which are admirable, and shaded by long lashes, and their perpetual smile give one the illusion of frankness. The honey-colour of their skin, the bright colours of their clothes, harmonize with their surroundings: the greens of a tropical vegetation, the gold of the sands, the blue of sky and sea. I forgive and forget their faults, and see them as I wish them to be. This evening, in the splendour of the tropical night, I relished the primitive notes of their songs, the graceful movements of their dance, the unconsciousness of these primitive and unspoilt children of Nature, and I prayed that what we choose to call civilisation may not come and destroy in them the beauty of Nature's gift.

To be continued.

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Fish Farming

About 100 years ago Americans began rearing young trout and salmon. It was their first attempt at raising fish to eat. Today, entrepreneurial farmers all over the United States are growing seafoods as if they were raising hogs, cattle or poultry. Why the growing interest in aquaculture? It simply reflects the sobering fact that the oceans and rivers are not an inexhaustible source of food. Indeed, most traditional fisheries already are being harvested at or near maximum sustainable yields. Natural stocks of some species—salmon, oysters and lobsters, for example—are decreasing due to overexploitation, pollution and habitat destruction. *Although much aquacultural development is still in the laboratory stage, a surprising number of commercial enterprises have been established.* Some large oil, paper and animal-feed companies as well as electric utilities and such well known names as Coca-Cola (shrimp), Campbell's Soup (salmon) and General Electric (kelp) are already investing in aquaculture. Catfish farmers must care for their stock every bit as much as the rancher looks after cattle or sheep. They spend their days weeding the ponds, feeding the fish and adjusting the stocking of the ponds as the fish get larger. They worry about the quality of the water because mass fish kills can occur if the fish use up the water's oxygen and suffocate or if certain pesticides wash into the water. When the water begins warming up in the spring, catfish farmers know that spawning time is near. They select a few large fish, especially females swollen with eggs, and put them in a special pond with large milk cans laid in the mud around its edges.

OF THE VARIOUS FISH BEING FARMED, channel catfish are easily the most important species. These bewiskered, freshwater fish are unattractive to behold but delectable to eat. Catfish farming started in 1960, just 10 years later it began to have impact on the U.S. economy, and by 1980 over 3,800 fish farmers had turned their ponds into underwater feedlots producing the tasty, profitable fish. Catfish readily take to living in captivity and they eat commercial feed made from soyabean meal, slaughterhouse scraps and wastes from other sources. Farm-raised catfish now account for about one per cent of all fish consumed in the United States. Enthusiasts predict that eventually catfish may overtake chicken sales in American supermarkets. After a few days, they wade around poking a stick inside the cans feeling for the gelatinous mass of eggs. (A stick is needed because the male catfish guarding the eggs will bite a finger.) Egg masses are taken inside a building and placed in wire baskets in a trough. As the eggs hatch the tiny young catfish

swim through the mesh. From each egg mass the farmer can rear 3,000 or so fingerlings, and by the end of the summer they are out in the farm ponds growing fast. In about 20 months they are fully grown catfish ready for sale. This type of catfish production has become a \$25 million farm industry, and more and more Americans are buying—the appealing packages labelled "catfish" at their neighbourhood supermarkets. *Substantial growth in catfish farming is expected over the next decade.* "I think," says Mr. George Lockwood, a pioneer California aquaculturist, "that we'll see the American public consuming a lot of catfish. It's a good, low-cost source of protein." Fish grow more quickly in warm water than in cold, and fish farmers are coming to realize that scattered across America is a cast resource of warm water that they might use. It comes from the cooling towers of large power generating stations. Some discharge millions of litres of warmed water each minute. Fish are the most obvious aquatic creatures for aquaculture. Some of the others now being farmed are much more exotic crawfish, for example.

MOST COUNTRIES have small, lobster-like crustaceans in their rivers and lakes. Crawfish, a cross between lobster and shrimp—is one of the best-tasting delicacies to come out of the water. The little freshwater "lobsters" are easily grown in rice harvest. They grow fat on the rice stalks and grain residues. Some Louisiana rice farmers already make more money from crawfish than from rice. Over 8,000 hectares of rice fields are being farmed this way today, but there is more than 100 times that much rice land in the United States so the potential for rapid increase is enormous. The farm has no direct connection with the sea. It is on a flat windy and sunny coastal plain. Windmills pump pure, cool, brackish water out of swallow wells and into nearby ponds. In the tropical warmth the ponds quickly become a rich brown, coffee-coloured soup of algae. The constant wind keeps them "stirred," and in less than four days the warm, nutritious, planktonic soup can be sent coursing through the concrete tanks where the oysters filter out of it the food that makes them so juicy and delectable. Compared with some of the aquatic species now on farms, oysters are well known. In hunting for new sources of seafoods some aquaculturalists are growing species seaweed, for example. Demand for seaweed is increasing dramatically. In 1971 the world-wide harvest amounted to over 100 million tons. Today it is probably more than double that.

ALREADY THE UNITED STATES harvests some, 170,000 tons of kelp each year, most of it off the coast of California. It provides a jelly like substance that goes into ice cream, jelly desserts, laxatives, lubricants, toothpastes, cosmetics and salad dressings. It is even

used to stabilize the foam on beer. Seaweeds are among the fastest growing and most productive plants on earth, and efficient methods of growing and harvesting them are under development in the United States, China, Japan, the Philippines and other countries. In Japan vast amounts of one seaweed, called *North* are already cultivated for food. In the United States, Mr. Robert Waaland of the University of Washington has discovered a "super strain" of red seaweed growing on a reef in Puget Sound, in America's Pacific Northwest. This particularly fast-growing strain is rich in carrageenan, an emulsifier used in latex paints, beer, puddings and some dairy products. Moreover, this plant, unlike other seaweeds, reproduces vegetatively: small fragments are cuttings grow into entire new plants. Mr. Waaland is growing these now in large vats of sea-water. He pumps air bubbles into the vats to swirl the water and keep the plants circulating. The work is still at the experimental stage but it, and research like it, is helping to bring the culture of seaweeds within commercial reach.

CATFISH, TROUT, CRAWFISH, OYSTERS AND SEAWEED are just a few of the aquatic organisms now being farmed in the United States. In addition, eels are being grown in North Carolina, salmon in Oregon, shrimp in Hawaii, prawns in South Carolina, Sturgeon, Kelp spirulina algae, and abalone in California, water chestnuts in Georgia, and grass carp in Arkansas. The availability of new technology is one reason why aquaculture's momentum is building. Thirty years ago, for example, scientists discovered pituitary hormones (mostly taken from cattle) that induce fish to spawn. Today such hormones are used to produce thousands of millions of baby fish on demand. Other technologies include special feeds, automatic feeders and fish antibiotics. Each year the farmers are improving their production methods. The stage is set, the technology is known, markets are developing, banks are more and more willing to make loans to fish farmers, and more cooperatives for making feed and for marketing the product are being established. *USIS*.

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FOR HEALTH

Avocado

THE AVOCADO *PERSEA AMERICANA*, also known as "butter fruit", belongs to Mexico in Central America. It can be cultivated both in tropical and sub-tropical regions. There are three types of avocado—Mexican, Guatemalan and West Indian. The Mexican variety and its hybrids are more resistant to cold than the others. The West Indian type can be grown in the plains and also in the hills up to 900

metres above sea level while the Guatemalan type require much higher altitudes. Pollock, Fuerte and Peradenia purple hybrid are some of the important varieties. *Avocado is a very nutritious fruit containing about 28-26 per cent of easily digestible fat besides protein, minerals and vitamins. It has a calorific value of 215 per 100 g of fruit. As the sugar content of this fruit is very low (one per cent), this can be recommended as a high energy food for diabetic patients.* Avocado is a salad fruit and can be eaten with bread or with lemon juice, salt and pepper. Avocado oil is used in the preparation of cosmetics and the seed is also made into poultry feed. It is an evergreen tree with a shallow root system growing to a height of about 15 to 20 metres. So the tree is easily damaged by heavy wind. It thrives best on a loamy soil of medium texture with porous subsoil. Though ordinarily propagated by seeds, propagation by shield or forked method of budding on its own seedling rootstock is advisable to ensure good parental quality. A spacing of about five to 7.5 metres on either side should be given. The plants are to be planted in 60 cm (3) pits during May-June in hills and July-August in the plains. Immediately after planting it should be provided with shade until it establishes well.

After the seedling establishes, watering once a week is sufficient. Regular weeding and shallow digging prior to the flowering season (i.e., December-January) is essential. A bearing tree may be supplied with 50 kg of farmyard manure, five kg of castor cake or one kg of urea and one kg of super phosphate per year, during January. No pruning is necessary for the first ten years. As it grows older the basal whorls which may become unfruitful due to overshadowing, have to be removed. The branches should not be pruned terminally because the flowers are borne on the axils of the past season's mature shoot, towards the end of the branches. There are two types of avocado, purple and green. Both flower and set fruits in January, but the fruits of the purple avocado mature during June-July while those of the green variety, mature during August-September. Though all varieties of avocado bear bisexual flowers the maturing of the sex organs at different times necessitates cross pollination for fruit setting. A flower opens first for a few hours when its pistil is receptive to pollens. It then closes without shedding pollen and opens again the next day to shed its pollen, but by then the stigma withers. Flower of different groups of avocado open at different times both for pistil reception and pollen shedding, thus encouraging cross pollination. This phenomenon is known as diurnally synchronous dichogamy. Therefore pollination can be improved by interplanting of varieties of different groups and providing sufficient number of bee hives.

The tree starts bearing three or five years after planting. The fruit is a large single seeded berry, obovate or pyriform in shape with a flashy buttery mesocarp which is the edible part. Fruits are to be carefully clipped as soon as they show change in colour. The purple avocado shows a blush of purple colour on its skin while in green avocado the dimming of green colour and the development of a yellow tint on the skin occurs. On an average a well grown tree may yield about 200 to 300 fruits per year, and as the age of the tree advances the yield may go up to 1,000 fruits. Avocado is not affected by any serious pests or diseases.—Hindu

SCIENCE, DEVELOPMENT and MAN

POPULATION AND POVERTY

5. Neurotic Fear of Normality

By Prof. A. C. J. Weerakoon

A SECOND CONSEQUENCE of our accepting the Malthusian Myth is that we make fools of ourselves. The eminent biologist Julian Huxley has recently described the world as a hybrid birth partly ostrich, hiding its head in the sand, and partly stork, going on producing babies! In a sense, I suppose, it is appropriate that his prejudices should have betrayed Huxley into using two biological myths to describe a third. We all know the ostrich does not bury its head in the sand, and I am certain few of you still believe that babies are brought by storks. Another example: The population conference in Rome at which Huxley is reported to have made that statement I have just commented on was followed a week or two later by a conference in the same city of the Food and Agriculture Organisation. And this conference proceeded to discuss as its main topic what was to be done with the world's food surpluses. There was a surplus in 1953; and this, heaven help us, on top of the surplus in 1952! What was to be done to—prevent a fall in prices?! Does anyone still feel I used too violent an expression when I said we make fools of ourselves? How ridiculous it is to have doddering old men, who have raised families of six and seven children in their day, protest at the rate of growth of Ceylon's population. How exasperating and tragic to have some of our scientists railing at what they are pleased to call

our horrifying prolificacy, instead of getting on with the job of increasing our food production.

And what is it that they brand as our horrifying prolificacy? It is the average rate of increase of Ceylon's population between the years 1871 and 1946 which Ranasinghe has calculated the published in his "Report" on the 1946 Census of Ceylon, a rate of 1.47 per cent per annum. He says this rate is more than twice the world's rate of 0.62 percent per annum—and that frightens some of us so much that we are incapable of noticing two very important points. *First:* the world's rate of population growth is a very rough estimate, and can be nothing else so long as censuses in so many underdeveloped countries are mere estimates and even guesses. *Second:* in the very paragraph in which Ranasinghe has made the statement which so frightens them, he also states that another expert, Carr Saunders, estimates the world's rate of population growth at 1.16 percent, as against Euczynski's estimate of 0.62 percent. It is only if one accepts Euczynski's estimate that Ceylon's rate is seen as more than twice the world's; with Carr Saunders' estimate, Ceylon's rate will be seen as very much the same as the world's. *Finally,* there are the many anti-social effects of our accepting the Malthusian Myth. These are the most important, of course. Instead of concentrating our energies on increasing the amount of food we produce, on bettering the nutritional quality of the food we produce and on distributing equitably whatever we do produce and that last is in fact the crux of the problem today; the starvation, misery, unhappiness and so on are produced *not by our multiplying too fast but by our sharing what we have in an utterly iniquitous way*—instead of doing something about these problems we waste our time, our energy and our money on trying artificially to reduce our birth-rate and to cut down our population.

And here let me make it perfectly clear that I have no objection to "birth-control", or "family-planning", so long as its objects are to help parents to have so many or so few children as they would like to have for personal reasons or as they must have for reasons of health. It is only when it is meant to reduce the size of the population, the size of the nation, that I object to it. And that, precisely, is what the Neo-Malthusian doctrine is aimed at... controlling the size of the nation, reducing the population, in order, so it is claimed, to raise its standards of living. This is genocide, little different in essence from that practiced by the Nazi Germans. Then the victims were Jews, now the victims are the colonial and neo-colonial peoples. Then the population was reduced by slaughtering those already living, now the population is to be reduced by preventing those already living from reproducing themselves. Certainly the Neo-

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Malthusian method is less crude, less horrifying and much less visible—but it is genocide none the less. Also, let us not forget that machines by themselves produce nothing at all—however wonderful they may be. All the wealth of a country, all the food, all of it, is produced by men (humans); by men using their bare hands, or by men behind machines. But always by men. Therefore, to cut down the population of a country is, in fact, to cut down its wealth, its food; and must ultimately increase poverty not decrease it.

WHAT THEN IS TO BE DONE? First and foremost let us stop worrying about, stop being frightened by our birth-rate; let us stop swallowing all this Neo-Malthusian propaganda, let us realise once and for all how false the Neo-Malthusian prophets are. *Secondly*, having freed our minds of this neurotic fear of our own normality, let us concentrate our efforts on increasing our production of food. There is so much to be done and so few of us. Especially in this country, to do it. There are our cultivated lands which have to be made to yield more food, there are the lands still to be brought under cultivation. There is our lop-sided economy—Tea, Rubber, Coconut—which has to be balanced by an increase in the acreage under food, crops and by a development of industry. And there are all the immense possibilities of developing new sources of food: proteins from the cultivation of unicellular algae, for example; carbohydrates from the manufacture, in factories, of sugar from carbon dioxide and water, as the green plants do in their leaves. And we must take to cultivating fish on a large scale. Few of us realise that as regards our fish production we humans are, by and large, still in the food-gathering stage of civilisation, a stage which our ancestors graduated from nearly 10,000 years ago so far as most food crops are concerned. *Finally*, let us do something about sharing what we have, sharing what we produce, more equitably.

Concluded.

The series of five articles now concluded is a slightly abridged version of Dr. Weerakoon's 1954 Presidential Address to the Natural Sciences Section of the Ceylon Assn. Advcm. Science.

POWER PACK

With Inverter

A wide variety of electrical tools and appliances can be used with a portable power pack developed by a British firm which offers an independent on-the-spot AC power source in outdoor or remote locations not served by mains electricity. It also offers an emergency standby facility during power cuts. It is

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basically an inverter, converting DC supplied by two 12 V thick-plate lead-acid internal batteries into AC. It has a maximum output of 400 W for continuous use, with allowance for short-term peak outputs of 600 W and users can select an output voltage of 220/240 V or 110 V 50-60 Hz by using a selector switch.

When fully charged, the pack will operate continuously for two hours at 400 W, enabling an operator to use a 400-600 W drill, for example, on an intermittent basis during an 8-hour working shift before the pack's batteries have to be re-charged. Self-contained re-chargeable spare battery units can be supplied to extend the pack's available capacity. They can be effortlessly interchanged in about one minute. Batteries in the pack can be inexpensively re-charged overnight from any mains supply via an internal charger which automatically monitors battery voltage and maintains the battery at full charge.

Alternatively, the pack's batteries can be re-charged from a 12 V or 24 V motor vehicle system—a useful facility in areas with no mains supplies since the pack can be re-charged while the vehicle is being driven during the day and used during the evening to provide lighting and/or power domestic appliances, such as radios, TV sets, small computers and associated equipment. The pack electronically monitors input from the vehicle's electrical system to prevent current being taken when the vehicle's engine is not running. The pack's vehicle charge socket can also be used to re-charge the pack from two other energy sources—a solar panel and a small wind generator, both available from the firm.

FRENCH MANUFACTURE

Battery-Operated Car

PEUGEOT OF FRANCE has beaten the other major car manufacturers in coming out first with an electric car which maintains all the characteristics of a classic vehicle except under its bonnet. Apart from making its electric car look the same as the other models in its "205" range, Peugeot has also sought to give its experimental car the sort of performance not usually associated with electric vehicles. "We wanted the car to have good acceleration, a top speed of 100 kilometres an hour and the ability to travel at least 100 kilometres without recharging," M. Peyriere, the head of the company's electric car research and development, said.

To achieve these overall aims, Peugeot worked on the development of a nickel-iron battery with SAFT, a

subsidiary of the nationalised French CGE electronics conglomerate. Research work on the battery started more than five years ago. Peugeot and SAFT eventually were able to produce a battery which gave twice as much power as a standard lead battery of the same size and weight. The Peugeot electric prototype has 12 nickel-iron batteries whose life is also double those of standard lead batteries. These batteries have a life of more than 200,000 kilometres and give the car a maximum range of 140 kilometres before recharging. M. Peyriere acknowledges that the recharging process, like the four other electric vehicles, remains long, taking 8 to 10 hours if the batteries are completely flat.

The electric engine and controls had to be compact to fit in the bonnet under the 12 batteries. Peugeot devised an entirely electronic control system, making a gearbox unnecessary. The car only has two control pedals: the brake and the accelerator. The engine itself which Peugeot bought from Leroy-Somer, the French electric engine producer, gives the car a top speed of 100 km/h. Despite these technological developments that have enabled Peugeot to electrify a classic car without changing the character of the vehicle, Mr. Peyriere and M. Regis Fries, of the group's planning and marketing department, are extremely cautious about the new car's eventual commercial prospects. "It is a costly car to produce and we look at it at present as a research vehicle," said Mr. Peyriere. The batteries alone for each car involve a total cost of between FFr 18,000-FFr 20,000 or the equivalent of Rs. 23,000 to Rs. 26,000. Indian Peugeot has identified the French public administration as the most promising market for a small electric car. Because of their limited range, electric cars are essentially an urban vehicle.—*Financial Times*.

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CHINA

Marriage and Money

Beijing. The feudal concept of marriage has still its firm grip in China, although new marriage law discarded many old ideas concerning relationship between family members. In China, marriage is still a money-consuming social event with its accent on ostentation. Most marriages take place during the spring festival which ushers in new year. While most people in China are looking forward to three-day national holidays—longest at a stretch out of total seven gazetted holidays in a year—for the spring festival, some are positively worried. They fall in the category

of those who are about to get married. Talking of one such young man, a columnist in China daily said recently "like many young people, he has chosen spring festival as the time to have his wedding. However, as the day draws nearer, he still does not have enough money for the big wedding banquets and celebrations he plans to hold". According to the columnist, "he (young man) has already spent all his savings—1,000 yuan (1 yuan-Indian Rs.5.60)—on furniture and clothes for his fiancée and gifts for his future mother-in-law". The young man has been quoted as saying "maybe I will have to borrow some money to keep the whole process going". "I have never been in debt, but this time"... the young man forced a smile. The commentator said, "he is not unique. Influenced by feudal ideas, or future parents-in-law, many young couples prepare lavish betrothal gifts they can ill-afford, hold extravagant weddings and borrow money to furnish apartments". China daily also reprinted some letters published in *Jiefang Ribao* (Liberation Daily), Shanghai, on the question of love and marriage. "Some young people marry in haste and divorce in haste, too. They do so because they marry for money and housing rather than love".

According to a letter, "a young woman and a young man married in December 1981, but were divorced nine months later because the young woman was displeased when she could not have all the furniture and new clothes she wanted for the wedding". Another letter said a young worker in a paper mill wanted to marry a young woman because he thought she owned a 15-square metre room. But after he learnt this was not true, he refused to marry her. In another case, a young female factory worker had been an invalid since an accident in 1975. Last year, she married a young man who worked in Anhui province. The young man was able to obtain a transfer to Shanghai so that he could take care of his wife. Many spouses are separated from each other because their work units would not give them transfer for joint living. The strange part of the story is that soon after he became a Shanghai resident, the young man began to ill-treat his wife. Even in China's Communist society marriage brokers exist. Beijing's marriage broking centres have helped more than 2,000 applicants fall in love. Of them, 1,200 have been married and others are preparing to hold their weddings during the forthcoming spring festival. According to Xinhua, "match-making has become a growth industry as more than 15,000 young people have registered with six match-making centres in Beijing in the past three years.—PTI

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RELIGION, CULTURE LITERATURE

ANIMALS

In Indian Mythology

By J. P. Das

IN ANCIENT INDIA, animals were closely studied and were regarded as part of great pattern of life. Even when they were hunted or sacrificed, they were treated as part of a scheme of things. In Indian mythology, evolution had an aquatic origin, swayambhu or the self-existent having created himself by meditating on the oceanic state called Pralaya. Being himself now created, he created other things, there was no creation out of a void. Indian mythology thus postulates regeneration which is opposed to the Biblical concept of creation.

The inexhaustible primordial ocean was a part of the natural world, of rock, earth, wood, water, fire, cloud, air, light and dark. In this world, trees and animals naturally find a special place. Even in the Vedic times, Vanaspati or the Lord of the forest was praised and the sacrificial stake was made from a tree trunk. In the concept of Triloka or triple world, the stake was taken as a ritual connection between this world and heaven and the snake, living in the subterranean waters, was supposed to connect the world of man with the other world. In the Indian myth, Vishnu, the God is depicted lying in ayogic sleep upon the serpent Ananta, the Endless, with its multiple cobra-heads forming a canopy above him.

As Ananta is connected with Vishnu, there are many other animals known for their association with deities to whom they are specifically dear, and in whose worship they participate. They are regarded as Vahanas or vehicles upon which the gods and goddesses travel. Thus, Indra rides the bull Nandi; Yama on a buffalo, Durga on a lion or tiger; Agni on a Nandi, the Vehicle of Lord Shiva, Ram, Vayu on an antelope and Ganesha on a rat, Virabhadra rode a dog and Kamadeva travelled on a parrot. Monkeys as representatives of Hanuman are very commonly worshipped. The dog is worshipped by some, but is regarded as unclean by others.

Among birds, the goose is the Vahana or Vehicle of Brahma, the peacock that of Kartikeya; Shani rides a vulture. The cow is not regarded as the vahana of the deity, but is widely worshipped. Brahma, the supreme

creator is said to have created cows and Brahmins at the same time. While the Brahmin was to officiate at worships, the cow was to provide milk as offering. The cow has been treated as sacred in India, since the Vedic times, when the herds represented the communal wealth of the early tribes; much of the warfare between the early settlers of India consisted basically of cattle raids. Like the cornucopia or the magical tree, the milch-cow became legendary in Indian lore as the Kamadhenu, the wishfulfilling cow. The cow also came to be closely associated with Krishna, who was cowherd. Gopala, one of the epithets of Krishna, literally means cowherd.

In ancient India, animals were closely studied and were regarded as a part of the great pattern of life. Even when they were hunted or sacrificed, they were treated as part of a scheme of things. For example it was thought that the deer was created only to die, being hunted by predatory animals. The deer was called Mriga, which literally meant 'death-goer' or one which goes towards death. Of all creatures, it was the horse which was most loved and respected particularly by the kings. It was the swiftness of the warrior's mount and the manoeuvrability of his chariot team which decided his fate in battle. It was again through asvamedha or horse sacrifice that a king established his supremacy over others. *Man's study of animal behaviour led to the association of the main characters of a particular creature's habits human strengths and weaknesses. Human personalities were given to animals in Buddhist Jataka stories as also in Sanskrit tales like Panchatantra and Hitopadesha.* Animals find a prominent place in the epic Ramayana, in which they came to the aid of the divine incarnations. When Sita, the wife of Rama is abducted by the demon king, the mighty bird Jatayu fights a battle with the abductor. An entire army of monkeys under the command of Hanuman allies itself with Rama and destroys the demon's capital city.

Indian mythology is also full of strange creatures. Garuda is a mythical being, half-man and half eagle, the mount of the God Vishnu. In pictures and sculpture, he is usually represented with the head and the wings of a bird, with a human body. Though not treated strictly divine, he appears frequently in Vishnu's exploits. Garuda is treated as the king of feathered tribes and an enemy of the serpent race. Garuda figures in both the epics Mahabharat and Ramayana. According to the Mahabharat story, Garuda's mother had been imprisoned by serpents, who promised to liberate her on the condition that Garuda brought them the moon. After an adventurous journey and after surmounting many dangers, Garuda at last seizes the moon and brings it concealed under his wings. While returning, however, he is attacked by the gods and he vanquishes them all except Indra. After a contest with Indra, they come to terms. Indra

makes him immortal and promises him a seat higher than his own. On his part, Garuda agrees to become the Vahana or carrier of Vishnu. Since then Vishnu rides as Garuda while Garuda, in the shape of a flag sits at the top of Vishnu's car. In the Ramayana, Garuda is represented as doing great service to Rama and his followers. When Rama and his army had to face a battalion of serpents, Garuda came to his rescue. Garuda had two sons, Jatayu and Sampati who also assisted Rama. When the demon Ravana kidnapped Sita, Rama's consort, it was Jatayu who fought with him to rescue her. Ravana was carrying away Sita in a chariot when Jatayu saw him and reasoned with him to restore Sita to her home. His entreaties having failed, he warned Ravana that he would die if he did not leave Sita alone. When neither advice nor threats availed, he prepared to fight. Ravana's arrows wounded Jatayu, but the bird in turn threw darts which injured Ravana, and broke the chariot. He is given a mortal blow in the end and Ravana leaves him dying. However, he is able to inform Rama about the kidnapping before he breathes his last.

There are many imaginary animals in Indian mythology, but the strangest of all is Navagunjara, an animal combining the limbs of nine creatures, including man. It is something like the griffin in Greek mythology—a creature with eagle's head and wings and lion's body. The concept of Navagunjara originated in the epic Mahabharat in which occurs the following story. The five Pandava brothers had married Draupadi and had agreed among themselves that if one of them was with Draupadi, none other should enter the bedroom. If one did, he had to go on exile for twelve years. One day, when the eldest brother Yudhisthir was inside, the God of fire came and asked to be taken to Yudhisthir. He was refused entry. However when the God threatened that he would destroy the city, Arjun, one of the brothers went inside to inform, Yudhisthir. He then went on exile voluntarily as per their earlier understanding. Arjun went to the Manibhadra mountains and started living there. Vishnu wanted to see him and so went to that mountain. To give Arjuna a surprise and to test him, he took a strange form, that of Navagunjara. It had the head of cow, the neck of peacock, hump of bull, a snake for tail and the waist of the lion. Three of the legs were those of tiger, horse and elephant and the fourth was not a leg but a human hand holding a lotus. Needless to say, Arjun recognized the disguise and fell at the feet of Vishnu.

Animals of Indian mythology have been very well represented in Indian art, both sculpture and painting. Naga or snake is a very common motif in temple architecture. In Buddhist sculptures, there are representations of the multi-headed snake king rising up to protest the Buddha. There are exclusive Naga shrines. The presence of a Naga sculpture in temple

is considered auspicious. Elephant was another popular motif in temples. Cows, though associated with Krishna, do not occur so extensively in temple sculpture. Temples, however, abound in sculptures of mythical animals. The animals from Indian mythology also figure in Indian paintings, where they take their place with the various gods and goddesses of the Indian pantheon.

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POEM

BUDDHA AND I

By A. Rahman

GAUTAMA the Buddha
I am a wanderer.
I have been wandering,
in the land of your birth,
in far flung places, where
your message reached,
and enabled the souls and mind of people
and shaped their lives.

Poverty, illiteracy, ignorance, ills and injustices
hurt you,
and you went out in search of solutions.
solutions for others.
And salvation for yourself.
You achieved Nirvana.

Today society, once again,
as never before,
is suffering.
People are dying for lack of food,
they are ill,
steeped in ignorance.
They try to find succour in superstitions,
yet, there is no relief for them,
there is no remedy to their injustices.
There is misery and violence everywhere,
It rears apart your soul.

My heart bleeds,
my soul is hurt,
I wander in search of a solution,
to attain salvation,
There is no nirvana for me.

People come to you,
to pay obeisance,
to beseech you.
They chant, recite mantras.
They go away with hope.
Is there a hope?
I see you everywhere,
lying, sitting standing,
you do not speak.

TRIBUNE, SEPTEMBER 29, 1984

My wandering continues.
 My search continues.
 My restlessness continues.
 Would there be an end?
 to this misery, ignorance and injustices?
 to my restlessness, search and wanderings?

Would life end,
 without the search, reaching
 its destination.
 Without attaining enlightenment?

And as I depart I would ask:
 what was the purpose of life?
 where did I want to go?
 what I wanted to achieve?
 I would have no answer,
 and you do not speak.

THE posters, the tourist guides and pamphlets,
 advertise,
 I must see:
 The sacred Bo-tree ,
 The sedent Buddha,
 The twin ponds.
 I walk bare feet in search,
 for which you left,
 The King's palace, the Queen's palace,
 The Royal pleasure gardens,
 and the lovers,
 which the guides advertise,
 Where shall I go?
 to the unknown paths,
 uncharted routes,
 where there is no guide,
 and you are alone with,
 your restlessness, your search.
 or
 to the lovers,
 pleasure garden,
 to the palaces of Queens or Kings?
 you would not say.

Perhaps I would go to the museums,
 to look at things gone by,
 to wonder at them,
 and would try,
 to reconstruct in my mind,
 the stories which I would imagine
 and be satisfied
 Perhaps not
 I would strive to go beyond.

LIFE It is an endless restlessness
 it is an endless wandering
 an endless search, an endless struggle
 with self and for others

TRIBUNE, SEPTEMBER 29, 1984

It is hopes, half fulfilled
 and hope of what remains to be.

June 3, 1984
 Anuradhapura, Sri Lanka.

Courtesy, *Mani stream*, New Delhi

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LIFE

When I consider this, that bare
 Water and earth and common air
 Combine together to compose
 A being who breathes and stands and goes
 With eyes to see the sun, with brain.
 To contemplate his origin,
 I marvel not at death and pain
 But rather how he should have been.

Francis Burrow

x x x

WHEN ALL IS SAID

When all is said
 And all is done
 Beneath the Sun,
 And Man lies dead;
 When all the earth
 In a cold grave,
 And no more brave,
 Bright things have birth;

When cooling sun
 And stone-sold world ,
 Together hurled,
 Flame up as one—

O Sons of Men,
 When all in flame,
 What of your fame
 And splendour then?

When all is fire
 And flaming air,
 What of your rare
 And high desire

To turn the cold
 To a thing divine,
 The earth a shrine,
 And Man the God?

J. D. C. Pellow

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CONFIDENTIALLY

Why Nestle?

IS IT NOT STRANGE that a reader, a resident of Sri Lanka for nearly thirty years and who now lives in retirement in his native land in Europe has written to the Editor that *Tribune* should not devote so much space to the question of Nestle and that the space could be put to better use? That though this person is one of the most knowledgeable about Sri Lanka and continues to read *Tribune* (many thousands of miles away), he fails to realise that Nestle has become a grassroots question in this country? That it is true that a multinational like Nestle with its competence, its know-how, expertise and efficiency can help Sri Lanka and Sri Lankans a great deal? That the danger is that this whole island paradise will soon become a backyard dairy farm of Nestle? That given a free hand and with the punches it can pull among politicians and bureaucrats, Nestle will soon swallow up even the DDF now being launched under World Bank auspices mainly as a private sector enterprise? That if this should happen, as it probably will, Nestle will become a major issue in the national politics of this country? That the country will witness a new invasion by Western multinationals led by Nestle?

IS IT NOT TRUE that Nestle has a successful history in "taking over" competitors in all parts of the world? That Sri Lanka is only chicken feed for Nestle, but taking over this island will be a further step in the consolidation of Nestle in the Third World? That recently Nestle took over the world famous dairy complex known as *Carnation*? That a press report had stated: "Nestle's decision to boost its already huge worldwide sales by acquiring the American *Carnation* Company was seen by bankers as a solid long-term investment but one unlikely to generate large early profits. This Swiss food giant has offered three billion dollars for *Carnation*, a dairy products group famous for evaporated milk, in what would be one of the biggest non-oil mergers in history. But some bankers regarded it as a conservative move. 'There is a mixed picture about the financial aspect of the takeover', said Claudio Werder from Bankers J. Vontobel. '*Carnation* is a very good company. But people had been expecting the acquisition of a company with good growth potential and this company has less potential than something in the hi-technology or pharmaceuticals sector', he added. Werder did not see Nestle's profits benefiting from the purchase until 1986 or beyond. Another senior share analyst said Nestle was squandering three billion dollars which could have been more profitably invested in government bonds. On the Zurich Share Market, dealers said there was concern about the vast outlay for the new company and the price of Nestle's bearer shares dipped 135 francs last morning to 5,355. Werder says the purchase of *Carnation* will give Nestle greater

balance in the US market where it previously had a one sided presence. 'Nestle went into coffee, chocolate, frozen foods and hotels in the US but dairy was lacking', he said. 'Nestle can add its own specialisation in dairy products elsewhere (it supplies milk products to the Third World) to *Carnation's* already strong position in the US' said another analyst at a major Zurich bank. Nestle spokesman Francois-Zavier Perroud said Nestle was not expanding into *Carnation* at the expense of other acquisitions. The company still sought growth in other sectors, he said. For example, he said Nestle wanted to expand its eye-care sector, despite its failed attempt earlier this year to buy *Coopervision*, a US ophthalmological company. The US anti-trust authorities blocked the move. Most analysts foresee no problems from the US Federal Trade Commission with *Carnation*...

THAT THERE IS NOTHING more we can add except to say Amen? That if in the USA which is very zealous about protecting its industries Nestle is able to take over another multinational like *Carnation* what chances have the small dairy farmers in Sri Lanka? That while a reader from Europe writes to us asking us why *Tribune* should devote (waste) so much space on Nestle, a local reader has written to us as thus: "Sir, Congratulations on your articles about the notorious multinational Nestle. However, they will do not much good, if they continue to be published only in Sri Lanka. Public opinion is not powerful enough to consider the activities of Nestles—if it had been, some control would have been imposed upon Nestle by now. Unfortunately, Nestles hits at the lowest income groups who are compelled to rely on starch and milk in their daily diet—this is a powerless segment of the public. Further, Nestle is backed by the State-controlled *Daily News* which is the only avenue open to express a "limited" opinion on public issues. It is also backed by a powerful high pressure advertising campaign. May I say that public consciousness is stronger in Nestles home ground of Switzerland, than in Sri Lanka. Therefore, you can aid the Sri Lankan cause by bringing pressure to bear on Nestle, from the Swiss public itself. Please publish the addresses of leading Swiss newspapers to enable us write to them. The Swiss public must be made aware of the activities of this notorious company, in our land." That within the short time Nestle and other multinationals (virtually junior partners) have started operating in this country, prices of milk products have shot up? That the local producer gets only a minimal fraction of the increased prices the bulk of which goes to swell the profits of multinational imports of milk powder and other dairy produce? That incidentally a favourite trick of multinationals which operate in Third World countries is to "show" losses in order to get governmental concessions and charge high prices on ground that milk supplies should not be interrupted?

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