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TRIBUNE

CEYLON NEWS REVIEW



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Letter From The Editor

NOMINATION DAY will be soon upon us. All the major parties have chosen the majority of their nominees for the different electorates. There are gaps to be filled in and probably some adjustments to be made. The UNP list is the most complete having chosen candidates, up to the time of writing, for nearly 150 seats. Although the UNP has announced a few candidates for the North and the East, it has not chosen candidates for every seat in the Tamil areas. It has also to fill in other gaps like Galle where the long-time Independent Dahanayake has sought UNP Nomination (in the past Dahanayake has been a member of the LSSP, SLFP and other Peramunas). The SLFP list has not been fully finalised and serious problems have arisen in some seats like Kandy where the local SLFP organisation is reported to have protested against the SLFP's Central Board's choice of H. M. Navaratne, the ex-MP for Minipe. The TULF has nominated candidates for 24 seats in the North and East including three Muslim seats. There were not many surprises except for Amirthalingam shifting to Kankesanthurai and Thirunavakarasu (who had contested the KKS seat in 1970 as the TC candidate) shifting to Vaddukoddai which had been Amirthalingam's traditional seat which he lost in 1970 to the Tamil Congress candidate Thiyagarajah who is now contesting as the SLFP candidate (having joined the SLFP two or three years ago). It is difficult to say how Thirunavakarasu will fare in the Vaddukoddai against Thiyagarajah who has built a personal following on the basis of "good work" as an MP. He has utilised the decentralised Budget and his connections with the Government to effect tremendous improvements in many parts of his electorate. If his personal popularity can tip the balance against the latent animosity of the Tamil voter towards a Sinhala Party (like the SLFP or the UNP), Thiyagarajah has a very good chance against the TULF candidate. It is yet too early to say whether any emotional swings will sweep the North to offset the personal popularity of Thiyagarajah. The other seat where the TULF has adopted an unconventional method of dealing with the tricky situation is in Batticaloa. Here two TULF candidates have been nominated. Batticaloa is a two member constituency where a Tamil and Muslim are returned. In the past, the FP has, at times, nominated a Tamil and Muslim, but this time the TULF has nominated two Tamils. The TULF has not developed delusions of winning both seats, but really to test the popularity of two TULF candidates in Batticaloa: the old veteran Rajadurai and the new youth militant (with the halo of having spent some time in detention) Kasi Anandan. The youth wing of the TULF wanted one or more of its nominees to be selected; and as Kasi Anandan the youth "leader" is from Batticaloa, the TULF picked on this device to settle its internal problems. In the Jaffna electorate, the TULF has chosen a youthful newcomer (not of the militant youth wing), who is at present a political lightweight. How he will fare is yet uncertain, but a great deal will depend on whether Independents come into the scene to successfully split the bloc that may otherwise go to the sitting member C. X. Martin. The Socialist United Front (SUF), consisting of the LSSP, CPSL and the NDP, have also entered the field as an independent unit. The last time that the Left and "progressive" parties had contested the election as separate entities was in 1952. (In March 1960, there was a half-hearted attempt to go-it-alone which led to an abortive short-lived Parliament, but in the July 1960 election there was an electoral agreement between the SLFP, LSSP and the CP). The 1977 election will see three major groups fighting the elections: the SLFP, the UNP and the SUF. The TULF will fight in the North and East, but it may also set up candidates in areas where Tamil speaking voters are found in sufficiently large numbers, e.g. Puttalam. It must be noted that the SLFP leaders "unofficially" tried to bring the SUF into an electoral pact but the determined opposition from the LSSP, in particular, ended all hopes of such a Pact. If traditional political considerations still constitute a yardstick, the absence of an electoral Pact between the SLFP and the SUF will open the way for the UNP to win a major electoral victory. Some SUF leaders nurse the hope that they will run a close second to the UNP with the SLFP a bad third, but most observers do not accept this assessment. It is far too early yet to make any predictions, and it is also not known whether the new entrant into parliamentary politics, the JVP, will make any serious impact in the outcome of the elections—at least in tilting the balance in hard-fought two and three-cornered seats. The SLFP seems to think that it can win over the "progressive" anti-imperialist vote by gimmicks—removing historical monuments like Governor Ward's statue from its pedestal in Kandy to the Museum in Colombo.

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CONTENTS

EDITORS NOTEBOOK

—Turmoil Upcountry p. 2

CHRONICLE

—May 6 - May 19 p. 4

COWARDICE OF INDIRA—2

—Conclusion p. 10

INDIA

—Janata Party p. 12

INDIA

—Lessons p. 13

SRI LANKA'S CONSTITUTION

—Meritocracy p. 14

TAMIL-SPEAKING

—And Their Problems p. 15

HERBERT KEUNEMAN

—More About Him p. 17

ANANIA

—Thirsty Men p. 19

CONFIDENTIALLY

—Land Reform—I p. 20

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

On Plantations

Colombo, May 25,

The demonstration, organised by the professional planters of our tea (mainly) and rubber plantations in our hill country and in the lower foothills of the central massif, and which they staged in Colombo this week, with a political finesse not known before in this class of management staff, has woken many people (who should have known better) to the realities of the situation in the heartland of our main foreign exchange earning industries. The publicity given to this demonstration which was attended by over 500 professional planters—superintendents, assistant superintendents and the like—was not what it should have been. Only the *Sun/Dawasa*, papers accorded the quiet demonstration, which had started at Galle Face Green, with slogans and posters which revealed a part of the dangerous situation that has arisen in many planting districts. All the other newspapers—nothing else could have been expected—had played this demonstration down.

In fact, everything in the plantation districts has been played down, except to boost the Land Reform and the Land Alienation Policy of the Government with near-hysterical headlines that land was being given to the "landless" Kandyan peasants who had been "robbed" of their lands by the British and their imported Indian labourers. Loud political speeches were made that the rights of the Kandyan peasants were being restored. Occasionally, reports were also published in the press, that the world tea market was booming—there is no doubt it is, but the question whether Ceylon tea is not being by-passed because of our current decreasing production is not even mentioned. Further, that under the Land Reform Commission, the State Plantations and Janawasama, the tea industry was growing from strength to strength and that in a very short time the tea industry would touch heights of glorious fulfilment never before known. And that this was being achieved entirely with Kandyan pe-

sants working the estates with only a few of the Indian labour retained under the Sirimavo-Shastri Pact. This was the crux of the propaganda put out by the Government over the SLBC and the pro-government media. Many people have been fooled into thinking that this was a true picture of the situation—with only a little bit of understandable exaggeration and back-scratching governmental self-praise. *The public discontent that the price of ordinary tea leaves and tea dust had gone up two and three times was explained away as being caused by the boom in world prices—though this is far from the truth.*

While this euphoria was being built up, only the *Tribune* has consistently pointed out for over four years now, (and more recently after the decision to take over the big tea and rubber plantations), that whilst Land Reform was essential in an agricultural country like Sri Lanka, the manner it was being implemented and carried would undermine the economy in the most disastrous manner. In the first place, *Tribune* had pointed that the arithmetical ceilings of 50 and 25 acres were meaningless in a country where there were tremendous variations in land utilisation. Apart from this, the ceilings were not strictly observed in the case of political enemies and poli-

tical favourites. And, it was most horrifying that the land reform was being carried only for political considerations totally ignoring the economic implications. That was why highly developed coconut, tea and rubber lands were fragmented into quarter—to-three-acre blocs for alienation to so-called landless peasants—in reality the political loyalists and potential voters of the different MPs and Ministers. *Tribune* has also pointed out that land reform, especially by a Government which claimed to be socialist, should have concentrated on the consolidation of economically developed land and not resorted to fragmentation. *Tribune* has stressed that the land policies of all previous governments in attempting to create peasant colonisation schemes had not yielded even the minimum dividends for the millions (nay billions!) invested in these undertakings. These schemes had also been politically motivated—to create new pocket boroughs for certain political parties or individual politicians. *Even here the political results have been abortive and more often than not counter-productive.* *Tribune* has also indicated to its readers that from reports from the plantation districts it was clear that the situation was getting from bad to worse.

COVER

ON THE COVER we have a photograph of men working in a gem pit. To the credit of the United Front government, and especially the LSSP, it must be said that it ended the old system where more gems were smuggled out rather than officially exported. The export of gems has now become a major export, and as long as the gems are found in certain parts of the island, the industry will bring substantial foreign exchange earnings. But in the process of discouraging gem smuggling by offering "incentives" to smugglers to turn into genuine exporters, the Government has created a new capitalist elite known popularly as CRA capitalists and gem-mandalalis. There is no doubt that the kind of frankensteinian incentive, offered to gem and non-traditional exports after 1970 could have been avoided. Any government, after the 1977 elections, if it hopes to bring equilibrium into the state of economic life in the country, must end the present system of CRA incentives and replace it with other incentives which will not have such a degenerative impact on the socio-economic fabric. It is also imperative that incentives should be given to all who attain high productivity in agriculture and industry—even though the bulk of such products are not for export. To earn money by export is an easy "compradore" art for the jet set. But those who sought to increase productivity in food cultivation and other basic essentials have so far been totally ignored. If a balance is to be brought into economic life, the lop-sided over-emphasis on superficial export earnings must be set right. And often, as experience has shown, export earnings are only a mirage in a world of floating currencies and hyper-inflation.

Superintendents

But, until a few months ago no attempt had been made to fragment the tea lands in what are known as the best highgrown tea. Fragmentation had ruined the medium and low grown teas and economic excuses were advanced that these lands were "marginal" and that crop diversification, which would be undertaken by the LRC through the new allottees, would bring the country great benefits through non-traditional exports. Suddenly, (this coincided with Anura Bandaranaike's decision to contest the Nuwara Eliya seat), it was announced that 7000 acres of the best high grown tea estates would be alienated within a matter of weeks. This naturally led to protests from the trade unions in the first instance—not merely from the Ceylon Workers Congress (which has the support of the bulk of the workers of recent Indian origin) but also all the other plantation unions led by the LSSP, CPSL, UNP and also some independent unions. The generally non-political Estate Staffs Unions—or what is left of them after the decimation by the LRC—also joined in the protest. The top management of the estates privately expressed their views to their political friends but generally kept out stating that it was their duty to carry out government policy—as long as it was possible. But the Unions pointed that alienation in estates in mid-country and other places had led not only to hardship to workers driven out of the estates by the armed "terror hordes", unofficially organised and maintained by some leading lights in the LRC and the Janawasama outfit. The police, it is alleged by the Unions, had not taken any action against these "terror hordes"—claiming to restore the rights of the Kandyans by driving out the "foreign elements" in the Kandyan areas—and that the Police had in fact connived with them by not taking the normal precautions to maintain law and order.

This naturally created a sense of fear and insecurity among the workers and when teams of surveyors went to the estates—now marked for alienation—they were not allowed to do their work by the resistance offered by the workers who would have been thrown out by the land alienation. Insistence by certain interested political quarters that the surveyors must proceed with their work had led to clashes

and the Police resorted to firing in Devon Estate, and killed a young worker. There are stories of troubles in many other estates but details are not known and there is no confirmation from reliable sources.

In the meantime, the "terror hordes", using government vehicles and with the police shutting the Nelsonian blind eye, (in spite of complaints that such action was being contemplated), descended on two estates in the high grown area, Sanquar and Delta, and demolished several sets of line rooms after looting all the valuables of the workers—sewing machines, jewellery, clothes, etc. etc. They had gone away scot free—and it was only when the trade unions threatened massive trade union action that the police had begun to wake up, but not enough to catch the culprits, or even take preventive action to ensure that these gangs did not indulge in these orgies anymore.

In the meantime, a melodrama staged by a Deputy Minister to involve a senior Jaffna Tamil Superintendent in a charge which might have justified his removal by the LRC was foiled because of fortuitous circumstances. *Tribune* will publish more particulars of this sordid story when some facts brought to us have been verified, but the question that is being asked is whether the Deputy Minister, who made a complaint of "attemp-

ted murder" and who later with drew it at another police station is not going to be dealt with according to the law (relating to false complaints). It would be also necessary to find out if it is true that a police officer in plain clothes was present when the Deputy Minister had waved the big stick and indulged in big talk and whether it is true that he had also made a statement in regard to the original charge of attempted murder.

The attempt to involve the senior Superintendent in a serious "legal" charge had made all senior and junior planters to sit up. They had already been shocked by what was going in the plantation areas. This led to the decision at a meeting of the Planters' Society to stage a demonstration to bring before the public and the government the true state of affairs in the up-country. Very realistically, realising that the action of 500 odd planters would have little or no political impact, the Superintendents sat round a table with trade unions and the estate staff unions and arrived at some common decisions to save the plantation industry from further destruction. The joint actions of all the workers' trade unions on May 12 had compelled the Government to climb down and had agreed to all the demands the joint trade unions had put forward. The Planters action followed on this.

LETTER

Sir,

EMPTY BEER CANS

Recently I saw an article about a national election upcoming in August in our local newspaper. The article mentioned your newspaper and that is why I am writing to you. This letter does not concern politics, but empty beer or ale cans from your country.

I am an American beer can collector and do not have any from your country. If any beer or ale cans are available in your country I would truly and deeply appreciate it if you or someone you know would send me some empties.

If you decide to send me any cans they should be packed very good to avoid damage in shipping, also upon receipt of package I will return any monies to you for postage paid. Thank you and have a nice day.

Charles B. Fralick

730, E. Mifflin St.,
Lebanon, Pa 17042
U.S.A.
May 9, 1977

—Will any reader willing to oblige Mr. Fralick inform us.—Editor

The planters staged a demonstration from the Galle Face Green to the Police Headquarters and a deputation of them had met the IGP. After that, the same deputation had met the head of the Janasama, Asoka Gopallawa, the head of State Plantations, Clifford Ratwatte, and the Minister of Agriculture and Lands, Hector Kobbekaduwa. What action the Government will take as a result of these submissions of the planters is not known, but unless the Government does something, the "explosive situation" in the plantations will explode. There seem to be some *ultras* in the LRC who seem to think that 500 odd senior superintendents and their assistants could

be dispensed with and the the so-called "trainees" appointed by the LRC on MPs' and Ministers' letters from particular electorates would be able to take over. Those who know the calibre of these "trainees" will shudder at the very thought of such a possibility.

In retrospect, it is interesting to note that the senior planters are getting "democratised" and "politicalised" by the ferment set up in the industry by the stupid actions of the LRC on the basis of unrealistic Land Reform. In the "bad old days of the British," the white planters were a law unto themselves, and they did not soil their hands with "politics" because the

entire administration, from the Governor to the kachcheri clerk, had existed only to ensure that the plantation industry worked smoothly. It was colonial rule, with all its limitations and inequalities, but the industry had been run efficiently and profitably. Today, with a Republican Constitution, the inequalities continue, but a situation has arisen where the industry is not only not being run efficiently but is also on the verge of total collapse. In this setting, the professional planters have begun to take legitimate political action to safeguard their future, the future of the industry and, in more senses than one, the future of the country.

SRI LANKA CHRONICLE

May 6 — May 19

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

CDN—Ceylon Daily News; CDM—Ceylon Daily Mirror; CO—Ceylon Observer; ST—Sunday Times; DM—Dinamina; LD—Lankadipa; VK—Virakesari; ATH—Aththa; SM—Silumina; SLD—Sri Lankadipa; JD—Janadina; DP—Dinapathi; SU—Sun; DW—Dawasa; CM—Chinthamani; WK—Weekend; RR—Rivirasa;

FRIDAY, MAY 6: A significant feature in Sri Lanka's trade pattern in 1976 was that the first time since 1965 the trade deficit has been reversed and a favourable balance of Rs. 120 million has been registered, says the latest People's Bank Economic Review. The general elections will be held before August this year, the PM said yesterday at a public rally that followed the opening of a number of services in the Polgahawela electorate. The latest death toll in the boat tragedy that occurred on Vesak day at Matara is now believed to be around 35, most of them youths; upto yesterday morning 22 bodies were recovered and identified. A student admitted to the University on the results of the HNCE examination will have to study one year more than the prescribed period to obtain a University degree. The People's Bank opens its 200th branch in Kollupitiya next week—CDN. Dr. Edouard Saouma, Director General of the FAO will pay an official visit to Sri Lanka from May 11 to 14; on May 12 he will present the CERES medal to the PM issued by the FAO. Mr. Felix Dias Bandaranaike will contest Dompe on the SLFP ticket. Public Service Engineers, income tax assessors, accountants and audit officers have formed a joint front to fight for four common demands to be presented to the government—CDM. The Police last week foiled a plot to free Rohana Wijeweera, leader of the JVP from the Magazine Prison at Borella where he is serving a sentence. Under the generalised scheme for Preferences of the European Economic Community announced for 1977 there are increased opportunities available for Sri Lanka's exports. The Supreme Court

yesterday allowed an application by Mr. Anura Bandaranaike, Chief Organiser of the SLFP Youth League for a revision of an order made by the District Judge of Colombo in a defamation case against him filed by Mr. R. Premadasa, first MP for Colombo Central. A new channelled consultation practice will come into effect from May 14. The EEC has agreed to give Sri Lanka 19,868 tons of wheat flour as food aid for the second quarter of 1977—SU. The United Left Front will field candidates in 140 electorates at the next general elections; this decision was taken last week at a meeting of the leaders of this front—VK. Rs. 162.15 million is to be spent on modernising five tanks covering an aggregate of 31,000 acres in the North Central Dry Zone. To speed up cultivation work in the Dry Zone the government has decided to get down 600 tractors through a grant provided by the British government—CO. The Ministry of Finance has decided and will soon implement the fixing of a reasonable standard price for gold—DP.

SATURDAY, MAY 7: Colombo Port today is one long queue of ships awaiting unloading; the delay in unloading ships has resulted in demurrage of about 3,000 US dollars a day; the question being asked in shipping circles is why did government departments and corporations place orders for early delivery in Colombo knowing the capacity of the Colombo Port and that ships have already got bunched in Colombo. Two more bodies of victims of the Nilwala Ganga boat tragedy have been found, bringing the death toll to 33. Striking estate unions have called for the suspension of the alienation of 7,000 acres of land in the Nuwara Eliya-Maskeliya electorate as a prerequisite to calling off the work stoppage that began at the end of last month. The UNP has issued its election manifesto—CDN. According to the latest Annual Report released by the Central Bank in 1976, the cost of living index, increased by 1.2%, as against an increase of 6.7% in 1975 and 12.3% in 1974. The traffic police will soon lay speed traps along the Negombo road where a number of fatal accidents have taken place since widening of the road for the Colombo non-aligned summit. Last year paddy production increased by approximately 5 million bushels over that of 1975—CDM. Mr. Anura Weeraratne, former Chairman of the Ceylon Ceramics Corporation was yesterday further remanded for one

month in connection with investigations into alleged exchange control offences—SU. There has been a difference of opinion between the PM and the Minister of Finance, Food and Co-operatives, and that is why he left the island, according to government sources—DP. According to Central Bank statistics there has been an unexpected drop in tea production after 17 years; in 1976 it is 3 million 80 lakhs of pounds less than that of 1975. There were incidents of resistance and attacks when government servants went to distribute the 7,000 acres of tea estates to be alienated—DW.

SUNDAY, MAY 8: The State Gem Corporation earned over Rs. 70 million through gem exports during the last four months; according to customs sources export earnings had shown steady increase with Japan becoming the principal buyer of Sri Lanka gems. The PM said yesterday that even her opponents would agree that it was the SLFP which had done most for the country; she added that the LSSP and the CP aimed at destroying her party because they knew that they could not come to power as long as the SLFP was functioning; she was addressing a rally at Nuwara Eliya where she formally introduced Mr. Anura Bandaranaike to the people of the area as the prospective member for the electorate. Some of the larger districts which have proved too unwieldy for proper administration are to be broken up and it is likely that the number would be increased from the present 22 to 30. The navy will go into action against poachers in the Wilpattu National Park; the Wildlife and Nature Protection Society reveals that in order to avoid detection poachers transport the flesh of slaughtered animals particularly deer, by sea. The non-aligned news agencies pool is now taking concrete form and shape; third world countries will shortly submit to the non-aligned secretariat the steps taken by them to implement the decisions of the Colombo Summit last year relating to media and mass information—SO. The Attorney General has ruled that the Commissioner of National Housing has no power to divest houses already vested in the Commissioner under the ceiling on Housing Property law if the order of vesting has been gazetted, moneys deposited and written agreements entered into between the Commissioner and the tenant. The PM told a mass rally in Nuwara Eliya yesterday that the 7,000 acres of land to be alienated in the Nuwara-Eliya -Maskeliya electorate would be given to Sinhalese as well as Tamils without any discrimination; she said she wished to refute the propaganda spread by Mr. Thondaman that the land was intended for alienation only to the Sinhalese. The organisers of the current campaign aimed at obtaining the release of 'political prisoners' expressed tremendous satisfaction at the public response so far; according to one of the organisers, they have received petitions signed by 120,000 persons—ST. The IGP yesterday ordered a full probe into the loss of five highly sophisticated Radio Transreceivers from the Fisheries Corporation Stores at Mutwal. Marxism and Marxist-oriented political parties have no place in this country in the future; at the coming general elections which is going to be a decisive one, the choice of the people will only be between the SLFP and the UNP, said the PM at a public meeting held at Hanguranketa on Friday. Large crowds are expected at this year's Republic Day celebrations on May 22—the last one before the coming general elections—SU. The government is thinking of stopping the slaughter of local cattle,

and importing 60,000 heads of cattle from South India—DP. Mr. Vasudeva Nanayakkara, MP for Kiriella has denounced the LSSP for stopping his procession on May Day, and has called for the formation of a Left Front—VK. Sri Lanka is unable to draw up a map of the seas surrounding her, to furnish the World Bank which is collecting these maps from various countries, as she has neither the equipment, the personnel nor the finances—RR.

MONDAY, MAY 9: There should be no compromise on the government's policy of land alienation to the peasantry of this country; reversal of this policy would be tantamount to a reversal of the government's decision to correct an injusties perpetrated by the colonialists on the peasants of this country; this is the main recommendation of the Commission appointed by the government to report on demands made by 13 unions representing the plantation sector employees. The government has decided to take punitive action against importers who fail to conform to it's decision that prices of consumer items should be reduced by at least 10%. General Carlos Romulo, Secretary of Foreign Affairs of the Philippines will arrive in Colombo today en route to Jeddah; he and his party will leave the next day. A Dominican expert on coffee marketing has predicted that coffee prices will continue to rise at least until the end of 1978; the low levels of reserves in the areas of greatest world production will not allow for a price reduction in the near future.—CDN. The UNP which claims to champion the cause of democracy dispensed political patronage to those who attempted to destroy the system in the country; it was the SLFP which preserved democracy and successfully staved off all threats to it, said the PM at a mass SLFP rally in Nuwara Eliya yesterday. Squadmen of the Bribery Commissioner's Department were last week checking the movements of certain Excise officials after information of large scale bribery by certain tavern and inn keepers in the city and the suburbs—CDM. The PM will this week hold a strategy session with her Ministers—as a prelude to the dissolution of the NSA. The Indian government has set up a study team to identify employment potentials in public sector undertakings for rehabilitation of repatriates from Sri Lanka under the Indo-Sri Lanka agreement—SU. The Minister of Irrigation, Power and Highways is scheduled to open the Rs. 50 million Rambukkan Oya Project shortly; once this project is completed 6,000 acres of land will have water during both seasons—CO. With the heavy rains experienced for the past three days, many of the tanks in the NCP are overflowing and paddy fields are under water—DP. According to the Minister of Agriculture and Lands, instead of breaking up the land into small bits, they are thinking of giving it on a co-operative basis to be looked after by registered co-operative societies—DM. The Chairman of the Janawasamas has said that whatever show of strength, whatever strikes take place, the 7,000 acres of land will be distributed in the Nuwara Eliya-Maskeliya electorate—DW.

TUESDAY, MAY 10: The Tea Board has recommended to the government an increase in the subsidy for replanting of tea; at present the quantum of the subsidy is around Rs. 4750 an acre; it is learnt that the Tea Board has recommended an increase of this amount of between Rs. 2500 and Rs. 3000 per acre. The

Federation of Teacher's Association of the University of Sri Lanka, last week met the Minister of Education to discuss proposals regarding the revision of salaries of University teachers. The percentage of the country's export earnings used for meeting debit repayments has declined to Rs. 20.1% in 1976 from 22.9% in 1975, according to the latest report of the Central Bank; this was due to better export earnings; owing to exchange fluctuations the country also incurred an additional debt of Rs. 533 million in 1976. The memorial to be erected in Jaffna in memory of the late TULF leader, Mr. S. J. V. Chelvanayakam will be built on the advice of the former DMK Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, Mr. M. Karunanidhi, who is said to be an architect. The Secretary of the Ministry of Labour, has reported to the PM that 13 Plantation sector employees unions had made representations to him that they would call off the strike in the Nuwara Eliya-Hatton districts if the government agreed to suspend the land alienation program in the district. Colombo Fort received 9.65 inches of rain during the 24 hours which ended yesterday at 8.30 a.m.: this is considered to be the highest amount of rain received in Colombo in recent times. A number of roads in the city have suffered severe damage following torrential showers last week—CDN. The Attorney General has ruled that the giving of 12,000 teaching appointments will not constitute an act of bribery or undue influence under the Election Laws; the Attorney-General's ruling follows a request for clarification on the matter raised by the Minister of Education. The technical officers belonging to the Meteorological Service of Sri Lanka will resort to strike action from midnight today. Thousands of children are without milk foods as a result of the shortage of Lakspray and sterilised milk. Coconut production fell by 2.7% from 2,398 million nuts in 1975 to 2,093 million nuts in 1976; this fall in production has been attributed primarily to prolonged drought conditions and the lagged response to fertilizer application in 1975—CDM. Price Control authorities are to prosecute the CWE for profiteering. The 10,000 strong Public Service Technical Officer's Trade Union Federation and the Technical Service Trade Union Federation will come out on a general strike tomorrow. Forty Trade Unions representing several grades of workers in state medical institutions throughout the country will pull their members out on strike from Thursday. Mr. Kumar Rupasinghe, a Director of the National Youth Council is likely to be the SLFP candidate for the newly-carved out Anamadawa seat. The Sri Lanka Aid Group has indicated the possibility of a substantial increase of its support to Sri Lanka if an expanded investment programme is formulated and translated into development projects, says a press release from the World Bank, the sponsor of the group; the aid group 'expressed concern that recent policy measures may make more difficult the task of reconciling the competing claims on resources of Sri Lanka's legitimate social aspiration and faster economic growth'—SU. Most of the rivers in the island are rising after the torrential downpours which are now being experienced in most parts of the island; in Colombo over 200 families are reported to be rendered homeless. Heavy absenteeism has practically broken down the CTB's bus services in Colombo and the suburbs. People's Bank authorities in Kurunegala are considering granting loans to a large number of released insurgents to start self-employment schemes—CO.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 11: In the wake of island-wide complaints about the deterioration of the bus services, the Minister of Transport yesterday assured commuters that a better bus service would be provided within three weeks. Prices of teas at yesterday's Colombo auctions dropped by Rs. 4 to Rs. 10 on a kilo after reaching very high levels at previous sales. Mr. Maithripala Senanayake, Minister of Irrigation, Power and Highways, ceremonially opening the SLFP office for the entire district said here that there was nothing in the way of the SLFP, LSSP and the CP reuniting to form a common front to carry forward the policies of the late Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike, which was the primary objective of the 1970 coalition of progressive forces. The Tea Board has a new scheme for replacing old and diseased tea plants by new plants; the process known as 'infilling vacancies' is to be financed in a big way once authority has been granted, said a spokesman for the Board yesterday. Due to the rain nearly 1,000 telephone lines in the city were dead—CDN. The CTB has appealed to the government to release Rs. 60 million immediately to clear the 450 buses which are scheduled to arrive next month to run a satisfactory service during the forthcoming elections. The PM said at the meeting winding up her tour of the Nuwara Eliya Maskeliya electorate that she would go ahead with the alienation of 6,000 acres of lands in the areas despite attempts to thwart it by interested parties. Mrs. Erin Senanayake, wife of the late R. G. Senanayake will be the SLFP nominee for the Kelaniya seat—CDM. The Philippines Foreign Secretary, General Carlos P. Romulo yesterday appraised the PM of the policy and achievements of the 'New Society' of the Philippines established in 1972. A group of prominent doctors and Professors of medicine have formed a new union—the 'Union of Doctors for Democracy'. All the opposition parties may put forward one candidate to contest the Attanagalle seat against the PM, in the coming general elections—SU. Heavy rains, unusual at this time of the year, are lashing the Raja Rata, the nation's traditional rice bowl. The Mayor of Colombo has ordered that Rs. 100 per family be given to the families whose belongings have been lost or damaged with the recent heavy rains—CO. There is shortage of Lakspray and other milk foods in the market now; however, there are 24 lakhs of pounds that have accumulated in the milk powder factory at Welisara; this is due to a shortage of tins and the tins that have been ordered from abroad have been delayed in coming—LD. Paddy production which fell in 1975 has gone up by 8% according to Central Bank statistics; the increase is about 50 lakhs of bushels—ATH.

THURSDAY, MAY 12: Thirteen unions representative of staff and labour plantations yesterday agreed after a conference presided over by the Commissioner of Labour to call off the strike on plantations with effect from tomorrow, May 13. Mr. Maithripala Senanayake will inaugurate construction work on the Rs. 62.5 million Rambukkan Oya Project in Amparai on May 14. The PM receives the Ceres medal of the FAO today the Director General of the FAO will personally present the medal to her. The threatened strike by the Joint Front of Health Services Trade Unions was called off last night following talks the front had with the Minister of Health—CDN. The despatch of drugs, surgical instruments and medical gases to all medical institutions came to a complete standstill yesterday; the Civil Medical Stores Storekeepers Union had adopted

this action because no redress had been given to their demands so far. The strike by workers on the Nuwara-Eliya-Maskeliya electorate was called off because the unions accepted the assurances given by the Commissioner that no worker who is resident in the estate would be displaced as a result of the land alienation and that alienation would be made without deiscrimination among the Sinhalese and the Tamil estate employees. Work in several government departments and corporations were hampered when technical officers in several grades belonging to the trade unions comprising 52 trade unions struck work yesterday. Sinhala film star, Vijaya Kumaratunge is tipped to contest the Katana seat on the SLFP ticket—CDM. Seven suspects charged with the murder of Mr. Alfred Duraiappah, Mayor of Jaffna, are expected to be discharged. The cabinet yesterday approved a unified salary structure for middle grade technical and scientific officers in the public sector. The government this week concluded negotiations with Iraq for a multi-million rupee joint fishing venture. Talks for an electoral understanding among constitution parties of the Socialist United Front ended abruptly on Tuesday with the leaders failing to reach agreement on candidates for certain seats at the coming general election—SU. India and the Soviet Union will begin a major study this month of the southwest monsoon which is due to set in soon over India, Burma, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka; this is the first in the series of studies to find out why the monsoon is so fickle. A severe coffee shortage this year, estimated at being about 17% below the level of last year's world production figures, is now being anticipated by the coffee trade, who feel that unless world production is stepped up considerably, the prices of coffee will soar to unprecedented figures by the end of this year. Schemes to step up the cultivation of coconut in the various parts of the island, are now being successfully implemented by the Coconut Cultivation Board. The Price Control Department has prosecuted 123 traders for flouting the price law during the past 10 days—CO. The payment of agricultural loans has been very unsatisfactory; out of the Rs. 65 million 32 lakhs given from 1967-76, Rs. 20 million 41 lakhs has not been paid, according to Central Bank reports—DW. The Ceramics Corporation has stopped all new tenders from abroad because it is unable to produce enough to meet the needs of any more orders, according to reliable sources in the Corporation—DW.

FRIDAY, MAY 13: The government on Wednesday approved a new salary structure for university teachers; the new wage structure for non-academic staff of the university was also accepted in principle subject to scrutiny by the Treasury. The TULF will not take any immediate steps to elect a President to fill the vacancy created by the death of Mr. S. J. V. Chelvanayakam, its leader. A labourer was killed yesterday morning at Devon Estate in Lindula in police firing, where according to government sources the police were obstructed; the police had been summoned to the estate to enquire into allegations of surveyors being obstructed when the incident took place. From June 1 all tea exporters must register with the Tea Board the contracts they have entered into with foreign buyers within 48 hours of completing such contracts; the Tea Board will also stipulate that shipments on approved contracts must be carried out within four months—CDN. The seven Tamil youths accused in the Duraiappah murder case who were discharged by the High-Court-at-Bar on a

nolle prosequi entered by the Attorney General yesterday were later arrested by the CID and produced before the Additional Magistrate of Colombo who ordered them to be re-remanded. Several Health Department employees struck work though an agreement had been reached between union representatives and the Health Ministry to call off the strike they planned for yesterday—CDM. Police Headquarters were yesterday considering the question of rushing re-inforcements, including riot squads, to hill country areas where there is reported to be tension over a series of incidents. Railway guards have launched a go-slow campaign from midnight to protest against the failure of the government to give them shoes. The SLFP's Nomination Board has picked Mr. Halim Ishak as the party candidate for Colombo Central at the coming general elections—SU. Since the government decided to issue passports to all countries and relax certain conditions on persons going abroad in search of employment, a large number of people, mostly youth, are storming the Department of Immigration and Emigration daily. The PM will officially inaugurate National Children's Day on May 17 at Kandy; this day commemorates the death anniversary of the national child hero Weera Madduma Bandara. 322 industrialists were given Rs. 8.7 million as loans under the People's Bank-Industrial Development Board Financial Assistance Scheme last year—CO. Teachers who were newly appointed by the Education Department left the Ministry offices only after 9 or 10 p.m., and that too with covered heads for fear of identification—DW. The Mayor of Colombo been questioned in connection with the 5 missing suitcases of a passenger who he had come to meet at the Airport—ATH.

SATURDAY, MAY 14: The Saukkya Seva Balaman-dalaya, representing forty unions of employees of the State medical services called off the strike at 5 p.m. yesterday and resumed talks with the Minister of Health on their outstanding demands. The President has authorised the Criminal Justice Commission to inquire into offence in relation to currency or foreign exchange until March 30 this year i.e. offences committed between August 1975 and March 76. The Episcopal Consecration ceremony of the new Archbishop of Colombo, His Grace, the Most Rev. Nicholas Marcus Fernando will take place this evening at St. Benedict's College Quardrangle, Kotahena. Mr. T. William Fernando, Nuwara Eliya's mayor and former MP, died of a heart attack in Colombo yesterday morning—CDN. The first NCGE Examination scheduled to be held in 1978, will not be held according to top Ministry officials; this decision was taken at a conference of university dons. The government will import a further consignment of 11 million tins of canned fish within the next few weeks—CDM. The government last Wednesday sought the opinion of the Attorney General on whether the appointment of 12000 teachers by the Ministry of Education contravenes any election laws. Since irregularities such as, houses belonging to single house owners have been acquired and transferred to persons who already owned a house, have been discovered in a review of the Department of National Housing by the new Minister, Mr. C. Kumarasuriar, he has ordered a full probe of the 'Keuneman period'—SU. Soon there will be a controlled price for gold; the Central Bank is in the process of fixing the price; for the price of gold has within the last decade risen from Rs. 100 to Rs. 600 or

700—VK. The European Economic Community has allocated a sum of 25 lakhs of US dollars for the restoration of a tank on the Trincomalee road—DM. The General Secretary of the Estate Worker's Union has said that the entire blame for the death of the labourer on Devon Estate, Lindulla rests with the government and it is no use their trying to shift the blame on someone else—DW. Despite the financial difficulty the CWE is facing, in the Kolonnawa and the Galagedara electorates 500 new appointments have been made, and the CWE union has protested to the Minister—ATH.

SUNDAY, MAY 15: Parliament will be dissolved this week; according to the constitution the NSA which first sat on May 22, 1972 when the country became a republic, will stand dissolved at midnight on May 22 unless dissolved earlier by a Presidential Proclamation. A final decision regarding the re-introduction of 'Channeled practice' for government medical specialists will be taken by the government this week. A series of frauds unearthed by the internal audit of the National Paper Corporation has revealed the loss of nearly Rs. 1 million; investigators said yesterday that one of the men they wanted to meet most—an executive of the corporation had disappeared. The Controller of Importers and Exports has suspended with immediate effect, the export of all types of timber in sawn and logged form; this step follows the alarming trend in the destruction of forest land for commercial purposes—SO. The Dudley Peramuna led by Mr. Rukman Senanayake, MP for Dedigama, has ceased to function as a political party; since its leader has asserted that he will contest the elections only on the UNP ticket, many leading figures in the Peramuna are reported to have sought membership in the SLFP. Since the new Socialist United Front has not had talks for the past two weeks or so, the question asked in political circles is whether there has been an unofficial suspension of talks owing to disagreement over nomination over the next general elections—ST. History was created in the prisons last week when the Nomination Board of the JVP met behind bars and decided to contest 15 seats at the forthcoming general elections; Mr. Prins Gunasekera Gen. Sec. of SLVB met Mr. Rohana Wijeweera in prison on Wednesday to discuss a no-contest pact with the JVP—VK. It is reliably understood that the widow of the late Mr. G. G. Ponnambalam has requested Mr. Sivasithambaram, Leader of the TC to nominate her son, Mr. Kumar Ponnambalam to the Point Pedro seat where his father was born, so that he could continue the work that his father had started; the letter said that he would submit the proposal to the Nominations Board of the TULF for consideration—DP. In the first three years of this month the customs has seized unauthorised imported goods to the value of Rs. 1,34,444—RR.

MONDAY, MAY 16: The physical take-over of 432 estate schools and their integration with the national system of education will take place this week; around 500 teachers and principles of these schools will also be absorbed by the government. The PM said that the massive crowds that participated in SLFP rallies recently have given the correct answer to the opponents of the government who try to show that the government has lost popularity; she was addressing a public rally at Mahara yesterday. Two beche-de-mer factories built at the cost of Rs. 1 million as DDC projects at Kalpitiya and Mannar—the first of their kind anywhere in the world—have been closed down; according to official sources this is because of 'management problems'.

Group farms on a co-operative basis will be formed on lands alienated by the Land Reform Commission to prevent fragmentation of land into uneconomical individual units; the Minister of Agriculture and Lands has formulated this scheme to enable the planned development of the entire blocks alienated to the people. Mr. A. Amirhalingam, will contest the Kankasanturai seat previously held by the late Mr. S. J. V. Chelvanayakam, leader of the TULF—CDN. The premier public service trade union—the GCSU is now in the throes of a revolt within its present leadership; 13 Central Executive Committee members of the union have openly attacked the present leadership and attitude of the LSSP charging them with indulging in sectarianism and obstructing unity among all sections of the working classes and their trade unions. The people will be given a chance to exercise their vote before August 15, said the PM addressing a public meeting at Mahara in connection with the opening of several development projects in the electorate. Sri Lanka's Import Bill increased only by 1.6% from Rs. 5,334 million in 1975 to Rs. 5,417 million in 1976. Sri Lanka's money supply rose from Rs. 3,088 million at the end of 1975 to Rs. 4,166 million at the end of 1976—CDM. The CTB has sent an S.O.S. to India for the purchase of 6,000 tyres; these tyres are urgently required by the CTB if it is to put out its entire fleet of buses on the road. Over 2,000 families have been affected by the rains in the past few days; these families have been housed at Municipal Community Centres, reception halls and schools in the city. The Ministry of Irrigation, Power and Highways has set aside Rs. 30 million to provide electricity for 200 villages by the end of the year. The government has decided to import 100,000 tons of cement to meet the acute shortage of this building material which is hampering the country's construction industry—CO. The Nominations Board of the TULF has failed to give nomination to Mr. Kumar Ponnambalam, son of Mr. G. G. Ponnambalam, even though until the last minute they had indicated that they would nominate him, said sources close to him; and he is very shocked and upset about it—VK. The Publications Department of the Ministry of Education has not yet released all the prescribed text books for schools this year—DW. Millions of rupees of the government funds are being wasted due to the negligent attitude of the Administration in government departments and corporations; for the past one year 49 lakhs worth of iron has been lying in the Port of Colombo, despite the repeated requests of Port officials to remove it, nothing has been done—JD.

TUESDAY, MAY 17: About 30,000 16-year-olds, the pioneers of the new educational reforms, will sit their first HNCE (II grade) examination in August 1978; it will not be held in April along with the present GCE 'A' level, it's parallel as earlier planned. Due to the incessant rain, 8,000 telephones are out of order in the Colombo and greater Colombo area; telecommunications traffic has also been impaired by a work-to-rule started by the Telecommunication Engineering Officer's Union and Inspector's Union. The Housing Department has resumed the granting of loans to the public to build low cost houses—CDN. Can Deputy Ministers continue to hold office and draw salaries after the dissolution of the NSA? this is the question being asked in parliamentary circles and certain members of parliament will soon seek an opinion from the Attorney General on the subject. The government is examining

the question of granting pensions to the staff of the University of Sri Lanka. The work-to-rule campaign launched by the Ceylon Railway Guards Union had hampered the despatch of food to the outstation areas, mainly the hill country—CDM. The President will today issue a proclamation dissolving the NSA. The All-Ceylon Trade Chamber has launched a campaign to get all political parties contesting the coming general elections to give a pledge that they would redress the grievances of handloom textile weavers. Six cargo vessels carrying fertilizer are bunched up outside the port of Colombo—while the State Fertilizer Corporation says that as a result of a 'trade union' dispute in the corporation it is not in a position to unload the cargo—SU. It is reliably understood that Mr. A. Amirthalingam and Mr. S. Kathiravelupillai, MP for Kopay have had secret talks with the General Secretary of the CP Mr. Pieter Keuneman; this is believed to be in connection with an electoral agreement in the Kankasanturai and Colombo Central electorates. The supporters of the LSSP in the North are contemplating starting a new Left Party according to sources close to the party—DP. The demurrage bill is now Rs. 2 million because the bunching of food and fertilizer ships in the Port of Colombo and the slow rate of handling the cargo in the last few days. Milk collectors of the Milk Board have dropped by 10%; Milk Board sources attribute this drop to the present coconut crisis which has led to a severe shortage of ponnac and concentrate feeds—CO. Ten rice ships are lying in the Trincomalee harbour—LD. Production of yarn in the Tulhiriya Textile Mills has reduced considerably due to a shortage of spare parts, and this has adversely affected the handloom industry. The government has offered compensation of Rs. 1,094 per acre for the lands they have acquired under the land reform, but estate owners want at least Rs. 2,650 per acre—DM.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 18: The manner in which trees are being felled, and the pace at which it is taking place is so reducing the forest cover of the country that it is difficult even to estimate the extent of the reduction; in the late sixties forest cover amounted to 44% of the land mass but today it might well be well below 20%. The NSA will be dissolved from the moment the President, on the advice of the PM, signs the proclamation that is expected to take place today. The 52 day-old strike at the Tyre Corporation has been suspended following the invitation extended to the striking unions for talks by the corporation management on Monday. A sudden stoppage of work by 4,500 employees of the railway workshop at Rattmalana yesterday morning and the work to rule by the guards have interrupted the train service. The LSSP does not intend to join the SLFP in a coalition; this is the text of a statement issued by the Party's Assistant Secretary on the instruction of the Politburo of the party. The Ministry of Plantation Industries has expressed the view that it is not necessary to change the emoluments of estate superintendents in employment before the nationalisation of the plantation. Tea prices came down yesterday by about Rs. 4.5 a kilo on the average; in the quality teas the decline was about Rs. 8-10 on the average—CDN. A storm is brewing over the appointments now being given to teachers; the agitation has sprung from the government's own ranks, and protestors include Cabinet Ministers Deputy Ministers and SLFP MP's. The Civil Medical Stores Storekeepers Union decided on

Monday to suspend their trade union action for a fortnight and were prepared to negotiate with the Minister of Health—CDM. The dissolution of the NSA scheduled for yesterday, was put off at the last minute in view of strong astrological reasons. The leaders of the three constituent parties of the Socialist United Front—the LSSP, CP and the PDP—yesterday resumed their talks to finalise a no-contest pact for the next general election. Several persons are reported to have been injured after a gang set fire to the lines at Delta Estate in Pusselawa yesterday. Mr. Felix Dias Bandaranaike is expected to return to Sri Lanka by Nomination Day, says the Secretary to the Ministry of Justice in a statement issued yesterday—SU. The seventh suspect in the Duraiappah murder case was released yesterday, after being in custody for one and a half years—DP. Though the public are claiming daily to improve bus services, the Transport Minister has said it has so far not been possible to outfit the spare parts necessary for it. Anura Bandaranaike has said at Devinuwara that if the UNP comes to power, it is very lively that they will set up a separate department just to take revenge on members of the SLFP—LD. When there is such a shortage of drugs in the hospitals, Rs. 10 lakhs worth of drugs has been collecting in the govt. stores and it is not unfit for use. The government has decided to reduce the teaching appointments from 12,000 to 6,000 because the Treasury has not made permission for it—DW.

THURSDAY, MAY 19: The NSA was dissolved at midnight yesterday by a Presidential Proclamation; the President issued the proclamation on the advice of the PM; the proclamation named June 6 as the date for nominations for the eighth parliament of Sri Lanka; General elections will be held on Thursday, July 21 and the new NSA will meet on Friday, August 26; the Parliament which was prorogued on February 10 and scheduled to be re-convened today will not assemble following the dissolution. The Ayurvedic Drugs Corporation will import one million rupees worth of Ayurvedic drugs this year. Two police officers attached to the CID died on the spot of gunshot injuries after being shot at in broad daylight by two gunmen at Inuvil yesterday morning. The Director Regional Development of the Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs has written to say that the news item appearing in the CDN of May 16 which claims that the Beche-de-mer projects at Kalpitiya and Mannar have been closed down is completely untrue; but the editor says, that though beche-de-mer is continuing to be imported from Sri Lanka they are not the products of the Kalpitiya and Mannar factories—CDN. Hill country police stations have been alerted to watch out for mischief makers moving about in lorries and creating disturbances in tea estates. Though the LSSP has stated that the United Socialist Front would not have a no-contest pact with the SLFP, several leading LSSP and CP politicians are still lobbying for it, according to political circles. The CWE has issued co-operative societies throughout the island with 1,500 tons of imported dried fish for distribution to consumers this month—CDM. The SLBC last night blacked out the news of the dissolution of the NSA, even though the communique announcing it was released by the Department of Information by 9 p.m.—SU.

INDIA

The Cowardice Of Indira Gandhi

By Daniel Sneider

TRIBUNE only recently received a copy of the April 22 issue of the **NEW SOLIDARITY**, the organ of the US Labor Party which carried an article by Daniel Sneider, datelined New Delhi, April 12 about the defeat of the Congress and Indira Gandhi in the last Lok Sabha elections. The **NEW SOLIDARITY** is tri-weekly, published in New York by the U.S. Labor Party, which seeks to explain, interpret and comment upon national and international events from a new Marxist approach adumbrated, developed and popularised by the leader of the U.S. Labour Party, Lyndon La Rouche, a candidate in the last US Presidential election and his colleagues. Sneider was in India in March and early April (he left after the Nonaligned Co-ordinating Committee meeting). His incisive article, entitled **THE COWARDICE OF INDIRA GANDHI**, pregnant with revealing insight on current development in India will appear in the **TRIBUNE** in two instalments.

Mr. Sneider, who heads New Solidarity International Press Service's Asia desk, has just returned from a ten-day visit to India. New Delhi, April 12, (NSIPS)

Indira Gandhi, the daughter of Jawaharlal Nehru and for 11 years the undisputed leader of independent India, is today only the leader of one part of the shattered remnants of the formerly ruling Congress Party. The woman who was the symbol of India's fight for progress and of the Third World's struggle for a new world economic order has become, in the eyes of the millions who had looked to her for leadership, a defender of reaction and an obstacle in the life-or-death political battle which must now be carried out in India. How this transformation took place is the puzzle which must be solved if India is to have a future other than chaos and economic collapse.

The massive election defeat of Mrs. Gandhi and the Congress Party this year was the final step in an organized effort to destroy the political leadership of India. The State of Emergency which Gandhi declared in June 1975 was the stage on which the destruction scenario was carried out. The course of the Emergency increasingly saw Mrs. Gandhi a captive, albeit a willing one, of the very forces of reaction and subversion—the agents of the International Monetary Fund-World Bank—against whom the Emergency had been ostensibly carried out.

The conditions of economic crisis which prevailed in India following the 1973 oil crisis were not confronted by the Emergency, but merely avoided. Ultimately, the Emergency itself became the vehicle for implementing the IMF program for India, as exemplified by the forced sterilization campaign, which was widely implemented during the Emergency. Faced with the same choice as all other governments of the developing world to break with the dying beast of the dollar empire, Mrs. Gandhi's regime chose the route of apparent expediency, and lawfully became a victim of its own political cowardice.

India's political leaders, the inheritors of the struggle for progress, are now trying to find out how this came about. Many in this city, including the best of the Congress Party and the pro-development leaders who watched with horror as this process unfolded, are today painfully dissecting the past in order to find a guide to the future. For us of the U.S. Labor Party who lead the struggle for progress in the U.S. and who stood by as friends and supporters of Mrs. Gandhi, there is a moral and political obligation to offer our own answer to this question.

Ten years ago, the Congress Party, the party of the Indian struggle against British imperialism and the ruling party since independence, stood at a point of crisis. Indira Gandhi, placed into the

premiership in 1965 by an old guard of rightists who saw her as a willing tool, was faced with a fight against that clique. Following their advice, including that of the current Prime Minister Morarji Desai (at that time, the Finance Minister), she had implemented in 1966 an IMF austerity program including the devaluation of the Indian rupee. The disastrous consequences of that move showed up the following year when the Congress Party suffered a devastating electoral defeat in the state elections which left most of the state governments under the control of the various opposition parties.

Mrs. Gandhi finally chose to fight the austerity, and her political courage showed itself in the move to nationalize the banks. The bulk of the old guard with Desai in the lead responded by splitting out of the party in 1969, taking with them most of the party machine in the states and leaving Mrs. Gandhi with only the Communist Party of India (CPI) as her ally. But, the Congress split had revitalized the fighters for progress in the party, and among its allies, and a political renaissance occurred. For the next two years, the leftist layers of the Congress Party who had stood by Mrs. Gandhi at the point of crisis led the battle to reorganize the Congress machine.

This battle resulted in the overwhelming victory of the Congress Party in the 1971 general elections, a personal victory for Mrs. Gandhi's leadership. The opposition had only one objective: stop this woman—a goal captured in their slogan "Indira hatao" ("Abolish Indira"). Mrs. Gandhi turned that around and campaigned on the theme "Garibi hatao" ("Abolish poverty")—a slogan which mobilized the vast masses of Indian peasants and workers to rally behind her.

For a period following the 1971 victory, the government and the Congress continued a forward march. But Wall Street, seeing India acting as a leader of the Third World, which was increasingly allied with the Soviet Union and the socialist countries did not give up so easily. By the time the effects of the Rockefeller family's engineered oil crisis of 1973 hit India, Wall Street's

counterattack on the Gandhi government also emerged. In the midst of an increasing economic crisis in India, characterized by inflation, massive food shortages, and general stagnation, the first assault began—from the outside. This was the 1974-75 fascist movement led by the aging agent of the Ford Foundation, J. P. Narayan, who was aided by Socialist International covered agents like George Fernandes and the remnants of the old guard like Desai. This movement was designed to create the conditions of chaos that would force military intervention.

Increasingly, Mrs. Gandhi found herself on the defensive and fearful that she would meet the fate of Salvador Allende of Chile. Her response was to strike out against her enemies: the declaration of the State of Emergency on June 26, 1975 and the widespread arrests of the agents of destabilization that immediately followed: Mrs. Gandhi told a Congress leader, one of her close friends from the 1969 struggle, on the phone the night before: "They are out to get me. I have decided to go down fighting." As subsequently became clear, these were not words of courage and determination. Rather, they were spoken out of the fear and desperation which would later blossom into paranoid schizophrenia.

The declaration of the Emergency was a profound mistake, compounding all earlier ones. Mrs. Gandhi attempted to fight by administrative fiat, by using the power of the machinery of the state, instead of turning to the Indian masses and conducting a political battle to mobilize the population, for a fight against the agents of backwardness as had been done in 1971.

This, in fact, was the advice she received from some of her closest and most trusted advisors and comrades in struggle, who for months had advocated such a mobilization. Mrs. Nandini Sathpathy, then the Congress Chief Minister (governor) of the Western Indian state of Orissa and a close friend of Mrs. Gandhi, recalled this sadly in an interview here. Mrs. Gandhi, Sathpathy said, had not listened to her when she told her that J. P.

Narayan and his gang could be easily beaten in a real political fight. Mrs. Sathpathy, who later was ousted during the Emergency and is now a leader of the Congress for Democracy, a split-off formed weeks before the election, recalled that: "JP came to my state and for four days he spoke at the universities and all over but he could not get any support." At the end of those four days, she recalled, the frustrated JP could only issue a grudging recognition of the political leadership of Mrs. Sathpathy in her state: he vowed that, after Indira Gandhi, "Nandini Sathpathy is my number one enemy."

Also important to understanding the Emergency period is the case of the famous 20-point program—the program for economic development, peasant debt moratorium and land reform that was put forward during the first months of the emergency as the instrument for mobilizing the masses behind the Gandhi government. The 20-point program was, in fact, drawn up before the Emergency, at the request of Mrs. Gandhi, by a small group of political leaders and economic advisors mainly drawn from the socialist wing of the Congress Party apparatus, as the response to the fascist destabilization. In its original form, the program included the nationalization of the jute, textile, sugar and other industries, largely controlled by the Birla family, the Rockefeller's top financial allies in India and one of the most crucial factors in the downfall of Indira. These points concerning nationalization were crossed off and the 20-point program left to gather dust. It was not until after the Emergency that the 20-point program was actively publicized or implemented.

The Emergency could have been, despite its desperate origins, a vehicle for victory over Wall Street and the IMF. The full implementation of the 20-point program internally, accompanied by a global strategic fight for debt moratorium and the establishment of a new monetary system, would have made the J. P. Narayans a distant memory for the Indian people. But that was not done, nor is there much evidence to suggest that Indira Gandhi and most of the political leadership of India were prepared to wage such a battle.

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Failing to open that battle at the beginning of the Emergency, Mrs. Gandhi, already profiled for her fears, became the target of an insidious effort from inside her regime (even her household) to make her a psychological captive of the international financiers, the local comprador Birlas, and their all-too-numerous agents in the government and political machinery. Instead of becoming a Salvador Allende, Mrs. Gandhi chose to become a Sadat.

Piece by piece, the real story of the hideous creation which the Emergency regime became is now being unfolded in the investigations printed in the Indian newspapers. The key connection to Indira was her son, Sanjay, a failed businessman and self-styled auto-mechanic, who in the course of the Emergency emerged as the front-man for a clique of powerful men who operated outside the structures of the Congress Party and the government to the point where, by the end of the Emergency, their power was completely unchallenged. This group was referred to as the "extra-constitutional authority" (the ECA), or simply as "the caucus."

Mrs. Gandhi's profiled guilt about her son's failure in life—he had flunked out of school and even failed to complete an auto mechanic's course at Rolls Royce in England—was skillfully used to place a circle of advisors and cohorts of Sanjay around her. Her previous advisors, including long-time political allies, were cut off from her. As her increasingly evident paranoia gained control of her mind, she became convinced that they too, some because they told her to fight politically, were "out to get her." Her son was elevated to the status of virtually the No. 2 political leader of the nation, and leaders with 30 years of experience dating from the independence struggle were forced to grovel before him.

(To Be Concluded)

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INDIA

Janata Party

—Turning Point in Indian

Politics—

New Delhi, May 5,

The emergence of the Janata Party as a single political entity with Chandra Shekhar as its President, marks a turning point in Indian politics. This is reinforced by Jagjivan Ram's dramatic May Day announcement of the merger of the Congress for Democracy into the Janata Party. This development is regarded by the protagonists of the so-called two-party system as a vindication of their thesis that in Indian conditions, the time has come when the American or the British model of two major parties should dominate the political scene, thereby ensuring some sort of a check-and-balance. Apart from the fact that such an Anglo-Saxon political precedent need not be suitable for our specific Indian conditions, since it is born out of the historical circumstances prevailing at a particular stage of development of those countries, we have to take into account the fact that the working of the two party system, particularly in the American context—what with all the disclosures of the CIA-FBI, the Watergate, the Lockheeds, the Ku Klux Klan and the Birch Society—does not necessarily provide an inspiring working model for any country.

What the inexorable compulsions of the Indian situation demand is the evolution of a political set-up which can and must mobilise the nation for a relentless struggle for the elimination of poverty together with the full and active participation of the masses in the democratic process suited to our native genius. If Indira Gandhi's political career suffered a shattering debacle at the hands of the electorate in March, it has been mainly because of two reasons: her inability to live up to the promise of Garibi hatao, and her total disregard for the democratic process, as the monster of Emergency demonstrated. The two-party or the multi-party functioning is only a matter of form; what really matters is the content of our political commitment and the

firm adherence of the political leadership to that commitment.

This is the point on which the Janata Party will be judged from now on. It has come to power in a manner which was totally unexpected for its leadership; the massive anger against the Emergency regime which was gathering in the northern States—almost imperceptible not only to Indira Gandhi and her caucus but to practically all political parties—came like a dam-burst at the Lok Sabha poll, and the only credential demanded of the victorious candidates was whether they were opposed to the Congress, since in the eyes of the masses, Emergency was the handwork of the Congress raj.

Once the nightmare of Emergency is over, the old credential alone will not do. The discerning public will certainly give the Morarji Government a breathing space; it will mark time for the debris of the Emergency misdeeds to be cleared, whether by way of restoration of normal democratic functioning or punishment of the guilty men and women of the mafia. But the return to the democratic process will not by itself help the Janata Party to have a stable tenure in office. In the ultimate analysis, the new Government's stability will depend on its efforts to honour the commitment to strive for a just and equitable order in which poverty will be eliminated; unemployment banished and economic disparities reduced.

While the traditional hundred days have to be granted to Morarji Desai and his Government before any judgement, however tentative, can be passed on it, its insistence on forcing State Assembly elections on as many as nine States by executive diktat has, to say the least, not enhanced its commitment to genuine democratic functioning. While on the political plane, the Congress in these States had lost its credibility to govern after its total debacle in the Lok Sabha poll, the Janata Government's resort to constitutional squeeze could not possibly have helped to strengthen healthy precedent in democratic functioning. The open strain generated over the difference with the Acting President could have been avoided by a less precipitate approach to the issue.

The Congress camp was certainly not united on the question of challenging the legal validity of the Centre's powers on the subject, as could be seen in the West Bengal Ministry's refusal to be associated in the reference to the Supreme Court. There was a touch of poetic justice in the entire episode since the unwanted Forty-second Amendment which had been forced through Parliament by the Indira Government under cover of Emergency, took away the last vestige of Presidential prerogative, and its first fall-out could be felt to their detriment by the Congress Ministries themselves.

Although the coming State Assembly elections need not bring about an exact replica of the Lok Sabha election—since the issues facing the electorate are different—there is little change for the Congress to recover a substantial part of the lost ground because of its inability to put its own house in order even after the March poll debacle. The stubborn defence by Indira Gandhi of the mafia that played havoc during Emergency is the main cause of the prevailing disorder inside the Congress. Corresponding lack of firmness on the part of those opposed to the mafia will extract heavy toll from the Congress in the coming poll.

As the political parties will be absorbed in State-wise election in the coming two months, the economic situation shows no sign of improvement. By the time the election fever will be over, the imperatives on the economic front will force new tensions on the politics of the country.

And it is precisely on this score that Chandra Shekhar as the new Chairman of the Janata Party will face the greatest challenge of his political career. If there is any lesson that he can learn from Indira Gandhi's fate, it is that her persistent refusal to build the Congress into a functioning political organisation was to a large measure responsible for her fiasco.

Compared to the Congress, the Janata Party cannot claim to be a better equipped organisation. In many ways it resembles the pre-1969 Congress with the only difference that the Congress did not have any RSS-based Jana Sangh element within its composition. While some section of the Janata regard the presence of the well-

knit RSS as an asset and try to assure that it has been undergoing transformation, there is no gainsaying the fact that many inside the Janata Party itself and a large number outside its fold are not able to reconcile its ideology with that of secularism and democracy. The bias for Big Business and the rich farmer in the Janata Party is no less than in the Congress.

With such a party at his disposal, Chandra Shekhar has before him a perspective of encounters and confrontations. For him, the Presidentship of the Janata Party promises to be a crown of thorns, with all the best wishes that he deserves for his politics of commitment towards building a new social order.

—Nikil Chakravarty
Mainstream

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INDIA

Lessons From Indira Gandhi's Defeat

Colombo, March 25, 1977,

I am one of the millions taken completely by surprise by what has happened to Indira Gandhi. This is an event which has implications far beyond the fate of one person and needs to be examined.

In viewing this debacle there are no neutrals—one is either pleased or saddened. Of course as much in life, an event will please or displease different people for different reasons. Most of the people pleased feel that Indira Gandhi was dictatorial. She has been called the Indian Bonaparte. A friend of mine, a leading Rotarian, was taking bets a month ago that Mrs. Gandhi will lose her seat. Luckily I am not a betting man and refused to bite. This morning I rang him up and told him he must be a rich man. He told me is a close student of Indian current politics and he felt Mrs. Gandhi was wrong in locking up innocent people.

I have pondered over this. Politics is not a game of cricket. Even a game of cricket can become stormy as we have seen lately. But the theory is that it is played by sportsmen in a gentlemanly way. Politics is a ruthless game and it is

fight for survival. This is particularly so in the context of the struggle between the two lines called "democratic" and "totalitarianism", which is a masked way of expressing the struggle between capitalism and socialism. This is at the core of all political confrontation in the modern world and until this is realised it is impossible to understand what is going on in the world of politics today. Capitalism is entrenched in the most powerful countries of the world and has to keep an eternal vigil to see that its interests are not eroded by its deadly enemy—socialism. How else can one understand the special relationship between the U.S.A. and Japan, which it cruelly atom-bombed? The rich capitalist countries, whatever their own contradictions, unite because their continued prosperity depends on their ability to obtain raw materials readily and at the lowest price possible from Third World countries, which possess a lot of the basic raw materials they need. The reluctance of Great Britain to bring the rebel Ian Smith to heel in Rhodesia is due to the fact that Southern Africa has natural resources which when listed cover almost the entire alphabet from Asbestos to Zinc, including among others, beef, coal, diamonds, gold, iron, lead, nickel, petroleum, steel and Uranium. The capitalist countries led by the U.S.A. will never surrender their access to the natural resources and cheap labour which Third World countries afford. Capitalism is like a large Dragon which has to devour all the time to keep alive and if it involves millions of people dying of starvation, well, it is just bad luck.

It is in this context that Mrs. Gandhi's (I.G.) debacle has to be studied. I like to think Mrs. Gandhi was honest when she said she wanted to abolish poverty in India. India, the fabled India, sought after for centuries (Columbus set out in search of India and reached America and the natives there are still called Red Indians) fell a prey to capitalism with guns and has today become the most quoted example of a poverty stricken nation and I can understand the burning desire of an Indian to remove that stigma and when Mrs. Gandhi set out to try to do it, why doubt it? But what were her tools? She admits she has no ideology and to me that is a fatal flaw,

because that is like a ruderless ship. She attempted to abolish poverty through Parliamentary Democracy (P.D.), which postulates a necessary Opposition party. When she found the Opposition obstructing her, she locked up the leaders, gagged the press, changed the laws and even amended the Constitution to enforce the supremacy of Parliament. The Western News Media, in capitalist hands, naturally set up a howl that "democracy" was being crushed by Mrs. Gandhi. I don't go along with that. The will of the people is supreme and all power must flow from the House where their representatives sit, provided the House has representatives freely elected without fear or favour. The trouble is that under Parliamentary Democracy there is so much coercion, bribery and corruption by competing sectional interests that the House is packed with people supporting their private interests and not the interests of the people as a whole. What is happening today in Pakistan after its unique assay into Parliamentary Democracy is an example.

Mrs. Gandhi failed to realise that Parliamentary Democracy has been carefully designed to prevent radical change. This is openly admitted in England, the home of Parliamentary Democracy. Mr. Harold McMillan, the doyen of British politics, at a complimentary dinner given to him for his Sixth Volume of Memoirs said that the essence of P.D. is that here is agreement of fundamentals between the Government and Opposition and that there never can be radical change leading to revolution and counter revolution in a country under P.D. This means that capitalism, with its class structure, its employer and employed class, its inflation and unemployment, its wealth and poverty—all entrenched in Third World countries, can never be changed as long as they practise Parliamentary Democracy.

In parenthesis, it may be asked if Mrs. Gandhi was overthrown because she practised P.D. Why was not Sadat of Egypt, who also professes to practice P.D. not overthrown? Sadat (unlike Nasser

the founder of modern Egypt with its independent policy) cosied up to the U.S.A., signed a separate treaty with Israel and thus broke the United Arab ranks and weakened their position on confrontation with Israel. He has suppressed all opposition. It is significant that the powerful capitalist news media has never attacked Sadat as it did Indira Gandhi. This is because Sadat was on their side. Sadat lives in luxury and has seven villas at his disposal. To me it is a measure of Indira Gandhi's sincerity in her attempt to remove poverty in India that the capitalist news media in the West attacked her as they feared their interests were at risk—a fear Sadat never aroused. In Egypt there is rising poverty as was demonstrated by the recent riots, the worst for decades, which Sadat crushed, to the relief of his Western patrons. That Sadat prospers while Indira Gandhi is crushed shows the power of Western mass news media, controlled by powerful capitalist countries, to influence world affairs.

An unfortunate mistake by Indira Gandhi was her enthusiasm for Family Planning. She swallowed the western capitalist thesis that the poverty of India is due to the population explosion there. She started a sterilization campaign which her supporters enforced ferociously. This frightened people and the Opposition took good care to capitalise on it.

To err is human, as Indira Gandhi admitted when she found this error snowballing and threatening to engulf her during her abrasive election campaign. Now with the heat off it is necessary for impartial observers to evaluate the blunder objectively. When a person carries out a policy in the honest belief that it will help to remove the poverty of her people she deserves commiseration when it back-fires. Indira Gandhi failed to realise that when poverty is removed the population explosion subsides.

To get back to the quest to abolish poverty. Capitalism is not a suitable instrument to accomplish this. All countries in a capitalist set up feel they have to industrialise to develop and success depends on profits, which means buying as cheap as possible and selling at highest possible prices. This engenders vast accumulation of wealth by the owners of means of produc-

tion and distribution of wealth and poverty for the wage earners. It is a polarisation which is inevitable. All kinds of efforts have been made to bridge the growing gap between the employer and employed specially in the USA, which has become the best exponent, practitioner and defender of capitalism in the world. Labour has been seduced into compliance with capitalism and the upper structure of labour has entered the bourgeoisie class and trade union leaders live in luxury. But poverty has not been abolished in the USA. According to a report put out by the USA census Bureau in September 1976, twenty six million Americans live at or below the poverty line. In 1975 there were two and a half millions more living at or below the poverty line than in 1974. This was when the USA put a man on the Moon, a project which cost 20,000 millions.

It is now generally conceded that a necessary concomitant of capitalism is inflation and unemployment, found in all capitalist countries but not in any socialist country. That these two scourges will remain is now accepted by capitalist countries—their only hope is to be able to keep them within manageable limits. If this is the truth for rich industrialised capitalist countries, what hope is there for poor Third World countries to abolish poverty under P.D.? Indira Gandhi tried and her dismal failure should be a lesson to all of us in the Third World who are in earnest that the course of poverty, which deprives millions of people, mostly in Asia, Africa and Latin America, of their right to enjoy their birth right—to be fed, clothed, housed, educated, healthy, employed and able to follow their chosen pursuits in gracious leisure.

Indira Gandhi has left the political stage in humility. There need be no humility in trying and losing. There is need for the humility required to learn from one's mistakes. Indira Gandhi's biggest mistake was to attempt to instal socialism without having an ideology and thus falling into the trap of attempting to instal socialism through parliamentary Democracy. It has never

been done anywhere in the world for the simple reason that it has been carefully designed to preserve capitalism.

Post Script:

The above note was written on the morning after the election results were known. Since then some interesting developments.

1. Mr. Shirley Amarasinghe, our permanent representative at the UN, has voiced the feelings of the non-aligned nations and congratulated India on the smooth change of government—the *sumum bonum* of P.D. The problems remain, if anything, they have worsened. There has been violence, even murders and allegation of rigging, but not the holocaust in neighbouring Pakistan.

2. Shoals of defections from the Congress party, which won all elections since independence 30 years ago, though it never got more than 40% of the votes cast, because of the fragmentation of the opposition. This time, by the simple device of getting together just before elections, the hotch-potch opposition parties, without any programme, defeated the Congress party. This is being hailed as a triumph for Parliamentary Democracy!

Kumar

Colombo 5.

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THE CONSTITUTION

A Meritocracy In The Seats Of Government

By R. B. Thamitta

No man has the right to limit another man's freedom to develop. Notwithstanding, by preaching and exercise of the mechanics of Party—shibboleths some few persons have been dominating the many to arrest that free development of the human spirit; and worse, to identify and exalt by labels and nostrums its cumulative degeneration.

This has been, paradoxically, the order of events since the Middle-Forties of this century. And today, thanks to "that few", Sri Lanka is become a sick society. The deeper tragedy within this general

decline is that "that few" have all been persons conditioned by their education and upbringing for self-alienation from the society that bred them, and from that redoubt to inject poisons to bedevil the texture of our oneness in nationhood.

So we have today, in the place of a single national polity, a brittle agglomeration of miasmas no one of which even by its own standards stays constant between one sunrise and another. The common bond between all these miasmas is the mantram of material riches for the individual, whilst the common consequence of their combined labours is the bequeathment of soaring National Debt-liabilities to us and to posterity.

On the eve of a General Election it may be well therefore to reflect forwards from twoscore years of miasmatic manipulation to a possible future of coherence between State and Society. On April 23rd in these columns I ventured to suppose that we could nurture, if we tried, a sane democracy of Government By The People For The People, as against the dissolute orgy of a democracy RULING THE PEOPLE, and I ventured to hope that by the evening of the coming half dozen years we in Sri Lanka will have refound compassion to sow the good seed.

I am bargaining for the issue of a General Election to provide the orthodox machinery for jettisoning the Republican Constitution that we have and for filling the beneficent void with an Instrument enlisting and entitling the people to govern themselves.

This calls, of course, for immense sacrifice by the Party that wins, and rather more by the individual who leads it: the abjuration of the pride of power and place, group and personal, adhering to the Party System which inevitably commits extant democracy everywhere to a self-corrupting way of life. This victorious Party through its Leader can opt to surrender the perquisites of its sectarian triumph for the simpler dignity of unsullied service to fellow-man and receive in reward the namaskaram of a people to a Patriot. Were this to come to pass, we shall have a meritocracy selected and elected and placed in the seats of government by a free people for the nation's enduring well-being.

I find it attractive to map out this Instrument from its apex to its base because this reversed process is able to show best what we most need to have, viz. not demigods holding court in the echelons of power but men scrupulously chosen for fitness, in terms of merit and vision and ideals, for creative endeavour and collective responsibility.

The true essence of a Constitution, it will be readily granted, is the end-result the society aims for. Everything else of it is means to that end. Hitherto we have been delinquently circumscribing the one and distorting the other. The Party-Manifesto circumscribes, and the Opposition, as and when it seizes power, distorts. Progress, far from being a regulated continuum, runs the gauntlet of a saw-up-and-down, criminally wasteful of willing labour and scarce money. What one Party constructs another Party demolishes. The merry-go-round moves on and on, now raising expectations and now deferring and defeating them. A Constitution geared to the Party System of government cannot do else, and a society geared to it automatically, and almost voluntarily defers and defeats its expectations.

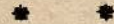
The picture changes dramatically in a Parliament whose each constituent member is required and duty bound to present at its initial assembling a memorandum of the basic needs of his constituency, studied, codified and framed in consultation with his elector. Here is no fancywork but an authentic corpus of data, society's charter of needs. There can thus be no doubt that the initially motivated five/six/seven-year draft work-plan of national uplift blueprinted from that national pool of needs-information that the national Cabinet of Ministers will bring to Parliament will be the most authentic as also the most practically realizable within a given time-target. Parliament will thereupon sit in constructive opposition to debate the draft, adding, revising, deleting, or laying-by, and the Cabinet will carry the final instructions thence into a White Paper whose implementation Parliament duly then will authorize.

The society has four segments to it:—Rural, Semi-urban, Urban,

and City. Naturally, therefore, the scheme of development will consist of four sympathetic integrations, with variations on the theme where so advised.

Every subsequent national work-plan will be largely a derivative of its predecessor and a precursor to the one following. The picture is as of a man building a ladder whose every rung, bar the one at its foot, betokens dependent origination.

Over and above this development, policy-structure can occur ventures and ideas for ventures, which fall within the category of prospecting and research. Parliament will consider and promote such ideas and enterprises independently of the national work-plan so as not to confuse actual development with speculation and, accordingly, inaugurate and service a Reserve Fund exclusively for their furtherance.



SEPARATE OR UNITED ?

Tamil-speaking Public

—And Their Problems—

by R. Kahawita

In a multi-lingual State, the language of the major group has been declared the official language by law and it has been written into the Republican Constitution together with a concession to the concentrated minority groups area wise. It is more an administrative device than a statutory requirement. The majority got what they wanted but the minority continue to live in dissatisfaction, frustrated with an eternal grievance against the majority and with a desire not to cooperate with them.

In such an atmosphere there cannot be unity to forge a one people, one nation, ideal. A justice Minister may say "If this situation is intolerable, why dont you test it in a court of law," as he said the other day when the legality and constitutionality of revaluing the rupee was questioned by the Opposition. The Minister of Justice expects the leader of the Parliamentary Opposition to go to the courts to establish the illegality

of the action, and safeguard the interest and constitutional rights. He challenged the Opposition, knowing very well that it will not happen.

Likewise the same logic may be applied, if a citizen complains to him that such and such an office refuses to transact business with him in the language he knows, or when a postal clerk refuses to accept a telegram unless it is in the official language. Every time this happens the aggrieved person is expected to go to the courts to establish his rights denied to him administratively. This is the situation that has been created by the Sinhala only official language policy.

What is happening in this context is best illustrated by an incident that occurred on the 4th of April in the Registrar General's Office, Colombo. This is the Archive for the geneology of Ceylonese, where records of births, marriages, deaths, etc. are kept and can be had. There should not be any language barrier in such an office. However on the 4th of April a Mrs. Kay went to the Registrar General's office to obtain certified copies of birth certificates and marriage certificates covering two generations. As the documents were urgently needed, the lady studied the procedure and requirements to obtain these documents and went to the R.O.'s office fully armed with the supporting documents and stamps. Once in the office she found all the signs, notices, name boards etc. displayed only in Sinhala. This lady could speak English, Sinhala and Tamil but could not read Sinhala. (At this point of time in one's life one could not expect her to start schooling in the Sinhala language. She and ourselves are the remnants of a generation that is being fast exterminated as a Communist Comrade would put it).

The good old lady was pushed from pillar to post in search of the correct desk or individual. After several perambulations up and down in the office she landed at the correct counter, which was crowded with members of the public, like herself, wanting information about their lineage. After sometime the lady was able to get in a word to the girl at the counter and asked for an application form in English or Tamil. Her reply was "no forms in English or Tamil,"

"When do you expect to get your stocks?" asked the lady. "I do not know," was the reply. "Can I buy them from somewhere?" asked the lady. "I do not know". So the dialogue went on in Sinhala without getting anywhere.

In desperation the lady started the rounds again in the office in search of the "Bada Shab"—the Registrar General. Having found his office she burst in; the R.G. was in the midst of a meeting, but took time to listen to the lady. After listening to the tale he was apologetic and said the forms were out of stock due to the strike and sabotage in the Government Printer's office, and handed over a piece of paper to make an ad hoc application for the documents she wanted. The application was sent to the proper section and after some inter-departmental communications she was told that she must pay Re. 1/- for the translations, which will take some days as the translators were busy or off duty.

Anyway as the matter was urgent, as far as she was concerned, she rushed about and got a rupee stamp and cornered the translator who glanced at the documents and exclaimed. "This is in Tamil, you have to pay fifty cents more". The lady protested "A Sinhalese can get the translation for a rupee and the Tamils have to pay 50 cent more, why do you discriminate against a Tamil in a Government Department like the R.G.'s office." The answer was, "The English has to be translated into Sinhala and Sinhala into Tamil"—The Constitution says all records must be kept in Sinhala. So the two translations cost more—If a citizen is Tamil-speaking, it costs him more to transact business with his Government than a Sinhala-speaking citizen with the same Government.

Is there anything more iniquitous and discriminatory than this? Can we blame the leaders of the Tamil Liberation Front or a separation movement for their demands? I as a Sinhala, can only endorse a movement of this nature. I would have joined a similar movement, or even a more violent one, if my mother tongue were to be Tamil and found myself frustrated and humiliated because my language was Tamil.

There are other consequences that flow from such disabilities of not being able to transact Government business. Bribery and corruption, a modus operandi necessary today to get anything done in a state controlled institution. This has almost become a national trait and accepted by all as a means to get anywhere or get anything done. Even in the political field enticing a starving voter by the issue of free rice, extra rations, imported food items, reduction of the price of food items, just before a general election are nothing short of tools of bribery to lure the voter to the party which has promised or given these to them.

I do not claim that our brethren from the North can be lured by such tactics, they are far too shrewd and know their rights and value of their rupee to throw it away to get their rights. The point is our administrative pig-headedness and our political mud-heads have paved the way for such corrupt practices. The solution is not in a permanent Bribery Commission but a change in the administration and procedures to enable unsophisticated average citizen of the country to get official business transacted expeditiously, courteously and in a spirit of "I remain your obedient servant" of the colonial era, irrespective of language, race etc. as long as he or she is a member of the public.

Now to get back to the story: After all the obstructions were cleared, by sheer force and insistence the lady got all the documents and their translations and was rushing home to get the documents in time to catch the air mail. While going home the lady tried to decipher the "various languages" and to her bewilderment, the Tamil language documents say the parents were married and the English translations—the documents that mattered most for her purpose—says the parents were not married thus declaring a generation of children illegitimate bastards, thus declaring them "illegal" in the eyes of the law. Fortunately the error was discovered in time; back again to the R.G.'s office for correction and "revalidating the parents etc." Whether she was charged another rupee and 50% more for being a Tamil, she did not say, may be due to a frustrated and angered mind.

The consequences of such irresponsibility in a very important Government Dept. can have far reaching consequences, effecting inheritance, paternity, social ostracization, marriage, employment etc. It could become a very serious matter involving litigation, swearing of affidavits, legal expenditure to establish the legitimacy and rights of the erroneously disinherited descendants by incorrect translations which have become necessary as the records are to be kept Sinhala only in Government offices.

When we ponder seriously on this language issue in the light of an experience as above the language barrier and the legislations or administrative rules to maintain the barrier is a very serious disability to those who do not speak, read and write Sinhala. We Sinhala as the majority group and our Sinhala politicians are guilty of giving "a constitutional status" to the disabilities of the Minorities in making Sinhala the only official language, with "reasonable use of Tamil".

How can we define "reasonable use of Tamil" for the enlightenment of the lower levels of administration who never use their discretion? Is it not a stupid and unimaginative compromise to retain the supremacy of the major group and their language? This at the price of national unity.

Unless one is confronted with a situation as narrated above many do not realise how unreasonably the lower levels of an administration can act under the cover of the official language Act to annoy and insult a section of the citizens who are in theory equal in law and supreme under the constitution.

Only yesterday I came across a similar situation in a provincial labour office where 90% of the labour disputes etc. involving Tamil labour. In this office all the signs, notices of time for interviews, appointments, dates for inquiries, are in *Sinhala Only*. The offices and the corridors were full of Tamil men, women and children, just loitering about not knowing where to go. This is what I mean when I say the administration can be stupid.

It will save lot of annoyance and distrust if the signs and notices were also posted in Tamil knowing very well that bulk of the labour that bring disputes are Tamil speaking. The administration does not understand "Reasonable use of Tamil," so the animosity against the major community goes on mounting.

Mrs. Kay, the lady who suffered these indignities was in a position to fight her way, assert her rights and get things done, even though it was done not as a right but as a concession. Imagine the plight of an average Tamil speaking citizen "who has to get things done in a Government office when his or her only means of communication is only Tamil: Like the Tamil labour group I encountered in a provincial labour office yesterday, it was almost inhuman.

I fully understand the dissatisfaction of the Tamil speaking people and their animosity towards the Sinhala—particularly the impulsive Tamil youths who are educated but unemployed due to communal barriers. They will be the group that will spearhead a movement for self-determination as a satisfactory solution to a situation created in 1956.

The wound has been festering for twenty years and it is doubtful whether the present generation—the generation that were babes in 1956 will tolerate the disparity any longer. It is time that the powers that be decided not to be so stupid and mud-headed not to understand a human problem and scrap the official language Act and make Sinhala, Tamil and English the official language in Ceylon. If this is accepted and written into the Constitution, then all other so-called disabilities will vanish into thin air. If this is not done the Tamil speaking community has no other alternative but to separate and go their own way as a separate national entity. This is what should be prevented, not by force, not by enforcing a law, but by mutual understanding and recognising a cultural heritage and a living language that is Tamil, by making it also an official language.

There are efforts made, I understand by the President of the United National Party to convene an all Party conference to work out a solution to the problem at the national level, thus keeping it above market place politics, and the solutions so resolved will find a clause in the new constitution that the U.N.P. leader has declared that his party would adopt draft and have accepted by the people. This should be a permanent solution, and if it materializes the unity of the people and the future of Sri Lanka can be guaranteed.



TRIBUTE

From A Playwright

Permit me to say a few words as a tribute to my friend Herbert Keuneman the news of whose death came to me as a great shock. I have seldom met anyone whose character I can so unreservedly, admire. He was great in every sense of the word, versatile, with intellectual qualities that few can boast of, and possessing, beside something that does not often go with intellectual qualities, a high moral sense. He always strove after the ideal of perfection in human relationships. When he felt the strain of keeping up to such high ideals, he sought solitude and the "pure" pleasures that involved less of human contact. But he was not a cynic. Rather, his temperament was that of an ascetic, self-critical and self-effacing, and this is what finally led him to take up his abode in the remote village of Ehetuwewa, to lead a life of few wants among the simple people he loved, to live and die in obscurity.

Not many know that he was one of my earliest collaborators in the theatre, at a time when I was fumbling about in this field and he was in possession of very positive experience and know-how. He was never obtrusive with his knowledge, but confined himself to the which was to design and construct the sets, but I learned a lot from a chance remark he would throw or a mild piece of criticism he would make.

He designed the stage and made sets for the first production I ever undertook, which was an adaptation of Oscar Wilde's "The Importance of being Ernest" and later for my production of three short plays of Chekov, and my own tragic misadventure in play-writing, "Bahina Kalawa". I got a severe thrashing from the critics for this last play, and I am as much grateful to them for the criticisms they offered as I am to Herbert for the kind words with which he tried to keep my spirits up, I remember him saying, "You should be glad, Sarath, that you are not sacrosanct as yet." And it was on his suggestion that I proceeded with my next play "Pabavati".

Herbert designed and made the sets for "Pabavati" too. This was a skeletal set which could be quickly adjusted, and there were five or six of such scene changes. Herbert had trained a band of students to change the scene immediately after the curtain went down, and if his plan worked, it would not have taken more than two or three minutes. But the first scene change took almost ten minutes, and I went back stage to see what was wrong.

And there I find Herbert standing with his face to the wall, and his body was heaving with sobs. Only then did I learn that the students hadn't followed his instructions they had wandered away irresponsibly and hadn't been on the spot to change the scene at the proper time. Herbert had reached breaking-point, he had worked night and day on the sets for weeks without even a proper meal, sustaining himself on cigarettes and tea, as he usually did when he undertook a job like that. And to add to it, smart reviewer wrote the next day, "the program says that several years lapse between the scenes, but it was hardly necessary to say this because the audience who waited patiently for one scene to follow upon the other would have realised this in any case or something to that effect.

Herbert wanted me to bring my "Sinhabahu" to Ehetuwewa and show it to the village, and I would have loved to do it both for his sake and for the experience it would give the cast, but I could not complete the arrangements before leaving for Paris. I was hoping how-ever

to organise this when I return this year, but alas what's the use, now!

Ediriweera Sarachchandra
Paris.

EXTRACTS

From A Letter

...So, then this is the first item in my creed; that genuine goodwill on the part of one person toward another, whether in a villager or any kind else, is possible, and that this is the only firm foundation for human relationships though, naturally, it is impaired when goodwill is impaired by self interest. I believe that self interest can and must be denied—consciously unnaturally if need be, hypocritically and insincerely, even, so long as act of goodwill triumphs—for in what other way can human society differ from that of beasts.

I believe that the worst flaws in the foundation that is goodwill arise from involvement with money and the indulgence of ambition (in the sense of personal aggrandisement) and God knows that—often at considerable cost of lesser values—with thank God! DJ to back me, I have found hitherto the strength to put these temptations largely behind me. (I am sorry that this should sound intolerably self-righteous and self-complacent. But I am only trying to be just to myself. I have often been called lacking in ambition, poor-spirited, idealistic—as though that were a bad thing)—a fool; if only you know how ambition has torn me all my life, how I longed to feel free to get one up over someone else, to make a little money! But—usually—I have been able to master these desires because I believed I should. Before God this is true, and it is the only thing in my life I am proud of. I want that one person, at least, should know that I have fought for my faith).

I quote some lines from—of all popularly outdated thinkers—Mathew Arnold. However it be, I have always admired him. I quote from memory, so I probably do him less than justice, but is roughly the way I feel.

*Charge once more,
then and be dumb.*

*Let the victors, whom they come,
When the forts of folly fall,
Find thy body by the wall.*

All this is rather melodramatic and what, precisely, am I charging against of for? It is difficult to explain, precisely, and I have already tried to say, in general terms. But let me try once again. This is my refusal to accept the modern ethos that self interest marks the "sincere" man and the Christian 'Bear ye one another's burdens' is so much hypocrisy. I believe, it is the only final truth for society and that after its period in the wilderness, society must come back to it because there is no other way or Truth or Life. I have tried (within my futilely small limits) to practise it, else I dared not have asked it of others; but an ideal must not be judged by the limitations—but only by the visions—of those that hold it.....

Now, a person that believes in the ultimate possibility of human goodness should (theoretically) be able to take for an unlimited period what wounds and disappointments he may temporarily encounter. Perhaps I could have (as, ideally, I certainly should have) had I not been for so long so bitterly alone at a time of desperate need: DJ's absence has been even worse than DJ's loss, and I have not the fortitude to go on. I have lost not my faith but my strength. One charge more then...so long as it is only one!.....

I had intended to make a list of those I particularly remember at this time. But so many have been, in one way or another, or in many ways at many times, so good to me. How could I name them all or choose between them? Only I do remember them every one of them, with delight—and ask that they will remember me, with charity.

The above extracts are from a letter written by Herbert Keuneman to a friend during his last illness. These sentiments constitute his philosophy of living and permeates all his writings and actions. A group of HK's friends are investigating the possibilities of ensuring the publication of two manuscripts he has left behind—one a chronicle of A VILLAGE THAT WAS and the other a massive encyclopaedic reference book on CEYLON.

LETTER

• Appointment Of An Archbishop

Sir,

To ward off a possible misunderstanding of Fr. M. Rodrigo's mind (Tribune, April 30), it will help, I think, to recall the Church's official position, crystallised in the recent text of Vatican II Council (Bishops, Number 20). "The appointment of a Bishop," says the Council, "belongs properly, peculiarly and of itself exclusively to the competent ecclesiastical authority"—not to any prince or civil government, or to the people as such. The reason is that this office of Bishop was instituted not by men, but by Christ Himself and serves a spiritual and supernatural purpose (not a temporal, economic or political one—in which case the civil authority and the people as such would be fully competent.)

And this doctrine is not a new claim, but as old as the Church. Suffice it to recall its long, continual struggle against the Investitures in the Middle Ages to get rid of the abuse of the Emperor appointing the bishops. And yet the exclusive right of the ecclesiastical authority to appoint the bishop remaining firmly established, the practical question is, how to choose the most suitable and acceptable candidate. The right is unchallenged; the way of exercising the right can change, and has changed. The Church has used, or allowed, various methods in the course of history: acclamation, election, presentation, nomination, designation.....

Unfortunately, none of these has proved fully satisfactory. Disorders of all kinds; ambition, jealousies, 'contracts', rash promises and other inconveniences of which popular elections give us ample proof, crept into the Church, too. Hence the decision of Vatican II that in the future all rights or privileges of election, presentation, etc. be done away with, and, instead, a broadbased and discreet enquiry among conscientious and responsible people be made, and then the bishop appointed.

Who will not admire the wisdom, the age-long wisdom of the Church in such a weighty matter?

There is, no doubt, as Fr. M. Rodrigo points out, the risk of

some members of the flock feeling lost or indifferent, at the beginning, to the new shepherd chosen in this way. But this is a much less inconvenience than all the scandals and serious evils that have otherwise cropped up in the course of centuries.

If the government of the Catholic Church has been generally a model of smoothness and efficiency, we owe it to the consummate wisdom of this arrangement in appointing her Bishops.

C. Iannaccone, S.J.

Deniyaya.

Inania of this, that and the other

By INNA

Boragas '56-57; And Thirsty Men

In the Surath-Al-Waqi'ah of the holy Qur'an one sees a eulogy of water woven into the "Event" (Surah LVI); the glorious Event of the last day is described thus:

"there wait on them (the good) immortal youth with bowl and ewers and a cyp from a pure spring and spreading shades and water gushing....." (17,18,30,31)

Then follows an eulogy on the Creator: "Have ye observed the water which ye drink. Is it ye who shed it from the rain-cloud or are we the shedders?" (68-69) What then of the persistently bad ones who persist in the 'awful sin' (46), the rejecters and the erring? They will get permanent punishment for their sin:

"ye will drink boiling water.." (54).. "the welcome will be boiling water" (93).

This desert-image of water was in my mind when I passed through Boragas recently. Glug, glug, glug. Sh-sh-shash—came the sounds of flowing water on every side somewhere around the 56-57 milepost on the N. Eliya-Badulla road. Nearly 400 people were in different stages of hope for organised, I mean well-organized water. Boragas, I found out, was close to 90 Muslim, but they feel thirsty as anybody else. Padinnawela nearby had a proportionate sprinkling of Buddhists, Hindus, Muslims Christians, just enough for them to get on very well in co-operation.

The small Bo-tree Temple, the Muslim masjid, the kovil and the church had seen to that sense of happy pro-existence, where, as the tailor at the lone kiosk said: "we get on well: no fights. Have any festival here, and all help. Have any festival down there at the church, we all help". The people depend mainly on the rain for their cultivation of marketgardening crops, but depend on organized piping for drinking water and household purposes. A reservoir has been built, but its walls are cracked. Water leaks out. The little water that is there, is carried through one-inch pipes to 40 families. But, that too is obstructed by someone who seems to be applying for the "later boiling water after the Event"! This "gentleman" leaves a large tap open out on his fields: getting for his plots, large plots and acres of them, what others would have used for their households.

Reminded by a worthy christian gentleman in my presence, he easily acquiesced: "O yes, I realize there is an element of tanha in this. I will stop now." Turned off for an hour. Next thing I knew was that it was turned on again towards his fields.. and the water went on and on.. the less-influential people's hopes growing dimmer and dimmer. "Water, water everywhere, nor any drop to drink" because someone's tanha stinks. Officials everywhere, but no one would stoop to let the thirsty have their fill.

Air is free, man has freely polluted it. Earth is free, but man has fenced it off in numberless acres in some countries, but given as an unplanned vote-bait quarter-acre in other countries. Fire is free, the same sun is over all, the just and the unjust and unstintedly, but some use solar energy while others only read about it (unless of course, we reckon with those who make fire-explosive matches and enormous profits, while others get their only shirt burnt, (and finger besides) by the one match that strikes in a bundle of non-strikers). Water is free, running hither and thither, called running-water in the cities, but in the rural areas, also "running" water, for people run hither and thither to officials and niladharis to slake their thirst! Also their thirst for good government.

Confidentially

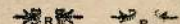
• Land Reform-1

IS IT NOT A FACT that the SLFP, especially its top hierarchy which has now become ossified in an ivory tower of political delusions, firmly believes that Land Reform will be one of the factors that will bring the SLFP victory at the polls? That many observers think that the SLFP is in for a shock when it discovers that Land Reform (in the way it has been carried out and implemented) will boomerang on the SLFP (and even the LSSP and the CP as its partners in this adventure—or misadventure)? That whilst it is true that the economic base of the more-than-fifty-acre-landowners has been undermined there is no doubt that many of the old landowning rich has blossomed out as the new SLFP-UF created capitalist class (with a sprinkling of SLFP non-landowning mudalalis)? That this new class has no use for the radicalism of the SLFP or that of the SUF although outwardly and ostensibly they pretend to support the SLFP and other former UF partners? The economic and political power (and pull) of this new class of capitalists, brought into being by the misguided and ill-motivated policies of the United Front (especially that of the LSSP), is far greater and far more vicious than that of the old landowning gentry? That real political thrust of this capitalist class is to bring the UNP to power—not with an overwhelming majority but with the SLFP and LSSP in sufficient strength to keep the UNP in check? That this class knows that land taken over, especially those which have been fragmented, cannot be got back? That for this reason they are determined to take revenge in the fullest measure on all those who were responsible for land reform? That their indignation and hatred would be less if the land taken over had been properly utilised? That in many cases the superb and beautiful proprietors' and superintendents' bungalows were made the offices (and *de facto* residences) of MPs and their hangers-on? That if these beautiful residences had been tur-

ned into sanatoria, hospitals and other public utility premises, the old owners could have no grievance? That to see these buildings being used by political vandals and thugs for purposes not connected with Land Reform or public sector activities has made them bitter and even venomous? That the tales (nearly all of them true) of how MPs, and Political Authorities and the new bureaucratic class (or caste) of land-controllers have pinched furniture, carpets, fittings, refrigerators, cookers, etc. etc. from the bungalows of land that was taken over and removed them to their own personal houses will fill many volumes of closely written pages? That though the *have-nots* are said to take sadistic delight in traditionally expropriating the *haves*, they are no longer prepared to tolerate the new breed of *haves* who hide their greed behind radical slogans and loud-mouthed professions of loyalty to leaders who claim to be socialists?

That SLFP strategists insist that those who have been given allotments of land will vote SLFP? That whilst this may be true of those who received the land in the last six months, there is no doubt that disillusionment has overtaken those who had got their tiny plots a year or two ago? That these beneficiaries of fragmented land find that they are worse off than they were before? That, whilst under the landowner they had been certain of a monthly wage, under the new dispensation they find their position has worsened to the point of no return. That in coconut areas, after slaughter plucking the trees at the kurumba stage to obtain the ready cash to buy their meagre weekly rations, they were forced to cut down the trees and sell the timber as rafters? That thereafter they are on the lookout for jobs? That in the meantime they have become a permanent liability for shramadana dole (subsidised with liberal gifts from the FAO, UNICEF, Freedom From Hunger, etc.)? That all these months the political authorities had an excuse in the drought and the "sabotage" of the old owners for the difficulties stemming from Land Reform? That after the plentiful rains in 1976 and the even more plentiful rains in 1977 this excuse cannot be trotted out to explain the phenomenal drop in production? That in tea estates

an artificial short-term boom in world prices has hidden the realities of the drop in production? That tall boasts over the SLBC and in Lake House papers about the wonderous increase in tea production under State Plantations, Janawasamas and Usawasamas, official statistics reveal a sharp drop in production as from 1975 to 1976? That the statistics for the first four months of 1977 show that the drop this year as compared to 1976 will be even greater? That with further fragmentation of the best estates (on the eve of the General Elections) and the consequent dislocation in the productive effort, the future for tea is bleak? That everybody knows that the fall in production in tea is due to the fragmentation under Land Reform and also to the utterly amateurish management techniques riddled with the worst kind of corruption, nepotism and skulduggery that can be imagined? That apologists for the SLFP, (and their erstwhile partners the LSSP and CP), whilst claiming that the political benefits of Land Reform have been immense and beneficial, admit that there has been serious economic dislocation and set-back in production? That they argue that such economic dislocation is inevitable and that within a short time matters would right themselves and that production would increase by leaps and bounds? That nobody is willing to swallow these sunshine stories? That Land Reform and fragmentation has been greatest in the (Kandyan) Central Province, also in the (partially Kandyan) North Western Province and in the (Low Country) Western and Southern provinces? That it is in these areas that lands were highly developed and had brought the biggest yields in every sector of agriculture? That it will be interesting to see how the voters in these regions cast their votes on July 21? That if Land Reform has been as beneficial as made out by the SLFP, there cannot be the slightest doubt that the SLFP must sweep the polls with overwhelming majorities in all these areas? That voter reaction to Land Reform will be put to an acid test on July 21? That Land Reform did not affect, in any substantial way, people and production in the Northern, Eastern and North-Central Provinces?



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