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Letter From The Editor

THIS MONTH, general elections will take place in Pakistan and India. Elsewhere in this issue we have interpretative analysis about the pre-polling realities and complexities of the situation in the two countries. We have tried to provide our readers with as objective and detached an analysis as is possible under the circumstances prevailing in the two countries where pressures and tensions are acute, deep and sharp. It is not possible, in any country and under any situation, for a commentator to achieve such supreme detachment and objectivity as would satisfy the adherents of all the points of view currently in existence, but we have chosen commentaries which, we believe, readers of *Tribune* will find interesting, informative and thought provoking. We cannot say very much about the article from Pakistan which we reproduce by courtesy of the New Delhi weekly *Mainstream*. There have been many articles and commentaries in recent weeks about the elections in Pakistan in *Mainstream* and other magazines published in India and elsewhere, but we were attracted by this analysis (the first part of which appears in this issue) because of the in-depth analysis and the studied detachment the writer seeks to maintain in his approach to burning questions that have created conflicts and tensions in Pakistan. About the Indian elections, we have picked on two editorial comments by the editor of *Mainstream*, Nikil Chakravarty. The *Mainstream* is a left-oriented paper, independent of party affiliations, but with an understandable bias in favour of marxist ideology as understood by the USSR and other socialist countries in the same orbit. It has often taken up attitudes different from that of the CPI and it has often been described as a maverick lone ranger in the field of Indian periodical journalism. The *Mainstream* has always been eminently readable and has specialised in critical surveys and examination of important topical questions. Generally, *Mainstream* has been taken seriously in political circles: Nikil Chakravarty's (N.C.) comments have at all times shown depth and insight. At one time, the *Mainstream* was an ardent (but never blind) supporter of the Indira Gandhi government even at a time when the CPI was hesitant about tying up with her. But in recent times, N.C. and the *Mainstream* have been extremely critical of the Indira Gandhi regime especially after the Declaration of the State of Emergency. It did not take long for the Indira Gandhi establishment to place the *Mainstream* on the blacklist, and sound many warning signals (by withdrawing advertisements and the like) that the *Mainstream* should watch its steps and its idiom, but N.C. and *Mainstream* did not succumb to such blandishments. Finally, towards the end of November, last year, the Administration had come down hard on the *Mainstream* by imposing pre-censorship of the most rigorous kind at a time when press censorship was being generally relaxed. Denzil Peiris writing in the *Far Eastern Economic Review* of December 24, 1976 summed up the matter in this way: "...for less trenchant criticisms than those made by Nikhil Chakravarty, editor of *Mainstream*, editorial writers such as Kudlip Nayar of the *Indian Express* have been jailed. The protection saving him from Premier Indira Gandhi's wrath was probably their warm friendship during their Oxford days, his close friendship with her deceased husband Feroze, and perhaps her son Sanjay's regard for him as a friend of his father. But even personal connections proved insufficient to save him: last week an order was given that *Mainstream* must be submitted for pre-censorship. And the censor had wondrous ways of delaying its approval to disrupt deadlines and eventually secure a lickspittle journalism. India's rulers were offended by Chakravarty's November 27 editorial which exposed the manoeuvres behind the emergence of Sanjay as heir apparent. More menacingly to India's new dynasty, Chakravarty said that the time had come for all 'forward looking forces' to mobilise against Sanjay's right-wing politics and new style of 'chorus politics.' Unlike the habitually hysterical polemics of Indian left-wing criticism, the urbane Chakravarty has combined reasoned analysis with a saturnine expression of dissent from the Emergency, the draconian restriction on citizen's rights, the introduction of totalitarian powers of arrest and indefinite detention by the executive the abridgement of the judiciary's powers as a protector of the individual against the arbitrary will of the Government, and the impotence of some Congress leaders to resist publicly the inroads into freedoms they deplore privately. In his criticisms, Chakravarty has been a non-conformist communist. But since Chakravarty's candour saves the conscience of the party's intellectuals, the CPI—which goes along with Mrs. Gandhi except for occasional tut-tutting—has been obliged to tolerate him....." In his editorial dated December 21, 1976 in the issue of December 25), Chakravarty had announced the temporary closing down of *Mainstream* after 14 years of continuous publication. But it has reappeared once again and the editorials we reproduce this week are from the issues of February 5 and 12.

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EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

Before The Elections

March 1,

THE PRIME MINISTER, in a series of speeches towards the end of last week has clarified many matters about which there was much speculation for several weeks now. First, at a meeting of Political Authorities (and GAs)—the "steel frame" with which the SLFP has replaced the old "civil service"—the PM had said that the elections would be held in about "six months time." Then, at a meeting at Kolonnawa, to celebrate the 64th birthday of Minister T. B. Langaratne—it is only customary to have political birthdays to mark the end of decades (50,60,70,80, etc.), but with the elections round the corner, even a 64th birthday was good enough to have a big rally—the Prime Minister said that the National State Assembly would be dissolved on May 21 and that the elections would be held within the legal limit (four months).

This makes it clear that the General Elections would be held sometime in the end July—early September period. The actual dates, it is learnt, have been "tentatively" decided upon, but they have not yet been disclosed (probably because there might be further considerations on sound astrological advice). The PM has also indicated that the Government (now SLFP) would seek to get several Bills through the House on two days, May 19 and 20, but whether the Government can do this is uncertain. There are various constitutional matters to be determined as to what can be done during a prorogation to make it possible have some Bills on the Order Paper on May 19. In any case the PM has sought to assuage Opposition suspicions and apprehensions (about attempts to postpone the elections) by announcing the date of dissolution and also by assuring everybody that the elections would be held according to the Constitution.

In her recent speeches, the Prime Minister had touched on a large number of matters of burning topicality, but one striking "confession" was there had been strong and serious moves (no doubt by SLFP MPs) to have the elections postponed. Such talks about postponement had persisted even after the SLFP talks with the Tamil and

Muslim MPs on February 21. The Youth Front of the TULF has now made it clear that they did not want the TULF leadership to enter into any horse deals about the postponement of the elections and that the question of the creation of a separate state was not now negotiable. In her recent speeches, the PM has touched upon every question of significance before the public, and it would be useful and interesting to examine them in detail, but it cannot be done in this note which can only refer to some major trends.

At the Kolonnawa meeting, Minister Langaratne had announced that he would seek election from Kolonnawa at the forthcoming general elections. He had also stated that it was necessary for the SLFP, LSSP and CP to get together again (and this statement had earned headlines only in the *Virakesari*). Kolonnawa has always been regarded as a "left" seat—and there is no doubt that it has been so from the days of the Suriya Mal campaign, veteran LSSP Terence N. de Zylva, and others—and TBI had been accommodated here by the LSSP-CP in the last election after TBI had lost his foothold in Hewaheta. When the LSSP went out of the UF, it naturally began to groom its own candidate for the Kolonnawa seat and he is one of 83 electoral organisers the LSSP has announced last week end. (The term electoral organiser is one that the UNP has brought into the local election terminology to mean a potential candidate or really the person most likely to receive nomination if the Party decides to contest the seat pending electoral agreements with other parties. The LSSP, CP, SLFP and other parties have now generally use this term). It is known that even the redoubtable TBI, who has dispensed massive patronage in the electorate to ensure his "hold", would find it difficult to hold the seat without LSSP and CP support. The UNP has a very strong candidate in the electorate and it is likely that he will win easily if there is a three or four-cornered contest in the electorate. TBI was the chief "kappuwa" (marriage broker) who had brought the United Front into being in the 1965 and through the Socialist Study Circle evolved the Common Programme on which the UF had come to power. Once again he seems willing to assume

the role of the "kappuwa", but the difficulties facing him now are more formidable than those extant in 1965/66.

Whilst TBI has announced his intention to contest the Kolonnawa seat, another SLFP Minister R. S. Perera, has declared that he will not be contesting the Kelaniya seat and that he was "withdrawing" or "retiring" from politics. It will be recalled that R. S. Perera was one of the SLFP Ministers who had openly proclaimed his opposition to any attempt to postpone the general elections. In the meantime, there are whispers and press reports that Minister T. B. Subasinghe was likely to follow in the footsteps of R. S. Perera. Significance has been attached to the fact that his son-in-law, head of the State Graphite Corporation, has assumed a major role in the breakaway SLFP party led by Nanda Ellawela. As we go to press, it is learnt that TBS has resigned from the Government as a vindication of his political beliefs: the Government was now pursuing some policies he could not support, he had said. Another Minister whose name has been included among possible "defectors" is Hector Kobbekaduwa. He is an uncle of Nanda Ellawela but he is also intimately connected with the entire Ratwatte Establishment. It was thought that he might "defect" from the SLFP to team up with the Socialist Front. But he has declared more than once recently that he was sticking to the SLFP and that he had no intentions of abandoning the Party he had helped to form with S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike.

The UNP continues to watch the squabble among its political opponents with understandable relish. J. R. has begun to display all the complacency of somebody assured of a landslide victory. He was no doubt counting on a swing with promises of more and better socialism. In a speech in Nuwara Eliya, on Saturday 19 (vide CDN, 21/2/77), JR had stated: "Capitalism was no more the answer to the country's problem. It was impossible to make everybody enjoy the benefits of development and ensure fair distribution of wealth by acting according to capitalism. The UNP policies and programmes—designed to bring about the dawn of a new era and set up socialism—were more progressive than program of work conceived in recent times in any country..." Many people, who are

aware of the history of the UNP and some of its leaders, find it difficult to believe that the UNP has really and truly adopted socialism—be it pink or red.

But, if a large number of the youthful voters are persuaded into believing the UNP, then JR may well generate a swing which will bring him and the UNP to power at the next polls. The UNP has no record of socialist legislation, but the SLFP and the Left Parties have. There is however great disillusionment about the SLFP, LSSP and the CP, individually, severally and collectively, for the numerous acts of commission and omission they have been guilty of in the period after 1970 when they wielded great governmental power. The question simply is whether the voters or a sufficiently large number of them will be prepared to believe the promises of JR and the UNP and take a gamble with their "socialism", or will they stick to the known Socialist "devils" in the SLFP, LSSP and CP? This is one of the big imponderables of the coming General Elections.

The situation has been complicated because of numerous "splits" among those who had opposed the UNP in 1970. The United Front is in three: the SLFP has a breakaway group in a new party, *The Peoples Democratic Party*; and the JVP youth, though in several groups, are seeking to emerge as an independent parliamentary force. The insurgent movement, then led by the JVP, is now in several groups, and two of them have already sought to acquire the status of parliamentary parties; viz. the MVP, the Mahajana Vimukthi Pakshaya led by Mahinda Wijesekera, and the JVP (of Rohana Wijeweera) led by some of his loyalists. The MVP and the JVP are bitter and antagonistic to the LSSP chiefly for the role played by the LSSP in wanting the suppression and even "liquidation" of the JVP in 1971. The SLFP, they say, is no different from the UNP, the CP is revisionist, and the LSSP reformist. The JVP and MVP have had one inaugural meeting each in Colombo, and the crowds that flocked to the MVP meeting was a pointer to the new winds sweeping across the country. Though crowds at meetings are no indication of election results, such crowds are indicators one cannot ignore about political trends and developments in the next three to five years. The

SLVB of Prince Gunasekera and Major Udugama has also made a statement about the danger of right reaction coming to power, but it has made no positive suggestion about how the Right was to be fought at the next elections,

In the TULF, the Youth Front has begun to make its presence felt. It has given notice to the leaders that they should not enter into any "agreements" about postponing the elections and that they should not conduct negotiations on any basis other than separation

There is no doubt that the concept of separation has taken firm root among the Tamil youth. Discerning observers of the political scene in Sri Lanka know that the policies by the Sinhala majority governments since 1947—from the separation into language streams in schools, the Sinhala Only Act, the Land Colonisation Policies, and the Republican Constitution of 1972 which did not give any constitutional status to Tamil rights—have made the division of the country a de facto reality. This may not be apparent to those who are submerged in the miasma of Sinhala majority domination but those who are sensitive current to political, social, educational, agricultural, industrial, commercial, economic and cultural trends know that the division of the country has been quietly effected during the last forty years, and more especially in the last twenty five years. The Tamil Youth now want only a de jure settlement of something which has become a fact.

Several generations of Tamils and Sinhalese have grown up—after the separation of language streams in 1947/48—without having contact with each other. (In the colonial post it was different where the concept of a Ceylonese had evolved on the basis of the English link language and other ties, but all this was shattered by the Sinhala political majority vested with supreme political power under the Donoughmore and Soulbury Constitutions.

Even the JVP seems to have realised, at this late stage, that the Tamils and Tamil Youth cannot

be ignored—as they had done earlier and in 1971—and much publicity has been given to the fact that some JVP leaders have learnt Tamil in detention and gaol and the JVP wants all Sinhalese to learn Tamil and vice-versa. This is a little late in the day, but it is better late than never—though it is doubtful whether this move will help to end the demand for separation. The TULF leaders who believed in a united country—either in federation or in autonomous regions—are now fading out, and already they will find it difficult to come to any constitutional agreement with the Sinhalese leaders. Various crucial developments are likely to take place in the coming months.

COVER

ONCE AGAIN, this week, we go back to our jungles for a picture on the cover. Sri Lanka's spotted deer are becoming fewer and fewer and their total disappearance in a few years—except for a few in our national parks and the zoo—is now taken for granted as an axiom of contemporary life. There are many other things which are likely to disappear from this country before long—unless people sit up and do something about it. The coconut, for instance, is fast disappearing from our country. It is not merely that domestic coconut consumption has increased. The truth is that our production has begun to decline at a time when our population continues to increase and the world demand for coconut products is on the increase. A bottle of coconut oil is now very nearly Rs. 6 and one single coconut, in some parts of the island, has begun to fetch Rs. 2. Next week, in the *Tribune*, attention will be paid to the coconut industry, and the dangerous consequences of the disastrous shortfall in production for the livestock industry. The Prime Minister makes stirring speeches that kurumbas should not be plucked, but the biggest ever mounds of kurumbas are daily found at the Nittambuwa bus stand for sale to commuters. For whose consumption are speeches made?

SRI LANKA CHRONICLE

Feb. 8 — Feb. 23

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—Dipa-
 mina; LD—Lankadipa; VK—Virakesari; ATH—Aththa;
 SM—Silumina; SLD—Sri Lankadipa; JD—Janadina.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 8: The PM said that in Sri Lanka today the ayurvedic system of medicine was well established and, in fact, the great bulk of the population sought ayurvedic remedies for their ailments. The government had been encouraging all activities connected with the development of ayurveda: The college of Indigenous medicine had been improved and expanded; research centres had also been expanded; every encouragement was given to systematize and publicise knowledge which traditionally used to be kept secret and confined to a few practitioners and their families: The PM was speaking after the inaugurated the Third Asian Symposium on Medicinal Plants and Spices yesterday. Sri Lanka's tea exports to the United States—which went up from 42.7 million pounds in 1975 to 48.7 million pounds in 1976—may possibly hit the 55-60 million pound mark this year provided the current coffee boycott in the US keeps snowballing: Sri Lanka is now the Number 1 supplier of tea to the US market. Police officers have been posted at Municipal markets to ensure that price control in regard to the sale of meat is strictly enforced—CDN. The New programme of work mooted by the government to solve the problems facing the Tamil-speaking people of the country would be disclosed shortly, said the Minister of Transport, at the opening of the new CTB depot at Karainagar last Saturday: he also said that the co-operation of all sections of the people was essential for the development of the country: therefore it was vital that they obtained the maximum assistance of the Tamil-speaking people and solve the problems facing them. The Progressive Estate Staffs' Union has urged the PM, the Minister of Agriculture and Lands and the Minister of Plantation Industries to make all members of the estate staff permanent. In view of the forthcoming General Election this year, it is all the more necessary to reunify the progressive trade union forces so that the attempt of the UNP to regain political power in the country could be defeated: So says the Communist Party controlled Ceylon Federation of Trade Union in a press release—CDM. The Colombo Municipal Council has asked the Ceylon Petroleum Corporation to get international expert advice on the Corporation's proposed low pressure Gas project at Ges Works Street. Nearly 1,600,000 drought-stricken peasants of the dry zone received assistance valued at 22.2 million US dollars from the World Food Programme during the latter half of 1976: this assistance came in the form of food rations comprising wheat flour, pulses, milk powder, sugar, butter, oil and dried fish—CO

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 9: The Ministry of Public Administration and Home Affairs has been unable to fill 400 vacancies in clerical grades in government

departments: the ministry which called 1500 applicants for interviews for these posts recently, found to its bewilderment that the response to its call from applicants was poor. The Ceylon Shipping Corporation is to add four new cargo vessels to its fleet: The fleet so far consists of second hand vessels the new additions will be two 15,000 tonners and two 3,000 tonners. The majority of members of the K. N. Weerakkody committee has recommended that a maximum monthly salary of Rs. 3,250 should be paid to planters who have put in more than 20 years service—CDN. University lectures and discussions recorded on cassette tapes will soon be made available by the External Examinations Agency of the University of Sri Lanka. The State Medical Stores which had requested the urgent despatch of more than 60 drugs, has received only two so far; as a result health authorities fear that there might be an acute shortage of certain drugs which might lead to a breakdown in services in some medical institutions. The country's earnings from the export of gems reached an all time high of Rs. 286,988,984.76, according to official statistics. A number of errors have been found in the results of the NCGE and the GCE 'O' level which were released recently—CDM. A new record in insurance activities was set by the Insurance Corporation of Sri Lanka last year: according to a press release issued by the Ministry of Trade, the corporation has exceeded the target of Rs. 328 million set for new business for last year by Rs. 13.7 million. The Colombo Municipal Council has appealed to the Minister of Local Government, to direct the national Water Supplies and Drainage Board to provide regular supplies of water for distribution to Colombo ratepayers. Mr. G. G. Ponnambalam, Q.C., the well known criminal lawyer and politician, died in Kuala Lumpur early this morning. The price for rubber for various grades have nearly doubled over prices for last year: This is bringing producers high profits, and the country a bonanza in the shape of more foreign exchange; but rubber shippers find their usual bank overdraft facilities inadequate to finance rubber shipments under the prevailing boom prices—CO.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 10: The issue of cement under a new scheme will be decentralised and in thirteen districts served by the Galle and Puttalam factories of the corporation, the government Agent will be entrusted with determining priorities in the districts. The government has decided to issue textiles on ration from February 21: Trade Ministry sources said yesterday that a holder of a ration book would be entitled to three yards of imported textiles: the government also proposes to issue another yard of local textiles on the ration. The government yesterday approved a draft legislation submitted by the Minister of Agriculture and Lands, Mr. Hector Kobbekaduwa to abolish the feudal system of service tenure of temple lands, to eliminate economic and social inequality and to provide for the maximum development of such lands. Hundreds of CTB Workers who were under interdiction but who were recalled for service during the strike in January are to be reinstated with full pardon—CDN. A series of political meetings of considerable political significance begin today.—the office bearers of the SLFP, the SLFP working committee, the Nanda Ellawella group, and the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Sri Lanka. Political circles believe that when the no-confidence motion is put to a vote on February 17, it will reveal the real alignment of political forces which could have a

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major bearing on the next elections. The Minister of Housing and Construction, has ordered all-round reductions in the monthly rents of low-income houses and flats of the Department of National Housing; these reductions will come into force on March 1—CDM. The Ministry of Health is seriously considering the reintroduction of the channelled practice in a limited form as an incentive for young government doctors to remain in service. The Titrawella Delimitation Commission expects that in the years to come, when the numbers of Tamils of Indian origin registered under the Sirima-Shastri pact progressively increase, 'there may be other electorates in the Uva Province where this group may be able to return candidates of their choice or at least have a strong voice in their return'. Over 350 underworld characters were nabbed by the City police during the first two weeks of 'operation flush cut', the campaign launched by the police to clean the city of Colombo of undesirables—CO.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 11: The sessions of the NSA were prorogued yesterday by a proclamation issued by the President. The prorogation of parliament took effect from yesterday February 10. Parliament stands prorogued till May 19 when it is due to meet at 2 p.m. The President issued two proclamations—one regarding the prorogation and one regarding the summoning of parliament for May 19 at 2 p.m. The SLFP members of the government parliamentary group have been summoned to an emergency meeting at 'Temple Trees' yesterday. Sri Lanka will receive 30,000 metric tonnes of wheat valued at 9 million Canadian dollars; it is provided through the Canadian International Development Agency under Canada's Food Aid Program for 1976/77. Vital drugs imported by the State Pharmaceutical Corporation are lying at the customs air freight office for several months; a customs spokesman said that several cartons of vital drugs marked 'very urgent' were uncleared. The Medical faculty of the University of Sri Lanka is now faced with the problem of finding qualified medical personnel to fill the vacancies created by the resignation over the last ten years of 24 fully qualified professors and lecturers. The National Livestock Development Board now supplies the total requirement of coconuts to MARKFED and the Marketing Department at reasonable prices; this has resulted in coconut prices dropping from 1.30 a nut to about 75 cents. The four TULF leaders who were indicted under the Emergency Regulations with possessing and distributing seditious literature were today discharged by the High court-at-bar: the accused were Mr. A. Amirthalingam, Mr. V. N. Navaratnam, MP for Chavakachcheri; Mr. K. P. Rutnam, MP for Kayts and Mr. K. Thurairatnam, MP for Point Pedro—CO.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 12: Sri Lanka nationals resident abroad can now maintain accounts designated in selected foreign currencies with the Bank of Ceylon International Department and the People's Bank Foreign Branch. This is a sequel to the budget proposals of the Minister of Finance, in his budget speech in November 1976: the accounts will be designated in either US dollars or pounds sterling, according to Finance Ministry sources. The government is considering a proposal put forward by the Health Ministry of a new form of consultation practice for government doctors to be allowed initially in Colombo and Kandy—CDN. Students organisations have opposed a University demand that they give written undertakings not to resort to disturbances

and violent protests: the University sought this undertaking, so that there would be no repetition of the incidents at the Peradeniya Campus: Student circles indicated that they would never agree to such an undertaking. Sri Lankans can travel to India only once a year except in exceptional cases: this restriction was imposed by the Indian government as a sequel to smuggling of goods on a large scale. Mr. Mahinda Wijesekere, who was acquitted by the Criminal Justice Commission (Insurgency) announced yesterday the formation of a new political party called the Mahajana Vimukthi Pakshaya. Government Medical Officers are perturbed at the lack of any tangible redress granted them in their recent struggle: it is now over a month since the campaign was called off and despite a few conferences with the Ministries of Health and Public Administration, nothing satisfactory has emerged; the GMOA and the AMS will hold a general meeting on February 20 to review the situation—CDM.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 13: SLFP Working Committee sources said yesterday that the PM, had informed the committee that she had decided to prorogue the NSA because she did not want an unnecessary dramatisation of recent events. Four MP's of the SLFP resigned from the government on Friday: they are: Mr. Nanda Ellawela (Ratnapura), A. M. Jinadasa (Kekirawa), Gamini Ariyaratne (Maskeliya) and Tennyson Edirisuriya (Tissamaharama). Released insurgents are earning four-figure incomes by taking to agriculture: these young men who took to cultivating paddy and subsidiary crops following their release from detention have finally achieved successes in spite of the many problems such as lack of irrigation facilities they originally faced. The Governments of India and Sri Lanka will shortly begin a joint venture to conduct extensive research into the Ayurvedic system of medicine, it's further development, and production of herbal medicines on a large scale: This was revealed by the Deputy Minister of Health, at the symposium on Ayurveda at the Bandaranaike Memorial Research Centre at Navinna yesterday—SO. The Emergency which was declared on March 17, 1971 will lapse on February 15, as the government has decided not to continue a state of Emergency thereafter: this was disclosed by the PM when she addressed members of the Government Parliamentary Group last Friday: as a sequel to this decision elections to all local bodies, Municipal Councils, town Councils, and Village Committees are to be held soon. The PM addressing the members of the SLFP Working Committee said that she had no doubt that the people would once again repose their confidence in the SLFP at the next General Elections—ST.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 14: The PM, has called upon SLFP organisations to put forward suggestions for the formulation of the government's manifesto for the General Election. The government has released all persons taken into custody in the North and South since 1973: official sources said that the detenus were both Sinhala and Tamil persons taken into custody as they were considered a threat to the maintenance of law and order: a number of alleged insurgents have also been released. The first batch of 24 skilled personnel has been selected for employment abroad by the Foreign Employment Bureau of the Employment Exchange; the selected workers will be employed by the Sixth Construct International in Brussels, Belgium for two years. The two-storeyed new headquarters of the

Colombo Fire Brigade at Darley Road will be declared open tomorrow by the Minister of Local Government; Built at a cost of around Rs. 1 million, the new headquarters is equipped with modern facilities and other gadgetry to train personnel to cope with major fire fighting and life rescue operations in high rise buildings—CDN. Over three hundred persons were rendered homeless when nearly 50 houses at Siddharta road, Kirillapone were burnt during a minor gang warfare. The PM, has not received any official communication from the Communist Party of Sri Lanka on any matter whatsoever, according to what she had told members of the SLFP Working Committee last Saturday. The President and the PM yesterday signed the condolence book at 'India Home' and the PM conveyed to the Indian High Commissioner her sorrow over the death of the Indian President—CDM. Mr. Bonnie Jayasuriya, MP for Aweisawella said today that he had resigned from the SLFP, and the Parliamentary Group. The volume of export cargo lifted from Sri Lanka ports during 1976 had increased against the previous year's figure, the Central Freight Bureau announced—CO.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 15: A concerted drive to keep the price of rice down in the open market is being made by different government authorities; part of this scheme is to move an anticipated record Maha crop from producing areas to non-producing areas; this year the country's Maha crop from 1.2 million acres of paddy land is expected to be 375,000 tons of rice; some of the NCP areas have had an abundant supply of water from the Mahaveli diversion and this has been a great contributory factor to anticipations of a good harvest. With the Emergency lapsing this week, a number of important changes have followed: the ban on the *Dawana* group of newspapers which was imposed in April 1974 is now off, and according to a government spokesman the political parties proscribed under the emergency laws are now no longer under prescription. Leaders of the Opposition will meet today to discuss the sudden prorogation of the parliament. According to a UN study, Sri Lanka has the second highest maternal mortality rate in the world. Simultaneously with the lifting of the state of emergency tomorrow, the Minister of local government, will issue an order fixing March 1, 1976 as the date on which the term of all local bodies ends, according to official sources. The Central Committee of the CP of Sri Lanka meets tomorrow to decide its political future—CDN. The five day week promulgated under the Public Security Act making Saturday and Sundays holidays will cease today when the emergency is lifted; this means that Saturday will be a working day. When the emergency lapses today, Price control officers will have to take every case of profiteering to courts; under the emergency, they were empowered to confiscate the goods or distribute them to consumers at the controlled price at the point of sale. The joint front of the clerical services alleges that some of their men in key ministries were transferred immediately after the strike. Lanka Salu Sala will import 3.3 million yards of textiles for Sinhala and Hindu New Year from the Cotton Textiles Export Promotion Council of India—CDM. The PM has invited all Tamil speaking and Muslim MP's to a special conference on February 21 to discuss their problems and to find a permanent solution—LD. Meanwhile the TULF youth have requested their leaders not to go to the meeting summoned by the PM, as nothing short of a separate state would satisfy them.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 16: The five-day week introduced by the government in January 1974 will continue despite the lapse of the state of emergency; a spokesman for the Ministry of Public Administration and Home Affairs said the Minister will issue a gazette notification declaring Saturday as a holiday under the Holiday Act. Opposition Party leaders met yesterday morning and discussed the situation in the country following the prorogation of the JSA; the UNP took up the position that the prorogation while the Emergency was on was a situation that could lead to several abuses without Parliamentary control. A six hour water cut in the city will be imposed from Monday in order to conserve as much water as possible to meet the drought which is expected to begin by the end of this month—CDN. The GA's of rice producing areas were directed yesterday to make prior arrangements to despatch the excess rice harvests expected from the bumper Maha crop to other neighbouring districts to bring down the price of rice in the open market. The Ministry of Education's vote of Rs. 2 million for the takeover of estate schools is a paltry sum as the Ministry's annual budget runs to nearly 900 million, the Ceylon Worker's Congress says in a press release. The State of Emergency lapsed from mid-night yesterday. The Central Committee of the Communist Party of Sri Lanka holds a crucial meeting today to take a final decision on its future political line. The Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna whose leader is Rohana Wijeweera (now serving a term of imprisonment) will hold a committee meeting tomorrow after the Emergency Regulations lapse—CDM. A CP insider has told the Observer that it was likely that the party would pull out of the government, confirming thinking within political circles that the Politburo has recommended this course of action to the broader political committee; meanwhile there was a lot of excitement in Colombo last night with the news of a visit the PM and some Ministers paid to President's house yesterday; this fuelled speculation that a dissolution of parliament was imminent—CO. The government has decided that in rice-producing areas rice will be distributed straight from the mills. Bangladesh and Sri Lanka have signed a trade agreement to import more products from each other's countries—DM. Mr. Michael Siriwardene, Minister of Labour, claimed at a meeting at Minnuwagoda that he was revealing a government secret when he said that the government intended to reduce the price of ration rice to 1.50 and also reduce the price of other essential commodities—ATH.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 17: The University Teacher's Federation has proposed to the Board of Governors of the University that undergraduates should be represented in all the main statutory bodies of the University and that provision should be made for this in the new University Bill now being prepared; while making this proposal for undergraduate representation of the UTF says the Act should exclude undergraduates from matters relating to examinations; the UTF which includes the academic staff of all the campuses except Peradeniya has also made a plea for the establishment of a University court which was provided for in the University before 1966. Mr. Pan Hien Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs and Special Envoy of the PM of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam came to the island today on a tour of goodwill. The Education Ministry has decided to recruit 10,000 more teachers to government schools from April this year—CDM. The Communist Party of Sri Lanka quitting the government is now im-

minent: the consensus among the members of the 50 member Central Committee is that the party should sever its political alliance with the SLFP; the CP however expressed no objection to the party entering into an electoral pact with the SLFP; it is also learnt that the CP is expected to function as an independent group within the Opposition. Government doctors are getting set for trade union action; there is widespread unrest among the rank and file as no satisfactory solutions were found to their outstanding grievances. Most of the country's minor crops have been hit by drought this year; according to the trade, coffee production is down by half, cardamoms by 75%, cocoa by 40%, and papain by 25%. There has been a drop in the price of home-grown pulses, due to a boom in producing areas. A bottle of coconut oil costs Rs. 4; a spokesman for the coconut industry said that one reason for the price hike was that large quantities of coconut oil were exported—CDM. Mr. Bonnie Jayasuriya MP for Avissawella, was present at a meeting of the Opposition Parliamentary Group held at the NSA this morning; all five government MPs who quit the government and the SLFP recently were invited to attend this meeting; but Mr. Jayasuriya was the only breakaway MP who attended—CO. The Tamil youths who had been imprisoned under the Emergency and who were released recently received a rousing reception (when they reached) the Jaffna railway station—VK.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 18: Sri Lankans are in great demand for skilled jobs abroad; particularly in the Middle East; two hundred local personnel have been found employment in Iraq and leave for that country shortly; the newly established Foreign Employment Bureau of the Labour Dept has been responsible for securing jobs for them; the first batch of Sri Lankans has already left and another batch of 40 leaves shortly. The Central Control Commission of the Communist Party—the highest decision making body in the CP met at the party headquarters yesterday; the political position of the CP is expected to be announced at a public meeting to be held at Hyde Park on February 22. The Delimitation Committee appointed to delimit districts, Assistant Government Agent's divisions and local authorities held it's first meeting last Friday—CDM. Privately-owned foreign banks now operating in Sri Lanka will be nationalised before the forthcoming general election; a decision to this effect has been taken by the government. A campaign to clean the co-operative movement and weed out corrupt employees will be launched next week; official sources said yesterday that they had received numerous complaints from the public that a major part of the stocks of items from the co-operatives were fed into the black market by corrupt employees—CDM. The Ministry of Agriculture and Lands has taken steps to open Polas in all important towns to enable the public to get consumer items cheaply and easily; the Polas will be held daily and people will be able to buy the produce of Usawasama, Jana wasama, LRC, PMB and other state institutions—CO. When the PM meets MP's of the Tamil speaking areas on February 21, to discuss their problems, UNP MP's will not attend—VK.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 19: The government's objective should be a total integration of the health services on estates with the general health services on the island; it is important that the existing health and welfare services on the estates should not only be main-

tained and improved but also be buttressed by legal provision till such time as the goal of total integration is achieved; this is the counsel given by the committee appointed by the Minister of health to review the Medical Wants Ordinance. The politburo of the CP of Sri Lanka is scheduled to meet today to study a draft statement prepared by the Central Control Commission on a decision arrived at by the party's Central Committee on Wednesday. Consumer will be issued four yards of textiles on the rice ration books through the co-operatives from February 28—CDN. The CP has decided to leave the government; this decision which was imminent will be officially conveyed to the government any time now; meanwhile CP branch organisations have been summoned for a meeting in Colombo on Sunday. There is an acute shortage of drugs in many hospitals in the outstations; the Minister of Health, who visited Jaffna, Mannar and Vavuniya last week found the hospitals in the areas facing an acute shortage; there were also reports of shortages in many other outstation hospitals. The Public Service Technical Officer's Federation which represents about 9,000 middle grade technical and scientific officers has unanimously decided to call out it's membership on a three day token strike on March 8; the strike is in progress against the Ministry of Public Administration and the Committee appointed to study proposals submitted in 1971, for a unified salary structure. The official intimation that the CP is leaving the government was sent to the PM yesterday—VK. The Rajya Seva Urchiya Samithi Sammelanaya has requested the PM to keep to the conditions signed in the agreement with them and reinstate the 350 workers who are still out of job—LD.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 20: The PM said yesterday that parliament would reassemble on May 19 and would be dissolved according to the constitution thereafter; she adds that there were some urgent bills to be passed by the NSA, before the country goes to the polls; the PM was addressing a public rally at Lunugala in the Passara electorate. The Communist Party yesterday officially announced that it had withdrawn from the government; it has instructed the politburo to take all necessary steps to give effect to the decision. Mr. Pieter Keuneman Minister of housing and construction and Mr. B. Y. Tudawe, deputy Minister of Education yesterday sent in their resignations to the PM following the decision of the CP to leave the government ranks. The national increase in population rate rose from 18.4 in 1974 to 18.9 1975, according to the Administration Report 1975 of the Registrar-General—CO. The allegation that Parliament was prorogued because the government could not face the accusations was totally false; the government was concerned with the confidence it enjoyed with the people, not of the opposition said the PM at Lindula yesterday. With the lapsing of the Emergency the legality of the present administration of the SLBC is in question; according to law, the SLBC must be administered by a board of directors comprising five persons; now there is no such board and the SLBC continues to be administered as it was under the emergency, by it's chairman. The Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna, which led the insurgency of April 1971, will field candidates for the forthcoming general election—ST. The State Trading Corporation has saved 2 million 59 lakhs in foreign exchange from 1971-75—SM.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 21: Analysing the political situation in the country the PM, in a major speech at Passara during the weekend said that she as leader of the SLFP was not worried about the defections or the withdrawal of the CP from the government; the SLFP was a strong political force and would survive such defections; historically also defections had never weakened the SLFP she said. With the resignation of the CP and five other MP's from the government Parliamentary group after the prorogation of the Parliament, the SLFP remains the single largest group with 84 members. Workers who were locked out at the government press since last October's disturbances at the press will be recalled this week, following the lapse of the emergency. The PM is due to meet MP's representing the Tamil-speaking community at the BMICH today—CDN. The GMOA and the AMS met jointly yesterday and decided to launch a 'go-slow' campaign at the General Hospital Colombo from today; the "Daily Mirror" understands that this campaign will be introduced to hospitals throughout the island if no satisfactory solution is found to their problems, after Wednesday. The National Price Commission has recommended an increase in prices of some items for mass use like soaps, matches, drugs etc; the Commission has informed the respective Ministers that the proposed price increases would ensure their steady production. The Bill to nationalise privately owned foreign banks which the government expects to take up and dispose of on May 19 will have to be first gazetted, according to several Opposition MP's; they said that whether the Bill could be disposed of in all its stages on that day is a procedural tangle which they would oppose—CDM. In a last ditch effort to stop the outflow of antiques and cultural treasures from this country via diplomatic luggage, the Ministry of Defence and Foreign Affairs has sent out a protocol to all diplomatic and other missions in Sri Lanka requiring registration of such articles in the possession of diplomats. The Minister of Agriculture and Lands, Mr. Hector Kobbekaduwa, speaking at a meeting held at Pitigala in the Bentara-Elpitiya electorate said that he will not leave the SLFP at any cost. Doctors in the Colombo Group of Hospitals reported sick en masse today crippling medical services—CO.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 22: The government is due to discuss next week a new scheme drawn up by the Health Ministry to restore private channelled practice to all government doctors official sources said yesterday; the new scheme which has to be approved by the Ministers makes no distinction between ordinary medical officers and specialist's cadre in government services, the sources said; but medical circles claim the move will initially benefit the specialists who will attract the major clientele. The doctors in the five hospitals in the Colombo group who reported sick yesterday morning resumed work at 3 p.m.; the Health Minister who met representatives of the two doctors associations earlier in the day appealed to them to get back to work as early as possible, as the Cabinet would be deciding on their outstanding demands on Wednesday. The six campuses of the University which remained closed for three months reopened yesterday, but before attending lectures the undergraduates observed the day as a day of mourning; the University authorities said everything at the six campuses was quiet. The CP of Sri Lanka holds a public rally this afternoon at Hyde Park to explain the reasons for its withdrawal from the government—CDN. The TULF which has been vigorously

campaigning for a separate state for the Tamil people since its Vaddukoddai sessions yesterday indicated its willingness to consider an "interim political arrangement" that could satisfy the aspirations of the Tamil people. Consumers will receive increased rations in certain items of subsidiary food-stuffs next month CWE sources said yesterday. The Tamil and Muslim members of parliament who met the PM yesterday decided to meet again early and carry on the dialogue that had commenced, according to a Government Press release yesterday. An agreement for the operation of air services between Kathmandu and Colombo was signed on February 19 following talks between Nepal and Sri Lanka governments—CDM.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 23: Sea Street, the pivotal centre of the brokering and gold trade in Sri Lanka for over 170 years and a veritable fortress of non-Ceylonese traders yesterday faced a major challenge when a Sri Lankan bank entered its portals; the People's Bank of Ceylon, the common man's bank, yesterday struck the first blow for Sri Lankan trade in pawn broking and gold jewellery when it opened its own centre for transacting such business in this very fastness of foreign dominance. Mr. Chelliah Kumarasuriar was sworn in as Minister of Housing and Construction yesterday; he continues to be the Minister of Posts and Telecommunications in addition. Communist Party leader and former Minister of Housing and Construction, Mr. Pieter Keuneman, yesterday called for a common radical rally of all progressive forces in the left and anti-rightist elements in the SLFP to abort any attempt by UNP-led reactionary forces to capture political power in this country, when he was addressing a mammoth crowd at Hyde Park yesterday evening. Mr. R. S. Perera, Minister of Information and Broadcasting told a meeting of the Kelaniya Productivity Committee yesterday that he was quitting politics and would not be contesting the Kelaniya seat. The CWE will issue synthetic sarees and suiting to co-operative societies through nine regional warehouses for the Sinhala and Tamil new year. A hectic sea chase by a Navy patrol boat and a police party in a Port Commission launch led to the recovery of yarn worth over Rs. 150,000 stolen from the Colombo harbour in the early hours of Monday—CDN. Some long distance and suburban trains did not run yesterday when several railway workers stopped work protesting against the delay in the payment of the bank loan of Rs. 300; the strike which commenced at 9 a.m. was later called off around 4 p.m. following an assurance given by the General Manager of Railways that he would get the bank to expedite the payment. A significant increase in the cost of living index has been recorded during the first eleven months of last year; according to the statistics compiled by the Central Bank, the average index for the first eleven months was 1.21% higher than the average index for the same period last year. To go into battle against the UNP under the banner of the policies of the SLFP rightwing was to surrender without firing a shot, said Mr. Pieter Keuneman, MP and General Secretary of the CP speaking at a mass rally at Hyde Park yesterday; he also said that the right wing which had now taken command in the government and the SLFP were disorganising and demoralising the progressive forces and leading from one crisis to another; that was the main reason why the CP had to leave the government—CDN.

INDIAN ELECTIONS

Indira's Dilemma

New Delhi, February 3, *

NEMESIS has overtaken Emergency. The revolt inside the Congress brings out in essence the fiasco of the Government's attempt to pull off a snap election while holding on to the draconian provisions of Emergency. The powerful indictment of the original six led by Jagjivan Ram can hardly be smothered, softened or muffled by the voluble chorus of cronies that have thrived under the aegis of Emergency. Despite all that is being vociferously said to the contrary, this revolt has no doubt unnerved the Establishment. The Prime Minister's very reply to Jagjivan Ram's letter of resignation betrays it. And there is good reason for her being "astounded". Since the very first day of Emergency nobody amongst her colleagues had objected to it; instead, a deceptive complacency had grown in the new power-circle that nobody would dare to protest and there could be no challenge from within. How deep down this incapacity to gauge the mass mood could go was provided by the Congress President's memorable comment. "An individual defection cannot be a matter of consequence for the party". Borooah's expanding irrelevance is one of Emergency's gifts to Indira Gandhi.

With all the broadsides fired against Jagjivan Ram, the Congress cohorts round Indira Gandhi would have given a better account of themselves had they behaved with dignity and a sense of balance: a crisis need not lead one to run amock. Jagjivan Ram has never claimed himself to be a paragon of virtue, but nobody can deny his solid importance in Congress politics, particularly for Indira Gandhi's camp: the Cabinet Minister with the longest tenure; having been in the Congress Working Committee longer than anybody living; Indira Gandhi's candidate for the post of President of India in 1969; the first President of the newly formed Indira Congress; the colleague who unhesitatingly took over any portfolio assigned to him by the Prime Minister, from Defence to Agriculture, and with a record of conspicuous compe-

tence in each; a Harijan leader of national standing, reared under Gandhiji and continues to be so. Without any reflection on Indira Gandhi's present political stature, would it not be fair to recollect that it was Jagjivan Ram's support on Kamaraj's persuasion in the crucial days of January 1966 that tilted the balance in her favour in the contest for Prime Ministership? A political retainer of Bansi Lal's dis-eminnence, for instance, is no compensation for a veteran of Jagjivan Ram's standing.

How disastrously self-defeating the strategy of Emergency has turned out for the Prime Minister can be seen by the flashpoint of this revolt. The planned campaign for the removal of Bahuguna from Chief Ministership can be taken as the beginning of the decline of the Congress hegemony in Uttar Pradesh. The blatantly indecent take-over of the Orissa administration despite Nandini Satpathy's record of competence, popularity as well as loyalty, made it clear, that a coterie at the Centre was allowed to play ducks and drakes with the norms of democratic politics. If K. R. Guresh had to quit his ministerial post because of the drug multinationals' lobbying, it was the beginning of the process that has today enabled powerful US companies to find accredited agents among the star politicians of Emergency.

Can all this fetch votes in any normal election battle? Obviously, the Prime Minister decided to go in for the gamble of a snap poll, thinking that the heavy blanket of non-news that Emergency provides would be a good protection from exposure of all the inconvenient record. One can understand the difficulty for the Establishment to lift the Emergency.

The very process of election has had its own momentum. Despite all the fiery statements by the Prime Minister's yes-men equating the Janata Party with the 1971 Grand Alliance, the average Congressman is not unaware, for instance, about the standing of Chandra Shekhar with his reputation as the tireless crusader against the Birla irregularities, particularly when set against the background of the Birlas' entrenched position in today's Establishment.

But if the Janata Party has had to bear the liability of having the Jana Sangh as its constituent, no

such charge can be made out against this revolt in Congress. Neither in its composition nor in its programme can any Congressman object to it—barring, of course, the fact that it has no five-pointer youth prodigy to lay down, what a charming hack socialite has impudently coined, the Gandhi-to-Gandhi-to-Gandhi tradition. Even if the revolt does not snowball—and there is no convincing reason to be assured that it may not—the erosion in terms of poll scores would be ominously sizable for the Congress this time. It is no secret in New Delhi that when Indira Gandhi took the decision to go for election, her trusted and tested pollsters were reported to have put the Congress total score at slightly less than 300. If the dimension of the present revolt is carefully examined, there is little reason to expect that the Congress can get even bare majority this time. In this connection, an important feature of the present election battle is the over-riding anxiety among the non-Congress parties to avoid splitting of votes through tri-cornered contests. Hence the adjustment of seats—without electoral alliance—between the Janata Party and CPM, and now between the Janata and the revolt Congress. And after the two-month old press button anti-communism disgracefully indulged in by many a Congress leader from the Prime Minister downward, CPI is understandably anxious for such electoral adjustment with other Opposition parties, since any alliance with the Congress outside Kerala seems to be a very dim possibility, if not a political liability.

All previous Lok Sabha elections have shown that it was the Opposition vote splitting that could enable the Congress to win comfortable majorities in terms of seats despite minority score in terms of votes: in 1952, the Congress bagged 364 seats with 45 per cent votes; in 1957, 371 seats with 47.78 per cent votes; in 1962, 361 seats with 44.73 per cent votes; in 1967, 283 seats with 40.73 per cent votes; and in 1971, 350 seats with 43.64 per cent votes. If this time, the votes do not split, by and large, the percentage of minority poll score by Congress cannot ensure it majority of seats. A fair guess at this stage would therefore be not a landslide by the Janata Party—whatever might be Moranji Desai's unfulfilled dreams

of becoming Prime Minister—but every possibility of the Congress failing to get a majority for the first time in Lok Sabha, and hence seeking the support of other groups after the poll. It is not without significance that on the very morning of Jagjivan Ram's revolt, the Prime Minister has had to resume her campaign theme about the need of stability in Government.

If one of the considerations that impelled the Prime Minister to decide on a quick poll was to sweep the mounting Congress in-fights under the carpet, the very first fortnight has shown that Emergency has created deep fissures inside the Congress. This big revolt has no parallel in the Congress annals since Independence. And it requires no astrologer to forecast that once the Congress ticket distribution is over, there is bound to be many a sordid display of disunity. The statement by Jagjivan Ram and his fellow rebels has effectively highlighted the banishment of inner-party democracy inside the Congress—no doubt a by-product of Emergency—and with the minimum relaxation of the gags on political activity, the Prime Minister is confronted with this revolt.

By normal reckoning, this poses a dilemma for Indira Gandhi: if she does not go in for lifting the Emergency, the revolt may gather more adherents, while she may be scared that if she lifted it, an avalanche of suppressed anger from many Congressmen themselves that might sweep off the irresponsible coterie which had been the biggest political (and economic as well beneficiary) of Emergency.

This crisis has therefore imposed upon Indira Gandhi a fearful responsibility. It demands of her courage and perspicacity of the highest order, to repose her confidence in the normal function of democracy which requires the total lifting of the Emergency. It is not a question of Jagjivan Ram and his associates defecting from the Congress, as the Shukla AIR put out before the nation, but credibility itself threatens to defect from the Establishment's idea of election. An election in shackles has the danger of a terrible boomerang: it may result in the crippling of the Congress, if not the end of its hegemony. Such a writing on the wall cannot be read by poli-

tical sub-literates that crowd the Diwan-e-Khas with all their profusions of sycophancy.

The stakes are high not only for the nation—but for Indira Gandhi herself.

—N.C.

New Delhi February 9,

As the opening shots in the Lok Sabha election battle have been fired, the contesting parties while coming out with their respective manifestoes are actually more busy in hard bargaining for seats and choosing their candidates. The arrival of Jagjivan Ram with this Congress for Democracy in the Opposition camp, has visibly unnerved the Congress leaders, as is evident from their vitriolic outbursts against the powerful rebels.

This development has had rather extra ordinary repercussions. One would have thought that in the face of this unexpected revolt, there would be a manifestation of determination to close up ranks and the sinking of all differences in the Congress camp. But the rot in the ruling party has gone so deep—particularly with the debilitating complacency under the Emergency Raj—that the revolt has resulted in a virtual panic than renewal of party unity.

The Central Election Committee of the Congress has hurriedly taken recourse to the line of least disturbance in the matter of party ticket distribution: Better renominate the sitting Members—unless one is a confirmed liability—than take the risk of trying out new members.

As a result, Ambika Soni's youth list, reportedly two-hundred strong, seems to have gone with the wind. Raghuramaiah's dream of pushing his own men to over-power Brahmananda Reddy's in the Andhra list has not come true, while those who had planned to reduce Yashwantrao Chavan's strength in the Maharashtra list have been equally disappointed. And there are perceptibly anxious efforts on the part of the Congress leadership to placate CPI, thereby underlining the grotesque folly of their anti-CPI campaign less than two months ago.

More serious for the Congress leadership is the obvious collapse of morale even before the nomination papers have been filled. Instead of the Babuji challenge

reinforcing mutual trust, there is an air of distrust even about the Congressmen getting tickets. Should they all remain loyal till the end, or would they defect if not during the campaign but after the poll results are out, since the impression has gone round that the Congress would not get the majority despite the gimmicks—more to come—to win over the voter?

In the utterances of the Congress leaders, there has appeared a noticeable lack of cohesion in the face of the crisis touched off by the Babuji-Bahuguna-Nandini revolt. Since the Prime Minister continues to be the star campaigner for the Congress, it is revealing how she has been compelled to change from one theme to another, and then to another without any running thread. One day she would thunder at the Opposition for violence, the next day, it would be a defensive posture that she was not being projected as the solitary pillar of the Congress; and the next, she would pleadingly explain that Sanjay's entry into politics was the result of Opposition provocation and Borooah's permission. And the Congress manifesto with its pompous phraseology and painfully pathetic catalogue of shibboleth claims of achievement, amply reflects the vacuity that pervades the ruling party corroded by Emergency.

A striking commentary on the crisis that has overtaken Indian polity today is that the pattern of change that may come as a result of the Congress losing the majority has already become a subject of unusual interest in practically all political circles. What is conspicuous in all this talk—no longer in soft whispers but in fairly audible gossips—is that the loss of majority for the Congress is pactly taken for granted. Barely three months ago, the operators in the Congress were cocksure of sweeping the poll with their enormous accumulation of resources from jeeps to funds running into crores; and equally pessimistic were those in the Congress or outside, who were opposed to this tribe of operators, a tribe that is another shining byproduct of Emergency.

How the scenario has changed with the slightest relaxation of the Emergency curbs! For those who have been watching the New Delhi scene, a qualitative difference has

come about with the revolt led by Jagjivan Ram. The released leaders were confirmed Opposition, but the Babuji Bahuguna combine represents a crack in the Congress front; and so, when they spoke up in strident condemnation of Emergency politics—from coterie raj (what CPI calls "extra-constitutional methods and centres of personal power") to press gag—it immediately helped to break the silence that fear bred by Emergency had imposed upon the entire nation.

From street corners to post offices, from tea shops to the Secretariat, the timid has begun to talk, the ultra-loyalist of the Emergency Commission slinking back into the corner. The canteens are talking, Yashpal Kapur's mushroom National Forums are faced with extinction—not that this would entail any financial loss for him personally because the expenses for such outfits are generally drawn in advance.

Inevitably, when the people have begun to talk, the election prospects have become difficult for those who basked so long under the patronage of the Establishment. There is hardly any flaunting of the "I-follow-Sanjay" badge; the advertised hero of the Emergency has discreetly ceased, may be for the time being, to be the "must" feature in Shukla's "news" broadcasts over radio and TV.

But do all these amount to a regeneration of healthy democratic politics? The Emergency experience makes it difficult to believe that the spring has come so soon after the winter. And the people, the common man and woman whose instincts are often the wisest, still suspect that all this relaxation and the pushing of the Emergency scars away from the limelight is only a tactical retreat by the Establishment—as an election stunt. If the stars help to bring the Congress back with a majority—however remote the possibility—then the scores might be settled with vengeance.

That is why while the man in the street has started talking of political personalities—and even daring to nod with dissent—he has not yet made up his mind that he should get involved. The burnt finger is yet to make sure that the fire is put off and only the cold embers remain.

Such an assurance that the black night shall not return will not be taken seriously unless and until backed up by deeds. A bright face of democratic commitment can hardly be believed by relaxation in dribbles—a few more gags to go, a few more released, or a Shukla or a Bansi Lal's portfolio changed by a mini-reshuffle of Ministers. The bitter scars of Emergency cannot be effaced by any attempt at cosmetic face-lift.

Only the foolproof ensuring of a free and fair poll through effacing all the authoritarian landmarks of Emergency—and that has to include the caucus at the power centre—can alone prove Indira Gandhi's democratic bonafides. The hour for it is not yet over, but the time is running out.

Wages of Emergency cannot be left unpaid. —N.C.

PAKISTAN'S ELECTION

Bhutto's Pool Strategy

By Abdullah Malik

By courtesy of the weekly *Mainstream*, we reprint this contribution which published in the well-known weekly *Viewpoint* (February 4, 1977), of Lahore, edited by Mazhar Ali Khan and was received through the courtesy of Public Opinion Trends Analyses and News Service, New Delhi. The second instalment of this contribution will analyse the Opposition's candidates, strategies and tactics.

EVERYONE is in a speculative mood these days, and the favourite subject of discussion is, of course, the outcome of the March elections. Will the People's Party win? With what majority? Will the Opposition obtain sufficient strength to forestall unilateral amendments of the Constitution?

There are some persons who are even considering the possibility that a wind of revolt will topple Mr. Bhutto and bring the Pakistan National Alliance to power, just as the 1970 elections had brought Mr. Bhutto to power. This line of thinking has gained strength after the allotment of tickets by the PPP. It is alleged that Convention Muslims Leaguers and traditional feudal families—the professional

electioneering families—have been resurrected by the PPP, in spite of the fact that the party had defeated many landlords who are today fighting elections on its ticket.

In the 1970 elections, conditions were not normal. We were living under Martial Law and polls were held under Martial Law regulation. Second, the elections were held to resolve certain basic issues of a constitutional nature which revolved round the division of the country into two wings. These issues were basic, and they were heat-generating issues. Third, we had never before had any general elections on the basis of adult franchise. Fourth, we were living in an atmosphere of confrontation with India.

But, certainly, the most important issue was the socio-economic one—the denial of the daily needs of the people. The common people were in search of economic security, and Mr. Bhutto caught their imagination with his *Roti-Kapra-Makan* promise.

For almost two years, we prepared for the polls and for one year we went on campaigning vigorously. Tensions built up, and political polarisation was precipitated. For the first time, the term *Islam-pasand* was coined for the Rightists, and this was the period when the Left became all-embracing, with all kinds of persons getting under the popular umbrella of the PPP.

This atmosphere generated intolerance and violence in politics. Each party was out to eliminate the other point of view—even physically. This situation was also deliberately fostered by certain elements who were around the then President and Martial Law Administrator.

These people had convinced Yahya Khan that his survival depended only on fishing in the troubled waters of politics. That was the reason why he kept on hobnobbing with various parties, and even financing them. Yahya and his advisers were convinced that because of the tensions and polarisation, no single party would emerge strong and challenge his authority, and that he would be able to play one against the other.

But the result of the elections went entirely against these calculations. That was the reason why, when the results came, a number,

of Yahya's Cabinet Ministers insisted on cancellation of the elections. The so-called *Islam-pasands* at that time tried to influence Yahya through Sher Ali, the then Information Minister, and he demanded cancellation of the polls and fresh elections.

But seven years have passed, and the situation has changed. We may like it or not, but issues too have changed. So has our psyche. For instance, in 1970, 113 maulvis had come out with a *fatwa* against Mr. Bhutto and his socialism. Now a greater number of maulvis—140—have issued a statement in favour of the PPP, Mr. Bhutto and his reforms.

It may be argued that these maulvis are unimportant and they are a somewhat purchasable commodity. But this is not the whole truth. It is the atmosphere which creates acceptance of change. If to neutralise your opposition is opportunism, then what about the 40 intellectuals of Karachi who called on Mr. Jatoi and joined the PPP?

THESE CHANGES have taken place not through coercion but through the resolution of certain issues and by removing tensions. For instance, we were emotionally much perturbed by the question of recognition of Bangladesh and the release of POWs. Quite a big section of our population had suspected the Simla Agreement.

Similarly, when economic changes and reforms started taking place, the affected sections became unhappy. But gradually all these changes and reforms have been accepted; the need for normalisation of relations with India is no more a debatable point.

So it is in this changed atmosphere that Mr. Bhutto has chosen to go to the country. As a matter of fact, he took away almost all issues, even of a trivial nature, from the Opposition's hands before announcing elections.

Despite this, however, the fact remains that opposition to Mr. Bhutto is there, and it is trying hard to match him. Now what possibly could be his strategy and that of the Opposition? Before an attempt is made to pinpoint the gambits likely to be made, the Opposition's class character must be determined and understood because, in

the last analysis, it is economic interests which generate political opposition.

Most Opposition parties are fighting for what they call the Islamic way of life. But Mr. Bhutto too talks of Islam. And in spite of the acceptance of Islam on both sides, there still is a struggle between the PPP and the PNA. It is not a fight for Islam, therefore, but for certain other interests. These interests should be analysed because they are the main power at the back of the Opposition and sustain it—and there also, coincidentally, one can find an answer to Mr. Bhutto's present tactic of leaning on wealthy feudal families.

Mr. Bhutto learnt many lessons from the 1970 elections. At that time, he evolved different strategies for Sind and the Punjab. In Sind, it was not difficult for Mr. Bhutto to get the support of the big landlords, but he had to seriously tackle the feudal politicians of the Punjab.

In 1969 and 1970, Mr. Bhutto knocked at each and every feudal door and tried to rope all the feudals into the PPP. But he did not succeed. Instead, the feudals ridiculed him. He, therefore, leaned more and more on Left slogans and toured the province quite extensively, appealing directly to the people. His tactics paid off.

HOWEVER, even then, Mr. Bhutto's success was confined to districts where big landed aristocracy was missing. The Punjab districts where the PPP was overwhelmingly successful were quite advanced comparatively in literacy, in urbanisation and in industrialisation, and, except Multan, all other districts where the party won had small land-holdings.

When Mr. Bhutto came to power, therefore, he had two opposing classes to confront: the industrialists and the big feudals, particularly in the Punjab. Economic reforms and land reforms were required not only because they were desirable and necessary, but also because of political compulsions. The political influence of these two classes had to be eliminated, and to a great extent it has been during these five years. But their power base has not altogether been shattered.

So, before he decided to go to the polls, Mr. Bhutto announced another—probably the last for some time to come—instalment

of land reforms. The real purpose was to break the remaining feudal power. The taking over of rice husking mills, flour mills and ginning mills must also be considered as falling in the same political category.

Thus, on the one hand, the power base of the feudals has been weakened and, on the other, they have been awarded PPP tickets to fight for National Assembly seats. This allotment of seats has shocked many Leftists of the PPP who accused Mr. Bhutto of betraying them. But what they fail to understand is that these feudals have not got PPP tickets as victors but as vanquished and dethroned warriors who have surrendered and, willingly or unwillingly, put themselves at the mercy of Mr. Bhutto. EVEN THEN one should not overlook other objective realities which forced Mr. Bhutto to award tickets to these feudals, many of whom were badly defeated in the last election by his party. His main requirement was to somehow make up for the loss of popularity of his party. Every party in power becomes unpopular but the PPP has lost popularity much more speedily than expected. This, largely, because its MPAs and MNAs did not behave with their constituents in the proper manner. There have been widespread complaints of corruption and goondaism.

Mr. Bhutto might have easily calculated that bringing forward the old wealthy families might be a good idea. Mian Salahuddin, Sardar Ahmad Ali, Sajjad Quershi, Abdulla Rokari, Hamid Raza Gilani, the Noons and Qureshis of Sargodha, etc.—they are not corrupt in the ordinary sense, they are not goondas and, politically docile, they will be as loyal to the regime as they were to Ayub and their fathers and forefathers were to the government of the day. It is sheer pragmatism that has dictated Mr. Bhutto's choice.

The Opposition has not behaved differently. It too has chosen either feudals of the same or a rival faction or obscurantists of the worst type. The Opposition appears to be relying mainly on the frustration created among the people by the curtailment of the political process. For almost four or five years, there has been a stifling political atmosphere in the country with no public meetings, demonstrations or free reporting in the Press.

The people also have bitter memories of the PPP's behaviour during the bye-elections. Mr. Bhutto's strategy would be to make the Opposition fight on socio-economic issues when he thinks he can completely outwit them.

But the Opposition has certainly sprung one big surprise on the PPP. This is its decision to merge in a national alliance to the extent of putting up single candidates from each constituency, and have one flag and one manifesto.

It came as a shock for Mr. Bhutto because he had planned his strategy on the assumption that Opposition parties by and large would not unite and, if at all they united, there would be only small adjustments for different seats. The possibility of a single party and single candidate did not figure in the information fed to him by the vast network of intelligence. Even the so-called political columnists of the Government Press could not forecast this probability. This, incidentally, shows what happens when political rulers get isolated from the political process and the normal means of picking up political trends such as untutored newspaper columnists.

In this connection, another factor must also be taken into consideration. The PNA has succeeded in creating the feeling that the ruling party can at least be challenged. Before the announcement of the election schedule, the ruling party was almost unchallenged.

(To be Continued)



THE CONSTITUTION

It Is Best Redone, Not Just Refashioned

By R. B. Thammita

"The Constitution surely needs to be refashioned", a knowledgeable correspondent to the Sunday Observer sums up on Sunday, January 9th. This summing-up follows an assertion as well as a question. The assertion declares thus: "Any evaluation of the Constitution of 1972 must necessarily lead one to the conclusion that it has served the purpose for which it was intended. And the Question asks: "Can this

nation achieve greatness upon the efforts and talent of only one half of the people?"

Here undoubtedly is a freshening breeze blowing over Lanka's Isle. I welcome this candid confession of Nihal Jayawickreme's and so must every lover of his country. But how few can agree that the medication he proposes will make whole a Constitution to go sick at each drop of the gavel of its makers!

Let me take his assertion first: "It (Constitution) has served the purpose for which it was intended," which simply means that there was a blueprint of this purpose got ready in advance for the Constituent Assembly to tailor a Constitution to measure.

Were it so, this all-important fact had not been disclosed together with, or independently, of the call made upon the citizen to collaborate in that epoch-making exercise. This omission, it will be granted, was unfortunate if it had been unintentional. But if it had been deliberate, it amounts to a breach of faith with the people at the very initiation of a new status for them of what is purported to be free and independent republican democracy "to secure peace, stability and good government." a posture that thus needs explaining.

We here also have the manifest, parallelly, that the 1972 Constitution was designed for only one half of the people and on their behalf for a purpose programmed for a six-year tenure, dramatically fulfilled since in two-thirds the time. So therefore, as and when each planned purpose is achieved the taxidermist will set to work on the Constitution *de facto* and *de jure*, grafting new skin for that which has been atrophied by fulfillment early or late.

Under Freedom we certainly here have accouched our very first original idea sans precedent and sans emulation, viz. to "renovate" the Constitution as often hereafter as each preceding purpose—"the need of our time and age"—is accomplished. "The pressures for renovation"—the first such renovation has surfaced within four years—could come even quicker in the future in consequence of our burgeoning capacity for metamorphosis. It has also been the need of our time and age that

we grope stains British, that we instal lustres from the Yugoslavs, the Russians, the Chinese, the Cubans, the Koreans, and now perhaps from the Americans, and let stay condescendingly and only as a zebraic sediment the historical amalgam of Sinhala, Tamil, Moor and other Lankan tints. The time can come, and I think it certainly will, when those lustres too lose their glamour for us. And then? But of course there will be still left African tribes for being our mentors; and when their allure is also exhausted we can have recourse to the Pigmy and the Nite-tevo in turn.

This then is the continuing crux of our national situation, this metamorphosis which overtakes the political figures and its transmission by them down and throgh to the unresisting periphery of the Demos. In the brief timespan of a quarter-of-a-century since D. S. Senanayake's trialist acceptance of it, succeeding political figures have succumbed body and spirit to alien exercises of power-manipulation and people-management miscalling it Democracy; have created division of spoils to immolate the husbandman and make of every man (and woman) a spy upon his fellow; have fiddled about with thinking youth to panic them to murder and mayhem; and have gnawed through a way of Life to hoist Dhamma upon a spike of mutual intolerance. And we boast to being the most conscious democracy in all Asia! Oughtn't we confess rather to the sorry truth that of all Asians we best have signed away the freedom of man to a scrap of ballot-paper?

"Can this nation achieve greatness upon the efforts and talent of only one half of the people?" Eloquently No! On the contrary, those efforts weary and that talent is blunted by each recurrent confrontation of the one half with its other half upon terms of private hostility and politician vendetta.

It is from this tactic of partitioned power and partitioning over-rule that we have to have release. Let us then everyone sit down to the task of realizing government-for-the-people-by-the-people.

Let us re-do the Constitution so. Not just refashion it for disharmonies either as, or more or less than, Nihal Jayawickreme and subse-

quent correspondents and a hard-campaigning Opposition seem to desire.

The Party Manifesto is a broken promise. The lowly circumstanced elector, who is the vast majority, is become coldly indifferent to whatever befalls. Regimes will come and go, multiplying meannesses and eviscerating efforts and talent. And potential greatness will be ever fleeing the land.

To avert this self-destruction, political figures must give way to every man's fair plea to be selected by one's peers from the farther-

DR. ABRAHAM KOVOOR

most periphery up and through to the topmost legislature. Office has to be disbursed similarly by competitive selection and election. And State Policy must be framed only thereafter based in terms of priorities upon the material each Representative officially presents at each inauguration to the Legislature from his constituents. I have indeed in my mind's eye the disappearance of the bulk, if not the entirety, of those impediments to our greatness which happen to be the cheap hand-out of political figures with minds sub-nurtured upon a complex of alien hoodoos and cults.

his name and fame have reached the peak and the spectacular scale in which the World Sai Conference was organised at Puttaparthi in 1975 is adequate proof for his vast following in India and abroad.

The fame and the luxurious life of Satya Sai Baba is perhaps responsible for more and more people becoming Bhagawans, Babas, Gurus, Swamijis, Hatayogies, Matajies, Ammas, etc. While till a few decades back most of the saints and Sanyasies used to preach ethics and vedantha (philosophy) without claiming any supernatural powers and without being interested in material life, of late almost every one of them performs some 'supernatural power' or the other as though only to prove to the ignorant masses that he is really something above his fellow human beings. When the credulous people see with their own eyes the miracles being performed by these hoaxers they cannot help becoming their ardent followers.

The Rationalists in India who form the insignificant minority—have been helplessly watching the situation all these years. Their appeals through their own limited newspaper media and public meetings, to the ignorant people not to part with their money and become victims to this 'godmen' are of no avail as very strong religious press and the vast resources at the command of the godmen and their devotees are all there to attract more and more people.

Under these circumstances, Dr. Kovoor the President of Sri Lanka Rationalist Association and the uncrowned leader of Indian Rationalists has taken up the task upon himself to come into direct confrontation with the godmen of India led by the great Satya Sai Baba. Dr. Kovoor is not an ordinary rationalist. He has done extensive research on the so called supernatural pernormal powers, ghosts, spirits, rebirths, astrology, palmistry, faith, healing, witchcraft, yogic, powers and practically every other occult power we can think of. Being one of the world famous psychiatrists, it is just a child's play for him, when he is confronted with any of these phenomena which are generally believed to be 'supernatural'.

He has published innumerable articles on different aspects of the superstitions and blind beliefs and travelled all over the world exposing

Nightmare Of Godmen

by A. Suryanarayana

Secretary, Indian Rationalist Association

Editor, *The Tribune*,
43, Dawson Street,
Colombo 2.
Sir,

As it is the aim of all intelligent editors to provide his readers with interesting reading matter, you are perfectly justified in publishing the "point of view" from a Bombay weekly about a popular, or rather notorious, Sri Lankan like me by the self-styled "Bhagawan" Rajneesh, one of the numerous spiritual frauds of India, against whom I was campaigning during recent years.

I am sure the impartial journalist in you will be good enough to follow up this "point of view" by another, expressed by one of India's erudite scholars under the caption "Dr. KOVOOR—NIGHTMARE OF GODMEN" in the enclosed souvenir published on the occasion of my visit to Baroda and Ahmedabad.

I will be sending you in due course the copy of "*The Current*" that will contain my rejoinder to this "Bhagawan", a human parasite who thrives without working by exploiting the gullible hippies of the West, a voyeur who derives sexual gratification by encouraging his men and women devotees to dance about in the nude, and to indulge in sex orgies during ecstatic trance he is able to induce through hypnotic suggestions and "devotional" chants!

A. T. Kovoor

17.2.1977

Today in religious circles, two names are often heard in India. One is that of Satya Sai Baba of Puttaparthi, who claims to be an incarnation of god by performing many 'divine miracles'. The other is that of his arch enemy Dr. Abraham T. Kovoor. As a continuous intellectual fight is going on between these two, it is worth knowing something about these two men and their contentions.

Sai Baba performs many a "miracle" and claims they are the result of some divine and super-

natural powers he possesses. His disciples and followers spare no efforts in giving the maximum publicity for this godman. Not a day passes without an addition to the list of miracles' to his credit. On the rolls of his devotees are the politicians, scholars, doctors, judges, scientists, people from practically all walks of life who in all other respects tend to be rationalists. Another notable feature is that most of the wealthy people all over India are his devotees.

During the past two decades

these 'myths'. He found that all these efforts were not good enough to put an end to the atrocities being committed by the unscrupulous people in the name of god and religion. He then found out a solution that is his world famous Open Challenge of Rs. 1,00,000/-. About 18 years back he has thrown out this challenge to the entire world to pay a reward of Rs. 1,00,000 to any one in any part of the world who demonstrates any of the so-called supernatural powers. In his challenge he has covered all known 'supernatural powers' which run to 23 items. Most of the godmen and ESP men who still continue to practice their flourishing profession have thought it fit not to accept his challenge for reasons best known to them. Dr. Kovoor has sent several registered letters separately to Sai Baba, Pandrimalai Swamikal, Neelakanta Tahajii, Nirmala Devi Srivastava, Pujya Dadaji, Dattabal, Triparyar Yogini, Gurudev Mukthanand, Anandamurthi, Kumubhai, Chinmayanand, Acharya Rajneesh, Swami Rama, Swami Haridas, Sivabala-yogi, Bhagawan Gnananda, Gurumaharaji, Maharshi Mahesh Yogi, Hazareth Ali, Dr. Vadlajmidudi, C. S. Teerthgar, R. P. Tiwari, Uri Geller, Neliya Michailova, Jaene Dixon, Sybit Leek but none of them has so far come forward to prove the genuineness of their claims.

A few persons have initially accepted his challenge but failed to turn up at the meetings. A few others pretended as though they were prepared to prove their claims but later backed out under some pretext or other. Dr. Venkata Rao of Bangalore is a classic example of this type. He has even deposited Rs. 1,000/- with Indian Rationalist Association as per the conditions of Dr. Kovoor's challenge, but after having got enough all India publicity for his 'Miracle Boy' Sai Krishna, he chose to withdraw from the contest not bothering about the earnest deposit which was since forfeited. He and the 'miracle' boy's parents must have made two or three lakhs of rupees in about a month's time on an investment of Rs. 1,000/-.

A Most Attractive and Profitable business indeed!

During the last one year. The Madurai Mathadhipathi hit the headline by accepting Dr. Kovoor's challenge. But finally he refused

to face Dr. Kovoor unless Dr. Kovoor was prepared to abide by the decision of three theist judges! Another person from Rameswaran backed out saying that he received a directive from the god not to face Dr. Kovoor on 19.5.76 the day fixed by Dr. Kovoor to test his claims. Yet another person from Srivaikundam also backed out most unceremoniously under some other lame excuse. One Muslim gentlemen who volunteered to show god to Dr. Kovoor and his fellow-rationalists in a second's time finally conceded that he would only be able to talk about god.

So goes on the story of Dr. Kovoor and the takers of his challenge for the past 18 years.

The present lecture tour of Dr. A. T. Kovoor is part of the Fourth Divine Miracle the Exposure Campaign organised by Indian Rationalist Association. Now a few words about these campaigns.

In December, 1974 the 8th Convention of Indian Rationalists was held at Madras at which Dr. A. T. Kovoor also participated as a special invitee. At this convention several delegates expressed their concern at the growing exploitation of the innocent people by the so called godmen. The Indian Rationalist Association, therefore promptly launched the first divine Miracle Exposure Campaign in Tamilnadu and Andhra Pradesh and Bombay in March and April 1975. This was an eye opener for many of the blind followers of the godman. Inspired by the success of the first campaign one more campaign was conducted in October and November 1975 covering the state of Tamilnadu, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, and Kerala. After this campaign the Rationalist movement in India has become a force to be reckoned with. Though during the first two campaigns, Dr. Kovoor and Indian Rationalists had 'walk overs' at every centre, in order to hold the grip, Indian Rationalist Association launched yet another campaign on 18.5.76, the birth anniversary of Bertrand Russell. Besides the states already covered in the second campaign, Dr. Kovoor addressed in the meetings in Gujarat and Rajasthan where religion plays a dominant role in all the fields.

Then started the Sai Baba Controversy and Indian Rationalist Association gave an ultimatum to Sai Baba to surrender on or before

18.12.76. To mobilize further the public opinion against Sai Baba in particular and other godmen in general, Indian Rationalist Association launched the Fourth Campaign on 13. 11.76, at Ernakulam again with Dr. A. T. Kovoor as the principal participant. This campaign will end at Nagpur on 19th December, 1976.

Of late Sai Baba's agents have started a campaign against Dr. Kovoor stating that Dr. Kovoor would also be converted if he visits Puttaparthi. He has, therefore, made it a point to visit "Prasanthi Nilayam" of Sai Baba at Puttaparthi along with some members of Indian Rationalist Association on 1.12.76. Perhaps fearing that even his disciples would be converted as Rationalists by Dr. Kovoor, admission was not allowed to him to the "Prasanthi Nilayam". Since Sai Baba was at that time camping at his another Ashram "Brindavan" at Whitefield in Bangalore, Dr. Kovoor and party made another sincere attempt to meet Sai Baba at "Brindavan" on 2.12.76. When the visiting card was sent to Sai Baba he instantaneously went to sleep and no interview was granted..

Obviously Dr. Kovoor is a nightmare to Sai Baba—the "Indian God" as described by his "Publicity Agent". As at that time Sai Baba locked himself in his private room, Dr. Kovoor himself produced 'Holy Ash' and distributed to the waiting devotees of Sai Baba to their utter dismay!

In all his lecture tours Dr. Kovoor is assisted by a magician who performs all the "Miracles" which all these years were the exclusive monopoly of the so called godmen. He is also helped by a hypnotist in showing 'god' to various people in public by mere suggestions etc.,

It is hoped that this long-drawn-out battle between Dr. Kovoor, who has already crossed 80 years, and the godmen will come to a close soon with the inevitable victory for Dr. Kovoor and his fellow Rationalists.

HELD OVER

- WORLD POPULATION
—Problems Of Control

FLASHBACK, 1944

Ceylon Communist Party

—policy imperatives—

Colombo,
February 21, 1977

The Editor,
Tribune.
Sir.

While looking through my old papers, I discovered two important documents of the Ceylon Communist Party. I am sending them to you with my comments in the attached note. These documents have topical relevance today and I am sure "Tribune" will be interested in publishing them. The re-fashioning or renovating of the Constitution is now under discussion and these documents will be of great use to students of contemporary political history.....

J.S.A.

The note stated: Many will be surprised with pronouncements made by contemporary political leaders, (many still living, a few dead), on matters of topical significance, in the pre-Independence era. They offered solutions to some of the fundamental and difficult problems confronting the country today. Unfortunately, these have now been consigned to the archives or have been preserved in a few collections of old books and manuscripts. If these suggestions had been transformed into deeds these problems would have been solved long ago. The Federalism suggested by S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike in 1926, the autonomous regions and political states for the major nationalities proposed by the Communist Party in 1943/44, the Report of the Select Committee of the State Council making Sinhalese and Tamil as Official Languages, were some of more noteworthy of these suggestions.

But, in the post-Independence period, when these very same solutions were put forward and canvassed, the earlier exponents of these same solutions opposed them strenuously and vociferously. Historians have a duty to examine the sequence of events that led to such political transformations and even somersaulting. In 1972, we discarded the old Colonial Constitution—a Constitution based on the draft prepared by the Board of Ministers

but which came to be popularly known as the Soulbury Constitution—and sought to replace it with a Republican one which its sponsors felt would stand the test of time even during the stormiest of times. But, right-thinking citizens of the country have now discovered that under the new Republican Constitution some of the old maladies have become malignant and oppressive. To cite an apt comment: that one "could not help thinking that very often the reform of the Constitution is a sort of juicy carrot which the Reform Donkey follows... it is a very juicy carrot..." (these remarks were made by the late Mr. G. G. Ponnambalam in the State Council during the debate on the then Constitution Bill, Hansard for 1944, pp. 2629).

If the Donoughmore Constitution had aggravated the communal tensions and resulted in the polarisation of the major communities and the national minorities, the Republican Constitution of 1972 has taken the country further along the same road and pushed a section of the population to claim complete independence of the Constitution and a separate state.

A sense of guilt has no doubt overtaken many who had played a role in shaping the present Constitution and this has found expression in many recent pronouncements on the present Constitution. One such is the article in the *Sunday Observer* of January 9, 1977 by Nihal Jayawickreme in which he had stressed that the Republican Constitution of 1972 should be re-fashioned immediately. The recent publication of the Lanka Sama Samaja Party entitled "Draft Programme for a Socialist United Front" on pages 26-27 also admits the inadequacy of the Constitution to solve the problems of national minorities.

It is, therefore, opportune to bring before the public two documents which set out the policies of the Communist Party in 1944. These documents had been addressed to the Secretary of the Ceylon National Congress which, at that time, was entertaining suggestions for constitutional reforms from all political parties. Many stalwarts like S. A. Wickremasinghe, Pieter Keuneman, A. Vaidilingam, and Shanmugathasan, who had subscribed to these views then, are still with us. It would be interesting to know why they have changed

their views so radically in the post-Independence period?

It will be useful if the *Tribune* would publish the views of S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike for a Federal solution for Sri Lanka and some excerpts from the Report of the 1944 Select Committee of the State Council that recommended that both Sinhalese and Tamil should be made official languages.

(*Tribune* proposes to make these documents available to its readers in the coming months because we are convinced that the Reform of the Constitution or the making of a New Constitution would become a matter of paramount importance immediately after the General Elections—and one of the burning issues during the elections is also likely to be the Reform of the Constitution—Ed).

Ceylon Communist Party

Central Headquarters,
85, Cotta Road,
85, Headquarters,
Colombo.

Dear Friend,

I am forwarding for your information copies of two resolutions passed unanimously at a public rally of over 5000 people, called by the Ceylon Communist Party at the Town Hall, Colombo on Sunday, October 15.

Should you wish, we shall be glad to have a representative of ours discuss further with you any points raised in the resolutions.

With patriotic greetings.

Pieter Keuneman
General Secretary,
Ceylon Communist Party.

18.10.1944

First Resolution

"This rally of Colombo citizens, called by the Ceylon Communist Party, welcomes the decision of the special sessions of the Ceylon National Congress to summon an All-Parties Conference to forge a united demand for recognition of independence and a free constitution and urges congress to summon this conference without any delay. It appeals to all political parties, public organisations and communities to abstain from making any separate or unilateral re-

TRIBUNE, March 3, 1977

presentation to the Royal Commission but instead support such conference, and seek to establish a united demand for recognition of independence and a free constitution on the basis of common patriotism and mutual recognition of the interdependence and just substance of each other's demands. It appeals to the Board of Ministers and State Councillors not to seek any settlement merely among themselves within the framework of the 'Reforms offer' but instead make common cause with the people for a united demand for recognition of independence and a free constitution."

Second Resolution

"This rally of Colombo citizens, called by the Ceylon Communist Party, declares that, in order to achieve unity between the different communities and a common demand for the recognition of independence and a free constitution it is necessary to recognise that the development of Ceylon is taking and will take a multi-national form and that a united and free Ceylon can be realised only on the basis of guaranteeing full and equal opportunities for the development of all nationalities and minorities in Ceylon.

"As there are distinct, historically-evolved nationalities—for instance, the Sinhalese and Tamil—with their own contiguous territory as their homeland, their own language, economic life, culture and psychological make-up, as well as interspersed minorities living in the territories of these nationalities, this meeting declares that the constitution of free and united Ceylon should be based on the following democratic principles:—

- (a) Recognition of the equality and sovereignty of the people of Ceylon;
- (b) Recognition that the nationalities should have the unqualified right to self-determination including the right, if ever they so desire, to form their own independent state;
- (c) Recognition that the free constitution should contain statutory guarantees protecting and advancing the political, social, economic, educational and linguistic rights of interspersed minorities, as well as their freedom of religious worship; and, secondly statutory abolition of discrimination and privileges based on caste, race or com-

munity and making it a penal offence under the constitution to infringe the above;

(d) Recognition that those Indians, now in Ceylon who are prepared to make this country their permanent home and adopt Ceylon citizenship, should have the same rights and privileges as any other community.

"As however, the most economically developed areas are in the traditional homelands of the Sinhalese people and as the Tamils and minorities have contributed and will contribute towards such development, as well as to the general development the whole country, this meeting further declares that the constitution of a free and United Ceylon should provide for two equal chambers, one a Chamber of Representatives, elected on the basis of universal adult franchise according to territorial electorates, and the other a Chamber of Nationalities, elected on the basis of universal adult franchise and ensuring the principle of the equality of the nationalities of a United Ceylon.

MEMORANDUM SUBMITTED TO THE WORKING COMMITTEE, CEYLON NATIONAL CONGRESS AT ITS REQUEST, BY PIETER KEUNEMAN AND A. VADILINGAM.

The working committee of the Ceylon National Congress, at its meeting on October 16, requested us to elaborate further the views and principles expressed in the second resolution of the Ceylon Communist Party in the printed sheet attached. We were further asked to send this memorandum to the members of the working committee in time to allow for a discussion on it at the next working committee meeting on Monday, October 23.

Multi-National Development

- 1. The first point of departure of our resolution is the recognition of the fact that in Ceylon there are and will be several nationalities.
- 2. We regard a nation as a historical, as opposed to an ethnographical, concept. It is a historically-evolved, stable community of people, living in a contiguous territory as their traditional homeland, speaking a common language, having a common economic life and a common psy-

chological make-up, manifested in a community of culture. In the light of the above definition, we recognise that the Sinhalese and Tamil people, for example, constitute distinct nationalities. 3. Historically, in the early period of Capitalism, the development of nationalities coincided with the formation of centralized states, e.g. France, Italy and other countries in Western Europe where different tribes coalesced into a single-nation state, with a common language. In Eastern Europe and elsewhere such development was not possible. Here Capitalism developed later and centralized states were already in existence before nationalities could develop into their own. Thus we find the phenomenon of multi-national states based on the leading position of one nationality and the subjection of the rest e.g. Hungary, Yugoslavia, Tsarist Russia or colonial countries like India and Ceylon where British Imperialism forcibly established a centralized state. 4. The development of Capitalism and the democratic and anti-imperialist awakening in the whole world makes the national problem a burning one in multi-national states. Here the developing nationalities come into conflict with the existing centralized state, which forcibly holds back their national consolidation and development. The problem therefore arises of organising a multi-national state which will eliminate national oppression or discrimination and unify the nationalities, guaranteeing to each full and free development. The problem in Ceylon is, therefore, how to unify the different nationalities in the period of the general national movement for freedom.

Two Stages

- 5. The second point of departure of our resolution is, therefore, the building up of unity of all sections of the people to win the freedom of our country and to maintain that freedom on the basis of the unity and equality of all nationalities and minorities in Ceylon. **UNITY OF THE PEOPLE CANNOT BE REALISED WITHIN ANY OTHER FRAMEWORK AND THIS UNITY EXCLUDES SUCH INDIVIDUALS AND ORGANI-**

SATIONS WHICH STAND FOR THE CONTINUED SUBJECT STATUS OF OUR COUNTRY. Any attempt at building unity with those who do not stand for freedom of Ceylon is doomed to failure. 6. Our resolution, therefore, envisages two stages

(a) creating the basis for building unity for the common national demand for recognition of independence and a free constitution;

(b) and carrying forward this unity when we have won our freedom and the rights to determine our form of life

First Stage-Recognition of Principles

7. In the first stage, we consider that what is essential is a recognition of principles which would eliminate the fear of the non-Sinhalese people's that freedom of Ceylon will mean their domination by the Sinhalese people, ensure them of their right to free development and thus bring them into the common united national front.

8. We therefore consider that the congress should give a lead which will eliminate the fears of the minority nationalities. It should declare its allegiance to the principles of the equality of the nationalities in a free Ceylon, including the guarantee of the rights of the minorities. It should declare that freedom for Ceylon will mean freedom for all sections of the peoples of Ceylon.

9. We consider that the essential principles to form the substance of such a declaration should be those set out in the second resolution attached. In this connection we would like to deal with three points. (a) the rights of nationalities; (b) the problems of Indians in Ceylon; (c) the interspersed minorities.

10. When we say that a nationality has a right to independent political existence, we do not consider this right as an obligation. Our recognition of the Sinhalese and Tamils, for instance, as separate nationalities does not oblige them to form independent states. On the contrary, the very development, politically, economically, and culturally makes it possible and even desirable for those nationalities to exist in a united Ceylon.

The recognition of their rights to independent political existence is necessary as it shows that there is no qualification of their right to self-determination and removes the fear that one nationality wishes to dominate the other.

11. The Indians in Ceylon occupy a special position similar to the Indians in South Africa or pre-Jap Malaya. They have come and been brought to Ceylon since 1827 and live in the main in the traditional homelands of the Sinhalese people, as a large interspersed minority. The problem is whether all the Indians have to be repatriated or whether all or section of them have to be absorbed in the country. The first possibility is obviously undesirable and would be a crime against a section of people who have made and can in the future make an important and substantial contribution to Ceylon's development. It is worth noting that Indians comprise nearly one-sixth of the total population of Ceylon and that, of these, the number permanently settled in the country (estimates vary between 40% and 70%) are almost as large as the Ceylon Tamils and larger than the Ceylon Moors.

12. In view of this, it is only fair that those Indians, now in Ceylon, who are prepared to adopt this country as their per-

manent home should have the same rights and privileges as any other community. Ceylon, of course, will retain its right to control any further immigration into the Island, according to its national interest.

13. Point (c) in the second printed resolution contains the declaration of principles we consider necessary for the interspersed minorities.

14. We contend that acceptance and declaration by congress of the principles enumerated above and in the resolution under reference are necessary and sufficient to provide the basis for building up a united national front of the people of Ceylon behind the national demand.

Second Stage-Carrying Forward Unity

15. Acceptance of the aforesaid principles, building up of the united national front and the struggle for the freedom of Ceylon will lay the material and psychological basis for carrying forward the unity of the various nationalities and minorities in the period after we have won freedom.

16. When we have attained freedom, the question remains as to what type of constitution and representation we must have in order to put the aforesaid principles into practice. We

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Director

consider that this is feasible by the creation of two equal chambers, both elected according to territorial electorates, ensuring the principles of the equality of the citizens of a free Ceylon, and the other Chamber of the nationalities of a free and United Ceylon.

17. With regard to the Chamber of Representatives, the underlying principles should be (a) one representative for so many citizens and (b) electoral boundaries should be avoid cutting across national groupings. This form of representation will ensure a majority of representatives from electoral areas in traditional Sinhalese homelands. We suggest that it would be worthwhile considering the question of creating certain joint electorates in order to give due representation to large interspersed minorities, if it is not considered possible to carry out the suggestion in paragraph 22 regarding Indians and Ceylon Moors.

18. Regarding the Chamber of Nationalities, the only available figures of the distribution of population according to nationality are those of 1921 census. These however are based on the present provincial delimitation which is not based on any principles apart from an attempt to divide nationalities into fragments. Nevertheless, a glance at the distribution of population given below clearly shows that, while the Sinhalese people constitute 67% of the total population of the Island, there are certain areas where definite nationalities predominate and also mixed areas where no nationality predominates. (figures are from the 1921 census and percentages approximate) S—Sinhalese; IND—Indians; CT—Ceylon Tamils;

CM—Ceylon Moors

Province	S	CT	IND	CM
Western	82	2	9	4
Southern	94	—	3	2
N.Western	85	3	6	6
N.Central	76	6	5	11
Sabaragam	74	—	21	3
Northern	1	94	1	3
Eastern	5	53	1	39
Central	52	1	40	5
Uva	60	1	36	2

19. Allowing for the fact that changes have undoubtedly taken place between 1921 and the pre-

sent day, which cannot be established due to lack of more upto date statistics, we see from the above table that (a) the Sinhalese people form a predominant majority in 5 provinces (W, S, NW, NC, SAB); (b) the Sinhalese people form an absolute majority in the Central and Uva provinces, with Indians as a substantial minority; (c) The Tamils form a predominant majority in the Northern provinces; (d) Tamils form an absolute majority in the Eastern province with Ceylon Moors as a strong minority; (e) in none of the existing provinces do Indians or Ceylon Moors form an absolute majority. 20. While it is easy to delimit new areas where Sinhalese and Tamil people predominate, it is not so easy to delimit areas where the Indians or the Moors predominate, as the following Tables shows

Sinhalese	Indian	Mixed	Areas
District		S	Ind.
Kandy		55	36
Matale		61	30
N'Eliya		35	60
Badulla		58	35
Ratnapura		74	22
Kegalle		73	20

2. Tamil—Sinhalese—Moors	Mixed areas
District	CT S CM
Puttalam	15 42 32

3. Tamil-Moors Mixed areas

District	Tamils	Moors
Mannar	58	30
Batticaloa	52	39
Trincomalee	53	37

We thus see that the Moors do not form even an absolute majority in any area, while the Indians have an absolute majority in the N'Eliya district, an area approximately 900 sq. miles with a population of 167,612 in 1921. The Moors speak Tamil and are an important interspersed minority in the areas where the Ceylon Tamils have an absolute majority; while the Indians, though speaking Tamil, are cut off from the rest of the Tamil speaking people and form a large interspersed minority in Sinhalese homelands.

21. In determining representation to the Chamber of Nationalities, it is possible, depending on the circumstances then existing, to adopt one of the following courses.

(a) delimiting Ceylon into two national regions, namely, Sinhalese and Tamil where in the Moors and the Indians will form large interspersed minorities. Each of these two national regions should have the same number of representatives in the Chamber of Nationalities. In this case, we recommend for consideration that the principle of joint electorates to give due representation to large interspersed minorities in the Chamber of Representatives. At the same time we suggest that consistent efforts be made to develop the Moors and Indians as distinct nationalities by giving them land to ensure their national development.

(b) delimiting Ceylon into four national regions Sinhalese, Tamils, Indians and Moors. To make this feasible, the Indians and Moors should, we suggest, be given lands, to develop as distinct nationalities. The question of developing Indians as a nationality in a national region will, of course, depend on the number of Indians, who wish to, and will be allowed to, settle down permanently in Ceylon. In the Chamber of Nationalities, each region should have equal representation.

22. If 21 (b) is adopted, there is no need for joint electorates for the Chamber of Representatives.

23. In conclusion, as we have stress the importance of paragraph 7-14. What is wanted today is the recognition, declaration and agreement on principles which will unite all sections of the population for the common struggle. The detail drafting of a constitution ought to be left to a constitution making body appointed by a Constituent Assembly after freedom has been won.

24. In determining representation to the Chamber of Nationalities, it is possible, depending on the circumstances then existing, to adopt one of the following courses.



Confidentially

• Textiles • Rice

IS IT NOT FUNNY that the Lake House papers and the SLBC should, day and day out, crow about the textiles that was expected to "flood" the market before the Sinhala and Tamil New Year? That for the last six weeks and more, from even before the desperate gamble of proroguing the Assembly, there were almost daily assurances that everybody will have a plentitude of textiles? That it was also announced that the distribution would be through the Co-ops and that each family card would be entitled to two yards of chintz and one yard of white poplin? That there was also confusion whether it was and not or? That the stories put forward in some newspapers differed from what was heard over the SLBC? That there were even variations in the SLBC announcements from time to time? That in the meantime Opposition circles had pointed out that this two or three yards on a family card was the most stupid and unfair manner of distribution? That a family card (for subsidiaries) carried anything from one to ten (or more) ration books for the individual members of the family? That under the scheme first announced a bachelor or a spinster would be entitled to the same yardage as a family with ten children? (That the distribution of hard-to-come-by goods and textiles from the early part of 1976 was carried out on the basis of the family card system—and neither the bureaucrats nor the politicians had been bothered about the gross unfairness of the system?) That a growing public dissatisfaction about this basically discriminatory system (and which left the door wide open for co-op corruption) seems to have compelled the authorities to have second thoughts on the matter? That, more than anything else, the overhanging shadow of the General Elections must have persuaded the Government to change the system of textile distribution through the co-ops? That the latest available announcement has proclaimed that the distribution would be on the basis of each ration book and that

certain specified textile ration numbers get 3 yards of imported chintz and other a yard of white poplin, besides 4 yards of local cloth? That somewhere along the way this white poplin (the age-old, but excellent, *Jumping Fish* from China, Rs. 7.50 a yard now and not the Rs. 2 odd as earlier) would be sold to those who will queue up for the same? That in spite of the lavish promises of a textile bonanza for the New Year, the whole thing is a sordid affair, with queues from early morning? That all these precautions cannot stop the co-op staff from "leaking" the yardage which is denied to late-comers or those unable to stand in queues into the black market? That this co-op distributed cloth is being made available at Rs. 6.00 a yard for chintz and Rs. 7.50 a yard for poplin for limited quantities (the total yardage available insufficient to provide bikinis for the females and span clothes for the males in the island)? **That for the rest it is possible (it has always been possible) to buy all the textiles one wanted in the "open market" (it is no longer called the "black market") at prices ranging from Rs. 12 (cotton) to Rs. 50 (tetron cotton) a yard? That those in charge of government propaganda do not seem to have realised that tall claims and big boasts do more harm than good?**

IS IT ALSO NOT STRANGE that in spite of the 130,000 odd additional acres said to have been brought under paddy cultivation as a result of the Mahaveli Division, Sri Lanka has to import more rice and flour than ever? That in spite of Mahaveli waters and a rather plentiful Northeast Monsoon last season (except in a few pockets) in the NCP and certain other paddy-growing dry zone areas providing water for old fields and the new, Sri Lanka, according to reports in the Government-controlled Lake House, will import not less than 400,000 tons of rice this year in addition to the 500,000 tons of wheat flour already contracted for? That, in the worst period during the last 10 years, even making allowances for the lower population earlier, this island had never imported anything more than 250,000 tons of rice and 200,000 tons of wheat flour? That some say that 300,000 tons of rice were imported in one year but

it is difficult to find confirmation for the same? That whatever it be, there is not the slightest doubt that the imports this year are the highest ever, and that this is at a time when more and more acres are said to have been cultivated in paddy under irrigation from major tanks replenished with Mahaveli water? That, if all the acres, that the SLBC and Lake House papers claim have been cultivated with paddy, are totted up and an average yield of 30 to 40 bushels per acre, is taken into consideration, Sri Lanka should be in a position today to export over 100,000 tons of rice this year? That government propaganda also claimed that the average yield in the Anuradhapura district, this year, (from fields already harvested) was about 60 bushels an acre whilst it was lower (not much) in other areas? That if the average yield is taken at 50 bushels an acre (on the basis of governmental bragging) then this country should have more than 100,000 tons for export? That in reality we are importing more than ever in the past when there was no Mahaveli water? That at present the price of rice locally grown is being artificially kept down by the over-supply of wheat flour? That this is also intended to hide the shortfall in paddy production? That *Tribune* has always maintained that the official paddy production statistics are not merely fictitious but downright false? That the statistics of the acreage under cultivation is worked out on a casual survey of paddy land available in a district (classified as tank irrigated and rainfed) together with the amount of seed paddy sold and the paddy loans granted for the season? That what these statisticians never check up is (1) the actual percentage of such land which is really cultivated; (2) the quantity of seed paddy used for consumption and, (3) the amount of the paddy loans utilised to meet other needs or pay old debts? That official propaganda will now start a new chorus about an unexpected drought, about a brown-hopper pest and about so many other obstacles which reduced the expected production minima (not the maxima)?



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