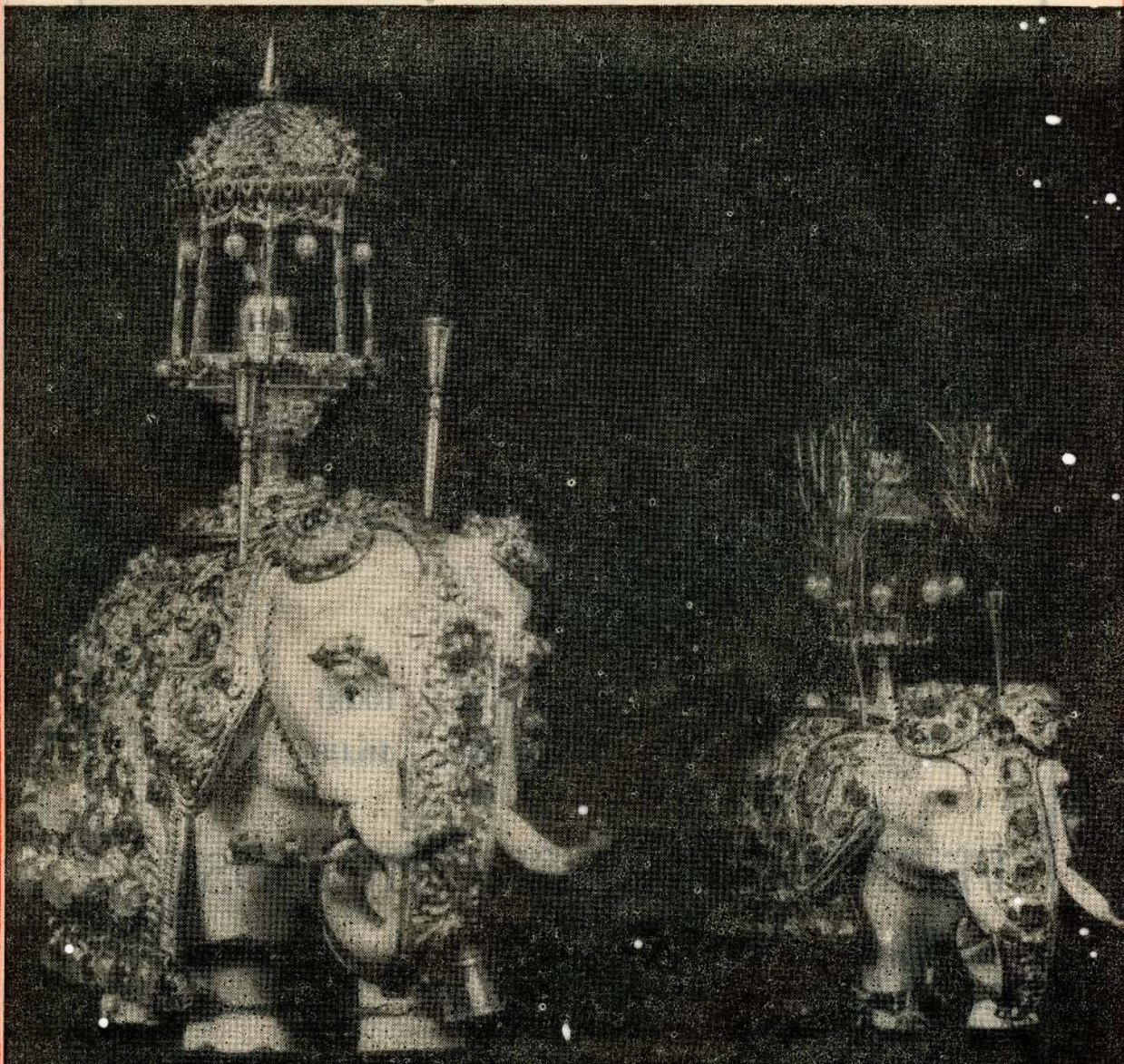


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REVIEW

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Letter From The Editor

IN SRI LANKA TODAY, we rush from tamasha one to another. And this is especially true in the political arena. We do not propose to recount or catalogue the political tamashas the government and the different political parties have staged or attempted to stage in recent times: we will confine ourselves in this note to the latest surfeit of tamashas, big and small, that have become a blight upon this land. For some time now, with the overhanging shadow of a General Election that could not be put off, the country has been inundated with rallies, meetings and processions in different towns and villages. The Chelvanayakam Funeral on April 30 in Jaffna—in which the TULF did everything to bolster their dead leader to a mini-world-stature that would entitle him to a masoleum posterity—disorganised the normal routine of work and life in the North and East (and a few other places) for a number of days. What history will say of Chelvanayakam is hard to say: he has very little in the way of political or other writing (or speeches) to his credit, and the future can only go by what others say about him. But the unquestionably immense and unbelievably large crowds that responded to the TULF call to accord a hero's funeral to Chelvanayakam is undoubtedly symbolic of the determination on the part of the Tamil people in Sri Lanka to show that they are a community which cannot be wiped out either through politico-economic discrimination or by cultural genocide. Chelvanayakam's funeral was a conscious and concrete political demonstration by the Tamils to show that they had set their seal on a political charter to end the second class citizenship status that had been imposed upon them by Sinhala state and army power since the British quit the island and the country became independent. Once the euphoria of Chelvanayakam's funeral has disappeared—in the modern era it is difficult to sustain such personality cults for long—and after the Tamils have regained the self-respect which comes from equality of status, it would be possible to examine, critically and objectively, the politics and the political role of S. J. V. Chelvanayakam without upsetting the emotional ethos of the Tamil community. In this connection, it is pertinent to mention that no serious, critical or objective biography of S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike has yet been undertaken—although he has left behind a very large quantum of utterances, in writings and speeches—because of the continuing (but now fast receding) emotional euphoria in which everything Bandaranaike had been enveloped by a clever admixture of religio-political adulation. No worthwhile biographies of Ceylon's political leaders of the contemporary era (both dead and living) have so far been written: those which have been written are only adulatory chronicling of the highlights of the politician's life and work intended primarily to further the political fortunes of particular parties. The MAY DAY TAMASHA in Colombo followed the Chelvanayakam super-show in Jaffna. Nearly 5000 of the CTB fleet are said to have been withdrawn from routine transport work and allotted to the different parties and unions to bring their supporters to Colombo. The SLFP and its affiliated unions had received the overwhelming majority of these buses, (no reliable figures are available), but that did not prevent the other parties from attracting impressively large crowds. But it is not the mechanics of bringing the crowds to Colombo that we are concerned with but the fact that May Day has been succeeded by a series of mini-tamashas. There is no doubt a touch of malice in the way some people choose to depict the Nuwara Eliya rally, but it must be remembered that people have become sick and tired of meetings, processions, rallies and tamashas, and nobody can be blamed for indulging in cynical innuendoes or vicious (or even unkind) comments about the waste of national wealth involved in staging such tamashas. (Many of those who went to Nuwara Eliya to witness the *de facto* opening of the SLFP election campaign, in the electorate Anura Bandaranaike has chosen to contest, have harrowing tales about the way old and large trees round the lake and other places have been cut down to provide firewood for the Municipal Rest house and other hosteleries. The fact that SLFP bigwigs were not able to prevent such vandalism—in spite of all their big talk about conservation and re-afforestation—has evoked critical comment even from longtime supporters of the SLFP who cannot be blamed for having second thoughts about voting for the SLFP—the only alternative they can see (choosing between the bigger and lesser evils confronting them) is to vote for the United Left Front (or Socialist United front). And even before the people have got over the tamashas on May Day in Colombo and a number of minor tamashas in Nuwara Eliya and elsewhere, the metropolis will witness what is intended to be the BIGGEST SHOW before the General Election, namely the REPUBLIC DAY TAMASHA on May 22nd.

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EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

Dissolution

Israel

Colombo, May 17,

Everybody has been waiting for the last two days for the Presidential proclamation about the dissolution of the National State Assembly by a special Gazette Notification which would also set the dates for nomination and polling. The date, "May 15," had been mentioned as the most likely in many newspaper reports—everybody knew that it had to be a date before May 19 to ensure that there would not be a meeting of the NSA as scheduled in the Presidential Notification about prorogation on February 11. It was said, when the expected notification did not appear on May 15, that it would be on the next day May 16. The Sun, which is now the only English daily which "prints all the news fit to print", (the Daily Mirror has slipped back in this respect in recent weeks), on Monday May 16, had a frontpage headline NSA DISSOLUTION THIS WEEK, SAYS PM. "The Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike, announced yesterday evening that the National State Assembly would be dissolved before May 21 and the general elections held before August 15."

On Tuesday, May 17, the Sun frontpaged the headline: DISSOLUTION WILL BE TONIGHT—PM WILL BROADCAST TO THE NATION and reported that:

"The President, Mr. William Gopallawa, will today issue a proclamation dissolving the National State Assembly. There was a last-minute change in earlier plans by the Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike, for a dissolution on Sunday. Fresh documents advising the President in terms of the Constitution and Parliamentary Order in Council were being prepared by the Prime Minister's Office yesterday. Mrs. Bandaranaike also cancelled a meeting of her senior Ministers scheduled to be held at Temple Trees yesterday in order to fly to Nuwara Eliya to attend the funeral of the Mayor Mr.

William Fernando. This meeting, to discuss matters relating to the party's strategy at the general elections, has been re-scheduled for tomorrow morning. Mrs. Bandaranaike is due in Colombo today from Kandy, where she is expected to participate in ceremonies connected with the installation of the statue of Madduma Bandara. The Prime Minister will broadcast to the nation tomorrow on the dissolution of the NSA. She is expected to outline the achievements of her Government during the past seven years and the various measures that have been introduced towards economic development. The dissolution of the NSA comes four days before the current seven-year term of the first Government under the New Republican Constitution, ends. Today's dissolution will obviate the need for the National State Assembly to sit on May 19 in terms of a proclamation issued by the President on February 11. It came with a proclamation proroguing the Assembly in the wake of a no-confidence motion on the Government which was to have been debated on February 17."

If the day of polling is to be a date close to August 15, the election campaign will run for nearly three months after dissolution. The country has already had a three months period of pre-election campaigning from the date of prorogation on February 11. The UNP, however, had launched its own election campaign in the last quarter of 1976 in the belief that the PM would resort to a snap election shortly after a sunshine budget. The budget had carried little or no sunshine and there was no snap election—and there were efforts by some people (not the PM) to secure a further postponement through a two-thirds majority constitutional amendment. The Railway Strike and a number of other crisis-level confrontations had brought a No Confidence Motion on the NSA's agenda and, to meet the threat of "exposure" (for election purposes) by the Opposition, the Government resorted to the questionable device of prorogation. What has happened since is common knowledge, but what many have failed to note is the significance of the fact that the enthusiastic tempo of UNP's election campaign has begun to peter out. People have already become tired

of the UNP campaign. UNP spokesmen have nothing new to say and have been compelled to descend to the vulgar and even the obscene in an attempt to revive flagging public interest. The UNP election manifesto is an uninspiring document which will satisfy neither the new youth nor the uncommitted—and, even the old guard of the UNP will fail to work up any popular enthusiasm with this manifesto. It is only the still continuing acts of commission and omission of the government (and the SLFP) and the unimaginative and unrealistic politicking indulged in by the SUF that still helps the UNP to have the edge over the two rival groups.

With the beginning of the election campaign, this month, in real earnest, it is inevitable that many people will look at some of the national elections which have taken place in several countries in recent times. In the USA though Nixon's Watergate took place a long time before the 1976 election, there is no doubt that the Republican did not get over the setbacks generated by Watergate. In Japan, the Lockheed scandals had reduced the ruling Liberal Democratic Party to a paper-thin majority—it can be called a majority. In India, the Emergency and the scandal, centred around the Sanjay Gandhi mafia clique had brought the mighty Indian National Congress down in the greatest electoral debacle of all time.

In Pakistan, the elections had led to widespread unrest which has all but brought Bhutto down. It was alleged that the early March elections which had given Bhutto's PPP a landslide (and runaway) victory were rigged and the popular uproar (verging on an uprising) seem to substantiate these charges. Bhutto is clinging to power on a thread with martial law and the army, and it is difficult to predict what the future will bring. In Indonesia, the Government-organised Golkar has also won a landslide victory for the second time—the first time in 1971—but, this time, questions have been raised about rigging, about 2 million votes that are missing of those who claim to have voted in one region alone. Indonesia is a country which has allowed its people only "limited" democracy, but if even this is not enough to contain popular dissatisfaction, the government cannot be

Scandals

said to be stable or democratic. Indonesia, after 1966, had a military government which employed technocrats and western-trained academics to run the country. The economy was initially pulled out of the stagnation into which Sukarno's dilettante leftism had submerged the country, but neither stability nor good democratic government has been established by Suharto. It is, today, a country with one of the highest rates of inflation even after the dizzy heights of the high cost of living that was afflicted the country for years. The miracle which the western-trained technocrats are claimed to have wrought shortly after they had taken over—with a surfeit of foreign capital and know-how—has already disappeared and Indonesia is now confronted with all the problems of a developing country—debt, unemployment, under-development, poverty, shortages, inflation, etc. etc.

Another country went to the polls this week, Israel. Here too financial scandals and economic difficulties have come to the forefront. The Prime Minister was compelled to resign a few weeks ago because of a violation of Exchange Control laws by himself and his wife. Other top ruling party officials were involved in financial scandals—one of them is now serving a prison sentence and another committed suicide. It is interesting and revealing to examine some facts about Israel. It is a small country with a very small population but which was regarded as an economic wonder brought into being by western capital and Jewish skill. The *Newsweek* of April 18 published a lengthy article about the exit of Prime Minister Rabin.

Before the Rabin scandal had broken, the ruling Labour Party "had been severely rocked by the suicide of Avraham Ofer, the Housing Minister, accused in the press of having misappropriated money from real-estate deals, and the jailing on corruption charges of Asher Yadlin, who had been nominated the governor of the Bank of Israel." During the court proceedings, Yadlin made several disclosures that showed that the Sanjaya mafia method of allegedly collecting money for party funds had been used in Israel also. In the course of his evidence, Yadlin had stated that he "had taken some bribes

for the party's needs" and that he had been forced to do so by some influential party leaders such as the late Finance Minister Mr. Sapir, the Finance Minister in the last Israeli government, Mr. Rabinovich, the Minister of Education, Aharon Yadlin, cousin of Asher Yadlin—and one of the favourites of the former Prime Minister, Golda Meir and her banker Kalderon.

Then came the scandal about the Rabins in the beginning of March 1977. *Newsweek*, March 18, stated that "...the story of Rabin's downfall could almost have been written by Woodward and Bernstein. Acting on a tip from Israeli sources, Dan Margalit, Washington correspondent of the Israeli newspaper *Haaretz*, walked into the Dupont Circle branch of the National Bank of Washington one day last month and told a teller he wanted to deposit \$ 50 in the account of Mrs. Leah Rabin. The teller handed Margalit a deposit slip for account No. 4698553—confirmation that the Prime Minister's wife, in violation of Israeli law, had money in a foreign bank. Appearing on Israeli's TV the day that Margalit's paper splashed the story

on page one Mrs. Rabin said that the account had been intended to pay 'outstanding bills' after she and her husband—Israeli's ambassador to the U.S. from 1968 until early 1973—returned home. She had neglected to close it within the six months prescribed by Israeli law, she said, because 'we are all only human and make mistakes here and there...' Though there was sympathy for the Rabins, the law took its own course. All attempts to hush the matter with an administrative "fine" failed and the Attorney General decided to charge both the Rabins. And, Rabin had no alternative but to resign from the Prime Ministership and the leadership of the Labour Party.

Israel's economy is also not what it was some years ago. The national debt of Israel has grown—it was over \$ 9 billion towards the end of last year. Last year, there was a big strike wave and more than 100,000 people (said to be about 40% of the labour force) had been on strike. Unemployment is now running at 4%—and this in a country with a population less than two million. Israeli economists have indicated that foreign aid and capital

THE CONSTITUTION

COVER

THIS WEEK, on the cover, we have a picture of two ivory elephants elaborately decorated with superb goldsmith's artistry. They are replicas of the leading perahera elephants which carry the casket containing the tooth relic. Such works of art fetch high prices and are much sought after by collectors abroad. But such little elephants overburdened with gold cloth and gilded container cages are not peculiar to Ceylon: they are common to all countries of South and Southeast Asia with minor variations in each country. We have not picked on these ornate ivory elephants to discourse on antiques and the skill of our craftsmen. What these elephants remind us of is the old adage that "all that glitters is not gold," and that Sri Lanka's Republican Constitution of 1972 is not what some of its framers had and still make it out to be. Making Ceylon a Republic was long overdue but many of the basics on which the Constitution rests are fundamentally incompatible with realities in the island and can only bring (as they have already brought) disaster to the country. *Tribune* has been critically and constructively opposed to the 1972 Constitution from the day (and even before) it was adopted and has persistently pleaded and urged that it should be refashioned and redone to make it viable. Even the LSSP, which was chiefly responsible for drafting the Constitution, has begun to develop second thoughts about its intrinsic worth and workability. The SLFP is still holding on to the halo it has thrust on the Constitution. The UNP, TULF and the JVP want the Constitution changed in such a drastic manner that it is tantamount to drawing up a new Constitution. There is no other way. A new Constitution must be drafted, discussed (with a Free Press and Freedom of Expression—without Emergency Rule), and then adopted. "Free" discussion must not be confined to the NSA alone, and the discussion must be spread over an adequately long period (not rushed through in haste as in 1972).

alone can help Israel to pull itself out of the economic and financial mess and that upto 1980 Israel would require \$ 10 billion of additional aid. What makes the situation worse is that the expenditure on military preparations and services is already over 35% of the state's gross national output.

Even in Israel—as in Sri Lanka and other countries—economic difficulties lead to the growth of crime. Israeli police sources have revealed in their reports that as compared to 1975, the use of drugs in 1976 had increased by 50%, the number of murders by 25% and gang

robberies by 6%. Observers have recently been struck by the rapid inflation rate in Israel, about the growing unemployment and about the corruption in the top echelons of the administration. Israelis themselves have begun to bewail over the degradation that has come over the ruling circles in the country. The Opposition bloc, *Likud*, has naturally made the most of this situation. One *Likud* leader had recently stated that the corruption so far revealed can be "considered only as the upper part of the iceberg, the largest part of which, as we all know,

is hidden under the water."

Will the elections bring a non-Labour Government and with it a wholesale exposure of the misdeeds of some of the prominent members of the Labour Party? Will the events in India be repeated in Israel?

And what about Sri Lanka? The UNP has already announced that it will set up high-powered commissions to investigate high-level corruption as well as the misuse of power.

SRI LANKA CHRONICLE

Apr. 18 — May. 5

A DIARY OF EVENTS IN SRI LANKA AND THE WORLD
COMPILED FROM DAILY NEWSPAPERS
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CDN—Ceylon Daily News; CDM—Ceylon Daily Mirror;
CO—Ceylon Observer; ST—Sunday Times; DM—Dinamina;
LD—Lankadipa; VK—Virakesari; ATH—Aththa;
SM—Silumina; SLD—Sri Lankadipa; JD—Janadina;
DP—Dinapathi; SU—Sun; DW—Dawasa; CM—Chinthamani;
WK—Weekend; RR—Rivirasa;

MONDAY, APRIL 18: The Conference of Foreign Ministers of the Co-ordinating Bureau of the Non-aligned which was held in New Delhi last week unanimously adopted a resolution sponsored by the Sri Lanka delegation expressing the deep disappointment and concern at the unsatisfactory outcome of the negotiating conference on the Common Fund held in Geneva recently, and the failure of the conference to reach agreement on a decision to establish the Common Fund. The Port Commission hard pressed to find berths for a number of food and general cargo ships in and outside the Colombo harbour is faced with another problem—unauthorised fishing operations within the port, according to a Commission spokesman—CDN. A social insurance scheme for all over 55 years of age enabling them to draw a monthly allowance is one of the pledges of the UNP embodied in its election manifesto that is now being drafted. The final round of talks among the LSSP, CP of Sri Lanka and the People's Democratic Party regarding the formation of the new front of progressive and socialist forces will be held this week. Pharmacies which issue dangerous drugs without proper prescriptions will lose their licences in the future; police sources said that these drastic measures had to be taken in view of the free flow of stimulants and tranquilisers which generally get into the hands of young people. Looking a little feeble in health but with grit and determination written all over her Madame Tang Ying Chao, Vice Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China and widow of the late Premier Chou en-lai stepped out of the plane to a warm and tumultuous welcome at the BIA yesterday—CDM.

The government has sought the opinion of the Ministry of Justice on the constitutional provisions relating to the sittings of the NSA when it meets after prorogation on May 19. The price of rice in the open market is expected to come down to about Rs. 2 a measure by May this year, a spokesman of the Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs said yesterday. Leaders of 13 Left-wing political parties and groups are due to meet at the CP headquarters today to prepare the ground for what is described as an alliance of progressive forces. A plan to modernise the 700 fibre mills in the country has been forwarded to the government by the Coconut Processing Board. The Tamil Congress staged a boycott of the TULF's Acting Committee meeting on Saturday; it is reported that the boycott stems from the allocation of seats to the TC; they have asked for seven seats in the North for the coming elections, but have been given only three. Consumers who did not receive their April quota of certain subsidiary food items will receive a double quota in the first week of May—SU. The National Milk Board has contracted with the New Zealand Dairy Board and a Bulgarian State Organisation to import 20,000 cases of condensed milk for which the government has made an import allocation; the milk is to be shipped from Singapore to enable supplies to be available as early as possible—CO. According to an Indian Specialist Prof. Ramamurthy, the TULF leader Mr. S. J. V. Chelvanayakam's condition is satisfactory—VK. According to economic experts, the foreign exchange of Sri Lanka has fallen below zero and there is a shortage of Rs. 101 million. 20,000 acres of coconut land per year are being destroyed in this country, and if something drastic is not done soon, there will be great financial difficulty, according to the Coconut Cultivation Board—DW.

TUESDAY, APRIL 19: The Medical Research Institute has told the Health Ministry that an outbreak of dengue fever which could well result in the death of children under 15, was likely to occur in Sri Lanka; the Health Ministry appealed to the public for their co-operation in its efforts to ward off the epidemic. The National Milk Board says the current shortage of Lakspray and condensed milk is due to a large consignment of cans for milk and milk powder being held up in the port for nearly a month; a spokesman for the Board expressed the hope that by next week the situation should ease considerably. The conference of Foreign Ministers of the co-ordinating Bureau of non-aligned countries which concluded its meeting in New Delhi last week took note of the recent statements by great powers

relevant to the establishment of the Indian Ocean as a zone of Peace—CDN. One-house owners whose houses were vested in the Department of National Housing under the Ceiling on Housing Property Law will soon be able to regain ownership of their houses if the tenants who have purchased these houses have not yet made payment; the Minister of Housing and Construction has instructed his officials to work out a scheme on this basis. Representatives of the LSSP, CP of Sri Lanka and the People's Democratic Party held talks yesterday with the Mahajana Vimukthi Pakshaya led by Mr. Mahinda Wijesekera and the Dharmasekera group. New entrants to the six campuses of the University of Sri Lanka will be admitted in mid-July or the end of the month at the latest. For the first time in more than two decades, Colombo was free of major crimes during the Sinhala New Year period—CDM. The Food Department will from next week introduce quality specifications on rice distributed to consumers through co-operative stores. The Ceylon Petroleum Corporation is drawing up a plan to produce urea locally; a factory for this is to be set up at Sapugaskanda, and production is expected to begin sometime next year. Mr. Vasudeva Nanayakkara, yesterday had a long discussion with the LSSP leader, Dr. N. M. Perera amidst speculation that he may rejoin the party. A resolution seeking a minimum of seven of the 14 constituencies in the North for the Tamil Congress at the coming general elections was adopted at a meeting of the TC Youth League held in Jaffna. Professor D. Ramamurthi, a leading South Indian physician who attended on the ailing TULF leader Mr. S. J. V. Chelvanayakam at the Jaffna Hospital, has recommended that carnatic music be played to soothe his nerves—SU. The Elections Examinations Committee has not yet met; therefore no decisions about nominations have taken place and the rumours that there is a split within the ranks of the TULF is false, said the leader of the Tamil Congress and an office bearer in the TULF, Mr. M. Sivasithamparam—VK. Coffee will be in short supply in the island for some time because Plantation authorities have decided to cash in on the coffee boom and export all available stocks and, rake in the foreign exchange while the 'going is good'. The Ministry of Irrigation, Power and Highways has taken steps to irrigate over 150,000 acres in the North Central Province for Yala season cultivation; Mahaweli waters were diverted from Bowatenna recently and tanks in the Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa areas are now filling up—CO.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 20: A Dutch team met officials connected with the Mahaweli Development Project with a view to helping Sri Lanka in the next major phase under the Mahaweli Project; the Dutch government has agreed to provide funds totalling Rs. 8 million for the feasibility study of this giant scheme which will put a further 400,000 acres of land under the plough. Arrangements are under way to supply Mahaweli waters to cater to about a hundred thousand acres of land in three districts from 12 giant tanks. Sri Lanka teas continued to fetch higher prices at the first tea sales on Monday after the New Year. Importers of foreign newspapers, periodicals and magazines yesterday assured Ministry of Finance officials that they would with immediate effect reduce by ten percent the selling price of literature imported by them. The Ministry of Health yesterday appealed to para-medical personnel to resume normal work since the assurance has been given that all recommendations of the Salaries Anomalies

Committee will be implemented with retrospective effect from April 1975; the Minister of Health will be meeting trade unions of para-medical workers today. The Cardiograph Unit of the Colombo General Hospital is functioning as usual; personnel attached to this unit have not joined the strike—CDN. It is not the President but the Speaker who should preside over the sittings of the NSA when it meets after the prorogation on May 19 in accordance with the provisions in the constitution; this is the view expressed by Mr. Colvin R. de Silva, former Minister of Constitutional Affairs in regard to the controversy over the procedure to be followed on May 19. Twenty persons were injured as the police baton-charged a procession of nearly 1,500 striking employees of the Tyre Corporation near Maligawatte at Maradana around 10 a.m. yesterday. Several infants from the premature babies unit and mothers from the De Soysa Maternity Hospital have died as a result of the work to rule of the para-medical personnel. Coconut production in Sri Lanka in 1976 estimated at 2330 million coconuts showed a decline of 255 million nuts or nearly 10% in relation to 1975, states the annual review of the Coconut Marketing Board—CDM. The UNP is proposing a strict code of conduct for members of parliament. The TULF will join the CP in Jaffna to celebrate May Day. Mr. S. Thondaman, President of the CWC, yesterday requested the PM, to immediately stop moves to alienate more than 7,000 acres of land in the Nuwara Eliya-Maskeliya electorate. Mr. T. B. Subasinghe, MP for Katugampola and former Minister of Industries and Scientific Affairs will be leader of the new alliance of left parties, including the CP, LSSP and the Sri Lanka Mahajana Prajathantrawadi Pakshaya. The LSSP Party's politburo is to discuss the question of re-admitting Mr. Vasudeva Nanayakkara and two Central Committee members. India is likely to provide Sri Lanka appropriate technology for development in a number of industrial areas; specific proposals for co-operation are expected to be received from Sri Lanka soon following the visit of a five member delegation to India which has already visited a number of research and industrial establishments in the country. The Rice Gall Midge, classified as a dangerous Pest, is damaging the Yala paddy plants in the Batticaloa District; it is feared that this pest would spread to Batticaloa, Kalmunai and Amparai very soon. Sri Lanka's traditional exports brought in an additional Rs. 323.3 million in foreign exchange last year—CO. It is likely that two rallies will be held by the LSSP this May Day, as the 'Vasu' group has not been permitted to march with the rest of the LSSP—LD.

THURSDAY, APRIL 21: The government yesterday decided to increase the rice ration to four pounds on a ration book on a recommendation of the Minister of Food and Co-operatives. Problems in regard to food distribution and production will be one of the main topics that the PM will discuss with the GA's when she meets them at a conference tomorrow at the Central Bank Auditorium. A two-day gem sale in Tokyo has netted Rs. 5.3 million for Sri Lanka in the foreign exchange. If the para-medical services do not return to normal soon, the Ministry of Health will take steps to distribute medicines and drugs to hospitals through Superintendent's of Health Services, Medical Superintendents and District Medical Officers. There will be a six-hour water cut in the city today beginning at 9 a.m. said the Mayor. The Commissioner of Ayurveda has requested all the Ayurvedic Drug manufacturing insti-

titions registered with the Department of Ayurveda to reduce the prices of their products.—CDN. The NSA will be automatically dissolved on May 22; therefore the trade unions and workers should mobilise their forces and help the SLFP to win the next general elections; this was stated by the PM at a meeting of delegates of SLFP-sponsored trade unions yesterday. There was a deadlock at talks conducted yesterday between the Minister of Health and representatives of the paramedical trade unions. Special armed combat units of the police and mobile squad would patrol the Colombo and suburban areas from April 29 to May 2, in one of the biggest police assignments to maintain law and order during the May Day celebrations. The Bank of Ceylon Staff Officer's Association has threatened to take direct trade union action to settle their outstanding disputes. Sixteen trade unions in the lower grades of the Health Department have threatened to come out on strike if no proper redress to their outstanding grievances was granted by the Health Department by April 25.—CDM. All public servants are in for a pay rise shortly; it is reliably understood that this matter is being actively considered by the government, and a decision may be announced on May Day. According to sources in the Food Ministry, dhal had not ever been ordered from abroad. Owners of vegetarian hotels and Chinese restaurants were yesterday told by the Minister of Food and Co-operatives to bring down the prices of several items served by them.—SU. The University of Sri Lanka is facing one of the worst financial crises in its history; although it has budgeted to spend Rs. 62 million this year, it has been informed that only Rs. 17 million will be released and instructions have been issued to carry on with the reserves. Tea estates and smallholdings that have benefited from the state-sponsored replanting scheme, have recorded yields of as much as 300% over and above their former yields. The CWE yesterday announced ten percent price reductions on dried fish, suduru, garlic etc. and electrical goods.—CO.

FRIDAY, APRIL 22: A Committee consisting of the PM, Ministers and trade union representatives will be appointed shortly to look into outstanding trade union issues and grant speedy relief to workers in state and private organisations; this follows a resolution adopted unanimously at a meeting presided over by the PM and attended by delegates from SLFP sponsored trade unions. Madame Teng Ying-chao, Vice Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China and party leave Sri Lanka by a special flight today from the BIA, after a state drive from President's House.—CDN. The Joint Committee of Trade Union Organisations yesterday decided to call a token strike of their members in all corporations and Departments under the Ministry of Industries and Scientific Affairs on April 28. The Progressive Estate Staff's Union has appealed to the PM to absorb into the permanent service over 20,000 members of the estate staff service, who were made temporary employees after the nationalisation of estates in 1975. The prohibitive export duty of Rs. 5 per kg imposed by India will push up the already buoyant tea market still further, according to the tea trade here. The Lanka Guru Sangamaya is collecting a million signatures to call upon the government to release all political prisoners without further delay. CDM. Scientists of the Research Division of the Agricultural Department have developed a new variety of rice suit-

able for cultivation in the ill-drained belt of about 70,000 acres stretching from Negombo to mid-way between Matara and Tangalle. Three thousand families will be settled during the next two months in the NCP, under the Mahaali Development Board's colonisation scheme, the Deputy General Manager of the Settlement's Division of the MDB said this morning.—CO. The joint opposition is of the view that the new sessions of the NSA on May 19 should be ceremonially opened by the President, in terms of the constitution; it is also of the view that he should deliver a policy statement. The eight-day work-to-rule by para medical personnel was suspended for six hours from yesterday. The government is to purchase six more new ships to handle the increasing volume of cargo between Sri Lanka and Europe and the Persian Gulf.—SU.

SATURDAY, APRIL 23: The Ministry of Justice has ruled that there is no necessity for ceremonial opening of Parliament by the President on May 19. Mr. H. G. S. Ratnaweera, Consulting Editor of the 'Aththa' and a leading member of the CP of Sri Lanka was yesterday released on bail by the Chief Magistrate, Colombo. The Conference of Foreign Ministers of the Co-ordinating Bureau of non-aligned countries which met in New Delhi this month has decided that a plenipotentiary conference to approve statutes for the Centre of Science and Technology in Lima should meet at an early date.—CDN. The PM, yesterday accused certain sections of the bureaucracy of deliberately sabotaging the distribution of essential consumer items during the Sinhala and Tamil New Year. Dhal was ordered from Pakistan, but that country could not deliver the order because of disturbances there, the PM said at the conference of DPA's and GA's yesterday. The Paddy Marketing Board expects to collect 20 million bushels of paddy during the Maha harvest now under way. Trade Unions in the Ceylon Fertilizer Corporation have urged the PM to intervene and settle their dispute because 'there is a marked absence of good sense among the management.' The Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany will formally hand over a gift of 1,341 metric tons of white sugar donated by the Food Aid Division of the Federal Ministry of Economic Co-operation, West Germany on April 27.—CDM. The PM yesterday told GA's that despite their right to have a political conviction of their own, they should not abuse this to sabotage the government's work. The Minister of Finance, Food and Co-operatives has directed that the co-operatives should not switch over to the metric system. The strike set for Tuesday by 25,000 employees in the Health and Ayurveda Departments has been temporarily called off following an assurance given to the union representatives by the Minister of Health. West German Foreign Minister Herr Hans-Dietrich Genscher arrives in Sri Lanka today for a three-day official visit.—SU. There are reports from many GA's to the government that in many of the estates taken over by the Land Commission the factories have remained closed, and much of the valuable machinery has rotted.—DW.

SUNDAY, APRIL 24: The PM held talks and hosted the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Germany, Mr. Hans Dietrich Genscher. Political observers expect next Sunday's May Day celebrations to be unusually interesting in the context of heightened political consciousness in the country; seven rallies and five demonstrations will be held in Colombo, according to the Police Commissioner. A pall of gloom

has descended on the Tamil community with the failing health of Mr. S. J. V. Chelvanayakam; elections are so close and it is a time of decisions for the Tamils and the question 'After Chelva who?' is on many lips—SO. The Opposition envisages a deadlock during the proceedings of the NSA when it meets on May 19—ST. The Army has been placed on alert and ordered to stand by for duty on May Day; this is part of a massive security operation that has been planned to ensure a trouble-free May Day; police expect the largest turnout at this year's rallies which are being held on the eve of the coming general elections. Three specific trade union resolutions dealing with the working class, the people and the foreign achievements of the government will be moved at the SLFP's May Day celebrations. The strike at the State Distilleries Corporation has been called off. The Vidyalaankara Campus of the University of Sri Lanka will continue to remain closed until the acute water problem in the campus is satisfactorily solved—WK.

MONDAY, APRIL 25: The government will shortly refund to public servants who joined the service from January 1, 1972, their contribution to the Provident Fund; they made this contribution in lieu of the pension scheme the former Minister of Finance scrapped from this date. A scheme to ensure the issue of rationed food items to the public without a breakdown has been formulated by the Minister of Food and Co-operatives. The Joint Council of the Para Medical Services will meet the Minister of Finance today for negotiations on their demands of salary revision and promotional prospects—CDN. Bus services throughout the island will be paralysed on May Day if the CTB allocates to trade unions all the buses they have asked for. Train services, mainly long distance trains from Colombo were severely disrupted last evening due to gang warfare amongst railway employees. Sri Lanka's tea crop picked up at the end of March is to close at 30.5 million kgs-2.5 million kgs more than the corresponding period last year. It is reliably understood that representatives of the TULF had talks with the UNP leader over the weekend; the CWC boss, Mr. S. Thondaman also attended the meeting. The government is likely to deploy the Armed Services in the Port of Colombo in a bid to relieve the congestion which is now assuming unprecedented proportions. In a bid to ensure that millers supply quality rice conforming to the Food Department specifications the government has decided to double the milling hire pending a full study of this and connected matters by a team of PMB officials to be appointed next week. The Bank of Ceylon Staff Officer's Association yesterday decided to resort to strike action to achieve its demands. The Ministry of Local Government is to spend Rs. 160,000 to re-forest the areas surrounding the Labugama and Kalatuwawa Reservoirs which have been denuded, through indiscriminate felling of trees. Following a difference of opinion regarding the nominations for the next general elections, the MP for Batticaloa Mr. S. Rajadurai may form a new party, it is rumored—VK. The current disturbances in Pakistan has seriously disrupted Sri Lanka's booming tea trade in that country. The Milk Board is unable to meet the rising demand for milk because of dwindling supplies from dairy farmers; the main reason for the drop of supplies was a general shortage of poonac and the drought which was affecting pasture lands in the 'milk Belt'—CO.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 26: The World Bank has made a very favourable report on Sri Lanka in its review to the Aid Consortium meeting which takes place this week in Washington. The Paddy Marketing Board hopes to purchase a targetted 28 million bushels of paddy this year; this is the highest estimated target since the PMB was set up in March 1971; twenty million bushels will come from Maha and 8 million bushels from Yala, according to Board sources. Although workers who had been on strike since March 6 at the State Distilleries Corporation decided to return to work yesterday and resume negotiations, work was not normal at the Seeduwa and Kalutara distilleries, said the Chairman of the Corporation. The CTB is faced with a massive liquidity problem, shortage of spare parts and high absenteeism which has resulted in it's services deteriorating during the past few months, said a senior CTB spokesman—CDN. The Department of National Housing is broke; all housing loan applications have been temporarily suspended. Demurrage amounting to over one million rupees was payable last week to four ships carrying fertilizer; further demurrage was payable on those ships as well as on two other ships that were due last week. The Ministry of Industries and Scientific Affairs has asked all industrial units to announce forthwith a 10% reduction in landed cost of their products consequent on the revaluation of the Sri Lanka rupee by 20%. The cost of living index for January 1977 shot up by 1.10% as against the cost of living index of January last year; according to statistics gathered by the Central Bank, it was due to the increase of price levels of clothing, fuel and light. The All-Ceylon Union of Government English Teachers has urged the Minister of Finance to restore the Married allowance to new recruits to the public service—CDM. A new price-wage supplement is to be introduced by the government next week to remedy the wage disparity between tea and rubber workers. Para Medical Personnel yesterday decided to call off their work-to-rule campaign following accord reached with the Minister of Finance, in regard to their outstanding demands. The Local Government Clerical Service Union has threatened to come out on strike if some of its outstanding demands are not met by the government before May 1. Six trade unions have jointly called for the repeal of the Public Security Act, the Criminal Justice Commission Act and all legislative restrictions on political and trade union rights of employees in the public sector, public and armed services. Two main unions and nine branch unions of workers in the State Distilleries Corporation yesterday reversed a decision to call off their strike-only a few hours before they were due to resume work after a 25 day strike—SU. On the recommendation of a special committee appointed by the government a program has been drawn up to provide employment opportunities and other benefits to estate workers who lost their jobs as a result of the take over of the estates—CO. The TULF has decided not to include the CP in its May Day rally in Jaffna—DP. Since there is a great deal of difficulty involved in selling paddy for the controlled price to the PMB, in the main producing areas the cultivators are selling it to mudalalis—ATH.

TUESDAY, APRIL 27: Tea thefts on a large scale are being reported following the marked increase in prices both in the world market and locally. The Sri Lanka Independent Trade Union Federation and the Sri Lanka Government Trade Union Federation will

not join the proposed token strike tomorrow called out by institutions under the Ministry of Industries and Scientific Affairs, said the Secretary of the SLITUF yesterday. The 30,000 strong Joint Front of Clerical Services yesterday sought an urgent interview with the Minister of Public Administration and Home Affairs to discuss their outstanding demands. Members of parliament belonging to the CP of Sri Lanka and the Mahajana Prajathanthrawadi Pakshaya including Mr. T. B. Subasinghe boycotted yesterday's meeting of the Opposition. A 'No Fault' insurance scheme which hitherto applied only to deaths caused by motor vehicles insured with the insurance corporation will be extended from May 1 to cover injuries too; this was announced by the Minister of Public Administration and Home Affairs at a Press conference yesterday. The prices of many essential food items continued to follow an upward trend. The Asian Development Bank approved today technical assistance to the Government of Sri Lanka for the formulation and preparation of the Sevanagala Development Project—CDM. Mr. S. J. V. Chelvanayakam, leader of the TULF, passed away last night. The leader of the Opposition yesterday raised questions about the cashing of a cheque for Rs. 1.5 million by the Libyan Embassy in Sri Lanka from their account here. The government is likely to reduce the price of rice issued on the ration to consumers—in a further bid to bring down the cost of living. The IGP has appointed a four member committee to look into the grievances of all ranks in the police force. The Coconut Cultivation Board has found how to arrest the drop in coconut production during the severe drought; the solution: contour drains. Despite the strike at the State Distilleries Corporation, it has earned as much as Rs. 43 million from April 1 to 20, claims the Chairman of the Corporation. Anti-Amirthalangam demonstrations were held in Trincomalee by over 3000 TULF supporters in protest against the nomination of Mr. R. Sampanthan for the Trincomalee seat at the forthcoming general election—CO. The Health Ministry has asked for a loan from the World Bank to develop Ayurveda in Sri Lanka—DM.

THURSDAY, APRIL 28: The Minister of Finance yesterday appointed Mr. T. Susiripala a senior Vice President of the Ceylon Bank Employees Union as the Chairman of the Bank of Ceylon. The Speaker has ordered a ban on public demonstrations within or near the precincts of the NSA while the Assembly is in session. The JCTUO is scheduled to stage today a 24 hour token strike in protest against alleged police assaults on strikers at the Tyre Corporation. The Committee appointed by the Finance Minister to examine and report on a new salary structure for bank employees held its inaugural sittings on Tuesday. The Minister of Finance is not satisfied with the price reductions effected by many private sector undertakings following the revaluation of the rupee. The six members of the UNP who are said to have resigned according to a news item published in the *Daily News* of April 27, are dead persons according to the General Secretary of the UNP. The leaders of the Opposition parties met the Speaker of the NSA yesterday and made representations regarding the procedure to be adopted when the Assembly sits on May 19. The Progressive Estate Staff's Union which claims a large membership in the plantation area is poised for a strike; the union has written to various Ministers seeking redress for their grievances, but there has been no response.—CDM. It is difficult to

reconcile the revaluation of the rupee with the developmental needs of an economy that has suffered from inadequate savings to finance investment; that must diversify its exports; and that demands continuing attention to the adequacy of incentives for agricultural production; this is the observation of the World Bank on the move to revalue the rupee by 20%. The staff of the Colombo Eye Hospital Walked out yesterday in protest against the transfer of the Medical Superintendent; the transfer is said to be connected with a dispute between two women surgeons over the use of the operating theatre. The working Committee of the UNP yesterday decided that the party should have no pact or electoral understanding with any other political group. Mr. Ivor Paternott, held by the CID for alleged exchange control violations was yesterday released on Rs. 75,000 bail by the Chief Magistrate, Colombo. Forty nine percent of Sri Lanka's exports eligible for duty free entry to the USA under that country's generalised system of preferences (GSP) had not enjoyed this concession due to non-request of preferential treatment at the time of entry; the Ministry of trade said that out of 3.2 million dollars worth of exports eligible for GSP preference, only 1.6 million had received such preference. The CWE has cut the prices of a number of consumer items including dried fish, groceries and textiles—CO. A further thirty members are to be dismissed from the LSSP, following the already existing split in the party—LD. The impact of the revaluation of the rupee will be only felt by the next government that comes to power, according to the World Bank—DW.

FRIDAY, APRIL 29: The Minister of Finance, Food and Co-operatives yesterday told industrialists who met him at the Central Bank auditorium he was not at all satisfied with the price reductions introduced by them consequent to the revaluation of the rupee in March on his personal appeal; he said in most cases the reductions were well below the ten percent that the government had called for and apart from a few, who had made genuine attempts to pass on a ten percent reduction, most manufacturers had tried to bluff the authorities in regard to the margins of reduction. The PM flew to Jaffna yesterday and paid her last respects to the late TULF leader, Mr. S. J. V. Chelvanayakam who died on Tuesday. Ambassadors and members of the diplomatic communities, Judges of the Supreme Court, Representatives of Religious Bodies and Trade Unions and a cross section from all walks of life have signed the condolence book at the residence of Mr. S. J. V. Chelvanayakam in Colombo. A disused petrol shed at Havelock Road, now used by the Petroleum Corporation to store LPG gas cylinders was completely gutted by a fire which broke out last evening—CDN. White and black flags were flown from many buildings and homes in several parts of the island mourning the death of the TULF leader, Mr. S. J. V. Chelvanayakam. The CWC is now negotiating with the UNP and the SLFP on its demands so that it could decide which party it should support at the next general elections—CDM. The government is to deploy the army for duty on May Day. All students of the Peradeniya Campus of the University of Sri Lanka came out on a token strike yesterday to back up demands for an immediate solution to their grievances. The Minister of Finance, Food and Co-operatives announced yesterday that he would soon liberalise foreign exchange restric-

tions and also permit the private sector to sell essential consumer items. Patients in the General Hospital were deprived of their meals yesterday as a result of a sudden strike by the kitchen staff. About 30,000 workers in the Corporations and other institutions under the Ministry of Industries and Scientific Affairs came out on a day's token strike yesterday. Fines are to be imposed on government departments and state corporations which do not clear their consignments of goods from the warehouses of the Colombo Port immediately—SU. Major political parties have made all arrangements for Sunday's May Day rallies in Colombo and all political leaders expect a large turn out for this year's celebrations as this will be the last May Day before the dissolution of Parliament and the next general elections—CO. Twelve trade unions in the Nuwara-Eliya Maskeliya electorate comprising over 10,000 workers are staging a strike this morning in protest against the distribution of 7,000 acres of tea lands—DW.

SATURDAY, APRIL 30: The bountiful Maha harvest this year was in a great measure due to the massive development projects such as the Mahaweli Diversion Scheme undertaken by the present government and the government was able to give two measures of rice to consumers on the ration because of this and not as an election stunt as alleged by the Opposition, said the PM addressing a well-attended meeting following the opening of the PMB rice store and mill in the Yapahuwa electorate. The Minister of Finance yesterday challenged Opposition parties to include in their election manifesto a pledge to reverse the revaluation of the rupee and to devalue the rupee to its former status. The funeral of Mr. S. J. V. Chelvanayakam takes place today at Jaffna—CDN. This year's May Day rallies will bring to the city the largest ever crowd to gather in Colombo on a single day. Over a thousand policemen from the outstations moved into the city yesterday for the biggest ever May Day security preparations in Colombo. Labourers and other minor staff of the General Hospital went back to their posts late on Thursday evening on an assurance given by the Health Ministry officials that the material for their uniforms would be supplied today. The retail price of coffee has dropped by Rs. 4 a pound; from Rs. 50 to Rs. 46—CDM. Leaders of the LSSP, CP and Sri Lanka Mahajana Prajathantrawadi Pakshaya will today sign a joint declaration announcing the formation of a new Socialist United Front. Norway has indicated it's willingness to collaborate with Sri Lanka in the manufacture and export of rubber-based products to international markets. Up-country train services were disrupted yesterday following the derailment of a Kandy-bound goods train. Cultivation loans to the tune of Rs. 266 million have not been repaid by cultivators; particulars of these loans granted between 1967 and 1976 have been submitted to the Commissioner of Co-operative Development by the People's Bank—SU.

SUNDAY, MAY 1: One of the biggest May Day crowds ever is expected to throng Colombo today; while all major political parties will go flat out to prove their strength the Police will mount a massive security operation to ensure an incident-free worker's Day. Attempts are being made by certain subversive organisations to infiltrate the police and armed forces, according to the Intelligence Services Division. Imported condensed milk will be given to ration book holders from the beginning of this month; Lakspray in tins will also be available in the market soon; the shortage was

due to a large consignment of tins being held up in the harbour. Six hundred and seventy six officers in class II of the General Clerical Service will immediately be promoted to class I of the service following the government's acceptance of a proposal made by the Minister of Public Administration and Home Affairs and the Minister of Trade, that the ratio between the two classes be increased from the present 1:8 to 1:6—SO. Today's May Day celebrations have developed into a show of strength by three distinct political groups—the SLFP, the UNP and the Front comprising the LSSP, the CP of Sri Lanka and the People's Democratic Party. The Ministry of Justice has turned down a request made by the police that the 24-hour period of detention in police custody be extended. Mr. Pieter Keuneman called for the release of political prisoners before the general election and the removal of restrictions on the freedom of other persons connected with the April 1971 insurrection so as to enable them to participate fully and freely in the general elections—ST. The NSA is now certain to be dissolved before it meets on May 19 after the prorogation: this matter, according to authoritative sources has already received consideration at the highest level and it is now left to the PM to advise the President on which date before May 19 the Assembly is to be dissolved. The Aid Sri Lanka Consortium has pledged assistance to the tune of 214 millions US dollars in 1978 at its meeting held in Washington, according to a report reaching the Ministry of Defence and Foreign Affairs yesterday from the Sri Lanka embassy in the US. A team of American oil experts will arrive in Sri Lanka early next month to conduct off shore drilling operations—WK.

MONDAY, MAY 2: The PM in her May Day speech asked the people not to be misled by false promises and warned them against the rise of power-hungry politicians. CTB buses suffered most from sporadic incidents in various parts of the country, according to reports reaching police headquarters last night. May Day yesterday easily surpassed in colour and in numbers any of the previous rallies held in Colombo. Mr. Maithripala Senanayake in his May Day speech scotched all rumours of his resignation and withdrawal from politics—CDN. Addressing a mammoth May Day rally at the Galle Face Green yesterday, the PM said that the massive show of support gave the lie to the propaganda of the government's opponents that it had lost popularity. The leader of the UNP addressing his party's May Day rally said that his primary objective was to form a just and fair government free from the twin evils of bribery and corruption and also of political victimisation. Mr. Pieter Keuneman, General Secretary of the CP of Sri Lanka at the United Front May Day rally of the LSSP, CP and PDP said that Mr. Felix Dias Bandaranaike was responsible for the break-up of the United Front government. Seven persons were drowned and several others missing when a motor-driven fishing boat, one in a procession of fishing boats which came to the May Day rally at the Galle Face Green from Panadura capsized near the Moratuwa beach. Archbishop-elect Nicholas Marcus Fernando of Colombo takes over the Archdiocese at a ceremony today at St. Lucia's Cathedral, Kotahena—CDM. Sixteen persons were drowned when a boat returning after a sea show at the SLFP's May Day rally capsized in the sea off Panadura last night. Yesterday's election-eve May Day, where the enthusiasm of all participants ran rather high, was marked by several incidents of violence both

in the city and outstations. One of the biggest crowds ever converged in the City of Colombo yesterday for the May Day rallies; police estimates put the turnout at more than eight hundred thousand; the largest crowds were seen at the SLFP rally at the Calle Face Green and the UNP rally at the Town Hall grounds; there was a big crowd also at the Socialist United Front's rally at Hyde Park. Mr. Vasudeva Nanayakkara, who marched with a large crowd under a new banner—Vamanshika Yoja Peramuna at yesterday's Socialist United Front procession, could not reach the venue of the rally because they were surrounded by a convoy of six riot squads which kept them seated in the centre of the road for nearly two hours till the Hyde Park meeting ended; this move came after the LSSP leader complained to the police that Mr. Nanayakkara's group at Hyde Park could cause a breach of peace—SU. The PM in her May Day speech said that the government had achieved more than their election pledges in 1970 and asked the people to consider the future of their children when they prepared to vote for the next general elections. The leader of the Opposition said in his May Day speech that the UNP will establish a government free of bribery, corruption and lies and they will in no way curb the freedom of the people nor will they take revenge—LD. Disputes between two rival factions who came for the May Day rallies led to stone throwing and grave injury to many amidst tear gas and fighting at Urugodawatte yesterday. Since neither the UNP nor the SLFP can solve the problems of the workers and peasants, and only a socialist government can do that, the Left Front was formed, said Dr. N. M. Perera in his May Day speech; Mr. Peter Keuneman said the ULF broke up because of the right wing elements in the SLFP and to alleviate the condition of workers and peasants the Left Front was formed—DW.

TUESDAY, MAY 3: Millions throughout the Buddhist world observe Vesak Poya today which commemorates the birth, enlightenment and passing away of the Buddha. This vesak is also the 261st birth anniversary of Prince Siddharta. Over 80 persons were treated at the accident service on Sunday for injuries received in May Day incidents in and around Colombo; the incidents in which the injuries were caused ranged from stone throwing to assaults and stabbings with knives and broken bottles. The growth rate in the economy in 1976 was 3% says the Central Bank report for 1976 which was presented to the Minister of Finance last Friday—CDN. A Republic Day amnesty for prisoners is in the offing; the Minister of Justice has asked for a report from the Commissioner of Prisons on the feasibility of granting an amnesty to those presently serving terms of imprisonment. The Minister of Finance left for London yesterday to undergo an eye operation; he will be away from four to six weeks. Eleven bodies were washed ashore off Moratuwa yesterday as a result of the May Day boat tragedy. Fewer pandals but more dansalas and puppet shows will be seen during the Vesak festival this year in Colombo and the suburbs—CDM. The UNP last week put into shape the blueprint for a new constitution for Sri Lanka designed to 'eliminate the weakness of the present system and to involve all parties and the people in the administration of the government.' Sri Lanka was not able to obtain the full benefits of an improved export price for its products in 1976 as a result of a decline in the volume exported. The Sri Lanka Administrative Service Association wants

for its members the privilege of being allowed to travel out of the island on no-pay leave. Sri Lanka will implement a priority agricultural development project—the Mahaweli Ganga Development Project II—with the assistance of a credit of 19 million US dollars from the International Development Association, an affiliate of the World Bank—SU. A plan to sabotage the May Day rallies and create trouble was instigated by a left wing faction, the CID believe, and they are carrying out investigations in this connexion; they are also trying to trace the relationship between this group and the 1971 insurgent group—VK.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 4: Of the 47 million rupees necessary to run the campuses of the University of Sri Lanka, the Treasury has sanctioned 30 million. Since over five hundred CTB buses were damaged due to incidents on May Day, those buses are also swelling the ranks of the already damaged buses; there has been a disruption in the bus services ever since in Colombo as well as the outstations—VK.

THURSDAY, MAY 5: Conservative estimates made by the Mahaveli Diversion Board have indicated that within just one and a half years, the quality of rice produced on the lands fed by the diverted waters of the Mahaveli is equivalent in value to the entire foreign exchange spent so far on the scheme; the board this week appraised the Ministry of Irrigation, Power and Highways of this achievement. The Health Ministry is taking urgent action against the use of cancer-inducing coal tar dyes in the food on the advice of the WHO. Nearly forty six persons are believed to have lost their lives in a boat tragedy at Matara on Vesak Day in the evening; a boat carrying 75 passengers capsized in the Nilwala Ganga. Yesterday Vesak was celebrated throughout the country with mass sil campaigns and religious observances; despite a mild downpour in the evening sightseers paraded the streets of Colombo to see the few pandals—CDN. The Transitional period of the University of Sri Lanka, due to end on May 15, is to be extended. Demurrage amounting to approximately 10,000 dollars a day is payable to the ships carrying fertilizer cargo now in the Colombo Port. The Technical Services Trade Union Federation will resort to strike action on May 11 if their main demands are not granted. There was a strike at the Negombo CTB depot yesterday morning after an incident where a driver was stabbed. There has been a sharp increase in the number of hold ups by armed gangs during the past week-end in the North and North Central regions of the island when police personnel manning stations in those areas were deployed to Colombo for the May Day rallies—CDM. The executive Committee of the Tamil Congress yesterday elected a sub-committee to meet the Nomination Board of the TULF and request the nomination of more TC candidates for the coming general elections. Sri Lanka's import bill increased by 1.6% last year—that is from Rs. 5,334 in 1975 to Rs. 5,417 million in 1976. Port authorities have recommended that consignments of flour and fertilizer lying in shops outside the Port of Colombo for the past several weeks be diverted to other foreign ports—SU. The Technical Worker's Union of the Mahaveli Development Project have decided to go on strike on the 10th of the month—ATH.

INDIA

Janata's First False Step

New Delhi, April 23.

In less than a month of their assumption of office, Morarji Desai and his colleagues have touched off a first-class political controversy which has scraped off a lot of democratic veneer with which they came to power at the crest of a spectacular electoral victory. Home Minister Charan Singh's public announcement of an "earnest appeal" made to nine State Ministers to resign and face a fresh poll because the Congress had done poorly in the Lok Sabha election in their respective States, is, to say the least, an example of playing with fire at a very uncertain phase in Indian politics.

It was not merely a display of clumsy incoherence that Charan Singh betrayed at his press conference—with all his misplaced references to Dicey and Halsbury—but the entire Government's stand on the issue is pregnant with dangerous implications for both its own future as also that of the country as a whole. The developments behind this irresponsible decision are worth noting. It is an open secret that Jayaprakash Narain has been persistently demanding fresh Assembly poll in the States where the Congress has lost in the Lok Sabha elections; he pressed for it openly in his last nationwide broadcast. JP's argument has been that the Congress Ministries in the nine northern States have lost the moral authority to govern since their party has been rejected at the Lok Sabha poll.

Even from a less loftier height than where JP nowadays is stationed, the Janata Party bosses can of course with reason claim that they are paying back the Congress with Indira's 1959 coin when she as the Congress President whipped up a so-called "liberation struggle" to unseat by Presidential take-over the first Communist Ministry which till the day of its dismissal had retained its majority in the Assembly.

When JP was raising this demand, Morarji Desai went on record that he would not indulge in the toppl-

ing game and made it clear both in public pronouncements and in private discussions, that no State Ministry would be forced to quit unless and until it had lost the majority in the Assembly. An impression therefore gained ground in New Delhi that while JP was insisting on fresh Assembly elections, Morarji Desai, known for being a stickler for rigid forms, would not go in for such a step, since it would amount to following in Indira Gandhi's unconstitutional footsteps.

The Union Home Ministry, on its part, was believed to have prepared a case for fresh poll for the Assemblies which have completed their five year term in the States where the recent Lok Sabha poll has shown that the Congress had lost heavily. This would have left out Orissa and UP from the list of the condemned. The political argument on which this case was based is that the Government had already brought the Bill in Lok Sabha reducing the term of Parliament and State Assemblies from six to five years (thereby rectifying this particular provision of the Forty-second Amendment)—a Bill which could not be passed in Parliament's last session because of the Congress reluctance to go beyond merely its formal introduction. Since this Bill could not in principle be objected to by any party including the Congress, the Morarji Government could possibly have justified in the eyes of the public its decision to call the Assembly poll particularly in those States where the five year term was over while the Lok Sabha poll verdict had gone against the Congress.

At the final stage of the Government's decision-making process it was Morarji Desai who went beyond the Home Ministry proposal and insisted on asking for the Assembly election in all the nine States where the Congress was defeated in Lok Sabha poll. What is extraordinary is that this important decision was taken at the Cabinet meeting where nearly half its members were not present including Jagjivan Ram, Atal Behari, Vajpayee and George Fernandes, among others. It is therefore clear that although the attack from the press and political perso-

nalities has been directed against Charan Singh—and with good reason since it was he who had announced it in public—the responsibility for the decision has to be shared by Morarji Desai himself. It is therefore not an exclusively Charan product of the Prime Minister himself.

One may certainly plead at the political level that the Congress having done so miserably in the Lok Sabha elections in these nine States should, as a matter of good parliamentary convention, on its own go for the Assembly poll. But for the new Government pledged to decentralisation of political power—as the Janata manifesto underlines—this latest attempt to compel the State Governments to conform to the political complexion of the one at the Centre is not only an example of blatant inconsistency but is also highly dangerous in an avowedly federal structure. This may result in undermining the integrity of the Republic, since any move to enforce political uniformity over any part of the country through the long arm of the executive would in the long run upset the delicate balance that our federal set up tries to maintain between the Centre and the States.

It is one thing for the Janata and its supporters to intensify at the political level the campaign for the Assembly elections—as Krishnan Kant, for instance, has been carrying on—but it is a totally different thing for the new Morarji Government to achieve this by misapplying the constitutional provisions when the Janata Party manifesto itself promises to amend Article 356 so that it "is not misused to benefit the ruling party or any favoured section within it." A political motivation can hardly be promoted through unwarranted resort to constitutional provisions.

At the political plane also, this latest move by the Janata Government may not fetch the expected dividends. For one thing, the issues that take precedence in a parliamentary election do not have the same impact in an Assembly election, where State level problems normally catch the limelight. It was precisely because of this very

reason that Indira Gandhi shrewdly delinked the Lok Sabha poll in 1971 from the State Assembly elections and thereby gathered a rich harvest.

The last Lok Sabha election has once again demonstrated that the unlettered voter in India is a highly sophisticated political animal who could not be taken for a ride by any party in office. The shattering blow he dealt on the Emergency coterie despite its being presided over by Indira Gandhi with her once-charismatic personality, should be a warning for her successors in office, particularly the Janata leaders. In the State Assembly elections—if the Morarji Government's decision is finally imposed—the voter may reason that since he has been able to dismantle the Emergency apparatus with its Sanjay terror, corruption and sterilisation, the issues facing him would not be the same as those in the Lok Sabha poll.

With a new Government in office at the Centre, the voter, after being vociferously ensured by the new ruling authority that there would be no return to the Emergency nightmare, would inevitably turn to the issues directly affecting his living conditions and would vote according to his understanding for those who may help to solve some of his pressing day-to-day problems which to a large measure fall under the State Government's jurisdiction.

It is unlikely that after having punished the Congress so severely at the Lok Sabha poll for the Emergency misdeeds, the voter would punish it again to the same degree in the Assembly election. More likely, his attention will this time be concentrated on weighing the comparative merits and quality for good and responsive administration of the respective political parties.

Secondly, the Morarji Government's fiat on the Assembly elections might result in closing up the ranks of Congress. The recent display of the Congress in-fight even after its poll debacle—as one witnessed at the Congress Working Committee in which Indira Gandhi was a principal contender—promised to lead the Congress on the way to disintegration. But the Morarji-Charan threat might help to stop this process and re-charge its battery. If the Janata leaders had left the Congress Undisturbed

for a few months, the inner conflict within the demoralised organisation would have certainly intensified. Because, many of the honest Congressmen would not have permitted themselves to suffer the Emergency characters like Tiwari, Shukla or Kesari dominating the State Congress politics. In the normal course, there was every possibility of the Congress Ministries in most of these States collapsing through sheer compulsions of inner-rift—a prospect which may be halted by the Centre's move to topple them.

The reasons behind the Morarji Government's decision to go in for this gamble are mainly two. For the thing, the Janata leaders have come to realise that even with their majority in Lok Sabha, they would not be in a position to push through their candidate for the Presidential election to be completed by the first week of August; and the hawks in the Janata camp do not seem to be inclined to take the wise course of a consensus President. In fact, they seem to be haunted by the fear that the Congress might put up an intractable candidate to contest the Presidential poll.

Secondly the new Government is seriously worried about the worsening economic situation, which has all the potentialities of an uncontrollable crisis in a few months. In fact, this was one of the three reasons which led Indira Gandhi to go in for a blitz election with disastrous consequences.

The Morarji Government on its part has hardly a viable economic policy framework as evident from its groupings in the very first weeks in office. The generalities in the Janata Party manifesto cannot possibly provide an effective means for combating the menace of inflation. The new Finance Minister's papacea lies in an overdose of Western aid to be preceded by sweeping drive for liberal import of consumer goods, coupled with drastic pruning of the Plan allocations. This can hardly provide any solution for the pressing economic problems. Morarji Desai's broadcast on price rise betrayed pathetic importunities to traders to be nice and decent—no sign of the mailed fist which is projected as part of his iron-man image.

With the menace of deterioration on the economic front and major miscalculation on the political

front, the Janata Government under Morarji Desai holds out before the country a fearful perspective of fissiparous forces raising their ugly heads.

—Nikil Chakravarthy
Mainstream

New Delhi, April 24,

What Indira Gandhi dared not do in 1971 with a two-thirds majority, the Janata government has decided to do with a paper-thin majority in the Lok Sabha. The Janata government has decided to topple as many as nine Congress-led state governments on 23rd April in case the Chief Ministers do not "oblige" Charan Singh and carry out his fiat to dissolve the State Assemblies and seek fresh poll. The decision violates the constitutional propriety and accepted political ethics for the restoration of which the people uprooted the self-centred authoritarian rule of the Indira Gandhi caucus.

How hastily the decision was taken is evident from the fact that the decision-makers did not wait even for a few hours to ascertain the views of the senior most minister and CFD chairman, Jagjivan Ram. The Defence Minister returned from Dacca on Monday evening. Instead of postponing the Cabinet meeting to the evening the Prime Minister went ahead with the original schedule and took a decision of far-reaching significance in disregard of the known views of the CFD chairman. Even Indira Gandhi, till she fell into the clutches of the caucus of mentally retarded baboons, used to rush planes to fetch her senior colleagues to the capital to ensure their participation in arriving at important political decisions. This tim-honoured practice was violated by Indira Gandhi for the first time on 25th June 1975 when the decision to impose the emergency was taken by her, and with disastrous consequences.

The Janata government's first major political decision, violative of the principle of unanimity among the constituent parties of the government, is portentous. Not only does it violate the principle of unanimity at the top decision-making level; it is also an

outright assault on the federal structure of the Constitution.

In 1971, despite its landslide victory in the Lok Sabha election, the Congress government did not serve quit notices on the Cong-Oled governments in Karnataka and Gujarat. Nor did it dismiss the Akali regime in Punjab. The SVD tamashas in UP and Bihar were allowed to merrily blunder on, unaffected by the massive electoral rebuff. Indira Gandhi's impulse for conformity surfaced only in 1972, and eventually ended up with the concentration of all powers in the hands of an inane caucus whose stupidity of arrogance is now being shockingly emulated by some Janata stalwarts.

The state governments are being brought down on the plea that the Lok Sabha election has demonstrated their loss of popular support. As a corollary, will Prime Minister Morarji Desai agree to ask the Janata MPs to resign their seats if a majority of the successful candidates in assembly elections belong to a party other than the Janata conglomerate? Will Jayaprakash Narayan, the repository of all moral values, care to make an announcement that the Janata MPs would resign the moment they realise that the electors are no longer with their party? By now, the Prime Minister, who is also the president of the Janata-Party, must have a premonition of what would befall the Janata parliamentary party in case the principle of people's support is rigidly applied every time. If he applies this moral principle, the Janata band wagon will crack up.

To put the record straight, it must be stated that none of the Janata leaders will ever dare test his own past political record on the touchstone of the will of "sovereign", the people. The Janata conglomerate knows that the people have not voted for it; they have pulled down the dictatorship of the caucus. The Janata has cashed in on the people's righteous anger against Indira Gandhi's sins of omissions and commissions.

It is not accidental that Delhi's blackmarketeers, who celebrated the day of the Congress defeat as a political diwali with illumination, sweets et al, have returned to their old game of cornering commodities and pushing up pri-

ces. Reports from all over the country show a similar pattern of organised fleecing of the hapless consumers. The weaker sections of the community in rural areas are already showing signs of disenchantment with the Janata. And the near unanimous hostility of the newspapers to Home Minister Charan Singh's flat reflects the serious misgivings of the middle class over the Janata government's intentions.

Fully conscious of the fact that in less than eight months the Janata Party will cease to have any appeal for the masses, the Janata junta wants to bring some of the most populous states under its wings. Secondly, having brought out of the political museum some choice antiques and posted them as governors, the Janata leaders are in a hurry to have one of the political drop outs installed as the President of India. This will not be possible in the present situation and only a candidate acceptable to the Congress can occupy the highest post. Finally, the Janata leaders want to use the Assembly elections to delay the day their internal contradictions overtake them; in addition they could mount pressure on CFD to kow-tow their line. *It is not without significance that Home Minister Charan Singh and Steel Minister Biju Patnaik are themselves surprised how Uttar Pradesh and Orissa Assemblies, which have two more years to go, were included in the list of states slated for a snap poll.*

The Janata septugenarian strong man, Home Minister Charan Singh, has propounded a new interpretation of the Constitution and the President's powers. According to Charan Singh, in case the President thinks that the Lok Sabha has ceased to represent public opinion, he can sack the government even if it enjoys the support of the majority in the Lok Sabha, dissolve the House and order fresh election. He further holds that this power is inherent in the Constitution (even without the 42nd Amendment) and that a constitutional amendment is not needed to give the President the power to dissolve the Lok Sabha at his discretion. Charan Singh holds that the position was clarified by Dr. Ambedkar in the Constituent Assembly. The Janata Home Minister made these points in

unambiguous terms in reply to questions at his press conference at which he served notices on the nine Congress Chief Ministers. In support of his threat to the Chief Ministers, Charan Singh cited the famous British constitutional expert Dicey who has written in the last century that "whenever the wishes of the legislature are, or may fairly be presumed to be, different from the wishes of the nation" the Crown can deprive the legislature of its power and its existence to appeal to the political sovereign, i.e., the people.

Charan Singh either did not know what he was talking about when he made his points or he was deliberately distorting the Constitution as it was before the 42nd Amendment Act in order to serve his political interests. The written Indian Constitution, unlike the unwritten British constitution, does not confer any discretionary powers on the President, and eminent jurists have held for long that even without the 42nd amendment he could act only on the advice of the Council of Ministers. By introducing the doctrine of inherent discretionary powers of the President to dissolve the Lok Sabha, Charan Singh is trying to put the President above Parliament whereas the Constitution has made him a part of Parliament along with its two houses. *This interpretation of the Constitution cannot but revive the memory of the 1969 presidential contest when the syndicate had tried to impose its own nominee on the party and the country. One may not be surprised if the Janata conglomerate sponsors Nijalingappa as its candidate for the Presidentship.*

The only situation in which the President can act according to his discretion are: First, if no party gets a majority in an election, the President can invite any one of his choice to form the Council of Ministers till the situation gets clarified either on the floor of the House or in a fresh election. Second, the President can withdraw his pleasure from a Prime Minister if he or she does not resign on being defeated on a substantive motion and ask the leader of the main opposition party to head a new government. Except for these two exceptional moments there cannot be a President without a Council of Ministers. It is not merely the

unconstitutional decision to dissolve the duly constituted state Assemblies, but also the Home Minister's interpretation of the President's power that must awaken the country to the extra-constitutional ambitions of the powers-that-be.

Ganesh Shukla
—New Wave

* * *

FIRST-HAND REPORT

Of The Take-Over Of Choisy Estate, Punduloya

What does "land alienation" in the highly-developed estate sector in the up-country mean in practice? We publish below a "first hand" report of the results of such alienation in Choisy Estate in the latest issue of the *Satyodaya* (Bulletin No. 48, March, 1977) incorporating the *Bulletin of Co-ordinating Secretariat for the Plantation Areas*. The report speaks for itself.

Choisy Estate is situated about 4 miles from Punduloya town and covers 350 acres of land. There are 375 families of estate labourers, roughly 1200 people living in this estate. Out of this 25 families have either received Indian citizenship or have applied for it. Among the others, some have received Sri Lanka citizenship, some have applied for it, and still others have been refused.

This is one of the estates taken over by the Land Reform Commission. Leaving 50 acres for the owner of the estate, the remaining 300 acres were distributed to the villagers living within a radius of 10 miles. Those who benefited from this distribution were mostly the Sinhalese.

The following are some of the facts I gathered in my conversations with the workers and the head of the Workers' Union:

(1) The school in this estate where 50 students were studying

was closed down and the two teachers have gone to another place near Ragala. (2) As the estate workers are now unemployed, the latrine coolies and the others who were employed to keep the lines clean are stopped from work. And the estate lines are becoming a breeding ground for all kinds of diseases and dangerous to live in. (3) The vegetable and fruit gardens of the estate labourers and even the place where their latrines are situated are divided and given away to the villagers. (4) However the lines are not yet divided. (5) As there is one doctor available in this estate the sick can still get some medical help. (6) The midwife has left this estate after the take-over. (7) There are three clerks employed to attend to the necessary paper work involved in sending away the labourers. (8) Among the officials, an old tea factory manager and an accountant are still here. (9) An old man was appointed by the manager of the estate to supervise the factory that operates for the 50 acres of tea. (10) All the other officials have gone away to other estates. (11) Before the take-over the workers were employed for not less than 26 days when the leaves were in plenty and for not less than 20 days when the leaves were much less. (12) Before the take-over some of the workers were able to get up to Rs. 200/- every month from their vegetable and fruit gardens. (13) After the take-over the estate workers have lost these gardens to the villagers and sometimes are forced by their poverty to steal from these gardens which they themselves have grown. (14) The estate workers were asked to leave the estate on 15.12.76 without any previous warning. (15) The Government officials told the estate workers that necessary help would be given for them to settle down in any other place they choose to go. It is reported that immediate preparations were made for them to settle down in a place called Kampayam in Ragala district. (16) One of the workers who has Sri Lanka citizenship spoke up for the others and said that they cannot leave this place where they were living for many years leaving behind the vegetable and fruit gardens which they have grown with their own sweat.

(17) Now, after the division, the villagers and the owners pluck

the tea leaves and sell them. (18) Some of them are using the estate workers for plucking, paying them from Rs. 3/- to 3/50 per day. (19) Leaves gathered after 15.12.76 were sold to the co-operatives. After 19.1.77 the leaves were sold to the estate management. (20) I saw some of the villager's plucking the leaves themselves and others employing the estate labourers for this work. (21) From the time of the take-over only two families have built their huts and are living in the lower division of the estate. (22) The others come to the estate only to pluck the leaves from their piece of land. And this may be due to the fact that there are no proper facilities for living on the estate in this place. (23) The estate manager has employed the workers for two days only in the whole month of January in his 50 acres of tea. (24) The last month's salary was given around 10 January. And the wages for the 2 days work in January were given only on the 10 February. (25) The villagers pay those whom they employ everyday after the work. (26) There was no attempt made by the estate manager to supply food for the starving workers. Only after the intervention of Mr. S. Thondaman were they given free rice and one pound of flour. (27) Representation to the management has been made by the C.W.C. for more rice to be given to the labourers. (28) To buy the one pound of flour the labourers have to use two days' wages.

(29) It is reported that those who are returning to India are given their service allowance, the provident fund and all the other helps needed. For those who have applied for the Indian citizenship necessary arrangements are made for them to stay on till their departure. (30) When the estate was divided the 95 families of the estate labourers who have the Sri Lanka citizenship applied for land. But they were not given any land. They complained bitterly about this discrimination in the distribution of land though they too were Sri Lanka citizens. (31) They also complained that because of the sudden take-over they are not in a position to rush into other places. And even when they want to go to other places it is not easy for them to get their service allowance and the provident fund. (32)

No Help ?

Only 5 families have left the estate and all the others are still in the estate. (33) And these 5 families are all members of the C.W.C. and the National Union of Workers. (34) The National Union of Workers has asked its members to go to other places to settle down. But no one has left the place as yet. (35) The C.W.C. has asked its members not to leave the estate till they arrive at a workable solution.

From G.T. (4.2.77)

(For the Co-ordinating Secretariat for Plantation Areas)

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HERE AND THERE

BY DOPEY

• Milk Food • Tin Fish • Petrol

Two days back we were driven out of Colombo by the heat and the environment and we landed in a small town where the political hotwind bags were being deflated.

We inquired why this hotair-letting like a punctured balloon.

The answer was interesting: "We the people of Sri Lanka are supposed to be supreme and it is our supremacy that has given us the right to elect our rulers. Having elected them—(by deceiving us)—what are they doing to us now? They are treating us like cheats, pick pockets, highway robbers who will be dishonest every moment of the day".

Why do you say this? we inquired.

"Look at this notice issued by the Bureaucrats, in this shop. It says, all baby foods available for sale in this shop will be sold only to those who can produce a birth certificate, a letter from a doctor, or a letter from the Gramasevaka. What happens to people like us who travel without any of these? It is too bad if you do, and, if you do, then (a) starve the child till you can produce the documents or change the diet of the child if you can find a substitute, or buy in the black-market and some of the Co-operative employees where they can be got".

What about producing the baby at the counter and ask for the baby food?

"They—the people behind the counter—will not believe that the production is your child without the necessary documentation—absurd. Sir it is true, there are so many illegitimate babies about the place—may be due to the Women's Year—they will gladly lend you a baby to overcome the distribution regulations, and the officials who issued these regulations believe this can be done, and they think the whole population of Sri Lanka are a bunch of rogues and none to be trusted. So this is the way, you and I, the consumers, can be made honest and save the State being robbed".

Did you not read about the great Mystery?

"All the tin fish imported into Ceylon by the millions have gone into the Private traders."

How did this happen? The Government is going to appoint a high powered Committee of Inquiry? What is the use? By the time the inquiry report is out all the tinned fish would be down the sewers etc." we interrupted. "That is true but the Government is just bidding time for the General Elections, and keep the people in hope that the fish will be out after the elections."

Is it for the same reason that no petrol is available in the town?

We asked.

"Last week there was no petrol at the two stations but we were able to get two gallons at the Co-operative station by all kinds of devious ways. Again this week, that is on 26th April, there was no petrol and we were unsuccessful to get any, so we are stuck here when we should be in Colombo".

"There is no point in complaining about these inconveniences. There is no one to listen to your complaints, there is no press to ventilate the grievances, the press and the radio also connive with the Government in this kind of trickery to fool the public".

Why do you say that? we asked.

"A week ago the most interesting news item to us, the consuming public, was that sugar and flour were being issued to the private traders for sale. So we

went in search of sugar and flour, their answer was, 'we have not seen these items for the last six months. Who said we have been issued these items?' asked the trader. "Why the Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation at the 9.15 p.m news item." "Bloody Hell, you are a super-duper fool to believe the S.L.B.C. Why don't you enter Parliament, we will give you all the support to get you there," said the trader.

Our informant said, "I am not yet convinced I am suitable for that august body". We agreed with him. But we are still here without petrol or baby food. Our supremacy (and over vote) is of no avail to us. Who is supreme is the bureaucrat. We do not know of any to help us. So we have to wait for the next elections to see whether you and I can get a better deal with a change.

* * *

IF DREAMS COME TRUE

And Turns Sri Lanka Topsy-Turvey

by Nimal Sarathchandra

I saw Percy's Progress, that sex comedy, when I was in Trincomalee. That very same night I had a strange dream, it wasn't a sexy dream nor was it a bad dream.

I am very often accused by those near to me, of day dreaming. Dreaming during day time as well as during the night has been one of my happy pastimes. While my wife kept talking to me, I would very often pretend I was listening to her but in reality I was dreaming. I would be then at the height of my imagination, climbing one of those hills in the interior, or else, I would be exploring a cave at Elle or Kuragala or elsewhere.

Everyone will not have the pleasure of dreaming. To be able to dream you should be imaginative and imagination begets poetry or even lunacy if you go beyond your limits. Dreams are film shows when your subconscious mind is the screen and the pillow your balcony.

I dreamt I was standing at the edge of the island separating the northern peninsula from the main-

land that is at Elephant Pass. With a sudden jerk the northern headland broke away and started drifting in the Indian Ocean. I started crying. What will happen to my friends from Kopay, Chuna-kam, Chavakachcheri, Point Pedro etc.? Will I be able to meet them once again? I got up and sat in bed thinking what would happen if what I dreamt would come true.

It was only a few months ago that a member expressed in the National State Assembly, that Sri Lanka is too small to be divided. Yet how many forces are there at work, each trying to divide this small country into small components based on race, caste and creed;

Even the elevation divides the country into the low country and the hill country, which in turn tends to divide the Sri Lankians into two rival camps. When applications are called for certain jobs the authorities still insist on ascertaining whether you are an up-country or a low country Sri Lankian. Why?

Race, creed and caste are the other divisive factors which tend to disintegrate this small island. More ill-will has been created, suspicion has been harboured and animosity has been perpetuated because of these divisive factors which are still at work.

As I sat up in bed I remembered what some politicians had earlier said about social intergration, but nothing has been achieved to bring about amity, understanding and goodwill among the various races in the island but on the other hand the unfriendly attitude shown by those belonging to the majority community had done much damage to undermine the national unity and intergration.

I started dreaming again. What would happen if our small pear shaped island does a complete somersault overnight. Then Point Pedro will be at the Southern tip of the island and Matara would be where Point Pedro was. Trincoamalee would be situated where Colombo once stood and Trincoamalee would take the place of Colombo. If this geographical change takes place, will it compel them to shed the differences amongst them and pave way for a intergrated and unified society? I think it will, to a certain extent, but then is this wishful thinking?

Ours is a small island, with a population of 13 million comprising of a number of races, Sinhalese Tamils and Muslims being the major communities. In a world where rapid means of communication bring far off countries to each others' doorsteps, it is strange how the various communities in a small country like ours still continue to perpetuate their differences, look at each other with suspicion and fear.

* * *

DESECRATION OR MONKEY PRANKS?

Sri Pada And "Mod Youths"

By R. C. Thavarajah

Retd. Superintendent of Police

It is a strangely unique ethnic characteristic of ours that something shocking or startling must happen to bring out the best in us. Take the case of the alleged desecration at Sri Pada by some Mod youths in the recent past. What happened?—there was unbridled effusion of religious and literary enthusiasm, expository prose in the form of editorials in prestigious 'dailies' one of which is most 'selective' especially in publishing letters to the Editor, acrimonious expression of indignation as well as informative documentation compiled and published.

SRI PADA and mountains in other parts of the world have been associated not only as geological phenomena or mere elevations of the Earth's surface. In the major religions of the world, they have a greater significance and relevance in MEDITATION which is "that exercise of the MIND by which it recalls a known TRUTH."

"I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills from whence cometh my help" was the ecstatic utterance of the Psalmist quoted from the Holy Bible (Psalm 121, verse 1). PAUL BRUNTON, in his most interesting and inestimable book entitled "INNER REALITY" refers to the fact that even Jesus Christ "travelled slowly in India", went Eastward to Benares and thence to the Himalayas where he meditated.

The South African novelist, OLIVE SCHREINER (1859-1920), in his delightful book "Story of An African Farm", relates the parable of a hunter who spent his life stalking the beautiful white bird of TRUTH—Not what the Jesting Pilate wanted to know—, but what is understood through the medium of the senses, the intellect or intuitive experience. The hunter sets snares and tries in vain to catch it. Disappointed, he leaves the Valleys of Superstition and sets out to climb the mountains of REALITY.

In Sri Lanka, there are other sacred mountain sanctuaries like THANTRIMALAI, off the medawachchiya-Mannar Road near Cheddikulam, with a Buddhist Monastery founded in the early centuries B.C. where one of the eight Bodhi sapplings gifted to the Great King Devanampiyatissa (247-207 B.C.) was planted. The other of importance both to Hindus as well as Buddhists is Kathiramalai (Veda Hiti Kanda) in Kataragama. PAUL WIRZ, in his book refers to Kataragama as the Holiest Place in Ceylon.

What is pertinent in the context of the alleged desecration is not the religious symbolism or connotation of the mountain sanctuaries. What any sane person would like to know is why the mod youths choose sacred places for Bacchanalian monkey pranks.

I do not for a moment suggest that the State should drain its financial resources by providing any special security service for the affluent tourists who may "chalk up" climbing Adam's Peak as an "accomplishment" in their tour programme. The Authorities must, however, prevent open and offensive hooliganism. The eager traveller and student in the sincere search for knowledge and experience, the devotees and others who visit the Holy Peak must be given adequate protection. "Mod Youths" subject to psychological disturbances and complexes should be taken away from such places and given clinical treatment. They should be made to realise that they are certainly NOT creating the proper image of the Country's youth. It would be most advisable if some one with a sense of patriotism interpret the immortal lines of the great Scottish Poet,

Politics And Parties

ROBERT BURNS (1759-1796) who was most interested in international development and who wrote:—

*"O wad some Pow'r the Giftie
gie us*

*To see ourselves as others see us.
It wad frae mony a blunder free us
And foolish notion...."*

SRI PADA, rising over seven thousand feet above sea level has not only been venerated by the Religions of the world. It has also a mystic aura which diffuses a therapeutic serenity to anyone who visits this holy place. Rev. W. S. Senior, one time Principal of Trinity College, Kandy in his poem "The Call of Lanka" refers to it when he says:—

*"He shall HYMN thee of hoar
SRI PADA*

*The peak that is lone and tall,
He shall sing with her crags
DUNHINDA*

The smoking waterfall."

No Sir, Sri Pada cannot be desecrated even if anyone were to be foolhardy as to try this insane exercise. Instead of ascending the Peak in what is sartorially most inappropriate like "bell-bottoms and platform shoes" and indulging in puerile buffoonery, our youngsters should elevate themselves from the nadir of their own folly, ingorance and the evil influence of liquor, drugs and "lackeyism". They should realise that they are an ENERGY to our Nation and the price-less opportunity is youth to do something and to become somebody. They cannot think of a more lasting contribution to the Land of their birth.

LETTERS

● Politics In Sri Lanka

Sir,

I read in the Tribune (of May 7, 1977) some very interesting comments by the reviewer of the book "The Repatriates from Sri Lanka." It was stated there that, according to Trotsky, the further east one went the more reactionary the bourgeoisie became. I guess that oriental bourgeoisie and their representatives such as Bandaranaike, Narodom Sihanouk, Sun Yat Sen et al. were more reactionary than their western counterparts like Hitler, Mussolini, Kennedy,

Johnson, Nixon and their lot. In fact it seems that the latter group's boundless love for humanity has escaped the notice of many modern historians.

As for good ol' Leon's "Golas" and their historical role when they were in (parliamentary) power—that is something that the reviewer has missed. I am, however, most grateful to him for not saying that Colvin did not draft the current Constitution and that Colvin did his mighty best to grant the plantation workers a minimum monthly wage.

What escapes me is why the plantation workers were so "ungrateful" as to reject the LSSP which did them the great "favour" of 'radicalizing' them.

S. Sivasegaram

Faculty of Engineering,
Peradeniya Campus.
7.5.77

Sir,

Every political party in Sri Lanka is blaming one or more of the other political parties for the chaotic condition of our country. I wonder when they will stop abusing one another and decide to unite in saving this island from starvation and strife. I found this topical anecdote in an old English magazine; "We are all responsible for our own sins," said the preacher. "It's no use trying to put the blame on someone else: Adam blamed Eve, Eve blamed the Serpent, and the Serpent hadn't a leg to stand on."

Over to you, dear prospective and present Leaders of Sri Lanka!

Jegatheswari Nagendran

33/3, De Fonseka Place,
Colombo 5.
3.5.77

Sir,

I read with great interest your editorial comments about the "Old Left" and the "New Left" etc., etc. The analysis is a perfect one and very few people seem to sort out things as you did. I am enclosing a draft of my thoughts about the Left Politics in Ceylon with an attempt to bringing together all those who think Left, either Soft Left or Revolutionary Left, Parliamentary Left, or Extra-Parliamentary Left.

With the May Day celebrations last year (1976) we had a spate of declarations, statements and announcements and a few articles in the daily papers on Socialism, Communism, Capitalism and Sri Lanka. "Can we get to Socialism this way?" asked Leslie after he had gone to form a United Front with the SLFP leaving behind the revolutionaries in his Party and suggested a Workers Volunteer Force to protect the Government. "We can never," said Shanmugathasan, "as our economy is controlled by the Foreigners". U.S. don't meddle in Sri Lanka's internal affairs, warned N.M. The UNP will wipe out Capitalism assured J.R. Will J.R. succeed where they failed asked Pieter. The Government ensures fair deal for workers announced a Minister. Protect UF unity from forces outside and within called the acting PM Maithripala.

It was reported recently that a young man wanting to become a Police Constable, when asked who the last Governor General was, promptly answered "Sir John Kotalawela". Why, in a sub-urban train an Undergraduate and a Trade Unionist were hotly discussing the political situation in the country and the Trade Unionist asked the Undergraduate what is meant by capitalism. He promptly replied J. R. Jayewardene. Then what is Socialism barked back the Undergraduate and he looked satisfied when the Trade Unionist said Sirimavo. Communism of course is Pieter contended the Undergraduate. An amused guest by their side asked them "What is Mrs. Pieter". The undergraduate very coyly said "She is Batik."

The earlier statements and this type of conversation are excusable these days as a lot of confusion has set in about the fundamentals of Political Science. All the talk of destroying the Bourgeoisie and other exploiting classes and building a socialist economic base and establishing a Dictatorship of the Proletariat is unheard of these days. There is only constant reference to the pious declaration in the New Constitution and also to the "progressive" legislation, Employees Councils and Janata Committees and the overworked Mahaweli waters.

We cannot but heave a sigh of grief when we hear of these references. To work the "Lofy Constitution" they forget one has to

go through the most despicable colonial oriented system of Elections. To succeed one must tell a few things like "Buddhism will be given the Top most place"—of course without being Buddhist oneself. Sinhala only should be spoken in Sri Lanka—speaking even to the Ayah at home in English; and if one Party gives one measure of rice to the people free, promise to give two measures.

How long could one do this to get to the Assembly? One Party gets a majority to form the government for a period of five years and extends the period to seven years and sticks there. Then another Party captures power and extends the period to ten years and goes on governing doing whatever it likes. Where will all these lead us to? The vast mass of people live in hope, suffering in silence.

Fifty acres to one person. Are the "fifty acres" available in Sri Lanka to be given to every one inhabiting the Island? How many peasants are owner cultivators of twenty five acres of fields. How does the ending of exploitation of man by man come about through the fifty and twenty five acre ceilings. Government pays and takes away the houses from the landlord and the tenant continues to be a tenant paying the same rent. Houses are built only for the townfolk—Colombo folk—especially for the bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie while the peasants, the labouring class in the rural areas, are left to the small mercies of the land owning class cannot by any stretch of imagination be called "progressive". Under the 50-25 acres dispensation families of nine and ten live under thatched huts working day and night as serfs of the land owner.

Rs. 2000/- raised to Rs. 2500/- is the amount allowed by the Socialist government for an individual to spend on his food, and clothing for a month and it is considered "progressive" when the average monthly income of a family in the Island is not above Rs. 75/-. Employees, Councils and Janata Committees are the greatest jokes among the people. Relief is given on wealth tax though the only staple food of the poor, imported wheat flour, is rationed (i.e. half a pound for a person per week until recently). When political thinking has deteriorated to such low standards deviating from the fundamen-

als of Socialism among the one time progressives, we cannot expect undergraduates and the Trade Unionist to define Capitalism, Socialism and Communism in any other form.

More harm has been done to progressive thinking in the country in the name of progress by the so-called "progressive" government as against the reactionary U.N.P. The broad masses of the country are being told by this government that all that they are doing is Socialism and if this is Socialism the people are praying to be saved from it and want to go back to the U.N.P.

Unemployed boys and girls escorted by "catchers" and "certificates" converge on the Metropolis to the Ministries and Departments for jobs. This aspect is such a stinking filthy affair scandalously talked about throughout the length and breadth of the country and it is best not reduced to writing. This matter has sunk to such a low level that a campaign had been launched by some right thinking people to stop solving unemployment through such methods. People's participation in administration present in the Local Govern-

ment bodies has been very ably done away with by dissolving them and appointing Special Commissioners and yet the Sovereignty of the people is enshrined in the Constitution. I do not propose cataloguing the various unsocialist and anti socialist activities of the government but would like to indicate that they can do a great service to Sri Lanka by refraining from shouting that what they are doing is Socialist. Otherwise the broad masses will get a wrong picture of Socialism. The young should be allowed to study and know what Socialism is without being confused by the utterances of Socialists.

Let those who want to achieve Socialism through constitutional procedures try their luck. And, let each leading group or party also try it with their volunteer units and Trade Unions. Let them operate through the constitution in which is enshrined the fundamental rights, sovereignty of the people and the principles of State Policy, but let them not stand in the way of progressive thinking in this country on the

CONSERVATION

W. L. N. P. S.

The Sunday Observer, May 15, 1977, had a frontpage piece with a heading **TIMBER—NO MORE EXPORTS**. The report stated that all exports of timber in sawn and logged form had been "suspended" (why not totally banned?—Ed.). The Wild Life and Nature Protection Society (WLNPS), according to the Sunday Observer report, had welcomed this move and in a note had pointed out that the ".....total forest cover of the island had fallen below critical levels. In the Mahaveli catchment area in the Central Hills, the situation is particularly serious....." After a brief summary of the havoc played by exploiters and exporters of our timber resources, the WLNPS, had stated that exports could be resumed in 10 years from now provided the plantation forests give a full yield by that time....." It is a happy augury that the WLNPS has sprung into active life once again. The last time it had made a splash in the papers was when it set out to save the animal life in Wilpattu from drought with a few bowser loads of water. It is time that WLNPS made its presence felt in a big way in the country. Tribune has always pleaded that new life should be brought into the administrative and executive wing of the WLNPS by the infusion of new blood into the Committee. At the time of the last annual general meeting (or was it a special general meeting?), a ginger group, which has wanted to pep up the activities of WLNPS, was referred to as a "tiny minority" and an "ignorant minority" which had been "misinformed and misled" by the President in his keynote speech. He had also used hard words like "a small power hungry, ill-motivated clique who want to take over what others have built up, without ever having contributed anything....." He also had other unkind things to say of this "minority" which had also questioned the right of the old guard in the WLNPS to perpetuate itself for ever Committee. It is time that this kind of acrimonious cold war is forgotten and a new era of detente ushered in the WLNPS so that the old and the new could blend harmoniously to make the Society function efficiently and with acceptance to all.

lines of the changes taking place in the countries of South East Asia and elsewhere in the world. India like Sri Lanka is struggling with parliamentary democracy China too had also set up a new Republic in 1949. Recently the Chinese Constitution had the number of Articles reduced from 106 to 30 whereas the Indian Constitution runs into volumes and ours has 134 Sections of numerous sub sections. One has only to look at China, and India and Sri Lanka today, to know what the difference is.

being pushed to without meaningful changes.

Kokuvil East, Kokuvil.

S. K. Murugiah



Inania of this, that and the other Ideology And Movement

By INNA

The power should be with the proletariat. Sectional or group volunteer forces will never serve the purpose of defending Socialism against Capitalism, Racism or Feudalism. The proletariat should be armed. The power should be with them to decide what is good for the country. Every peasant and worker, both man and woman, should be armed to protect this country against the internal and external enemies of Socialism. Every boy and girl in School should get into them that it is through Socialism and Communism we can live happily in this country. They should know that the implements and means of production must be in the first place be the property of the Society. Social ownership of implements and means of production makes it possible to develop the national economy according to a unified plan and ensure a fast and steady growth of the productive forces as well as ever fuller satisfaction of the requirements of the members of the Society. As it develops further, Socialism will grow into Communism the higher stage of the new Society.

The urgent need for the teachings of the unadulterated principles of Socialism and Communism enunciated by Marx and Engels and those of their way of thinking, to the young generation in this country is felt more now than ever before. In the name of Socialism and Communism now more damage is done to the progressive thinking. Without hankering for personal leadership and power genuine Socialists and Communists must come forward and propagate these principles among the young peasants and the labouring class to save the country from the confused trends in which the country is

A fearful somebody has inserted in a local catholic paper of Sri Lanka of February 27th 1977 a news item on Page One: *Church and Politics*, telling its catholic clientele that "French Bishops took up the question of christian involvement in detail" but the French bishops cannot take up the Sri Lanka question of Politics neither *en gros* neither *en detail*, as your French friends would say. In fact, both France and Sri Lanka (bishops or laymen or anyone to whom it may concern, if you know what I mean here) could take the line from the present Pope Paul VI who in his Letter to Cardinal Roy. (meant for the whole Church through written to that venerable gentleman) stated categorically: "In the face of such widely varying situations it is difficult for us to utter a unified message and to put forward a solution which has universal validity. Such is not our ambition, nor is it our mission. It is up to the Christian communities to analyze with objectivity the situation which is proper to their own country, to shed on it the light of the Gospel's unalterable words and to draw principles of reflection, norms of judgement and directives for action from the social teaching of the Church" (Oct. Adven, LR, n. 4). What would the supplier of French news-snippets say to that? I would rather take the line from any leader who is helpful than from one who is unhelpful in our present plight in this country.

Poor Pope John XXIII and his straightforward catholicism, straight from Christ and the earliest books (let's say, Book) seemed out of the running. In September 1976 and in December 1976, his name was dropped like a "hot potato" from the lists in that same paper by

someone who was, all the same, very close to that Pope when he was alive. "Hot potato" is a mild phrase for it and I can't find anything close to that, as effective. True, Pope John XXIII burns my hand if I have been close to "power and prestige and pomp and glory", pushed into it by those around me for their (not my) benefit. In his *Pacem in Terris*, he opened the door a little and in that process antagonised the high-ups who seem to prostrate to money but profess to love God and offer incense to His Name. This wonderful, embracing and embraceable Pope, human and "divine" in his attitudes, broad in his loves, distinguished between ideologies like Marxism, Communism, Socialism and all these "isms" which some find hard to take (though they feel 'capitalism' is OK and bearable!) between ideologies, I say, and their historical movements as they have come down through the years, broken in the fall like water and stones in a rivulet. It is another way of saying: "Look sharp. Don't attack these ideologies wantonly saying they are always denying some fundamental truth. May be they have something to say which is fully true, though not the full truth..."—or something to that effect. So here's the text if you are keen and wanting to vote differently this time, *en pleine connaissance de cause* (as the French bishops, if pressed, would have told you) i.e. with full knowledge of the causes. Here's the *Pacem in terris* text:

"False philosophical teachings regarding the nature, origin and destiny of the universe and of man cannot be identified with historical movements that have economic, social, cultural or political ends, not even when these movements have originated from those teachings and have drawn and still draw, inspiration therefrom. The teachings, once they are formulated and defined remain always the same, whereas movements, working in constantly evolving historical situations, cannot but be influenced by these latter, and cannot avoid, therefore, being subject to changes, even of a profound nature..." (Pacem in Terris, 159-160)

Now think of Marxism, or something else that some are harassed about today, rather unduly, Socialism, in the light of this text.

Confidentially

● Milk And Meat

IS IT NOT TRUE that *Perakum* condensed milk, produced by our Milk Board, is now available only in the open market at Rs. 7 or Rs. 7.50 a tin? That the official retail price is Rs. 3.25 a tin? That a family (be it one or twelve gets one or two tins on the Householders card every month) at the official retail price? That more tins, if required, have to be purchased in the open market and it is not always available? (That in the new CRA era of the UF and the SLFP, especially after the Felixian revaluation melodrama, there is nothing called a *blackmarket*? That there are: the price-controlled market on strict ration, the co-op back-door market with limited availability to the new elite, the open market where all essentials can be got at a price, the CRA market where all luxuries and electronic gadgetry can be had for cash and credit and the Felixian ten-percent-cut-revaluation-market where nothing can be got?) That to come back to the Milk Board's condensed milk, what has not been revealed is that the shortage is due to a chronic go-slow in the condensed milk factory combined with near-permanent shortage of cow's milk and other ingredients (eg. imported powdered milk etc.) That in addition to the lack of condensed milk there is no *Lakspray* or other powdered milk food (for infants) available at any price? That the very limited stocks available are occasionally sold to parents of infants who comply with many bureaucratic requirements like producing the birth certificate, the marriage certificate and other documents to satisfy co-op bureaucrat that the child in question was not hired or borrowed to obtain a tin of *Lak-spray* powdered milk? That the simple fact is that the productive machinery and establishment of the National Milk Board has collapsed in no uncertain way? That the rot in the Milk Board is so deep-rooted and widespread that, not very long ago, the world tenders it had called to purchase new machinery on World Bank loans were cancelled by World

Bank? That the World Bank had last year approved substantial loans to the Milk Board to upgrade its machinery and also extend its facilities? That a World Bank team had gone into the plans and had asked the Milk Board to draw up the necessary tender papers? That the accepted procedure is that the tender documents, when ready, should have been sent to the World Bank for final okay? That in this instance our cocksure bureaucrats had called for the tenders without obtaining the covering sanction of the World Bank and had even gone to the extent of awarding the tenders to certain firms of their choice? That it was at this "late" stage that the World Bank had awoken to the fact that the Sri Lanka's Milk Board had "taken the law" into its hands and awarded the tenders without the prior approval of the World Bank? That our Milk Board bigwigs seemed to have forgotten that the man who pays the piper calls the tune? That the action of the World Bank is a slap in the face of the Milk Board? That no paper (the *Sun-Dawasa* group had not started publication when this happened) has so far published this story? That if the Milk Board contends that this version of the tender fiasco is not correct or has gaps to fill *Tribune* will be pleased to publish the full and true version (from the Milk Board's point of view)? That as usual no Milk Board official or bigwig has been willing to talk on the subject not even to say that the whole thing is a colossal and malicious lie?

IS IT NOT ALSO A FACT that the livestock position in the country is getting from bad to worse? That the heroic fables put over the SLBC about the wonderful work being done by the *Sri Lanka National Livestock Board* (SLNLB), the price of beef is between Rs. 4.50 and Rs. 6.00 (depending on the quality and the "cuts") per pound of beef in Colombo? That in the outstations, where beef had cost Rs. 1.50 to Rs. 2.00 a pound, the price has gone up by fifty percent? That a pound of mutton is Rs. 2.50 in Colombo if one can get it? That various excuses have been trotted out by the authorities as to why the meat prices are so much higher than the ordained controlled-price but none of them can explain why the prices keep shooting up and why meat is only available on

three or four days a week in Colombo? That the Livestock Board, which had staged a major tamasha during the Nonaligned Summit by supplying limited quantities of packeted boneless meat at Rs. 3 a pound has now withdrawn from the market? That from time to time the SLBC boasts that the Livestock Board was once again on the verge of supplying the public with boneless meat at Rs. 3 a pound? That this "threat" has not been implemented for a long time? That the Government media tries to cheat the "left-minded" by conjuring the age-old propaganda gimmick of saying that "mudalalis" were cornering the meat and artificially pushing up the prices? That when this excuse was blown skyhigh, a top government official came out with a novel theory that the peasants in the Wannu had become so rich after the plentiful Mahaweli harvest (sic!) that they were not inclined to sell their cattle? That, when this thin story did not cut any ice, a new theory was propounded that the Wannu owners of cattle were now eating so much meat that they had no cattle to sell to butchers in urban areas? That all this circumlocution is only to hide the well-known fact that the number of animals has diminished by leaps and bounds after the stupid and insane manner in which Land Reform was (and is still being) implemented? That one result of Land Reform is that all cattle food has disappeared from the market? That a bag of 112 lbs of coconut poonac, which less three years ago had been considered expensive at Rs. 15, is now over Rs. 200? That even at this price it is often not available? That rice bran which was sold at Rs. 2 a bag is now over Rs. 20? That at these prices, cattle owners have been liquidating their herds? That the point has now been reached where there are only few herds with farmers and small owners? That these are fast disappearing? That the big herds were liquidated when the big estates and big owners were "taken over"? That some of these herds were taken over by the Livestock Board, the Janawasamas and Usawasamas? That only the Livestock Board is endeavouring to make some headway in rehabilitating the industry (by expending vast governmental funds)?



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