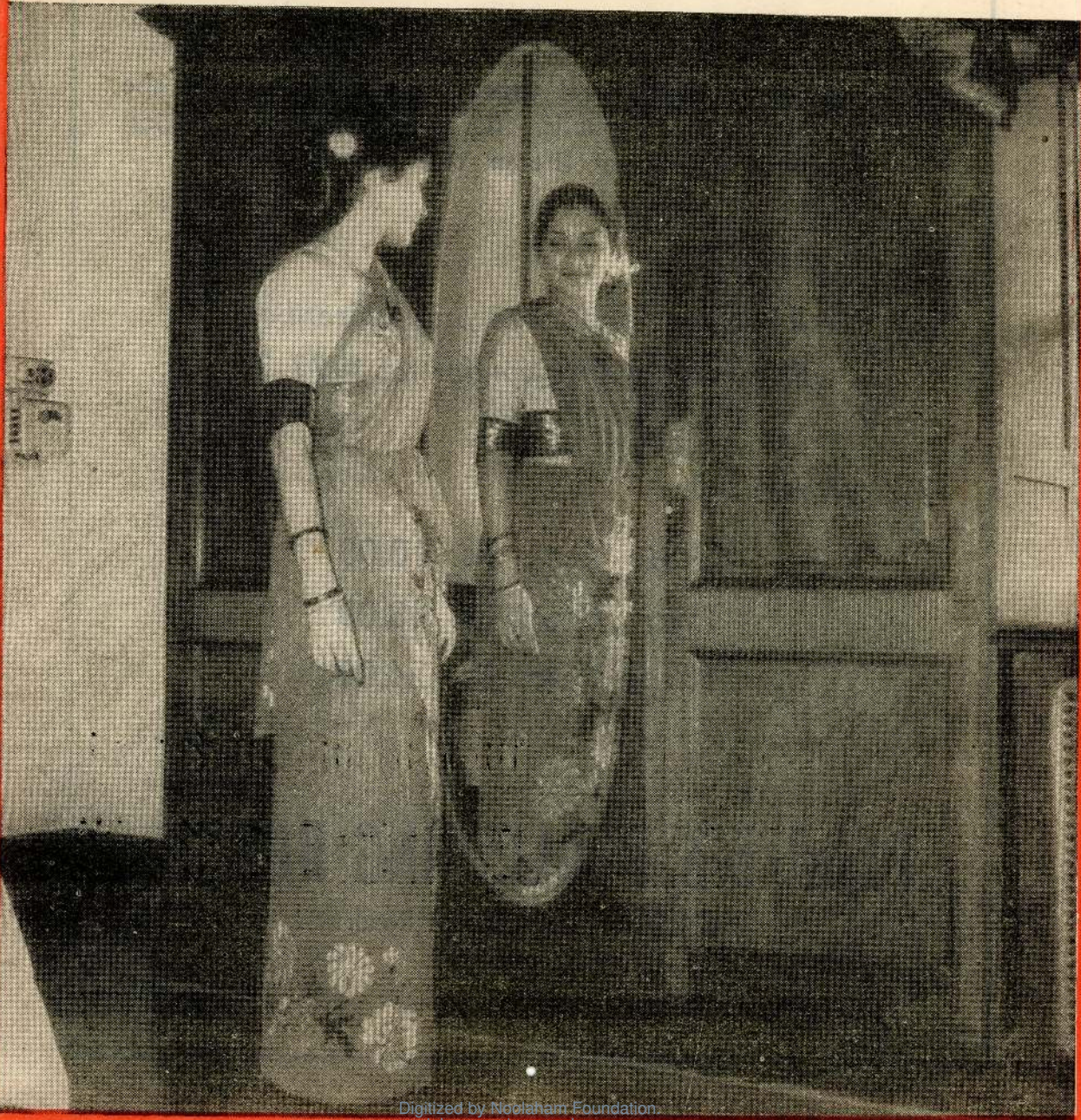


# TRIBUNE



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# Letter From The Editor

WITH CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR, just round the corner, there is a rush for textiles of all kinds and varieties. It is not only the Christians who are in the stampede. December is the time for annual bonuses and loans and with this money most families seek to replenish their stock of clothes. And with the new school year, parents have to buy clothes for their children. For the last fifteen years, the Governments in power have striven to increase the quantity of textiles produced in the country. Since 1956, there has been concerted action to make this country self-sufficient in textiles. Textile mills have been set up under government auspices at Veyangoda, Thulhiriya, Pugoda, and now Minneriya. Private textile factories have been established (including some to manufacture synthetics) in many places: Colombo, Ja-ela, Ratmalana, Kandy, Maharagama and other places. It is also a fact that the installed capacity of our modern textile factories is sufficient to meet the wildest expectations of our population for textiles with a fair quantity left over for export. In addition, we have an installed capacity for handloom fabrics which can well supply a substantial part of the textiles' requirements of the island. But, in spite of all this potential capacity for production, there is a chronic shortage of textiles. This is especially so in cottons. Synthetic manufacturers were permitted a free hand (with tax holidays) for a long time and in this period they charged exorbitant prices for their goods, and most of them recovered their capital in less than five years. There is now a new awakening that tax holidays do not induce purposeful and worthwhile development: and, that they only succeeded in creating a new variety of *nouveu riche* who have become a cancerous sore on the body politic of Sri Lanka. Price control measures and a governmental system of distribution through the co-ops, the CWE and the like, have not brought even the textiles we produce to those who need them. A section of the consuming public, who know how to get through the labyrinthian intricacies of our co-operative system, succeeded in getting part of their requirements, but a larger section have been completely overwhelmed by the bureaucratic methods of the co-operative world. Furthermore, the co-ops have the textiles when the consumers attached to them do not have the cash, and by the time they get the money the textiles have all disappeared into the blackmarket. The old-time shop keeper always extended the necessary credit to keep his customers happy and the little extra he charged was something no one grudged paying (for the service). But today, we are in the era of the co-operatives where the bulk of the population has been reduced to buying textiles from black-marketeters (having none of the friendly ties the retailer had maintained with his regular customers); and these blackmarketeters extort unconscionable prices because they are only quick-money adventurers who use professional queue-standers to buy part of the stocks from governmental agencies using ration books and the like from these who have no money to buy the textiles at the current prices (and the other part comes from wholesale leakage organised by the co-op bureaucracy. This blackmarket is possible only because the quantities produced by our textile factories are not enough to meet our needs. The Prime Minister has bemoaned the fact, on several occasions, that our textiles factories, the state-owned units, have not produced anywhere near capacity. Statistics are not available, but we will not be far wrong if we state that the totality of our state-owned cotton textiles factories have not produced even fifty percent of capacity. In some recent years, production in some factories has dropped to about thirty percent of capacity. One fact which has not been (conveniently) stressed in recent times is that Thulhiriya—a GDR aid project—is capable of producing all the textiles (and more) this country requires if its productive capacity was fully utilised. The products from the other factories could easily have been exported. But, to meet the Christmas and New Year rush, this year, the Government has imported textiles from a number of countries. The young lady on the cover this week carries her clothes very well, but what she could have bought for fifty rupees ten years ago will cost ten times that (at least five hundred rupees) today. Wages and incomes however, have not gone up proportionately, (except for the CRAs and the tax-free elite) and that is the crux of the socio-political-economic explosion threatening to burst in our midst today.

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**EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK****The Minister And  
The GMOA**

IF ANYBODY IS TO BE BLAME for the tragic impasse which has arisen between the doctors and the Government, the blame must be placed squarely and completely on the Minister of Health, Mrs. Siva Obeyesekere. It may seem ungallant to blame a member of the fair sex for lapses of any kind in the discharge of her Ministerial functions, but taking into consideration all the relevant factors that have contributed to the walkout staged by the doctors on Tuesday (December 7) afternoon, we have no alternative but to come to the conclusion that the Minister of Health has brought it all upon herself and the Government.

She had very successfully carried on a press campaign to make the doctors appear as petty criminals out to kill as many patients as possible. Elsewhere in this issue, a *Tribune* Investigator, has spotlighted the manner in which the Minister had started the offensive against the doctors. This was even before the doctors had started their work-to-rule campaign. She had stepped up this campaign after the work-to-rule had started. Supported by *Lake House*, the Ministerial efforts had raised a smokescreen in which some of the basic issues had been clouded. And the GMOA itself had not presented its case with vigour and had let the Minister get away with murder (propaganda).

Last week, the GMOA and the AMS seem to have woken up and have succeeded, through the good offices of the *Daily Mirror*, to focuss attention on the crucial matters that stood between the Minister and the GMOA and the AMS.

Ministerial propaganda had made it out that the doctors were more concerned about leaking roofs, travelling allowances and overtime pay than anything else, but though these are important issues, a dialogue was not possible because of two or three matters of high principle on which the Minister seemed unwilling to enter into negotiations. In fact, it now ap-

pears that the Minister had wanted to present a *fait accompli* in these matters by unilateral decisions covering them with Cabinet sanction. It is this kind devious strategy on the part of the Minister that has united the doctors to back the GMOA and AMS.

One of the main points at issue arises from the Ministerial attempt (whether the Cabinet has fallen for it is not yet clear) is to scrap the *Point Scheme* for transfers, promotions and appointments. This had been virtually "forced" down a reluctant GMOA and AMS in 1973 by a decision of the Cabinet. The *Point Scheme* replaced the earlier practice of relying solely on seniority for transfers, promotions and appointments to the special posts. It was argued that mere seniority should not be sole criterion of ability and efficiency, and the new scheme had a schedule of points to establish the ability and efficiency of a doctor. It is no doubt true that the GMOA had been reluctant to accept the *Point Scheme* fearing abuse in the way the points were awarded—many had thought the seniority test was the lesser of the two evils—but once the Scheme was implemented the members of the GMOA had geared themselves to work within it and had endeavoured to secure points by publishing research papers and pass specialist exams.

Now, the doctors say, the Minister wants the *Point Scheme* scrapped and has told the GMOA that since they had opposed it in 1972 they had no business to object to the scrapping now. The GMOA's retort has been that if the Government was inclined to scrap a Scheme it had formulated and introduced, it was welcome to it, but that this scrapping should not be used to transfer and promote persons "retrospectively" on the basis that the scheme had been scrapped: that if vacancies arose when the scheme was in operation such vacancies should be filled in accordance with the rules of the *Point Scheme* then in operation.

**This dispute seems to be the main bone of contention between the Minister and the GMOA and the AMS. And, looked at from any angle, the Minister has no leg to stand on to justify her actions. It will be interpreted, as it**

**is being alleged, that the Point Scheme, is being scrapped to enable some blue-eyed favourites to be given some key appointments which would have gone to others in the normal course under the Point Scheme. If this allegation is true—and this is the one matter about which she has avoided making propaganda (probably because she cannot)—then the public will hold the Minister responsible for the work-to-rule and the walk out.**

Even now, at the time of writing these notes, she has picked on the Medical Superintendent of the Colombo Hospital for not ensuring good accommodation for the doctors, and also chastised the doctors for not bringing the defects in their accommodation to the notice of the Minister—when for months (and years) the GMOA has been howling about these matters. And she continues to preach sermons about the poverty in the country coupling her homilies with appeals that doctors must undergo suffering and tribulations like others—the GMOA should invite the Minister to use only accommodation of this kind for herself—ignoring the unilateral decisions she makes about certain appointments she has made ignoring the *Point Scheme* (which it is believed that she had persuaded the Cabinet to scrap without any discussions with the GMOA in spite of the fact that it was one matters under dispute) in respect to vacancies which had arisen when the *Point Scheme* was in operation. This (virtually surreptitious) scrapping of the *Point Scheme*—if it has happened—is something which no Government, which claims to be trade-union minded, can do, without at least "negotiations" with the trade unions concerned.

The second major matter in issue is the question of permitting particular individuals to "change" their specialities a little before particular vacancies arise, thereby depriving those who had laboured in certain special fields from getting the legitimate fruits of their labour by a sudden intrusion from outside. The *Daily Mirror* drew attention to another matter in dispute in a forceful manner in its issue of Monday 6, 1976 with a front page banner headline:

**FRAUD IN TRANSFER\* LISTS—  
GMOA AND AMS ALLGE ALTE-  
RATIONS.**

"An alleged fraud in the preparation of transfer schedules of Specialists has been uncovered by the Government Medical Officers' Association and the Association of Medical Specialists. The *Daily Mirror* reliably understands that at a meeting of the Transfer Board held on Friday November 26, a schedule purporting to be authentic and correct was presented by the directorate of the Department of Health Services for perusal by the GMOA and AMS. The two associations on examining the schedule found that several alterations and false declarations had been made with regard to date of joining service etc, of some of doctors. It is understood that subsequent to the detection the two associations refused to accept the schedule. The schedule is normally prepared by the Health Department and forwarded to the Transfer Board—comprising the Directorate of the Department and representatives of the GMOA and AMS, for approval. All transfers of medical officers and specialists are subject to this schedule which has to be approved by the Transfer Board."

The news report indicates that it was not merely the question of the scrapping of the Point Scheme to enable favourites to creep upwards that the GMOA was fighting against but also jobbery and skulduggery of the worst kind.

On the next day, Tuesday, December 7, the *Daily Mirror* published a joint statement from the Presidents of the GMOA and AMS under a striking headline: ARE YOU WAITING FOR US TO STRIKE?

The *Daily Mirror* introduced the statement thus:

**The GMOA and the AMS are willing to call off the work-to-rule if the Minister of Health reverses "her unilateral decisions on some of our crucial demands", states Dr. R. R. Cooke, President of the GMOA and Dr. Rienzie Peiris, President of the AMS in a joint statement issued yesterday.**

**In their joint statement the presidents of the two unions cite cases where Ministers**

**(including the Minister of Health) have had discussions with strikers and pose the question whether the Minister is waiting till the doctors go on strike and bring the health services to a standstill to have discussions with them. THE JOINT STATEMENT ADDS: While the doctors' work-to-rule campaign now move into its seventh week, the Government has done nothing constructive to resolve the present deadlock with the two Trade Unions.**

During the past week, through both the Budget debate on the Health Vote as well as public meetings elsewhere, the public have been given some insight into the Government's interpretations (or mis-interpretations) of the work-to-rule. It is only in order therefore, that the doctors' unions re-state their own position clearly, lest any misconceptions be created in the public mind. We also have to clearly explain our position in regard to the present impasse which the Ministry precipitated and therefore has to take full responsibility for. We cannot accept the Government's stand of refusal to negotiate with our unions till we call off the work-to-rule when in fact the same "fair" Minister hurriedly summoned the nurses' trade unions to the negotiating table when they struck work only a few days ago.

Nor do we have to remind the public that the Education Ministry met all the demands including the removal of the Campus President while a strike continued in full strength at Peradeniya. The strikes at the Colombo Municipality and the CTB were also resolved in like manner before the trade union actions were called off. We wonder whether the Minister of Health will only grant our demands if we too go on strike and bring the health services to a stand still. We are not unwilling to call off the work-to-rule and resume negotiations when the proper climate is recreated by the Ministry; and this could be achieved by the Minister, reversing her unilateral decisions on some of our crucial demands.

A supreme instance of such a unilateral decision on her part relates to the filling of vacancies that have existed in specialist posts in the General Hospital Colombo

for nearly two years now. On assuming office as Minister of Health, she was in complete agreement with the two unions that these vacancies should be filled according to the rules and criteria that were in operation at the time these vacancies arose, viz the points scheme, and that no changes should be made in the scheme employed for the filling of these posts, and that no change in criteria should be employed with retrospective effect for the filling of vacancies that had arisen prior to the contemplation of change of criteria. It would be crystal clear to any reader that this is only just and fair. While we have been agreeable to reviewing the criteria for filling vacancies arise in the future (as from say, the time the present Minister assumed office) the membership will not endure the affront of retrospective change of rules for the existing vacancies.

With regard to the channelled consultation practice, we have learnt unofficially that the Government has appointed a sub-committee to look into this. We regret that this committee has been appointed four years too late, and demand that the status quo of islandwide channelled practice

**LETTER**

**Hindu Education 1840-1880**

Sir,

The article in the *Tribune* of October 23, 1976, (Vol. 21 No. 21) entitled *Hindu Education 1840-1880* by K. Arumainayagam could be seen correctly if you would read the *Hindu Organ*, Jaffna, of July 7, 1971. Williams Nevins alias Muttu cumran Sidamparapillai found the Hindu College and handed it over to Advocate Nagalingam and Nadaraja Chettiar, brother of Wytilinga Chettiar, of the Saiva Paripalana Saba. His (Nevins) photograph is still hanging in the Hindu College as its founder. J. M. Nevins Selvadurai was the Principal from 1892 to 1925 and after 5 years he came back as Principal till he retired.

**Dr. D. D. Nevins Selvadurai**  
20, Ebenezer Place,  
Dehiwela.  
14.11.76

be restored while the committee moves into deliberations at its leisure for future reference.

While the dispute had reached this crucial stage, the Minister seems to have hastened to take some unilateral decisions regarding the appointment of posts. She thus broke every known principle of trade union or even governmental by practice seeking to end a dispute and have her own way by taking unilateral decisions.

It was only natural that the doctors should stage a walk

out. If anybody provoked the walk out, it was Minister by her unilateral decisions. If any people die as a result of what is tantamount to a strike then the Minister is to blame.

On Wednesday, the *Daily News* tried hard to pull the chestnuts out of the fire by proclaiming that a Committee of the Cabinet had recommended that channelled practice would be abolished. This was also one of the demands of the GMOA, but at the moment the

crux of the dispute had now boiled down to the unilateral decisions of the Minister. The Minister also indulged in sermons about the complaints of the doctors about accommodation and other trivia compared to matters of importance centred around the unilateral decisions she had taken.

It is difficult to envisage what would happen in the next few days. It will not be long before the cry is raised the MINISTER MUST GO.

## SRI LANKA CHRONICLE

# Nov. 21 — Nov. 24

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

CDN—Ceylon Daily News; CDM—Ceylon Daily Mirror; CO—Ceylon Observer; ST—Sunday Times; DM—Dinamina; LD—Lankadipa; VK—Virakesari; ATH—Aththa; SM—Silumina; SLD—Sri Lankadipa; JD—Janadina.

**SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 21:** Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike, in a statement issued yesterday while expressing sorrow at the death of an undergraduate over the incidents at Peradeniya said certain political elements were trying to exploit the situation for their own ends; in her statement she warned that government will take every step to maintain law order in the country and will not brook lawlessness; she also said as promised a commission will be named soon to probe the incidents that occurred at Peradeniya Campus; she posed the question as to why these political elements which are so concerned about the death of the student did not utter a word over an incident in the Campus where a woman undergraduate was pushed out from an upper story of a building who is now an invalid owing to certain acts of some students; finally she requested all parents to inform their children not to fall victims in the hands of these political parties which were seeking their own sectarian advantage—ST & CO. According to the *Sunday Times* a senior judge of the Supreme Court was likely to be appointed to head the Commission that would be appointed to probe the Peradeniya incidents. Mr. J. C. T. Kotalawela, Chairman of the CTB, told the *Sunday Observer* yesterday that bus services were normal in the city during the one-day token strike and except a handful of employees the majority of them reported for duty. Following detections of forged degree certificates to obtain jobs, the Ministry of Public Administration has ordered that, the certificates of all public sector employees who joined the service after 1968 should be checked with Registrar of the University—ST. The GMOA has extended its work-to-rule campaign to include all Medical Officers of Health—ST. Following a shortage for cat-guts and other essential materials all surgery in state hospitals may come to a halt very soon—ST. Immigration authorities said over 75,000 Indian passport

holders are overstaying their temporary Residence Permits—CO. According to the *Sri Lankadipa* Philippines has agreed to supply all requirements of sugar to the country at a special rate while Japan has agreed to supply rice; these were undertakings given to the Prime Minister who recently returned after a visit to these countries and Malaysia. The annual Sahitya Day celebrations will be held this year at Attanagalle on the 27th and 28th of this month—SM. The Colombo Museum will soon be built into a large museum complex, the biggest in South Asia; this has been decided to coincide with the centenary celebrations of the Colombo Museum which falls next year—SM. Replying to certain statements made in the House by Mr. R. Premadasa, First MP (UNP) for Colombo Central, against Mr. Anura Bandaranaike, Chief Organiser of the SLFP Youth Leagues, the latter told a meeting in Attanagalle that at no occasion he demanded the resignation of the Minister of Education after the Peradeniya incidents—SLD.

**MONDAY, NOVEMBER 22:** According to the *Daily Mirror* Police will enforce the move-on bylaw from today in all parts of the island and demonstrations on public highways will be a taboo; instructions have gone out to all police stations to arrest students demonstrating opposite their schools; armed police will be posted all over Colombo city and the entrances to the city will be guarded; Police said students found outside their schools during school hours will be arrested. "As far as the CTB was concerned the strike on last Friday was a total failure", Mr. J. C. T. Kotalawela, Chairman of the CTB, told the *Daily Mirror*. Mr. T. B. Ilangaratne, Minister of Public Administration, Trade and Home Affairs, met representatives of Government clerical servants at his office and discussed several demands by unions; seven major issues raised by these unions were resolved at these talks; the Minister is expected to meet several other trade unions of the Government clerical servants during the course of the week—CDN & CDM. Netherlands will gift four million US dollars to Sri Lanka through the World Health Organisation for the eradication of malaria in the country—CDN. Over six lakhs of students will sit the GCE O Level and the NCGE examinations from December 11 to January 6—CDN. According to the *Dinamina* a large consignment of coriander imported by the Co-operative Wholesale Establishment from Pakistan was found to be adulterated with sand; the CWE employed a large number of workers to clean this consignment before making distributions. According to the *Virakesari*

government has ordered the Police not to enter the Peradeniya Campus without a request from the President of the Campus. Mr. R. Premadasa, First MP for Colombo Central declared at a meeting in Matugama that if the UNP is returned to power in the next general elections it had plans to give employment to over 4 lakhs of youth in one programme immediately—YK. The SLFP Parliamentary Group which meets today at the party headquarters is expected to discuss in detail the Peradeniya shooting incident—YK. Mr. Premadasa Udagama, Director General of Education, told the *Virakesari* that the Ministry was considering a proposal to have two sessions in the campuses of the University so that more number of students could be admitted beginning from the next academic year. According to the *Lankadipa* leaders of trade unions affiliated to the LSSP have criticised the leadership for the failure of the strike launched by the party on November 19. Mr. K. B. Reddy, General Secretary of the Asian Youth Council, told a seminar in Colombo that Mr. Anura Bandaranaike, son of Prime Minister Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike and Mr. Sanjay Gandhi, son of Mrs. Indira Gandhi, Prime Minister of India, were two youth leaders in Asia with a bright future ahead of them—LD. Mr. Batty Weerakoon, General Secretary of Ceylon Federation of Labour, told the *Janadina* that statistics published by Government media on the attendance of employees of November 19, the day of the token strike launched by the LSSP, were false—JD. The *Janadina* in an editorial said the statement by the Prime Minister on incidents at the Peradeniya Campus was a contempt to the entire student population of the country.

**TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 23:** Following a request by the Prime Minister, the Minister of Labour will explore the possibility of implementing the five-day week in the private sector too, under a collective agreement—CDN. At a top-level conference held at the Ministry of Justice yesterday the terms of reference of the Commission that would be appointed to inquire into the incidents of the Peradeniya Campus of the University was finalised: the Students Council of the Peradeniya Campus expressed its gratitude to the Minister of Irrigation, Power and Highways, Mr. Maithripala Senanayake, and to two other Ministers, Messrs. Hector Kobbekaduwa and Pieter Kanneman for taking prompt action regarding the incidents at the Peradeniya Campus—CDN. At a special meeting of the Government Parliamentary Group held yesterday Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike alerted government MPs about attempts by certain elements to exploit the Peradeniya incidents for their own advantage: the Premier assured members that she would take every action to maintain law and order in the country and said that he proposed Commission to probe the incident would be appointed in a day or two—CDM. The Opposition has given notice in the National State Assembly for the appointment of a Select Committee to inquire into the incidents of the Peradeniya Campus—CDM. The GMA in a press release yesterday said owing to the work-to-rule campaign launched by the GMA on the AMS health services in the country have deteriorated to a point where the Ministry of Health cannot be complacent: the press release further said the Ministry was conveying a wrong impression to the public regarding the work-to-rule—CDM. Commenting on the new move on law launched by the Police yesterday said school children

throughout the island were on their best behaviour yesterday—CDM. Mr. M. Thiruchelvam, Q.C., former Minister in the UNP Government and one of the prominent leaders of the Tamil United Liberation Front, died yesterday at the age 70: several Ministers, MPs, judges, leaders of the Opposition and diplomats expressed sorrow at the death of Mr. Thiruchelvam. The Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike, addressing a meeting in Colombo yesterday said even certain school teachers and principals incited school children to participate in anti-government demonstrations following the Peradeniya incidents—LD.

**WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 24:** On the recommendation by the Prime Minister the President, Mr. William Gopallawa, yesterday appointed Mr. Justice D. Wimalaratne to the one-man commission to probe the Peradeniya incidents: the Commission has been requested to submit its report before the 31st of December, this year: the Ministry of Education yesterday reminded all Heads of schools that it was their duty to see that strict discipline was maintained in all schools: the Ministry also appealed to all parents and guardians to see that children behaved well and did not become instruments in the hands of certain elements with ulterior motives—CDN. The Speaker of the House, Mr. Stanley Tillekeane, yesterday ordered that Mr. Prins Goonesekera, MP for Habaraduwa, be removed from the House when he refused to leave and refused to withdraw certain words he spoke—CDN. Nearly 800 students of the Medical Faculty of the Colombo Campus decided to continue their strike indefinitely which they launched last Monday protesting against the shooting incidents at the Peradeniya Campus—CDN. The Opposition parties have given notice of a no-confidence motion against the Government following the shooting incidents at the Peradeniya Campus—CDM. The President of the Vidyodaya Campus Students Union was arrested by the Police yesterday for having a poster with him regarding the Peradeniya incidents: this was revealed in the NSA yesterday by Mr. Ronnie de Mel MP for Devinuwara, and Mr. Prins Gunasekera, MP for Habaraduwa—CDM. Mr. K. B. Ratnayake, Minister of Transport, told the NSA yesterday that the Speaker should take action against the MP for Kiriella, Mr. Vasudeva Nanayakkara, for bringing a wreath into the House last Friday after the Opposition staged a walk-out: the Speaker made order that the MP concerned should see him in the Chamber: the MP was not present in the House when the Minister of Transport made this complaint to the Speaker—CDM. The Government decided this week that insurgents who were convicted and given suspended sentences could apply for jobs in the State sector notwithstanding the suspended sentences imposed on them—CDM. In several parts of the country shops were closed as a mark of respect to late Mr. M. Thiruchelvam who died in Colombo on Monday: the funeral will take place today—YK. Trade unions affiliated to the SLFP, CP and UNP and the LSSP will not participate in the one-day token general strike launched by the CMU, CWC, students federations and some other trade unions on November 26—YK. The LSSSP has said that it would give its moral support to the strike launched by several trade unions on November 26—DM. The Ministry of Education has announced that it would meet out stern punishment on teachers who incite students to participate in demonstrations

against the government on account of the Peradeniya incidents—LD.

\* \* \*

## INTERNATIONAL DIARY

### Nov. 18 – Nov. 20

**THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 18:** President Carlos Andres Peres of Venezuela told the United Nations General Assembly that the rise in oil price was not for the selfish benefit of the members of the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) but "the irrevocable decision to dignity the terms of trade"; he also said that, for the first time the Third World countries have been given a chance to negotiate with the industrialised western nations. President Ford and President elect Jimmy Carter will meet for the first time early next week in White House since Jimmy Carter won the Presidential elections: Mr. Carter will meet Secretary of State, Dr. Henry Kissinger, in Georgia next Saturday. Two black nationalist leaders, Robert Mugabe and Joshua Nkomo, rejected the British proposal for a date for independence to Rhodesia: they further said it would be futile for the conference to discuss other matters without arriving at a date for the independence: meanwhile, conference Chairman Ivor Richard began, a round of Private talks with black leaders and other delegates to try to move the negotiations forward and discuss the structure of an interim government in Rhodesia. At a meeting in Brussels the European Economic Community warned Japan to take concrete action to curb car exports to Britain, to cut its ship building output and buy more EEC canned goods or face retaliation from Community member states. Madame Teng Ying-chao, wife of late Chinese Premier Chou En-lai, returned to public life once again following the purge of four leftists. A report published in Washington said earthquakes killed more people in the first ten months of 1976 than any other year since 1970: once final figures are reached the toll could pass the 150,000 mark, according to these reports. Yugoslavia presented the Order of Freedom to visiting Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev: this is the highest military award in Yugoslavia. Japan's Prime Minister Takeo Miki said that he would continue as Prime Minister of Japan if his party wins the December 5 elections despite a certain section of his Democratic Liberal Party's (LDP) call for him to step-down.

**FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 19:** Beauty queens of Sri Lanka, Malaysia and Seychelles pulled out of the Miss World contest to be held in London this week protesting against the participation of South Africa in the contest: earlier India, Liberia, Mauritius and Swaziland withdrew from the contest. African nationalist leader Bishop Muzorewa yesterday denied that he was negotiating secretly with Britain for the independence of Rhodesia: he accused two other black negotiators of "cheap power politics". Palestinian commando factions were engaged in a battle in Beirut yesterday and the Syrian forces under the Arab peace keeping formula moved into the battle field to separate the two fighting factions: this is the first clash in Lebanon since the Syrian troops, acting under the Arab League mandate were deployed in the city two days ago. President

elect Jimmy Carter met his top Democratic Party members yesterday in his home town of Georgia and discussed the formation of his government on January 20. China claimed yesterday that its latest nuclear test had boosted its military power and dealt a heavy blow at the two super powers: China did not reveal the size of the Hydrogen bomb but made big claims over this blasting unlike the three previous tests it conducted during the course of this year. Thailand Prime Minister, Thanin Kraivichian, said yesterday that 323 of the 3,146 students arrested during the takeover by military is still being detained and they will be tried and those found guilty will be jailed. *Tass* describing the meeting of Leonid Brezhnev and Marshal Tito in Belgrade said the meeting between the founder member of the Non-aligned Movement and the leader of the leading socialist country in the world indicated a close co-operation between the socialist countries and the Non-aligned nations: Mr. Brezhnev in his speech said this co-operation between the socialist countries and the Non-aligned movement could effectively free mankind's tomorrow from the threat of the thermonuclear war and imperialists threats.

**SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 20:** 21-year old Miss Jamaica, Cindy Breakspere, won the Miss World contest in London yesterday: until the last minute there was speculation whether the Jamaican beauty will pull out of the contest over the participation of South Africa. Thailand's Foreign Minister, Upadit Pachaiyankum, said despite confrontation between Bangkok and Hanoi Thailand will support the application of Vietnam for United Nations membership: Vietnam's application has been vetoed by the United States which wanted more information from Hanoi over missing American soldiers in the Vietnam war. At the UNESCO general conference in Nairobi Israel was condemned for its policies in the occupied Arab territories: following this it is expected that Israel might not allow the UNESCO fact-finding missions to visit occupied Arab territories. British Chairman of the Geneva conference on Rhodesia said his country would soon announce a closing date for negotiations: it is understood Britain has taken this measure in order to drive out the stalemate over a date for the independence of Rhodesia. European Economic Commission announced in Luxembourg that the western countries would be doomed if oil exporting countries imposed a price hike at their meeting of the OPEC in Qatar next month. Israel yesterday said that Arab countries have spent over 35 billion dollars since 1973 on purchase of arms: visiting Israeli Transport Minister, Gab Yzacobi, said in Mexico that Israel is ready to sign any pact whatsoever for lasting peace in the Middle East. Chilean government announced yesterday that it was ready to release all political prisoners except for eighteen prisoners. K. D. Malavia, Indian Minister for Petroleum Products, said yesterday that the Government would soon nationalise the Caltex oil company, an American firm operating in India. Reports from Brussels said the European Economic Community's talks with Japan for resolving the trade problems failed.

TRIBUNE, December 11, 1976



## The New Personality Cult

—Chairman Hua—

Compiled by Kautiliya

One of the most interesting features of the changes presently overtaking Communist China is the personality cult that is being developed in a hurry to make Hua Kuo-feng a successor to Mao Tse-tung.

K. V. Narain in a despatch to the *Hindu*, 10/11/76, sets out the story of the succession citing a leading article from the *Army daily paper*, Tokyo, Nov. 9,

Though the custer from power of the four Shanghai radicals, led by Mao Tse-tung's widow, Chiang Ching, became known to the outside world only last month, an acute power struggle within the Chinese Communist Party had been going on for nearly two years with Chairman Mao himself ranged against the "gang of four" as they have now, come to be known. Some light on this hitherto hidden aspect has been thrown by a lengthy editorial carried by the "Liberation Army Daily", official organ of the People's Liberation Army yesterday. The text of the editorial was issued by the official *Hsinhua* news agency today. According to the editorial, the disgraced four had been engaging in conspiratorial activities over a period of time in an attempt to usurp top party and State leadership. Mao, however, saw through the plot and made it impossible for their schemes to be achieved.

As long ago as before the fourth National People's Congress in January last year, the gang of four went in for conspiratorial activities "to usurp power in a big way". After Premier Chou En-lai's death early this year, the four tried their best "to push their person into the post of Premier". The editorial did not clarify who this person was. However, Mao "absolutely refused to give the power to them and he personally proposed Mr. Hua

Kuo-feng for acting Premiership". This was opposed by the four with might.

To block their intrigues, Mao himself further proposed that Mr. Hua be the first Vice-Chairman of the party Central Committee and Premier of the State Council. Not long after this, Mao wrote to Mr. Hua in his own handwriting. "With you in charge, I am at ease". Thus, Mr. Hua's position as successor to Mao was established and the plots of the gang of four to usurp party and State power were completely routed. It was after this acute struggle that Mr. Hua became leader of the party. The editorial said that before he passed away, Mao told Mr. Hua the story of Liu Pang, the founding Emperor of the Han dynasty, who just before his death perceived that Empress Lu and others of her clan were conspiring to betray the nation and usurp power. It said Mr. Hua bore Mao's advice in mind and lived up to his earnest expectations apparently by crushing the plot of the gang of four.

Yesterday, Vice-Premier Ku Mu told a visiting Japanese economic delegation in Peking that China had become increasingly united and stabilised through the expulsion of the gang of four. The Vice-Premier also said that production in China this year was rising, compared with last year, after overcoming the intervention of the gang of four and severe natural calamities. Mr. Ku Mu explained that although the ousted Vice-Premier, Mr. Teng Hsiao-ping had been criticised for committing mistakes, Mr. Teng's status as a party member had been preserved. The gang of four had utilised Mr. Teng's mistakes and tried to overthrow elder leaders of the party and Government.

The *French AFP*, in despatch from Peking on November 9 drew pointed attention to the new personality cult.

The first signs that a personality cult is being built up for Chairman Hua appeared to-day in a leader on the front page of the *People's Daily*. The article reaffirmed that Mr. Hua Kuo-feng was "trained and selected" by Chairman Mao to succeed him, against the wishes of the so-

called "gang of four"—Mao's wife Chiang Ching and the three other radical leaders arrested in Peking last month and accused of wanting to seize power.

The article recalled the "wealth of experience" amassed by Mr. Hua Kuo-feng in contemporary Chinese history and his administrative ability at all levels, from districts to the national level. It went on: "Educated by Chairman Mao himself, comrade Hua Kuo-feng is an outstanding marxist leader who has the talent and ability to take charge of the overall work of the whole party and the whole country, being capable of correctly handling major party and State issues under difficult and complex circumstances."

"Comrade Hua Kuo-feng is democratic in style of work, unassuming and approachable, good at uniting with comrades to work together, maintains close ties with masses, shows concern for the people's well-being, firmly stands by them, works wholeheartedly in their interests and is of one heart with the proletariat and the labouring people", it added.

But, it is the *Liberation Army Daily*, however, which outlined the dynamics of the personality cult—something obviously essential to sell Hua Kuo-feng to the Chinese people. It would be useful to cite in extenso this editorial.

*Peking, November 8, 1976 (Hsinhua),*

Comrade Hua Kuo-feng as leader of our party is Chairman Mao's wise decision" is the title of an article by the editorial department of the "Liberation Army Daily" which appears today. Full text follows:

Comrade Hua Kuo-feng has become Chairman of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and Chairman of the C.P.C. Central Committee Military Commission; the Party Central Committee headed by Comrade Hua Kuo-feng smashed at one blow the plot of the anti-party clique of Wang Hung-wen, Chang Chun-chiao, Chiang Ching and Yao Wen-yuan to usurp party and state power. The two great joyous events are great victories for Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tse-tung thought and a very bright chapter in

the history of our party. The whole party, the whole army and the people of all nationalities throughout the country are highly delighted and immensely proud and happy that we again have our own leader and supreme commander.

Our great leader and teacher Chairman Mao himself trained, selected and arranged for Comrade Hua Kuo-feng to be the successor. Comrade Hua Kuo-feng's becoming leader of our party is a wise decision that Chairman Mao made before he passed away. Chairman Mao selected the successor for our party after acute struggles against the two bourgeois headquarters of Liu Shao-chi and Lin Piao and against the Wang-Chang-Chiang - Yao anti-party clique. Over a period of time, Wang, Hung-wen, Chang Chun-chiao, Chiang Ching and Yao-Wen-yuan formed a "gang of four" engaging in conspiratorial activities in a vain attempt to usurp top party and state leadership. Chairman Mao showed great insight and promptly criticized and refuted them and made it impossible for their schemes to be achieved. Chairman Mao had boundless faith in Comrade Hua Kuo-feng and felt at ease giving him the heavy task of leading the party and country. On the eve of the Fourth National People's Congress, the "gang of four" went in for conspiratorial activities to usurp power in a big way. Chairman Mao saw through their naked ambitions and told them not to "form the cabinet". After the esteemed and beloved Premier Chou En-lai passed away, the "gang of four" did their utmost to push their person into the post of Premier. Chairman Mao absolutely refused to give the power to them and he personally proposed Comrade Hua Kuo-feng for acting Premier. The "gang of four" felt bitter hatred and opposed this with might and main. To block their intrigues, Chairman Mao himself further proposed that Comrade Hua Kuo-feng be the first Vice-Chairman of the Party Central Committee and Premier of the State Council. Then, not long after this, Chairman Mao wrote to Comrade Hua Kuo-feng in

his own handwriting "with you in charge I'm at ease".

Thus, Comrade Hua Kuo-feng's position as successor to Chairman Mao was established and the plots of the "gang of four" to usurp party and state power were completely routed. After this acute struggle between the two classes and the two lines, Comrade Hua Kuo-feng, became leader of our party and Chairman Mao's wise decision was quickly realized. This is a great victory for the proletariat over the bourgeoisie and for Marxism over revisionism. The history of the international communist movement and of our party tells us that the proletariat and its political party must have their own marxist leader. History is made by the people and in the course of making history the people will inevitably bring forth their own leaders"... Proceeding from the fundamental interests of the Chinese people and the international cause of communism, Chairman Mao paid great attention to the question successors. In an incisive explanation of the significance of training and bringing up successors to the revolutionary cause, Chairman Mao pointed out: "it is an extremely important question, a matter of life and death for our party and our country. It is a question of fundamental importance to the proletarian revolutionary cause for a hundred, a thousand, nay ten thousand years." He put forward the five requirements for worthy successors to the revolutionary cause of the proletariat and the three basic principles 'practise marxism, and not revisionism; unite, and don't split, be open and for the peoples well-being, firmly stands by them, works wholeheartedly in their interests, and is of one heart with the proletariat and the labouring people.

With far-sightedness and insight, wisdom and resolution, Comrade Hua Kuo-feng never yields on important questions of principle, being patient and prudent while persisting in struggle. Chairman Mao before he passed away told Comrade Hua Kuo-feng the story of Liu pang (the founding Emperor of the Han dynasty), who, just before his death, perceived

that Empress Lu and others of her clan were conspiring to betray the nation and usurp power. Comrade Hua Kuo-feng bore Chairman Mao's advice in mind and lived up to his earnest expectations. At the critical moment when Wang, Chang, Chiang and Yao were making a hastily attempt to usurp party and state power and the revolutionary cause faced grave danger, Comrade Hua Kuo-feng took the decision and the party Central Committee headed by him took very resolute measures to shatter the scheme of the "gang of four" at one stroke, thus saving the revolution and the party. All this has brought into relief the bold vision and revolutionary mettle of Comrade Hua Kuo-feng as a proletarian revolutionary. Practice in the course of revolutionary struggle has fully shown that Comrade Hua Kuo-feng can faithfully carry out Chairman Mao's behests to the letter and steer the ship of revolution over the waves along the course charted by Chairman Mao. As we are hailing Comrade Hua Kuo-feng as our party leader and warmly celebrating the great victory in smashing the plot of the "gang of four" to usurp party and state power, we recall how Chairman Mao devoted his

#### LETTER

##### Peradeniya Incident

Sir,

The tragic incidents of 12th Nov. at Peradeniya will apparently cause a turning point in the fortunes of many in our island. The Academic community of the University has now been subjected a massive shower of public sympathy over the dead body of an undergraduate. At this very moment, I wish to remind the student community of the imposing responsibility they bear for having caused an identical crime; namely the tragic incident concerning Miss Rupa Ratnaseeli, the woman undergrad who jumped off the third floor of a hall of residence during a session of 'ragging' early last year.

S. D. Ebenezer

Nugegoda.  
20.11.76

life and energies to the revolutionary cause of the Chinese people and the people of the world, and how he selected the most reliable successor to the revolutionary cause so that our party and state would not change colour and the people would enjoy happiness generation after generation. All the more do we honour the memory of the great leader Chairman Mao and esteem him, and feel how wise his decision was and how far-reaching its significance.

*Wind and thunder are stirring,  
Flags and banners are flying  
Wherever men live.*

Now that the "four pests" have been stamped out by us under the leadership of the party Central Committee headed by Chairman Hua, our motherland is bubbling with enthusiasm; our 800 million people are in high spirits. Our party has broad prospects. Our country has a boundless future. Let us rally most closely round the party central Committee headed by Chairman Hua, hold aloft the great red banner of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tse-tung thought, strive heroically and press ahead triumphantly to consolidate the dictatorship of the proletariat and achieve the great ideal of communism.

The Hua personality cult had proliferated in a big way within a short time and on November 23, a *Samachar* despatch from Tokyo spoke of a MASSIVE CAMPAIGN TO BUILD MAO-TYPE IMAGE FOR HUA.

China has launched a massive grassroots campaign to build a leadership image for Chairman Hua Kuo-feng and re-educate the masses by interpreting Maoism in terms of production and reconstruction. Between these two parallel campaign objectives continues the sustained attack on Mao Tse-tung's widow, Chiang Ching and other radical leaders. According to the official *Hsinhua News Agency* workers, peasants and miners are daily meeting to hail Chairman Hua as their "wise leader" who "saved the party and revolution". At these meetings, local production and party leaders are recalling their experiences of working with Mr. Hua. Mr. Hua's services to the

cause or revolution are being projected in parallel with Mao's revolutionary work. The *people's Daily*, in a campaign feature yesterday, quoted a veteran Red Armyman, who followed Mao on the Long March to Tsunyi, as recalling that Mao at that time saved the revolution against Wang Ming's "opportunist line" which caused serious losses to the party and Red Army. Just as Mao saved the revolution then, so did Mr. Hua after Mao's death by crushing the "gang of four", the newspaper said. Leading members of local parties are recalling Mr. Hua's remarkable qualities, outstanding ability, revolutionary boldness and far-sighted vision. They say Mr. Hua has long been "tested in the new democratic revolution, socialist revolution and construction, the great proletariat cultural revolution and in the sharp and complicated struggle at home and abroad and he has accumulated a wealth of experience."

Mr. Hua is also being projected as a people's man who is loyal to Marxism, Leninism and Mao's thoughts, selfless, open and straightforward, modest and prudent and good at uniting with comrades and maintaining close ties with the masses. All this epithetical writings recalling his work at prefectural levels at various times finally conclude: "He deserves to be called the wise leader and helmsman of our party. He is certainly capable of leading us in carrying out Chairman Mao's behests." The whole objective of this three-way systematic campaign is to introduce the leader to the masses. Analysts say the campaign is to assure the people that a capable man has been chosen to succeed Mao and to make their acceptance easier. It is also being stressed he was personally appointed by Mao.

*No one should have any illusions about the mechanics of the power struggle. There is no doubt that Chairman Hua got the job with the help of the Army. And how? A short piece from New Delhi's Mainstream (taken from Asiaweek) entitled A PUSH FROM 8341 throws revealing light.*

Ever since Peking became China's capital in 1421 under Ming Em-

peror Yung Lo, the Inner City has remained the exclusive domain of the *Yu Lin Chun*—the royal guards. And the *Yu Lin Chun* always played a crucial role in the earth-shaking power struggles that punctuated the progression of emperors and dynasties in China.

That was one tradition which was retained more or less intact by the communists who took control of Peking in 1949. A master of the political chessboard. Mao Tse-tung had caught on to the importance of "royal guards" early in his career; even before the founding of the People's Republic, he had taken special interest in building up an elite cadre of bodyguards. After 1949 it was steadily built up into the most powerful *Yu Lin Chun* that China had ever known.

A pinnacle of sorts was reached in the 1960s with the Cultural Revolution. The special unit extended its jurisdiction all over Peking proper—from Chung Nan Hai, where top officials live, and Tienanmen to as far as Peking and Tsinghua universities several miles to the north. The significance of this move was that the "royal guards", under the direct command of Mao and beholden to none other, held total sway in the metropolis, pushing the regular Peking Garrison, to which it nominally belonged, into the outskirts.

By this time the unit had grown to about 50,000 handpicked troopers. Initially called the Central Garrison, it was quietly renamed the 8341 Legion sometime during the Cultural Revolution. Entrusted with the primary task of ensuring Mao's personal safety, the 8341 also became the Chairman's special contingent of stormtroopers; it is believed that, under Mao's direct orders, special cells within the crack unit kept detailed tabs on the movements and activities of all persons of note in Peking. The boss of this all-important instrument of power is a man who was Mao's most trusted bodyguard for upwards of 40 years. Wang Tung-hsing. Believed to be in his sixties, Wang is a member of the party's Politburo and director of the General

Office of the party's Central Committee, with access to all files. One American specialist on China put it in his own terms when he noted that "Wang is much more powerful than Edgar Hoover was". Part of his technique is to pick recruits from orphanages and unusually poor families, presumably in the belief that absence of family ties will help the development of single-minded loyalty.

Wang and the 8341 remained fiercely loyal to Mao until the end. However, hindsighted diplomats now say that Wang probably was unhappy when his master ordered him to throw his weight on the side of the Shanghai radicals in the confrontation that developed during and after the Cultural Revolution. When he was Deputy Security Minister from 1955 to 1969, Wang had been disliked by the old Peking clique under Liu Shao-chi. That background and his unquestioned loyalty were perhaps seen by the aging Chairman as factors that made him a natural supporter of the radical group led by Mao's own wife. Wang rose to the challenge. He moved his forces into major factories and the two universities, and set up bastions for radical attacks against their moderate adversaries. This boosted Wang's standing in the country and the party, and in 1969 he was admitted to the Politburo as an alternate member (he was made a full member in 1972). When last seen on the Tiananmen platform on September 30, he stood confidently in tenth place, between Chen Hsi-lien, commander of the Peking Military District, and Wu Teh, mayor of Peking and chief commissar of Chen's troops.

But Wang's involvement in national politics also meant he was in a position to develop ideas of his own. Some experts now claim he was one of the many men in key positions who were disgusted by Chiang Ching's overbearing ways, although the lady had heaped praises on the crack unit. Like other top brass in the military and security establishment, Wang probably tended to be conservative, anyway. In any event, the Tiananmen riot last April was some-

thing of a turning point; as leaders woke up to the fact that the riots would not have happened if the 8341 had acted promptly, doubts arose about Wang's affiliations.

Using Mao's authority, Chiang Ching and Chang Chun-chiao arranged to transfer Mao's nephew Yuan-hsing, a leader of the Liaoning military establishment, to Peking as political commissar of the 8341 Legion. Despite assurances that Yuan-hsing was not there to keep an eye on Wang, the crusty old boss of 8341 was not amused. The time for settling scores came as Mao's death touched off a political tumult. As Security Minister—his last job before becoming Prime Minister—Hua Kuo-feng had already, come into close contact with Wang, and they had hit it off, both being unswerving Mao loyalists. When Hua decided to launch his pre-emptive strike against the Chiang Ching group, Wang was able and willing to lend a hand. Among those summarily purged with the radicals was Mao Yuan-hsing; in the end, the royal nephew was no match for the seasoned cop. As always, the Yu-Lin Chun was on the spot to make history. Latest indications are that the 8341 has been re-absorbed into the Peking Garrison: the Garrison's October 17 message to Premier Hua, pledging support, prominently mentioned that it consisted of many of Mao's personal guards. Apparently Hua is taking no chances and is busy building up his own Yu-Lin Chun.

*The Liberation Army Daily refers to Mao's remembrance of Liu Pang (The founding emperor of the Han dynasty) and the intrigues of the surviving Empress to seize power confirms what many commentators have stated: that "Communist" China is still so very "Chinese" and if one chose to write contemporary history in the Confucian idiom (and not the Marxist-Leninist-Maoist jargon), the story would be same and probably nearer the reality.*

(To be Continued)



## SRI LANKA DOCTORS—3

### The Offensive Against Doctors

—letters from Tangalle and  
Kandy—

by Tribune Investigator

IN THE LAST ARTICLE reference was made to the fact that the doctors (the GMOA and the AMS) had failed to take the necessary publicity measures to win the sympathy and support of the public. It is no doubt true that the statements of the GMOA and AMS were published in parts or whole, in some newspapers but these statements were in the nature of "memoranda" written in the most dry-as-dust officialese—that only doctors and the circles close to them, and others very deeply interested in dispute, read them.

To show that their "trade unions" had teeth, the doctors staged two partial one day token strikes on October 6 and October 15. Without adequate publicity preparation, these strikes were used by the authorities to raise a hue and cry against the doctors: that they were inhuman and callous totally unmindful of the sick: that the country had spent over Rs. 60,000 on the training of each doctor and that they did not have even the slightest feelings of gratitude to the country which had "educated" them at such great expense, etc., etc.

The Minister of Health, Mrs. Siva Obeyesekera, at a meeting, (or conference), of Superintendents of Health Services on October 15 started the ball rolling against the doctors by asking the Superintendents to be strict about giving "leave" to doctors. This was intended to convey to the public the impression that doctors resorted to many subterfuges to cheat the authorities and the country. This was only the opening bars of the campaign which was to mount in the next two weeks. It was presumed that the GMOA and the AMS would launch a total strike in support of their demands and the official campaign was geared to meet this "threat".

## Doctors

The Daily News, of October 16 reported the Ministers' conference and thought it a good journalistic gimmick to headline the report: **NO MORE SUITCASE DOCTORS: Health Superintendents Told Not To "Cover Up" For Doctors on Long Leave.** The public had already been told that doctors were infamous characters who wanted to "emigrate" to get cushy well-paid jobs abroad, they had also been told that doctors were reluctant to travel by CTB vehicles and now they were branded as "suitcase doctors"—everything to create an image which would bring doctors into ridicule and hatred among the public. The Daily News report itself endeavoured to sum up the situation with a slant to make doctors appear as common criminals.

Health Minister Mrs. Siva Obeyesekera assured that Sri Lanka would no longer have "suitcase doctors" whom she classified as doctors whom the Ministry of Health had to shuttle around from post to post to fill vacancies created as a result of doctors quitting the service for employment abroad, going on scholarships and on leave and overstaying their entitlements.

Mrs. Obeyesekera who was addressing the conference of Superintendents of Health Services at her ministry yesterday said that she would consider applications for resignations and for earned leave only twice an year, in February and October, when the new batches of doctors come out from the universities and she could ensure that there is no disruption of service.

Doctors of the Colombo North hospital at Ragama and the Kandy hospital did not report for work yesterday. Nearly a 100 doctors and specialists were involved in what a GMOA spokesman described as a one-day work stoppage in protest against the Health Ministry's handling of demands put forward by the GMOA. The GMOA spokesman said the GMOA's special committee and the Association of Medical Specialists decided on yesterday's work stoppage following the failure of discussion representatives of the two associations had in two rounds of talks with the Health Minister, Mrs. Siva Obeyesekera this week. The GMOA's main demands related to better working conditions for doctors, reconsideration of the ban on channelled practice and better faci-

lities for study leave abroad. The GMOA refused to comment on whether the work stoppage in the two hospitals would spread to other state health institutions but the GMOA had threatened to resort to direct trade union action if the Health Ministry continued to disregard the GMOA's demands.

In a two-hour address to the Superintendents she appealed to them not to recommend applications for long leave in the belief that they could "cover up" for a doctor who went on leave. She said, she did not trust that phrase as it never worked. She appealed to them not to perpetuate another bad system. It was the sacred obligation of her ministry and departments under it to provide the best service possible to look after the precious human lives they had been entrusted with. There was no question of merely covering up.

The minister elaborated the magnitude of the problem of the shortage of doctors. She said the cadre was today short by 183 specialists and 141 medical officers. Additionally, 23 medical officers were on WHO scholarships and another 18 on Colombo Plan scholarships. Over the last five years as many as 684 resignations of doctors had been accepted. Resignations were submitted at an alarming rate and under such circumstances it was difficult to provide a proper service to the 2.2 million indoor patients and 40 million outdoor patients who sought medical attention at government institutions.

In February this year the resignation of 35 doctors had been accepted. Yesterday, she had accepted the resignation of 60 others granted no pay leave for 80 persons who were eligible. From today 140 graduates who had just passed out would be filling these vacancies, but there still was an acute shortage of doctors. Forty doctors who went on scholarships abroad had not yet returned. Forty four others were also overstaying their leave. "Was it fair for them to act in such an irresponsible manner when their country needed them?"

Mrs. Obeyesekera said nobody wanted to compel persons who did not want to serve their country to do so. But these persons continued to be on the cadre thereby blocking opportunities for others and not fulfilling their own obligations of serving the country for the minimum

period expected of them. Mrs. Obeyesekera said there was no doubt that the country's doctors were talented and provided an efficient service, but they should act with responsibility. It was not only doctors who faced problems of cost of living and transport and for whom opportunities were available abroad. They should not think of themselves alone, but the people of this country who needed their services, who were their people and whose service they should be dedicated to, instead of living in a single room in London, travelling by tube and bus and doing their own cooking, which may seem better life for them.

Mrs. Obeyesekera quoted: "Man became great exactly in the degree in which he resolved for the welfare of his fellow beings" and said the doctors should think of this before taking action and resorting to making patients shudder in the OPD.

The minister traced the progress that had been made in the health service during the past six years, and said "it had made an impact on the day-to-day lives of the people".

Among issues she highlighted were—

\* Increase in the health budget from Rs. 236 million in 1970 to Rs. 405 million today.

\* Drop in the birth rate to 1.8.

\* The Triposa program which replaced CARE and benefits 350,000 persons.

\* Massive progress in the family health program with emphasis now being shifted to the estates.

\* Success in the anti-malaria, anti-TB, leprosy and other preventive campaigns, and para-medical services.

\* Streamlining the supply of drugs and ensuring its ready availability.

\* Increasing hospital buildings and providing equipment and personnel.

She announced her immediate plans for the future was the establishment of a hospital at Galle; a new OPD for Kandy a new teaching hospital at Peradeniya; a new OPD for Colombo and working out a system for the two existing teaching hospitals to be peripheral hospitals. She also said she had proposals to revamp the SHS scheme and the dental services.

THE CAMPAIGN against the doctors was augmented by an ava-

lanche of letters-to-the-editor. At the start they were all directed against the doctors, but when it seemed obvious to nearly everyone that they were "manufactured", a few letters "defending" the doctors were also published. On October 18, the *Daily News* had two letters under the general title **GMOA AND ITS DEMANDS**. Sir,

I wish to congratulate you on your no-nonsense editorial of the 12th October on the above subject. The public is getting tired of the crowings of the *GMOA* regarding the services rendered by its members and its simultaneous wails regarding the poor facilities afforded to its members. To put the record straight it must be told that there are other categories of state officers like Police officers and AMPs who also have to put in long hours of work including disturbance after normal hours but are paid paltry salaries and provided with more pitiable living conditions.

It is time that the *GMOA* stopped indulging in nostalgic fantasies where every doctor had a car and owned a mansion like the ones in Colombo 7 with poodles for their wives and nannies for the kids. They must awaken to the realities of a developing socialist state struggling for economic independence where class distinctions and status symbols have been laid to rest.

Our doctors must realise that they have chosen their profession voluntarily urged by the noble motive of selfless service to the suffering masses. It is therefore regrettable that after passing out they are now trying to call the tune.

It would indeed be salutary if instead of being sent on scholarships and fellowships to the West (from where they are both to return or return disgruntled) our doctors are sent to the People's Republic of China to see the bare-foot doctors at work. That would teach them to count their blessings.

#### A Reader

Tangalle.

This A Reader certainly focussed attention on some of punchpoints in the official guidelines against doctors. It praised the *Daily News* editorial of October 12 (cited in the first article in *Tribune*, 13/11/16) and compared them to Police officers, AMP's etc and ended up with a sermon citing the

"barefoot" doctors of China (much beloved by some in Lake House in the pre-Hua period).

But, the second letter was an even letter piece. It was from Kandy. And the writer was Lucky Thompson—no address but just Kandy.

Sir,

Your leader under the above caption is timely and forthright. Doctors form one of the most importance segments of the population. As such, they are vital to the country's development program. While conceding that some of the demands put forward by Sri Lanka's doctors are just and reasonable, the people—including those who, down the years, have espoused the cause of our doctors—would have noted with dismay that the hand of primitive greed appears to hold an increasing number of medical men in its vicious grip. In this context, selfless service to suffering humanity must needs go by the board. Can the sacred Hippocratic Oath be equated with the amount of wealth a doctor can amass during his professional career? Doctors deal with human lives: not with cold machinery and merchandise. Therefore, the welfare of the sick should be uppermost in the mind of every doctor so that self-interest will never supersede service to the sick.

The *GMOA* bemoans the fact that many doctors are forced to live under leaking roofs paying exorbitant rents, travel in crowded buses to conduct clinics etc: We are all too familiar with not only crowded buses but also with ones that belch, splutter and "pass out" long before we reach our destination. As for houses with leaking roofs for which exorbitant rents have to be paid, the wide majority of Lanka's population is forced to grin and bear. It would seem therefore, that where hardships are concerned, the masses and the doctors are equal! As for the "suitcase doctor", let him draw solace from the fact that thousands of people in the Third World do not possess even a battered tin trunk to hold their possessions, let alone a suitcase. (an expanding one, I presume!).

Doctors would do well to bear in mind that the road to socialism is far from smooth. Our own forward march, we must be prepared to put up with imperfect housing, crowded buses, co-ops that are often bare, severe unemployment, an ailing economy—the lot. All sections of the

community should be more concerned about the size of the collective economic cake than about the size of the place each individual gets. I believe it would be in the country's interests if disgruntled doctors are permitted freely to join the hegira to the West. Imposing various restrictions on medical men who seek "greener pastures" is an exercise in futility, akin to holding the reins of a feeling race-horse. Let them go. Those who go for good are certainly not true sons of Mother Lanka, hence the country is better off without them.

Lucy Thompson

Kandy.

The style and idiom of "A Reader" from Tangalle and the omniscient "Lucy Thompson" from Kandy have great similarity. The second letter supplemented the first. It contained all the other "punch points" in the official guidelines (or official brief) against the *GMOA*'s demands. Lucy Thompson speaks of the "primitive greed" (shades of Karl Marx and his acquisitive society). She preached the usual sermon about, "selfless service" and chided doctors for complaining about "leaking roofs", "high rentals" and "crowded buses". She repeated everything said in the *Daily News* editorial of October 12 and concluded with a pontifical outburst about "the road to socialism" and the sacrifices one had to make to attain the "socialist goal".

Lucy Thompson speaks the language of the Shanghai radicals and Mrs. Chiang, but she ignores the "road to capitalism" which is now a dominant road in Sri Lanka with an overflow of CRA exporters, hoteliers, collaborators with foreign capital and the like. Why not preach sermons to these types about "sacrifices" and the need to eschew luxury and live under leaking roofs and travel in crowded buses.

And the *GMOA* would do well to trace Lucy Thompson of Kandy (the *Daily News* should furnish her full address) and find out why she did write the letter and tell her where and why she is wrong.

(To be Continued)

Next

WORK TO RULE BEGINS

\* \*

MARGINALIA

- Educated Elite?
- Colombo?
- "Socialism"?

by Bryan de Kretser

**UNIVERSITY.** So the University at Peradeniya is in trouble again or else is giving the people of this country a big headache. I do not want to adjudicate on the particular issue now confronting us as far as the actual cause for the present crisis is concerned. I know nothing about the facts. But I do know that every so often a crisis crops at the university campus. Why?

Top-men at our University come and go with rare frequency. I doubt if many of us can remember even the names of the chaps who held these posts over the past few years—after Jennings and Sir Nicholas—who? This is the clearest judgment on our premier institutes of learning for continuity in office of men of learning or charisma serve to give tone and discipline to any place. Where this is absent, discipline falters and tradition limps. And both of these values are needed to build security, atmosphere and learning.

Why do these top man leave? Chiefly I suspect because the task becomes impossible for them to handle. And not because they are incompetent. They surrender because politics takes over in every crisis. And the politicians with an eye to the main chance, the votes, invariably support the students against the administration. No administrator can possibly function effectively in such a situation. If fear that the present crisis will witness the same confusion of discipline. Instead of helping to build an autonomous university system, where the peoples of learning and in charge of administering the University, are permitted to deal with students and student problems politicians of all shade rush in to muddy the situation and exploit the young student minds to earn votes.

Of course in this country the Police is guilty of many acts of unnecessary violence against the person of the individual citizen.

Of course we must as citizens protest against such abuses and strive by all means at our disposal to hold such tendencies to violence in check. But the Police are necessary and the Police have often hard tasks to perform. Our Police also are chiefly young men, and when confronted by other angry young men, however righteous their cause may seem to be or indeed is, blood will boil and things can get out of hand.

But having said this, we must ask whether the present national outcry is not slightly out of all proportion to the facts of the case? what if in retaliation the Police force were to call a nationwide one day strike? It happened once in Canada in the city of Montreal and in that 24 hour period the citizens were exposed to a nightmare situation, rape, murder, open robbery, took place on an unprecedented scale.

Alas, for us, enlightened folks of the twentieth century, the animality of man remains unchanged. And power in the hand of folks like us, you and me, always becomes an instrument not only of law and order but inevitably of some abuse of power. From this "crisis" only heaven or Nirvana can save us.

**INTERNAL BRAIN DRAIN.** I came across this phrase the other day. Struck me as being very apposite to what is happening in our own land. We are troubled about the so-called brain-drain to other countries, the phrase 'internal brain-drain' suggests that we need even more to be concerned about what is taking place within the country.

What does the phrase mean? It suggests that most of the brains in the country are being concentrated in the capital city, Colombo. On the grounds that they are attending to State business, most of our MPs spend the bulk of their time in Colombo. They build their permanent residences in Colombo, they send their sons and daughters to Colombo schools. Their interest, whatever may have been initially, gradually gets weaned away from the village and gets caught up in Colombo. The same is true also for our top-grade Government men. They do 'time' in the outstations. Their wives

and children stay in Colombo, to send the kids to school. Interest in their work therefore suffers because they are not seriously, existentially, involved in the business of the area.

There has been some criticism of absentee-landlordism, and the point is well-taken. But the situation has only changed nomenclature wise, today the MP and the top-brass State officials have taken the place of the former-landlords. They use the rural areas as a takeoff base, they siphon off whatever wealth they can get hold of in the district to keep the Colombo establishment going. And because they appear to the rural mass mind as the chaps who have made it, all the clever folks, young folks, in the area, learn English with feverish anxiety, in the hope that they too can get away from the village to become young bloods in the big city. This is the brain-drain.

The seriousness of the national situation is clear from our failure to grow enough food to feed our peoples. All the slogan singing and shouting, all the promises of each Governing Party, cannot pull the wool over our eyes today. Apologies there are in abundance—drought, fertiliser costs, erosion—excuses there are in plenty for the sterility of our countryside. But the stark fact is that in the kind of a world in which we live today—population explosion, scarcity of water, infertility of soil—we can triumph only when we are prepared to love the land, to woo it, and to bring the best of our intellects to bear to organise and inspire rural life.

Now we have paper schemes, plans drawn up at the Planning Ministry level, occasional public meetings to draw attention to some national issue—tree planting programmes and the like—but all the time the prevailing ethos suggests that the best men leave the village and go to the town—to Colombo, our local Mecca. Thus we have brain-drain, the emasculation of the village, the draining away of much needed human resources from where they could best serve to save this nation from hunger and want.

**SOCIALISM?** I do not believe in Socialism. I take original sin too seriously to indulge in the naïve

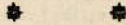
and pious hopes of the Third World that via Socialism our peoples will develop into a first class group, economically and otherwise.

Capitalism accepts original sin, man's innate selfishness, without any compromise. Communism recognises sin, especially in the other man—the capitalist class. From this denial of its universality, springs the hope that a new man will emerge who will be sinless. The State then withers away etc. Of course we are a long way off from this much-to-be-desired goal right now. For the present we must be prepared to trust the Marxist elite group—free from original sin—to lead us into this original sin-free haven.

All the contortions and distortions which these Marxist groups produce, when reaching out for power and in possession of power, reveal that this "trust-us-to-deliver-the-goods" to you invitation must be accepted, if accepted it must be, with tongue in cheek, or serious reservations—if we want to preserve our sanity. Communist groups in power clearly toe the Marx-Lenin line, those who inherit the same tradition, but see things slightly differently are revisionists. This means that those who are with us are goodboys those who are against bad chaps.

Original sin tells us that all of us are bad chaps, all children of darkness—certainly some are further out, through practice, in outer darkness, but this is only a matter of degree. The value of taking up this stand is that one does not get bowled out by optimist predictions about what is just around the corner. One knows that the just-around-the-corner business is something Saint Paul also taught two thousand years back, and that's a long just-around-the-corner business, indeed just enough to make us sceptic. Of course we are not only children of darkness, we are also children, all of us, of light—hence our hopes dreams visions of a brave new world, where all is clear and shining bright. Because of this dimension we shall continue to struggle to rebuild our world, our nation, our peoples. And in each land, we shall use the deep-rooted traditions of social action and reform to help improve life, just a little. For us this means using the Asokan heritage, a heritage which both

Sinhala and Tamils people share, to rebuild the land. If we did we would rid ourselves of the fanatic optimism and the utopian dreams with which the contemporary world is laden, Socialism, Communism, Democracy, and the like. Excessive hopes only result in the end in excessive concentrations of power in the hands of ruthless men. Naive hopes that via Socialism we shall build a brave new Sri Lanka only means that we continue to struggle along, bankrupt and secretly despised by the social and economic giants of the world.



#### FOR THE RECORD

### Sri Lanka's Finances

#### —and Treasury Bills—

*In our last issue, in the Editor's Notebook column, the speech of the Minister of Finance (as reported in the Daily News) on the occasion of his seeking the approval of the National State Assembly to borrow Rs. 450 million on Treasury Bills, was published. This week we publish the speeches of the other speakers during the debate. These speeches and the discussions throw revealing light on the Budget for 1977 and some aspects of the finances of the country.*

**Mr. Ronnie de Mel:** (UNP-Devinuvara) said he agreed that it was human beings that mattered not the concept of money. But he wanted to remind the Minister that it was human beings that mattered not figures. Today a worker had to work for 48 hours to buy a pound of tomatoes. Inflation had reached such heights. The Finance Minister was a good advocate of a hopelessly bad case. The present resolution was part of the Budget 'the on-going exercise'. Really the Minister was going on some kind of mythical prosperity. His budget was gathering speed for doom and destruction in the country. Price of goods had gone up by 400 per cent including prices of articles produced in the country. Mr. de Mel said that when Dr. N. M. Perera was Finance Minister he exercised financial controls through saving and

taxation schemes but in the last year of Dompe financing the actual utilisation of short term credit did the unusual thing of borrowing from commercial banks to an extent of Rs. 180 million. This was because the Finance Minister could not increase Treasury bills without the sanction of the NSA. Today the Government faced a critical liquidity problem and Treasury bill financing was being resorted to. This had always created inflation in this country. During the last three years on an average 90 per cent of the outstanding Treasury bills had been held by the Central Bank. The allocation of new money by the Central Bank always led to inflation. The Government had inflicted this inflation on the poor people of this country.

The increase in the money supply during the last 10 months had been in the region of 900 million rupees. By the end of December this year it would reach Rs. 1000 million which would be an all time record in this country. Why did the Minister not bring proposals to tax the new rich in this country a class created by this Government? "I give my solemn assurance on the floor of this House that if the UNP forms a Government it will not hesitate to tax the new rich class, the CRA, holders. Today galloping inflation has not affected the rich it has only affected the farmer, the worker, the student, the clerk and the fixed wage earner. Take the prices of essential food items today. The price of vegetables and eggs. The Finance Minister is an expert on eggs."

**Mr. Felix Dias Bandaranaike:** The price of eggs does not depend on the money supply situation but the quality of mash.

**Mr. de Mel:** Although we cannot accept the Finance Minister's figures of his budget we must accept his figure on eggs because he has a very good head for eggs. I wish he had a similar head for finance.

**Mr. Bandaranaike:** It is the hens that keep me going.

**Mr. de Mel** said that the Government cannot complain any longer of imported inflation. Today a coconut is 90 cents. This has nothing to do with world inflation. The Government promised to give jobs to 4 lakhs of people in 4



months. Now 8 months have elapsed and we have still to hear of these jobs. The crash program for employment will only crash like all other plans of the Finance Minister. Mr. de Mel said that whatever the Government might say there was a decline of wage rates amounting to about 50 per cent compared to the 1970 figures. The Cost of Living has gone up by 300 percent since 1970. All this is a result of the bogus socialism that this Government has tried to foster on the people.

During the UNP Government the money supply situation was in the region of Rs. 345 million which was an increase of 21 percent. Under this Government the money supply has increased from Rs. 1883 million to Rs. 3563 million till July 1976. This is an increase of Rs. 1783 million or 96 percent for the period of this Government. For the first time in Sri Lanka the money supply has been doubled in six years. This Government has only created a new ultra rich class and it has placed increased burdens on the poor. That is the reason why the Finance Minister was today seeking to increase Treasury bills. That is the theme song of his Budget.

**Mr. Wilfred Senanayake:** (LSSP-Hcmagama) said that there was the necessity for the Government to borrow monies for expenditure but when it does it should see whether it has the capacity to pay these loans. In any event there is a limit to borrowing. Borrowing should be done with sane and with due consideration of capacity to repayment. The Government should see whether there is wasteful expenditure and check this before they try to increase Treasury bills or borrowing money. It is true that this Government faced a number of financial and other problems outside their control. But what was the world market situation in 1971 and what is it today. Compared to the prices paid for sugar in 1971 this year there has been a 50 percent drop. A ton of flour which cost Rs. 631/- in 1975 went up to Rs. 2475/- a ton in June 1975. Today it is about Rs. 1900/- There has been a reduction. Rice cost Rs. 563/- a ton in 1971 and went up to Rs. 2244/- a ton in 1975. Today it has come down to Rs. 1600 a ton.

Since this is the actual world market prices the Government must concede that the price of the country's main imports have reduced considerably. Has this Government proportionately reduced the cost of living. In 1970 the LSSP and the present Government forming the United Front told the people that it would set up a socialist state in this country. "We told the people that we would narrow the gap between the haves and the have-nots. When we speak of socialism today we must consider whether we have narrowed this gap. Look at the families in the villages today. There are a large number of families whose incomes are below Rs. 100 a month. Seventy five percent of these families today go without lunch and dinner. Today there is also no limit for the wealthy to purchase jewellery, cars, gold and gems. There is no limit for these people but can a poor family afford to buy a chain for Rs. 150/-" Mr. Senanayake asked.

Today the Finance Minister was merely trying to win elections by giving false figures but this will only result in drastic effects for generations to come. This Government should not try to make socialism a joke to the people. Under the Land Reform and Ceiling on Housing laws what has happened? There has only been a change in ownership as far as the capitalists of this country are concerned. "Today the Government states that the young people are not working hard enough. But there are thousands of stooges of this Government who do nothing and draw thousands of rupees. How can you tell the youth to work harder in such a situation. You will not be able to deceive the people. In the end you will only deceive yourselves" Mr. Senanayake said.

**Dr. N. M. Perera:** (LSSP-Yariyantota) said Treasury Bills were not loans but a device which enabled the Government to obtain funds pending the receipt of revenue from taxation. There was a time gap in getting revenue by way of taxes and the Treasury Bill was only a temporary accommodation. The life of a Treasury Bill was one year. Under Section 89 of the Monetary Act a Treasury Bill provided temporary accommodation and that should not

exceed 6 months. As the Treasury Bills were only temporary measures to meet current expenses of the Government pending the realisation of taxation revenue the Treasury Bills should not be used for other purposes.

Dr. Perera said he strongly objected to the Treasury Bills being used to meet a budgetary deficit. A Treasury Bill had to be renewed every six months. The Rs. 450 million which was sought in Treasury Bills would go to bridge the budget deficit. Why was the Finance Minister in that difficult position. The Finance Minister had said that a cut in the welfare expenditure or a cut down in government expenditure would react badly. If that was done there would be unemployment, according to the Finance Minister.

All capitalist countries were faced with inflation. A proper planned economy would solve that problem. In the process of development the country measures, should be taken to increase the money supply. There should be a price index both in wholesale and in retail to find out the actual inflationary tendencies. On a limited price index the actual rate of inflation could not be determined. The one prepared by the Central Bank was not correct. The price index should be prepared on all food items and other commodities. Prices were daily going up. Seer fish was about Rs. 8 or Rs. 9 a pound. The cheap variety of fish was about Rs. 3. The prices of eggs and vegetables had shot up. On what basis, he asked, was the price index based. He said the price index should not be based on the prices of the rationed goods. The price index should include the food and other goods commonly used by the people.

Dr. Perera said the Finance Minister hoped to get nearly Rs. 100 mill on as taxation from people who would be compensated for the lands taken over by the Government. He had his own doubts whether the Minister would be able to achieve that. When he was the Finance Minister compulsory savings scheme stood at Rs. 100 million, said Dr. Perera. The Minister, he said, could not get money from the expenditure tax. Persons who dealt in precious stones and bullion would not pay the

expenditure tax. Under those circumstances the poor people would have to tighten their belts and reduce consumption. The Minister was lowering the standards of living by making inroads into consumption. The Minister could not expand employment by doling out money. If employment was not productive then the people would not get their goods. The government could not fool the people much less the youth. During the past few days it was the educated youth who wrote slogans on buses. He told the people of Yatiyantota that for this state of affairs the Government was responsible. For the country to develop there should be a planned economy on the basis of socialism. There should be funds for development projects. There should be a viable economy to improve the country. The huge deficits in the budget should be met in a non-inflationary way. There were limits to external borrowing. Nearly 40 per cent of the national revenue would be used for the payment of debts. They could not endorse the use of Treasury Bills to bridge the budget deficit.

**Mr. Denzil Fernando:** (UNP-Negombo) said inflation was very high judging from the high prices being paid for textiles, food and other goods required by the people. A suit length cost Rs. 80 per yard on the pavements when the controlled price was Rs. 18 per yard. Other textiles which had been priced at Rs. 11 were sold at Rs. 40 per yard. All was due to the textiles mills not getting sufficient raw material. There was trouble at Tulhiriya Mills and that had affected the production of textiles. If all the government and the private textiles mills were working the country could be self-sufficient in textiles. There was shortage of manure and this affected the coconut plantation. He said that production has come down in the government corporations. There was an increase even in the prices of vegetables.

**Mr. Prins Gunasekera:** (SLVB-Habaraduwa) said the Finance Minister tried to make out there was not much of inflation now as it was during the time of Wanninayake under the UNP and during the time of Dr. N. M. Perera. He had said the cost of living had gone up during Dr. Perera's time. The

Minister was only producing statistics to save his skin and not producing a remedy for an ailing economy. He would save his skin and escape but the economy of the country would remain ill. The attitudes of both the present Minister and his predecessor to those questions were the same. The money circulation had increased. What would happen if that sum of Rs. 200 million went into circulation? The Finance Minister gave relief of five cents in the price of flour but now he was going to borrow Rs. 35 from each citizen. Those loans would have to be paid by the future generation. He would not object if such money was being borrowed for development or if such an exercise created employment. But that money was being sought to meet an increased defence forces bill—Army, Navy, Air Force and Police. In the past few decades with that kind of borrowed money they helped the big, rich industrialists and tea estate owners—not the small producer, or the poor peasant. The economic perspective of the Finance Minister was completely wrong. That was why our economy was in such a mess. The government still went on the old archaic economic thinking. The ailing economy of the country could not be cured by that kind of patch work. Was the government not going to use that money to pay compensation for the estates taken over from foreign firms? Was it not to pay compensation for the lands taken over? The government was borrowing from the poor to pay the rich.

The budget was a "loan budget" instead of taxing the rich 50 per cent through his budget the Finance Minister wanted to borrow to that extent from the ordinary people. The amount that the Minister sought could have been got through taxes. The Minister could have got the money he needed for administrative expenditure from the 40-family kingdom that had emerged in the recent past.

**Mr. Gamini Dissanayake:** (UNP-Nuwara Eliya) said the Finance Minister was trapped in a bundle of contradictions. He tried to wriggle out of it through the felicity of his speech. It was a verbal exercise—words and figures. The Member for Habaraduwa had given a Sinhala version of the famous

words of Disraeli: lies, damn lies and statistics. One did not know which lie fitted into the statistics of the Finance Minister. Today in the west they had coined a new word "hyper-inflation". It stood for the meaning that prices shot up so much they had no relevance to the money value. He would substitute the words "hyper-inflation" with FDB financing. He said the Minister wanted to borrow Rs. 240 million from the commercial banks which meant the central Bank would have to impose a credit squeeze and the Central Bank would not be able to have a normal banking system. The Minister was borrowing from the Bank of Ceylon and the People's Bank against government securities. The country was heading for a situation when money circulation would be artificial. Where was all that going to end? The year 1976 had drawn to a close and what happened to the revenue forecast on FEECs the Minister made last year? He had already admitted there had been a shortfall. Of course the revenue for 1977 could not be predicted.

**Mr. Felix Dias Bandaranaike:** replying to the debate said the many arguments raised by the Opposition traversed the same ground. The Member for Yatiyantota said that treasury bills were not meant for financing budget gaps but should be used only as temporary borrowings. But during his budget speech in November 1971 the former Minister of Finance said he was issuing treasury bills into the banking system to cover an unfinanced budget gap of Rs. 161 million. That money was taken not as a temporary borrowing. Now he was doing exactly the same thing. His measure to borrow Rs. 240 million from the banking system to meet the food bills was called inflationary financing. He conceded that. He had said that the inflationary impact would be Rs. 440 million. In 1970/71 the former Finance Minister had an unsettled food bill of Rs. 150 million. After the Wanninayake period the former Finance Minister instructed the Central Bank to issue securities. Banks were asked to carry government securities in place of food bills which the UNP carried. What difference was there between then and now? It was precisely the same thing. The House could

not say that he had done something unorthodox, something unusual. It was the same thing that had been done before. His view was that borrowing from treasury bills in that manner was less inflationary.

It would be possible to predict employment and the cost of living without increasing the money supply position. Dr. N. M. Perera had stated that he would have solved the situation by increasing taxation. When he did that there was overt criticism both by Government and opposition members. The price of seer fish or tomatoes could not be said to be a direct result of inflation. From the stand point of the producer of fish and tomatoes it was good that there had been price increases. But one could not compare the wage structure and the prices of food because there was no direct competition between the two. During the past one year, going by the COL index it had not gone up by one point. Between 1970 and 75 it went up by 60 points. Some members had complained that he had not taxed the rich. But what did Dr. Perera do? In addition to increasing taxation he increased prices through gazettes. He was not prepared to do that. The resolution was then passed with a majority of 49 votes. 68 voted for it while 19 voted against the resolution.

BUILDING A VILLAGE HOUSE—100

Village Scrapbook—viii

By Herbert Keuneman

**THE FOREST'S MOIST BREATH.** I don't want to seem to ride a hobby horse, and I should hate to become called Keuneman Pluvius; but even at that risk I feel I should add this postscript to the hypothesis I have recently been offering for the experts' evaluation: that the moisture released into the atmosphere by forest trees possibly constitutes a critical component of the total water vapour available, especially in inter-monsoonal climatic conditions, for conversion into local rainfall.

It would all doubtless have been very much neater had I been able to include the following observations in my 'Questions Concern-

ing Rainfall' a couple of weeks ago, save that that article was pretty long already. But I couldn't trace in sufficient time the notes I knew I had made. And perhaps, although the confession betrays a certain lack of studious discipline (of which I am suitably ashamed) the circumstance was, as it turns out, a good thing. I am glad these notes now appear unburied in a ruck of other facts; for whatever their bearing on my hypothesis itself, the sheer figures when one comes to work them out are not short of being staggering. Even if somebody had better check my arithmetic.

Maybe, for all their impressiveness these figures will prove to have no real bearing on the validity of my argument. I am well aware that the production of the actual rainfall statistics for the relevant areas over the crucial years since 1970 are the likeliest contribution to go any useful way towards weighing the controversy one way or the other: if the statistics showed no change, my argument must clearly be invalid; while not even a demonstrable decrease in the recent rainfall would prove it to the hilt, for other factors might be involved. But be this as it may. Not being either a politician with an axe to grind or a scientist with a reputation to be jealous of, I am in the layman's happy position that the one answer would not unduly depress nor the other unduly elate me. There are both advantage and virtue in being non-aligned.

Meanwhile, to recapitulate my own belief until such time as it be, if it is to be, disproved: it seems to me at least possible—and if it is possible it is surely worth scientifically investigating—that the local contribution a forest adds to the content of atmospheric water vapour may be just sufficient to boost the humidity of otherwise 'spent' convection-borne clouds to the point where they again become saturated and rain must fall.

I mentioned this to a scientist friend claiming to be interested in the subject, and he brushed the argument aside saying that the forest's contribution I spoke of was 'negligible, negligible'. But this is where, layman though I am, I must venture to take issue with him. Is the contribution in fact negligible?

My note which I have now re-discovered is a statement from Paul E. Lehr & R. Will Bufnett's concise but fact-crammed little handbook *Weather*: to the effect that one tree (the authors name as typical an apple tree, a single apple tree) discharges by transpiration as much as 2,000 gallons of water vapour in the course of a year.

Now, I do not know accurately how the discharge from an apple tree (which, after all, is not a very big tree though a fairly big-leaved one) may compare with that from, say, a well-grown Palu or Mi or Milla; but, making rough adjustments, would an annual discharge rate of 3,000 gallons from one of our much smaller-leaved but much bigger-habited dry-zone trees be a reasonable, if arbitrary, estimate? Again, I do not know for anything like certain how many such trees actually grow in an acre of good forest; but, seeing that Merritt & Ranatunga (*Ceylon Forester*: Vol. IV, No. 2: N.S.) found up to 220 'stems per acre'—37 of girth 12-20" and 12 of 20x"—growing in the Sinharaja, would not an estimate of 50 well-grown trees per acre, almost 900 sq. ft. per tree, in our less serried dry-zone forests err, if anything, on the conservative side?

Well, now, now for some figuring. (But, as I warned, better check the calculation! My maths master in the Cambridge Junior form at S. Thomas' once asked me: 'How many one-penny stamps can you buy for one shilling?' He was being funny: to me it was no joke. When it was obvious a mental solution of the problem was beyond me he bade me work it out on paper. I put down 12 and divided that by 1, by long division, and got a remainder of two figures. Thenceforth I was banished to the back of the class to construe Greek and Latin.)

$3,000 \times 50 = 150,000$ . So, an acre of dry-zone forest breathes into the air above it that many gallons a year of water in vapour form. I cannot tell what percentage of water vapour actually returns as rain; but I should consider it reasonable to expect the eventual return as and when atmospheric conditions are right of 100%. A square mile of forest, then, holds out the firm promise of 9.6 million gallons of rain each year. That is to say—and, so far have I progressed

from my penny-stamp purchasing days, I will go out on a limb and say it—since a gallon is .161 of a cubic foot, a sq. mile of forest offers approximately  $1\frac{1}{2}$  million cu. ft. of water; or (an acre-ft. is 43,560 cu. ft.) about 34 acre-ft. of it; one three-thousandth of the capacity of Parakrama Samudra at spill level. This is not the insignificant fraction it may appear to be. It is the product of only ONE square mile of forest; and we have the authority of a Conservator of Forests—*v. Tribune* Vol. 21 No. 2, p. 24—to point out that ‘the forests round Mahaweli which should be covering 1,314,000 acres have been reduced to only 114,000 acres’. The 1,200,000 lost acres are not far short of 2,000 sq. miles!

Should you prefer to appraise forest-induced potential rainfall another way: 2 acre-ft. (actually, 1.98) is the input, or output, or whatever it is, of 1 cusec-day; i.e. of the collected amount of water flowing for one day at the rate of 1 cu. ft. per second. Now, the average Mahaveli flow after the April inter-monsoonal rains (which no longer seem to take place) is stated—4/6/76 Statement of the Minister of Irrigation, Power & Highways—to be 2,000 cusecs or 864,000 cu. ft., about 2 acre-ft., in 24 hours. The preservation of one sq. mile of forest seems to promise 17 times that much, as we have seen, in a year; or in three weeks the utterly dependable equivalent to diverting for a day the entire flow of that thoroughly undependable river.

Do, somebody, please check these findings: I can't believe them myself! There must be a catch somewhere; and if so, I only wish to goodness someone would early point it out to my boggling mind.

There, now! I've got that off my chest (perhaps you will be able to show that's where I keep my mind) and I promise not to talk wet, so to speak, any more. At least not in the near future.

**WORKING VOCABULARY.** Now that I am in the throes of building again—or, rather, in those of *sapayang-karanava*: collecting the material; for I shall not again fall into my beginner's error of expecting contracts to be fulfilled and supplies to be delivered to a deadline—I am beginning to come across those delightful Humpty Dumpty words ('It's a question

of who's to be master, that's all!') in which the local building trade abounds. What their meaning? whence their etymology? why their adoption (instead of an elegant translation into the Mother Tongue: like *pirimi-maeya*, for 'man-hour', which was for some considerable period the official technical term)? These are fascinating questions.

The one that particularly engages my imagination at the moment is *avulpas* (pronounce it with the slurred Sinhala *v*). Do you know what it is? or was; for it has fallen a long way from its original state and, so I should imagine, even from any claim to useful function.

I wanted two pairs for the new doorframe. Actually, I wanted on

pair but had to buy two of the Nava Lanka kind for safety's sake. I walked into a big hardware dealer's in Colombo's Third Cross Street and asked for them by their English name; but the shop said they hadn't any. Then I spied a bunch of what I wanted and pointed them out and the shop said, 'A-a-ah: *avulpas!*' and sold me four wretched little strips of cranked hoopiron with a little hole carelessly punched in each end, the latter clearly intended to accept a 1" wire nail—at most—though probably the manufacturers had had nothing stronger in view than a tinned-rack. Well, although I'd counted on 16/3" mild steel drilled and countersunk for

### NO "ELECTION BUDGET"

Sir,

That is how the *Daily News* had it. There are others who declare "some say this and some say that, but we go on for ever." Which one of the Bandaranaike policies, as enunciated in the Throne Speech, made on 14.6.70 (before the first budget) has been implemented in these budgets? And, this is the seventh budget.

The following are extracts therefrom—the words within brackets are mine:—

1. My Government will seek to make life less expensive for the ordinary citizen. (Cost of living gone sky high)
2. My Government will restore the measure of rice that the former Government cut from the rice ration. (Not restored—a further cut)
3. Milk food for infants will be distributed at cheap rate. (Often not available)
4. The prices of textiles and drugs will be reduced. (Gone up 300%)
5. Coriander and masoor dhal will be freely imported and distributed without rationing (Just a dream)
6. Goods in every day use will be made available at reasonable rates (Soap, matches, in very short supply—Sugar 6/-, Kerosene oil up 150%)
7. All laws and regulations that restrict democratic rights of the people will be repealed or amended (Further restrictions imposed)
8. Freedom of speech, organisation, assembly and public procession will be guaranteed in law and in practice (Guaranteed to the party in power)
9. The freedom of the press will be ensured—independent newspapers will be encouraged as a means to end the present domination of daily press by capitalist monopolies. (Independent Newspapers Ltd. sealed)

It will be relevant to mention herein that a very senior Minister writing to the *Silumina* stated "Those who make false promises before elections are Fascists". If we have not got the PARIPPU, we have at least solved the controversial question of who the Fascists are.

Richard Wickremeratne

Telijawila,  
Matara.  
24.11.76

stout screws, these were what I had to take; for nothing else is now made commercially, yet no village *baas* would consent to install a doorframe without paying homage to the custom of putting in... a holdfast... even though today's holdfasts are nothing but a superstition!

There are other words I shall be using. Why is laying a floor with bricks (or stone) before it is rendered with cement called *laisan-karanava*? what could it possibly have to do with 'licence', which is the nearest non-Sinhalese word I can get to it? Why is a house-painting job even of a brand-new wall always described as *repair-vada*? And whatever is the meaning of the name given to the small-footing of concrete beneath the posts of a doorframe: *nuit*—(or *noit*—) *eka*? **ADDING ONE TO ONE.** This is the hundredth article in this series. I mention it especially, in case nobody else otherwise notices! but I mention it in passing and not as though I should be justified in claiming for it any especial achievement. For is not a century—any century—after all like any other number: a mere function of unitary recurrence, an entirely arbitrary point invested with an entirely artificial significance in an entirely transcendental unconcerned and ineluctable series?

And yet, I cannot altogether deny a certain however illogical sense of *je ne sais quoi* accomplishment which I should be jealous to forswear! Certainly I could not go all the way with Browning's implied eulogy of self-sufficient ambition: 'That low man goes on adding one to one;

*His hundred's soon hit;  
This high man, aiming at a million,  
Misses an unit.'*

This low man, mean-spirited pedestrian and Benthamite as always though he may be, cannot but reflect that a purely supposititious million is a hell of a lot of practical good to any team!

LETTER

• Sinhala-Tamil

Sir,  
I read with interest Dr. B. Mahadeva's note on how language is dividing the Country (*Tribune* of 4.9.76). I fully agree.

When I was a boy a chap was either a good sport or a rotter; it never occurred to me whether he was Sinhalese, Tamil or Muslim. Today my grandchildren identify a chap by referring to him by his race. This is not the children's fault. It is the result of the disastrous language policy pursued by both the UNP and the SLFP. Independence was given to us on a silver tray and took our leaders completely unprepared. The only way they could hold the people was by pedalling elemental passions—religion and language—and the SLFP promised it could do better whatever the UNP can do in this field!

After over a generation we see the results deplored by Dr. Mahadeva. I think persons of all communities who realise that communal harmony is essential for progress are concerned. What can be done? In colonial times English was the medium of instruction in the big urban schools and the boys and girls of all communities could communicate with one another in one language. However, one of the fundamentals of education is that a child must be taught in its mother tongue. Among most of the affluent families, both Sinhalese and Tamil, the home language is still English, but obviously national educational policy has to consider the over 90% who speak Sinhalese or Tamil at home. The medium of instruction has therefore to be Sinhalese and Tamil, whatever the immediate disadvantages this may entail being out-weighed by the ultimate advantages.

The most straight forward solution is to make both Sinhalese and Tamil official languages and the study of Sinhalese compulsory as a second language in Tamil areas and Tamil in Sinhalese areas. This will at one stroke cut the Gordian Knot and all children will be able to talk and mix together freely. What is taught in our schools determines behaviour according to their conscience when they grow up. Winwood Reade, in his provocative book *Martyrdom of Man*, says, "Conscience is merely an organ of the intellect and is altered, improved, or vitiated, according to the education it receives and the inci-

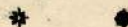
dents which act upon it." Thus the content of education today, in and out of school, determines the conscience of tomorrow. The behaviour of adults today, both Sinhalese and Tamils, is the result of the subtle racist linge imported to them yesterday, in both Sinhalese and Tamil schools.

It will not be realistic today to ask that both Sinhalese and Tamil be made official languages. Both the UNP and the SLFP have burnt their bridges on this road and there can be no going back as long as either party is in power; and there appears to be no alternative in the foreseeable future. The more realistic approach would be to ask that Tamil be made the regional language in Tamil areas and all administration and education be done in the regional language. This will not solve the division Dr. Mahadeva refers to. But it will be a first step towards the communities knowing each other better. When I was a school boy in St. John's Jaffna, I had no knowledge of the vast majority of the Sinhalese people living in my country, though I knew a lot about the English, their climate, flowers, produce and their Kings and Queens!

Not only the teaching of each other's language but their religion, culture and history, approached sympathetically so as to instil respect for each other, will gradually bring all the communities together and enable them to work as a united people to face the biggest challenge today—providing our basic needs, food cultivating and shelter. Asia today is the poorest continent in the world.

The curse of poverty must be removed from our country because it prevents a human being from savouring of the joys of life, which can only come by living in a society where basic needs are found and every man has work, a home to go to at the end of the day, to his wife and children and where his children have schools where they are taught to unite and work together to build a resplendent Sri Lanka.

Dr. R. W. Crosette Thambiah  
Colombo 5.



# Confidentially

## • Sawdust • Beedi- Textiles • SLFP-TULF

IS IT NOT A FACT that a recent analytical "test" of tetracycline capsules sold by the State Pharmaceutical Corporation (SPC) had revealed that what it contained was only sawdust? That it cannot be said that SPC had imported sawdust from abroad when there is plenty in Sri Lanka? That this mishap must have happened when the local contractor, who has been engaged to prepare capsules and tablets had carelessly permitted his employees to substitute sawdust for the drug imported in bulk and handed over to the contractor? That *Tribune* had in the past pointed out that persons totally unqualified to handle pharmaceuticals had been handed out remunerative contracts to do this work? That one such contracting firm is in a coastal town south of Colombo? That the only qualification the "firm" had to do this job was that the proprietor was a "catcher" of a leading politico whose ideology was shared by some of the top brass of the SPC? That, in fact, he started on this business on tableting and capsuling only with the orders given by the SPC? That multinational and international firms which had prepared high quality tetracyclines other antibiotics had been stopped by the SPC from manufacturing their products because they refused to hand over their formulae and methods of preparation to the SPC? That the SPC thereafter imported these drugs from cheaper sources? That the SPC also imported the drugs in bulk and had them tableted and "capsuled" here? That the nett result is that these antibiotics do not have the potency of the products of the international drug firms? That in spite of the bombastic denials by the chiefs of the SPC (backed by the dubious propaganda of Loke House), doctors and patients will testify to the sub-standard quality of many of the drugs sold by the SPC? That even the claim that the SPC

drugs and imports would prove cheaper has gone overboard with the unbelievably high overheads and the even more unconscionable profits of the SPC? That in addition the SPC had handed over to the Treasury a sum running into several millions as compensation in lieu of FEECs? That even after this levy has been stopped, the prices have not dropped? That everyday prices are being increased? That there is no doubt that SPC, by its narrow over-politicalised approach to the drug business, has made a mess of the drug situation in this country? That substandard drugs have already made some diseases like malaria and dysentery reach near epidemic proportions? That the sawdust capsules which were passed off as tetracyclines is a world-beater? That the medical profession knows about this "test" and the results but the daily press, which is howling about the misdeeds of the GMOA and AMS doctors, is silent about these sawdust capsules?

IS IT ALSO NOT A FACT that totally unqualified persons have been chosen to handle commodities by government agencies? That our attention has been drawn to a question asked by Dr. N. M. Perera from the Minister of Food, Co-operatives and Small Industries on November 9, 1976 and appearing in the Hansard column 338? That the question was worded: "Is he aware that the Marketing Services Board sells materials through the beedi distributors who have no knowledge about textiles..." That the purport of the question was to elicit the information whether beedi merchants had been given textiles to sell by the grace of the Marketing Services Board of the Ministry? That in the absence of the Minister, the Deputy Minister had answered the question with a "no"? That a further probing question had also brought the answer "no"? That this answer is being challenged by people who know a great deal about the beedi trade and the way the Ministry and the Tobacco Corporation set about their business? That one such person has sent *Tribune* a list of beedi merchants who have blossomed forth as textile merchants also? That it is likely that Dr. N.M. will take up this matter in the course of the Committee stage of the Budget debate?

IS IT CORRECT that political circles now believe that there is something more than meets the eye in the "talk" that a deal is brewing between the SLFP and the TULF? That the upper stratosphere of the political firmament in Sri Lanka is today thick with rumours about the pending talks between the top brass of the SLFP and the TULF? That the story going the rounds is that the SLFP is willing to swap a constitutional amendment guaranteeing minimum Tamil rights for a constitutional amendment postponing the general elections for a period not more than three years from 1977? That it is said that the TULF had not, at first, been enamoured of the feelers on this subject because they felt that if one was bitten once one should twice shy (and in their case they had been bitten more than twice?) That the persistence and credentials of the negotiators from the SLFP, it is said, had compelled the TULF to think seriously about the proposal? That inside the TULF the dominant view is still that the Sinhala-Tamil dispute should be settled amicably through negotiations? That those who talk of a "military confrontation" for a separate state are still an embryonic minority? That if the matter is not settled amicably in the nearest future, the initiative will undoubtedly pass into the hands of the youthful "military" confrontationists? That in these circumstances there is a fair chance that some negotiations may get off the ground? That inside the SLFP—especially in backbencher circles—there is tremendous pressure to get the elections postponed by granting the Tamils their rights short of a separate state? That the UNP has already has sounded the alarums about such a SLFP-TULF deal? That the LSSP has lighted the red signal with its paper *Janadina* making a major political story of what is presently only gossip?



### NEXT WEEK

- SECTORAL COMMITTEE TO THE RESCUE OF THE HEALTH MINISTER
- BREZHNEV—70TH BIRTHDAY
- MOYNIHAN—DETENTE

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# CUT ONLY IF YOU MUST.....

- It is as important to save existing trees as to plant new trees
- Statistics about the number of trees (in millions) planted is a fictional mirage: it is only the plants nursed and nurtured to maturity that count.
- It is necessary to ban the export of timber until we separate fact from fiction in our forestry statistics.

*"I am making this appeal to you to plant new trees and protect those we already have, not in the interest of a Party, but in the interests of the nation, in the interests of generations to come, and in the interests of our very national existence."*

Prime Minister, **Mrs. Srimavo Bandaranaike**

**TO SAVE TREES AND TO GROW TREES IS TO SAVE SRI LANKA.**

FACE DONATED