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PM's New Year Message — its implications —

IN THE SRI LANKA OF TODAY, it is what the Prime Minister says that counts.

This has been so right from the beginning of this country's political independence in 1947/48 when a Cabinet form of government was bestowed on the people by his Majesty, the King of England, who had exercised total suzerainty over the island for well over 150 years before that. But Cabinet Government in Ceylon was not like Cabi-

net Government in Britain—in the heyday of the British parliamentary system. Cabinet (collective) responsibility was only a figment of historical imagination so far as this country was concerned.

At first, it was a one-man democracy, that of D. S. Senanayake. He was all-in-all. He was followed by his son, Dudley Senanayake, but in his first spell (1952-53) he was too much of a liberal parliamentarian and developed Hamletian in-

decisiveness—and he had to give way to Sir John Kotelawela who had thereupon ruled with all the vigour of a Sigiri monarch.

Kotelawela's benevolent bombast could not persuade his subjects to accept the feudatory vassalage he sought to impose upon them—and the country then entered the Bandaranaike era which brought emancipation of many kinds, at many levels and in many dimensions, but it was always under the image of the ruling Prime Minister. Even during the short interlude of Dudley Senanayake between 1965 and 1970, the Prime Minister was still all supreme and Dudley had learnt the virtues of a one-man's democracy to exercise power among the multi-caste conglomeration of the Sinhales, let alone the multi-racial, multi-religious, and multi-linguistic complexities of the rest of the population. Since 1970, the Prime Minister, Mrs. Bandaranaike, has been all supreme. And she still is.

But more than during any other period since Independence, apart from the Prime Minister, the different Ministers today enjoy great power and shine supreme in their own orbits and treat their separate jurisdictions like separate fiefdoms. It is futile to talk of Cabinet responsibility. The Cabinet exercises a kind of indirect veto on Ministerial actions, spending and programmes. How this system of constitutional power will be described by the historians of the future is yet to be seen, but for the moment we must accept the fact that the Prime Minister is supreme. The 1972 Constitution vests the Prime Minister with more power than ever before. The PM virtually selects the Presi-

HARD AND CONSISTENT WORK

IN HER NEW YEAR MESSAGE, the Prime Minister has not only called for "collective and united efforts" but had also indicated that success can come only from "hard and consistent work." She had earlier stressed that only increased production could set the country on the road to rapid economic development. These are excellent sentiments but the objective of "hard and consistent work" cannot be achieved with the five-day-week nor the plentiful excess of compulsory holidays this country now enjoys. Many of our Ministerial oracles are fond of prattling that Sri Lanka is a unique country with many firsts: that it had achieved many miracles in development and transformation of society; and that the rest of the world will soon follow Sri Lanka's example in many matters. Our five-day-week takes 102 days of the 365 days out of the work schedules. Many of the leading industrialised countries have only a one-day-week holiday on Sundays whilst a few others have one-and-a-half holidays every week (with a non-compulsory half day on Saturdays). With the backlog in economic development Sri Lanka has to make up, a five-day-week is national suicide especially when the twelve poya-holidays every year most often come during the week thus creating stretches of partial non-working days with large numbers on french leave. We have 15 public holidays apart from the Poya days. In addition employees in the public and private sector are entitled to casual leave, statutory paid annual holidays and also medical leave (and who cannot get medical certificates if one wants one?). Any statistician will be able to tell that in Sri Lanka a person in the public or private sector has to work for only around 200 days a year in order to qualify for 365 days' pay. Statutory annual paid holidays, casual leave and medical leave are basic minima stipulated in ILO welfare benefit schemes, but a five-day week, the poya day holidays and the plenitude of public holidays are a luxury this country cannot afford. Hard and consistent work will be possible only if there is a review about our system of holidays and the number of working days every year.

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dent and the President is responsible for many important functions. The National Assembly is the supreme organ of power. It exercises power over the administration and the judiciary. Today, with the system of Political Authority, the legislators have become the all-important administrators; and the judiciary has become an organ of state power—with the abolition of the separation of powers. There are no constitutional or judicial checks or curbs on political administrators in between general elections.

Today, Sri Lanka enjoys a unique kind of democracy, where elected members of the Parliament (or the National State Assembly) belonging to the ruling coalition (together the defeated candidates—at the last elections—of the ruling parties) exercise all power—legislative, administrative and even judicial power (this in the ultimate analysis). Each MP, each Political Authority and each defeated candidate runs a little moghulate of his or her own, each supreme within certain limits in their little kingdoms defined by electoral boundaries and connected with central power in a multitude of ways. On the apex of this pyramid of power, which has emerged out of the new Constitution, stands the Prime Minister as the supreme voice of the Government, of the National State Assembly and the People.

TO UNDERSTAND the politics of Sri Lanka today one must know and appreciate the power wielded by the Prime Minister. That is why the statements made by our Prime Minister count for much more than the words of Prime Ministers in other countries with different constitutions and a different power structures.

On New Years' Day, April 14, the Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike, as is customary, issued a Message for the edification of all subjects—citizens and others resident in the Island. She wished the people well on this auspicious occasion, and she rightly felt that it was "useful for us at a time like this when one year has passed and another has dawned to think a little about ourselves..." The first point she made, with a great deal of justification, was that in a period of economic unbalance throughout the world and the overwhelming international inflation which had over-

taken the most affluent of countries, it was "futile and foolish for the most partisan of persons" to expect that Sri Lanka which had been classified by the UN as one of the most adversely affected by the world economic crisis, "could have had a period of rapid economic development or a tangible increase in the standards of living or for that matter any serious reduction in the price of essential commodities."

The second point she made was that in addition to the world economic crisis, this country was affected by one of the most severe droughts in recent times. She claimed that the Production War she had launched had broken all records in paddy production in 1973-74 because of adequate rainfall, but the drought last year had set everything back. Vast acreages had not been planted and increased quantities of foodstuffs had to be imported. Drought relief had already amounted to over Rs. 20 million.

She expressed satisfaction that Sri Lanka had pulled through without too much damage either to her economy or the health of the nation.

I am however happy to state that with all these difficulties, both internal and external, we have been able to provide the country with an adequate food supply at prices which are still very moderate in comparison to many other countries of the world. We have been assisted in this effort by several countries which have come forward to help us and we are deeply grateful to them. The Government in response to the drought situation has commenced an emergency programme of providing water to the farmer by providing him with water pumps, sinking tube wells and so on, in addition to a programme of extensive food cultivation in the non-drought stricken areas mainly in the wet zone. The attempt is to obtain the maximum possible production and productivity out of these lands. Here again we have been much encouraged by the assistance of several friendly countries who have helped us with the provision of water pumps and other essential implements and items, and I wish to state that we are very thankful indeed to them.

As is natural on such occasions, the Prime Minister thought that good outweighed the bad, and that

the year 1974 could be regarded as a successful year of great achievement. One cannot expect her to indulge in woeful dirges about missed opportunities, avoidable mistakes and bureaucratic ineptitude. There is no doubt that the Government has much to be proud about: the Government had done what many Governments in the past had failed to do over much longer periods of time. One cannot expect the Prime Minister, on the occasion of a New Year Message, with a General Election looming in the horizon in the next two years, to dwell on failures, setbacks and mistakes.

In spite of the many difficulties and setbacks, the past year has been in many ways a year of achievement also. I think we should look at things objectively and refrain from the tendency to be over optimistic or unduly pessimistic.

The Prime Minister picked on three items to illustrate her point that 1974 was an year of achievement: the progress made in the Mahaveli Diversion Scheme, the Oil Exploration work at Pesalai and the Land Reform which had brought a change in the ownership of over 600,000 acres of developed land. There is no doubt that the Mahaveli Diversion work has made much headway although critics can rightly point out that the work had been delayed by two years immediately after 1970 because the UF Government did not want to subscribe to the terms agreed upon by the UNP—though these changes could have been effected without so much delay. But each succeeding government in Ceylon has always wanted to show that it is a more careful guardian of national interests than the previous one.

The Mahaveli Diversion programme is proceeding according to schedule and we hope by the end of this year to divert the waters of this great river to the dry zone thus not only enabling new lands to be opened up for agricultural purposes but also ensuring water for two crops for those lands which are now capable of producing only one crop per year. This would not only be a major achievement but would also serve to strengthen the food supply situation in the country. The oil exploration project is also proceeding satisfactorily and there

New Year Message

is every hope that we would produce significant quantities of oil. It would be premature to talk about exact figures and quantities but I have been informed that there is every prospect of producing reasonable quantities.

The Land Reform was completed with the vesting of about 600,000 acres of land in the Government. Disinterested observers have stated that what has taken place in Sri Lanka is virtually an agrarian revolution and the fact that this has happened peacefully and in such a short period of time is something astounding. I am fully aware that many important steps have to be taken in the future to ensure both the production and productivity of these lands and the Government is at present engaged in the task not only of determining how these lands should be distributed and to which persons and institutions but also how to ensure the maximum production from these units. In this connection I wish to make two further points. The first is, that it is nothing short of a myth that all these lands which had come over to Government from private owners were lands that were well looked after carefully managed and productive lands. On the contrary a large extent of these have been lands that have been neglected very often by absentee owners who perhaps did not have either the finances, the capacity or the time to develop them adequately. Any effort put into these lands by the government would result in an improvement on their condition over and above the situation that existed at the time they vested. The second point that I wish to make is that it is inevitable that during the process of such a vast transformation there would be a certain degree of dislocation as well as certain areas of temporary mal-administration. The Government is aware of these problems and every effort is being made to finalise, these matters and solve these problems as soon as possible.

It must be noted that the Prime Minister has referred to these achievements in restrained and cautious language without going in for the hyperbole and exaggeration which many Ministers of her Government indulge in — thus creating a credibility gap quite unnecessarily — eg "Sri Lanka will soon be the

richest nation in Asia", "Sri Lanka citizens will have oil from Pesalai for their use before the Sinhala New Year of 1975," etc etc. The Prime Minister maintained this restrained, and therefore convincing, note to the end of her message.

I have really mentioned three very important matters which have engaged our attention during the last year where our efforts have been visited with much success. There are many other areas of achievement which can be mentioned but this I refrain from doing because this is not an occasion where I should speak at great length.

After this she proceeded to set out what the Government had done to reduce and minimise the burdens which had fallen on the people.

Turning to the future I must emphasise that the Government would do everything that is possible and practicable towards easing the burdens on the people. We have already taken several steps such as the de-rationing of flour, textiles as well as other measures which would make life a little easier for our people. We have further on three separate occasions granted wage increases to the most affected and most vulnerable sections of our public sector employees. We have also made these increases applicable to the relevant categories in the private sector as well. As far as our rural farming community is concerned we have been constantly raising the guaranteed purchase price not only on paddy but also on numerous other food crops in order to ensure that our farmer gets a fair return for his efforts. As and when we can more steps will be taken to grant whatever relief that is possible to all sections of our population. But I must emphasise that I cannot make promises to you which I cannot fulfil. I, as Prime Minister, cannot promise to you things which will drive this country towards bankruptcy. Basically we must produce more and our prosperity will ultimately depend on our energy, dedication and unremitting effort. There is no short cut to national salvation. Although at least some in this country have realised this there are many more who need to realise it if we are ever to have pros-

perity and affluence for all. We have also to realise that the prosperity affluence and privilege of a tiny minority does not represent the prosperity of the nation and that the policy of any Government if it is seen to lead to such a situation will never be tolerated by the people.

IT WAS AFTER saying all this that she had come to the one question which had been uppermost in the minds of the politically knowledge-



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able; that is, the question about the next General Elections—will it be in 1975 or will it be in 1977, or will be pushed back to 1982? And was there going to be National Government before September 1975?

As a prelude to what she was going to say in her Message, the Ada had made an editorial statement that the paper had noted that the Prime Minister had reiterated at several meetings that there would be no General Elections in 1975 and the increased availability of consumers goods was no indication of an imminent General Elections. Furthermore, on Sunday April 13, the *Sunday Times* had frontpaged a written question-and-answer interview with Minister Felix R. Dias Bandaranaike in which he had sought to explain that his speech about changes after September did not mean a National Government nor a coalition with the UNP. In laboured and tortuous logic he had endeavoured to show that he had been misunderstood by the *Aththa* and others, but it is difficult to say how many discriminating persons were convinced by his longwinded casuistry.

However, it made an excellent backdrop for what the Prime Minister had to say:

In conclusion I wish to touch on one other matter. That is the question of general elections. If I were to summarise the situation very briefly, we went before the people in 1970 and asked them for a specific mandate to 'draft adopt and operate a new Constitution—a Republican Constitution. This mandate we received in an overwhelming measure and that is now part of history. We thereupon promulgated the new Constitution' on 22nd May, 1972, and not only did the elected representatives of all political Parties take the oath of allegiance to it but it was also received with acclamation and rejoicing in the country. According to the Constitution the present Government's term is to end on 22nd May 1977. I wish to categorically state that not only will the Government continue its administration of this country till that date but also that it will not stay on a day longer than that. I shall dissolve Parliament and go before the people. I am aware there are some people in this country who think they can force

or compel the Government to hold elections according to their dictates and also that there are some others who say that elections need not be held in 1977. I wish to categorically tell the country that as long as I am Prime Minister that I will not be intimidated or threatened on this matter by either side and that I will ensure that general elections are held in the year 1977.

Before going on to comment on the implications of this statement of the Prime Minister, it is necessary to draw attention to the concluding paragraph of the PM's Message.

May I once again wish you a very happy and prosperous New Year. In so wishing I remind you once again that progress and prosperity can be ensured only by our collective and united efforts and that success to a nation just as much as to an individual can only come through hard and consistent work.

It will be noted that the PM in this last part of her Message speak of "our collective and united efforts" in general terms. Nowhere in her speech has she referred to specifically to the United Front. Most of her colleagues, especially those of leftist vintage, make it a point to praise the United Front and denounce the United National Party and the Tamil United Front as a matter of course in any public speech they make. But it is significant that the Prime Minister has on this occasion appealed to the nation as a whole for "collective and united efforts". This is probably fitting and proper on a New Year's Day, but many seem to think that there was something much more than that in the way she has worded this part of the Message. She has also appealed for "hard and consistent work", and this is something many will endorse, although the left regarded the liquidation of capitalists as a *sine qua non* to induce work whilst the Right insisted on the elimination of Marxists for any progress.

To come back to her statement that there will be no election until 1977, it means that all speculations about a 1975 elections must be laid to rest for the moment. But, does this mean that there were no discussions about political changes in party

alignments which might have necessitated a 1975 elections? Does it mean that Ada was indulging in fanciful kite-flying when it hinted that a 1975 election could not be ruled out. And was Minister Felix Dias Bandaranaike talking in any special language, which only he understood when he talked about what looked very much like the National Government (which was then being canvassed in certain circles)? What did he mean by a transformation of society after September 1975 with foreign assistance? Did the SLBC misquote him?

Whatever the doubts one must accept Minister Felix Dias Bandaranaike's explanations: that he believed that the fulfilment of governmental plans would bring a major social transformation by September 1975. And it was also heart-warming and soul-stirring to read his denunciations about capitalism and the UNP.

The Prime Minister's categorical declaration that there will be no elections until 1977 can mean either that there were no negotiations at all between a section of the SLFP and a section of the UNP about a possible coalition which might have prompted a snap general election in 1975 or that the negotiations had stalled on the first leg because the PM was not agreeable to a 1975 elections. It can also mean that the negotiations had broken down because the UNP had sought to demand too high a price (eg a tilt in the foreign policy towards the west); and, that until the UNP showed greater realism about genuinely centrist foreign and domestic policy imperatives, negotiations would be at a standstill.

The Prime Minister does not give any hint about such negotiations. She may have been totally unaware of them and it is likely that she was no party to them. But she could not have been ignorant about the speculations which had appeared in a wide spectrum of Sinhala periodical press.

Whilst she has come down heavily on those who had sought to bring pressure on her to have an election in 1975, she also rebuked those who had proclaimed at several meetings that the elections might not be held even in 1977, that they

could be postponed until 1982 or even later. Minister Ilangaratne had given vocal expression to this line of thinking, which certain leftwing circles have propounded; that it was not necessary to hold a general election in 1977, or even in 1982 or even much later—that it should really be postponed until such times as the programme of the United Front had brought prosperity and plenty to the country and affluence to one and all. It was argued that the two-thirds majority enjoyed by the UF could be utilised to postpone the elections until it suited the UF: that the elections of 1970 had validity for two decades or more; that in developing countries regular elections were more a hindrance than a benefit; that such frequent elections only helped the reactionaries; that the life of the State Council of 1936 had been extended until 1946 owing to the second world war and that the present was also a similar period of crisis and emergency; and so on and so forth. Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike has made it clear that as long as she was the Prime Minister she would not let the Government to continue even for one day longer than May 22, 1977.

The ultra left within the UF want the elections postponed indefinitely whilst the ultra right would like the elections in 1975. The Prime Minister has made it clear that she will continue to steer a middle centrist course. Any coalition will thus continue to be on centrist basis. If the UNP and other rightists want to enter such a coalition they must trim their policies to fit into the centrist pattern, and the leftists too would find it difficult to stay in the coalition if they seek to stray too far left from the centrist *Via media*.

There is another aspect to this whole National Government hullabaloo. Whoever had conducted the negotiations on behalf of the SLFP or whoever had leaked whispers that such negotiations were going on (though there were none) must have been aware that the talk of such negotiations, especially if they failed would tend to cause a split within the UNP and at the same time put the leftists in the UF on the defensive.

At a time when the position of the Government was a little better owing to the derationing of textiles and the ready availability of wheat flour (together with small quantities of durable essential foodstuffs) this kind of split in the UNP and apprehension in the Left will help to stabilise the SLFP centrist Establishment. And with the non-aligned Summit a virtual certainty in August 1976—Algeria or no Algeria—any disarray on the Right and dismay on the Left will help the Centrist hardcore to strengthen to itself immeasurably.

Tribunania

Philosopher-King

RADHAKRISHNAN. The death of Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, at a ripe old age of 87, after a prolonged illness has brought public focus on one of the most remarkable men of this age. His writings not only gave him an international stature but also marked him out as one of the greatest and noblest of the human kind. University degrees, doctorates and other honours have been showered upon him, but those who knew him intimately say that all this greatness had not gone to his head, and even that at the height of his power and glory he was calm, serene and sweet as ever.

The officially released bio data speaks for it self:

M.A., D.LITT., LITT.D., D.C.L., LL.D., F.B.A.; educationist and philosopher; born on 5th September 1888, Tirutani, son of S. Veeraswami; married Siva Kamamma in 1905, one son and five daughters, educated at Madras Christian College. Upton Lecturer Manchester College, Oxford 26; Hibbert Lecturer 29-30; Haskell Lecturer in Comparative Religion Chicago University 26; Vice-Chancellor Andhra University, Waltair 31-36; Spalding Prof. of Eastern Religions and Ethics, Oxford University 36-52; Vice-Chancellor Benares Hindu University 39-48; member International

Committee of Intellectual Co-operation of L.N. 31-39; Leader Indian delegation to UNESCO 46-47; Chairman Executive Board UNESCO 47, President 52; Chairman University Education Commission 48-49; Ambassador to U.S.S.R. 49-52; Vice-President Republic of India 52-62; President 62-May 67; Chancellor Delhi University 53-62; Chairman Indian P.E.N., Vice-President Int. P.E.N., President and Fellow, Sahitya Akademi, Fed. German Order of Merit; Goethe Medal 59; Hon. O.M.; Hon. Fellow British Acad., All Souls College, Oxford; Awarded Templeton Foundation Prize for Progress in Religion, 1975.

Publications: The Philosophy of Rabindranath Tagore 18, The reign of Religion in Contemporary philosophy 20. The Philosophy of the Upanishads 24, 35, Indian Philosophy (2 vols.) 23, 26. The Hindu View of Life 27, An Idealist View of Life 32, East and West in Religion 33; Editor, Contemporary Indian Philosophy 36, Mahatma Gandhi, 39; Eastern Religions and Western Thought 39, India and China 44, Education Politics and war 44, Religion and Society 47, Is This Peace? 45, Bhagavadgita 48, Dhammapada 50, The Principal Upanishads 53, East and West 56, Recovery of Faith 56, Brahma Sutra 60, Fellowship of the Spirit 62, Religion in a Changing World 67, The Radhakrishnan Reader 69.

One of the most popular parts of the second volume of his *Indian Philosophy* was published as one volume entitled THE VEDANTA (Allen and Unwin, 1928). It had two parts *The Advaita Vedanta of Samkara and The Theism of Ramanuja*. Who but Radhakrishnan could write: "The Advaitism of Samakara is a system of great speculative daring and logical subtlety. Its austere intellectualism, its remorseless logic, which marches on indifferent to the hopes and beliefs of man, its relative freedom from theological obsessions, make it a great example of a purely philosophical system. It is impossible to read Samkara's writings, packed as they are with serious and subtle thinking, without being conscious that one is in contact with a mind of very fine penetration and profound spirituality. With his acute feeling of the immeasurable world, his stinging gaze into the abyssal mysteries of spirit, his unswerving resolve to say neither more nor less than what

could be proved. Samkara stands out as a heroic figure of the first rank in the somewhat motley crowd of the religious thinkers of mediaeval India. His philosophy stands forth complete, needing neither a before nor an after. It has a self-justifying wholeness characteristic of work of art. It expounds its own presuppositions, is ruled by its own end and holds all its elements in a stable reasoned equipoise. The list of qualifications which Samkara lays down for a student of philosophy is not an intellectual pursuit but a dedicated life....."

IT MUST BE REMEMBERED that it was the *advaita* system of Samkara (or Sankarachari as he is known in other texts) that brought about a revivalism of Hinduism in India, especially, in south India, and it was this that brought about the decline of Buddhism, Jainism and certain other religious sects. It was under the impact of Samkara's teachings that Brahmanism was transformed into Hinduism during the sixth and seventh centuries. In South India, at the time when Pallava suzerainty was at its greatest, there was a great revival in popular Hinduism. "The religious persuasions of the Pallava kings gives a clear indication of the reconstruction then taking place. Whilst the earliest rulers of the Pallava dynasty were Buddhists, those next in order were Vaishnavites, while the latest were Saivites. As a reaction against the ascetic tendency of Buddhism and the devotional one of theism, the Mimamsakas were exaggerating the importance of vedic rites. Kumarila and Mandana Misra denounced the value of *jnana* and *sannyasa*, and insisted on the value of *karma* and the stage of the householder. Samkara appeared, at one and the same time, as the eager champion of the orthodox faith and a spiritual reformer. The power of the faith to lead the soul to the higher life became for him the test of his strength. He felt impelled to attempt the spiritual direction of his age by formulating a philosophy and religion which could satisfy the ethical and spiritual needs of the people better than the systems of Buddhism, Mimamsa and Bhakti. The theists were veiling the truth in a mist of sentiment. With their genius for mystical experience, they were indifferent to

the practical concerns of life. The Mimamsaka emphasis on *karma* developed ritualism devoid of spirit. Virtue can face the dark perils of life and survive only if it be the fine flower of thought. The Advaita philosophy alone, in the opinion of Samkara, could do justice to the truth of conflicting creeds and so he wrote all his works with the one purpose of helping the individual to the realisation of the identity of his soul with Brahman, which is the means of liberation from *samsara*..

The manner in which Radhakrishnan analyses, examines and dissects the philosophic teaching of Samkara is a demonstration of Radhakrishnan's genius and his lucidity as a teacher. But the *advaita* of Samkara is not complete without the theism of Ramanuja. "The Absolute of Samkara, rigid, motionless, and totally lacking in initiative or influence, cannot call forth our worship. Like the Taj Mahal, which is unconscious of the admiration it arouses, the Absolute remains indifferent to the fear and love of its worshippers, and for all those who regard the goal of religion as the goal of philosophy—to know God is to know the real—Samkara's view seems to be a finished example of learned error. They feel that it is as unsatisfactory to natural instincts as to trained intelligence. The world is said to be an appearance and God a bloodless Absolute dark with excess of light. The obvious fact of experience that, when weak and erring human beings call from the depths, the helping hand of grace is stretched out, is ignored. Samkara does not deal justly with the living sense of companionship which the devotees have in their difficult lives. He declares that to save oneself is to lose one self in the sea of the unknown....."

Radhakrishnan goes on to present the beliefs of the theists: "Personal values are subordinated to impersonal ones (in Samkara's *advaitism*), but the theist protests that truth, beauty and goodness have no reality as self-existent abstractions. An experience that is not owned by a subject is a contradiction in terms. Truth, beauty and perfection speak to us of primal mind in whose experience they are eternally realised. God himself is the highest reality as well as

supreme value. Moreover, the innermost being of God is not solely the realisation of eternal truth or the enjoyment of perfect beauty, but is perfect love which expends itself for others.. Ramanuja concentrates his attention on the relation of the world to God, and argues that God is indeed real and independent; but the souls of the world are real also, though their reality is utterly dependent on that of God. He believes in a spiritual principles as the basis of the world, which is not treated as illusion. He insists on continued individual existence of souls. Though the world of matter and the individual souls have a real existence of their own, still neither of them is still essentially the same as Brahman. For, while Brahman is eternally free from all imperfection, matter is unconscious, and individual souls are subject to ignorance and suffering. Yet they all form a unity, since matter and souls have existence only as the body of Brahman, i.e. they can exist and be what they are simply because Brahman is their soul and controlling power. Apart from the Brahman, they are nothing. So Ramanuja's theory is an *advaita* or non-dualism through with a qualification (*visesa*), viz that it admits plurality, since the supreme spirit subsists in a plurality of forms as souls and matter. It is therefore called *Visistadvaita* or qualified non-dualism. In ethics also there was a protest against the intellectualism favoured by the followers of Samkara and the ritualism of the Mimamsakas. Even as early as the age of the Rg-Veda we found that gods were sometimes entreated by prayer and at others compelled by ritual. The sacrificial cult had always to contend with the devotional worship of the Supreme through symbols, originally in groves and later in temples.."

Radhakrishnan was undoubtedly one of the greatest modern exponents of Indian philosophy and religion. He writes with clarity and objectivity, and nearly every line he has written is worthy of citation. His chapters on *The Vedanta* as understood by the *Advaita* of Samkara and the *Visistadvaita* of Ramanuja throw profound light, among other things, on why Buddhism and Jainism, which had flourished in the South of India for nearly a thousand years, went into

decline before the growth of popular Hinduism and Saivism. Jainism has continued to flourish in pockets in various parts of India, but Buddhism disappeared as a living religion practically from every part of the country of its origin. The writings of Radhakrishnan (many of them based on his lectures) will help one to understand the historical, philosophical and religious intricacies of thought and action in India past and present.

It is not often that genuine scholar and philosopher, such as Radhakrishnan was, is ever able to rise to positions of eminence and prestige in the governmental hierarchy of his country. But Radhakrishnan was not only a distinguished Ambassador for his country but he was Vice-President of the Republic for ten years and its titular President for five years. Within the imperatives of a republican era, Radhakrishnan was indeed a scholar-king, or a philosopher-king, respected and loved in his own country and also in the world abroad.

INTERNATIONAL - AFFAIRS

BY ARIEL

Changing Times

AS WE HAD ANTICIPATED SOMETIME AGO, the Lon Nol regime has collapsed. Phnom Penh fell much sooner than many had expected. The moment the US decided to evacuate its Embassy, the American citizens and some "loyal" Cambodians, it was clear that the days of the Government were numbered. President Lon Nol had been sent away sometime before and Prime Minister Long Beret had returned in the hope that a negotiated peace could be brought about—not only to save American face but also give a few remaining "traitors" (seven of them specially so proclaimed by the Sihanouk government) a chance of rehabilitating themselves under the new regime. But these tactics did not work. Sihanouk and Khmer Rouge refused to negotiate with the Lon Nol collaborators or even the army generals of that government. Phnom Penh was taken in battle

and the troops fighting for the deposed government were compelled to hoist the white flag and surrender unconditionally.

What new Government will emerge is not clear, but Sihanouk will be the titular head for life. But he is not likely to interfere with the actual administrative and executive affairs which will be in charge of the Khmer Rouge. The leader of the Khmer Rouge, Khieu Sampan, has already been appointed by Sihanouk as the head of the Administration. And he has said that Cambodia would follow a "non-aligned" policy. What this will be is not yet certain, but it will be interesting to watch.

The Saigon regime will not last much longer. Anyway, it will last long enough or the US to evacuate all American's still left in South Vietnam together with as many of the South Vietnamese who want to quit—and though the total number of Americans still left is said to be around 5000, the number of South Vietnamese who may want to quit to the US or the anti-communist sanctuaries is expected to top the 200,000 mark. The US Congress had refused to sanction money for arms aid to Saigon, but has voted money for "humanitarian purposes"—and this money is for the evacuation and the rehabilitation (in part) of those so evacuated. The fact that Thieu has refused to quit in the way that Lon Nol did has made matters more complicated for a negotiated settlement—because unlike in Cambodia the Vietcong and Hanoi are prepared to negotiate with elements who had not become tainted too much with collaboration with Thieu. South Vietnam has always had a hard core of non-communist opposition to Thieu—drawn from the Catholics as well as the Buddhists—and these elements have called for a change of government—one which would be able to negotiate a peace settlement with the Vietcong. Many Catholics, who had earlier not been enamoured of the communists, have now declared that they would be willing to co-exist with them in a coalition government.

How long the Operation Evacuation of the Americans will take is not known nor into what snags and difficulties this operation is likely to run into. But the Vietcong and Hanoi will probably not raise

objections to the evacuation of the Americans, but when it comes to mass evacuation of South Vietnamese there are bound to be serious problems.

It is now only a matter of weeks before Communist power is entrenched in Vietnam and Cambodia. Laos will be a fragment which will be sucked into this communist mini-giant which will emerge in Indochina. The manner in which this development has taken place is likely to have far-reaching repercussions.

If the Western powers, especially France at first and latterly the USA, had permitted the nationalist movements in these countries to develop in the normal way with a leftwing slant, the countries of Indochina (Annam) may have grown up non-aligned republics within the orbit of the democratic world. France did not want to lose her colonies and waged a battle against Ho Chi Minh for nearly ten years from 1945 to 1954 when a Geneva Agreement was signed to enable these countries to develop in freedom and independence. But, John Foster Dulles and the Americans, fearing that these countries would tilt towards socialism and communism rather than capitalism and the west, tore up the 1954 Geneva Agreement under one pretext or another, and started the 20-year war to create kingdoms after their heart.

At first it was the domino theory which was proclaimed to save Indochina, Southeast Asia and even Southasia from communism. After a decade of fruitless fighting, the domino theory was superceded by the Vietnamisation theory—which meant anti-communist (called democratic) Asians were paid and equipped to fight other Asians (who were inclined to oppose them and their western patrons). The Vietnamisation (asians fight asians) theory flowered into the Guam Doctrine of Nixon. From Dulles to Nixon, it was not a big change.

After spending billions of dollars and losing over 50,000 American lives (the number of Indochinese killed was not taken into consideration), the

USA found itself a nation divided. Detente with China did not bring peace in Vietnam, and the Paris Accords were signed. Washington's calculations were subverted because the Thieu regime was not willing to accept the most likely outcome of the full implementation of the Accords. This gave an opening to the Vietcong and Hanoi to interpret the Paris Accords in a way that suited them. In the meantime, in the USA Nixon had gone and Watergate had brought a new mood into American thinking, and Kissinger's calculated risks in the Paris Accords all crumbled to the dust—without virtually unlimited US aid in cash and arms, Thieu and his associate were not able to continue doing what they had been doing because a sizable proportion of US money went into the private bank accounts of the top Thieu hierarchy (a goodly part in banks in different world capitals).

IT IS POINTLESS having a post-mortem. Post-war (second world war) US policy in Asia has collapsed in spite of its being the richest nation on earth and militarily the strongest. The refusal to accept the slightly left nationalist Government which Ho Chi Ming in the early phase would have established has now led to fully-fledged hard-line communist regimes filled with the bitterness of thirty years of war and with several generations of young who know no other way of life except war in which they saw many millions die—most of them victims of US bombing. The US has only itself to blame for the whirlwind of hate and bitterness it has engendered in this region.

US cold war logic, backed by its supreme military powers and its millions with which it was able to buy thousands of local supporters like Thieu and Lon Nol, has created a new situation in which the insurgent guerilla forces became the "liberation forces". (If the same misanthropic cold war logic is continued as the paramount thinking in respect of other countries in Southeast and Southasia, in the immediate future including Sri Lanka, all "insurgent" forces will soon be hailed as the liberation forces and this will be so even if

the governments in some of these countries claim to be left. There is always something left of left if corruption and human degeneracy have to be eliminated. And corruption in all these countries, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, Philippines, India, Burma, Bangladesh, Pakistan, and even in Sri Lanka—in spite of the anti-corruption gimmicks—has become a way of life for the majority of the hierarchical elite, and the young

are no longer willing to surrender to the corruption of the regimes and systems into which they were born.)

There is now a major shift in the balance of power in Asia with the collapse of American policies in Cambodia and Vietnam. In the first phase, there will be a major accretion of strength to China as the dominant power in East Asia, and probably very soon in Southeast Asia, but one cannot

INTERNAL COLD WAR

IS IT NOT A FACT that influential banking and governmental circles in Colombo are gravely disturbed by stories which had appeared in certain newspapers over the last weekend that the US Embassy had withdrawn large sums (March rupees one million, April rupees one and half million and May also rupees one and half million)? It was suggested in these papers that the withdrawals of these large sums had caused many "eyebrows" to be raised in "UF political circles?" That with the threats of fascism in the air, these papers had hinted that Government should "keep a tab on the manner in which these moneys are spent locally?" That those upset by these withdrawals "will urge the Prime Minister to take serious notice of these heavy withdrawals of money having in mind the fate that befell President Allende in Chile?" That these circles close to the Establishment say that the Central Bank and Finance Ministry were aware that such withdrawals were being made for the transfer of these sums from the Central Bank (which pays a low rate of interest) to a wellknown Commercial Bank (which pays a much higher rate of interest)? That just as much as withdrawals from the Central Bank, however small, can be known to government, so also a check can be kept on withdrawals from a Commercial Bank? That whilst these newspaper stories had created the impression that all this money had been carried away in gunny bags on a wheelbarrow for secret disbursement, the fact is that so far the withdrawals were no more than mere transfers? That money drawn from the Central Bank can be mispent as much money from a Commercial Bank and the Government's security services must have had an eye on such disbursements ever since the PL 480 came into existence? That what has disturbed these influential circles is that the circles which had evidently "leaked" the news knew that the transaction were so far no more than transfers? That what has disturbed them even more is that this cold war blast has come so soon after Washington had granted such a large quantity of wheat flour under PL 480—enough to defuse the crisis and tension on the food front in Sri Lanka? That such stories were likely to kill the goose that laid golden eggs (in this case much-needed cereals)? That these Establishment circles are also perturbed that these stories were timed for the visit of the US Secretary of the Treasury Simon? That some of our governmental bigwigs expect a vigorous protest from the US Ambassador in Sri Lanka? That what they feared more was a thunderbolt from Washington stopping all PL 480 deliveries because the mood in the Congress, after Vietnam was such that it would want the Administration to keep off places where the US was not wanted? That many seem to think that a stoppage of PL 480 supplies will do Sri Lanka good in its efforts to be self-reliant in food and everything else? That others think that until more food is produced locally it would be a crime to let the people starve? That this cold war between two opposed schools of thought has begun to hot up? That with this PL 480 story one side thinks it has called "check"—not yet checkmate? That it will be interesting to see what the next move of other side will be in this tension-packed game of chess now going on in the country? That a mini-climax is expected on or before or after May 1?

overlook the growth of a possible communist mini-giant in Indochina which may develop new and uniquely peculiar characteristics of independence.

IN THE WEST, US and Western cold war strategy has not worked the way they had wanted. Portugal which suffered a rightwing dictatorship for over 50 years from the end of the first world war to the military coup of April 1974 has now swung to the far (and communist) left. As long as democracy in Portugal was crushed by rightist dictators (on the plea of fighting communism) the US and the Western Powers had not uttered a word of protest, but now when a leftwing authoritarian government has caused the pendulum to swing the other way, the Western Powers are raising howls and some have even contemplated intervention—they have forgotten Vietnam! The West was willing to support the anti-democratic puppet

dictatorship of men like Thieu and Lon Nol because of cold world logic, but raise sanctimonious cries of horror when leftwing dictatorship arise. If one wants to stabilise democracy, it has to be applied and supported on a principled basis even if the immediate impact and repercussions are unpalatable to cold war predilections.

The sooner cold war logic is forgotten the better it would be for the world. The detente must be made real. One cannot have detente with reservations. Every country will now review its foreign policies in the light of current events. But what is most significant is that the vast changes which have taken place in the last one year from Ethiopia to Portugal from Pakistan to Indochina, in fact in every part of the world—are changes which have only previously come at the end of the world wars. Such sweeping changes in governments and rulers have,

in the twentieth century, come only in the wake of global wars.

But today revolutions and changes have come without a global war. There have been small wars in all parts of the world—cold-war inspired wars—but what has really laid the foundation for these catalysmic changes was the global conflagration and confrontations in matters economic. The monetary system of the capitalist world has collapsed. Gold is no longer what it was in the exchange markets of the world. Recession, inflation, boom, oil crisis, eurodollars, petrodollars, have all contributed to create a situation similar to what the world was at the end of first world war and the second world war—when the bolsevik and the chinese revolutions broke out and had swept through the world.

Vast and unbelievable changes can be expected throughout the world in the coming months.

CHRONICLE

APRIL 3—11

A DIARY OF EVENTS IN SRI LANKA AND THE WORLD
COMPILED FROM ENGLISH-LANGUAGE DAILIES
PUBLISHED IN COLOMBO.

THURSDAY, APRIL 3: The Government decided yesterday to take over immediately a group of sterling company estates whose ownership changed hands in London recently: the estates have a total acreage of 10,372 acres including valuable gem land—CDN. The special envoy of Prince Sihanouk of Cambodia, Mr. Charin Chhak, at a press conference held yesterday said that it was for the Sri Lanka Government to give diplomatic recognition to his Government or not, and he also said that by November Cambodia will be completely liberated—CDN & CDM. The French delegation to the IPU conference at the BMICH in a memorandum to the Committee on Political Questions, International Security and Disarmament said that the end of the world no longer depend on the will of angry and capricious gods but on man's sanity or madness—CDM. The Association of Government Medical Practitioners in a statement issued yesterday said that they had not been prompted by any outside influences in launching their strike: the Government yesterday decided to recruit retired medical practitioners to meet the strike going on from March 27.—CDM & CDN. Liberation forces have captured the strategic ferry town of Neak Luong after bitter hand-to-hand street fighting: the overall commander of the area was believed to have been captured. The Dutch police have foiled a plan by a group of militant Indonesian South Moluccans to attack Queen Juliana's palace near Utrecht and take members of the Dutch Royal Family hostage.

FRIDAY, APRIL 4: Deputy Minister, Mr. Lakshman Jayakody, told a Press Conference yesterday that Britishers who owned the tea estates in Sri Lanka were mainly responsible for the present condition in these estates: he was commenting on a controversy, currently raging in Britain about appalling conditions under which estate labour in Sri Lanka were reported to be functioning—CDN. Sir Oliver Goonetilleke was absent when the CJC (Foreign Exchange Offences) took up the case against him and five others yesterday: it was postponed till May 5 as the other suspects wanted time to study statements before making any plea—CDN & CDM. The PM, Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike, is scheduled to visit Baghdad after April 20: from there she will go to Jamaica to attend the Commonwealth Prime Minister's Conference—CDN. The Government yesterday declared as an "Essential Service", the maintenance, care, reception, feeding and treatment of patients in hospitals, nursing homes, dispensaries and other similar institutions: the Ministry of Health has warned all Striking Medical Practitioners to return to work by 6 am on Monday the 7th April, 1975: failure to do so would render them liable to dismissal—CDN & CDM. Mr. Anura Bandaranaike, Chief Organiser of the SLFP Youth Leagues, speaking at a meeting yesterday, said that the success of his mission to North Korea was due solely to the foreign policy enunciated by the late Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike—CDN & CDM. Mr. T. S. Fernando, High Commissioner in Australia and New Zealand, has been nominated by Sri Lanka for election to International Court of Justice—CDN & CDM. A new Government was likely in Saigon following swift gains by liberation forces: while in Cambodia, liberation forces yanked their noose round Phnom Penh. The US Senate Foreign Relations Committee has sent two of its staff members to South Vietnam for an on-the-spot assessment of the situation there.

SATURDAY, APRIL 5: Minister T. B. Ilangaratne, yesterday ordered a complete "clean-up" of the Insurance Corporation's Motor Department: he told the Corporation's Board of Directors at an emergency meeting he summoned yesterday that his request followed a spate of complaints from the public that the branch was "reeking with inefficiency, lethargy and corruption."—CDN. India has pledged full support to Sri Lanka to make the 1976 non-aligned summit a success according to Deputy Minister Lakshman Jayakody—CDN. Dr. Colvin R. de Silva, revealed at a press conference yesterday that some of the estates of sterling companies which changed hands in the London stock exchange were sold for only £ 13 per acre.—CDM. The striking Government Registered and Assistant Medical Practitioners will decide tomorrow whether to call off their nine-day old strike—CDM. The United Kingdom's Parliamentary delegation, participating in the IPU sessions in Colombo, is preparing a report on the conditions of the British-owned plantations in Sri Lanka: the report which is being treated as a highly confidential document will be handed over to Mr. David Ennals, Minister of State, Foreign Affairs, when the delegation returns to London next week—CDN. President Nguyen Van Thieu announced that Prime Minister Tran Thien Khien and his entire Cabinet had resigned. Cambodia's Khmer Rouge forces have punched a fresh hole in Phnom Penh's defence perimeter: according to military sources the Government also appeared to be preparing to abandon some of its outlying provincial capitals in order to pull forces back for the defence of Phnom Penh.

SUNDAY, APRIL 6: The C.I.D. is maintaining a close watch on student activities in and around the University campuses: the CID is also keeping a close watch on some of the extra-mural activities of some college students: according to police reports cells were being formed in the campuses to propagate radical views—ST. The Delimitation Commission is now going through a large number of memoranda—over 600—it has received from various organisations, societies and public: the Commission had discussions with the Government Agent Colombo, and is expected to meet GAs of Kalutara, Moneragala and Badulla and the Registrar General this week—CO. A massive two million bushels of paddy is expected to be the annual contribution made by the Wet Zone under a crash program drawn up by the Minister Mr. Maithripala Senanayake—CO. Hundreds of farmers in the NCP are finding it extremely difficult to dispose of their stocks of sorghum owing to the ready availability of wheat flour: Mr. David Spurgeon, Director of the International Crops Research Institute, has said that sorghum is the world's fifth ranking cereal crop—ST. With the Sinhala and Tamil New Year only one week away, the public and private sector business establishments have finalised plans to meet the last minute rush by consumers: most of the shops in the city are stocked with textiles, readymade garments and other clothing requirements at reduced prices—CO. Cambodian liberation forces were yesterday attacking Government positions six miles north of besieged Phnom Penh while the US Embassy in Phnom Penh made emergency plans to evacuate its personnel. In Saigon rescue workers plucked more bodies from marshland just outside the city where a giant American transport plane crashed yesterday killing 140 tiny Vietna-

mese orphans and about 50 adults: President Ford shaken by the crash of the Vietnamese orphan—airlift plane near Saigon, flew to San Francisco yesterday after early morning talks with Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger, on the Communist sweep in South Vietnam.

MONDAY, APRIL 7: The Police Narcotics Bureau seized two tons of ganja (cannabis sativa 'L') in the first three months of the year: the Bureau considers this only one per cent of the actual quantity being trafficked by the underworld: during this period police have also uprooted 83,000 ganja plants grown in 21 chenas—CDN. The 11-day old strike of the RMP's and AMPs has been called off: they will report for duty today in keeping with the deadline set by the Health Ministry last week—CDN. The Navy and Army will strengthen its shore establishments and increase its in-shore and off-shore patrolling to put an end to all forms of smuggling in the country: this follows certain reports in recent weeks of large scale smuggling of liquor and other luxury goods by small fishing craft—CDM. The Sri Lanka Higher Institute for Fisheries Training established at Crow's Island, Mattakkauliya, will be declared open by the Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike, today—CDM. The CTB will spend Rs. 44 million this year to set up 18 new depots in the rural areas: as part of the Board's decentralisation program, the new depots will help maintain a more efficient service and cut losses—CDN. The Sri Lanka Air Force's helicopters earned \$ 100,000 in foreign exchange from tourists during the last three months—CDN. Minister of Education, Dr. Badi-ud-din Mahmud, had talks in Kuwait with the Kuwait Foreign Minister, Sheik Sabah Al-Ahmed, on relations with this gulf oil state and Middle-east developments—CDN (Reuter). The number of persons granted Sri Lanka citizenship under the Sirima-Shastri Indo-Ceylon agreement is 99,914, the Foreign Office announced last week: the number of repatriates to India so far under the agreement has totalled 171,980—CDN. Cambodian Liberation Forces were trying to slice the Phnom Penh defence perimeter in two before launching a major assault on the Cambodian capital. The Viet Cong have taken complete control of South Vietnam biggest naval port in Cam Ranh, according to the North Vietnam News Agency: hundreds of South Vietnamese orphans have flown out of Saigon to a new life in the United States with the wreckage of an American plane which crashed killing 140 children still smouldering in the distance.

TUESDAY, APRIL 8: Anti-smuggling operations on both sides of the Palk Straits are beginning to show results: a drop, by nearly Rs 2 million in the value of contraband detected on the Sri Lanka side, last year, was yesterday attributed by the Government Agent Jaffna to the success of joint operations in Sri Lanka and South India: according to figures available the value of goods smuggled within the Jaffna peninsula and seized by the Army, Navy, Police and Customs authorities was worth almost Rs. 3.5 million—CDN & CDM. Sri Lanka would need an additional amount of about £ 200 million to meet the current foreign exchange requirements: this is revealed in a draft report of the world Bank on "Recent Economic Developments and Current Prospects for Sri Lanka"—CDM. The Communist Party of Sri Lanka in a press release states that American President's appeal to other countries to help him in the

evacuation of so-called "refugees" is nothing more than a clumsy attempt to "internationalise" the defeat of US imperialism, which even America's traditional allies are reluctant to do—CDM. The screening of a second film on poverty, hunger and disease among workers of British owned tea plantations in Sri Lanka has provoked a fresh wave of protest in London: the film was shown on Granada TV in London on the popular "World Action" program—CDN. (Reuter) The Prime Minister yesterday appointed a top level committee to recommend a course of action to stabilise prices of recent harvests of sorghum, maize and other substitute foods which have experienced a steep drop in prices during the last few weeks—CDN. Dr. Colvin R. de Silva disclosed at a press conference yesterday that a Star Sapphire worth over Rs. 6 million was found in one of the five estates acquired by the Government last week—CDM. Mr. Yen Chia-Kan, 70 year old scientist and scholar, became the new President of Taiwan succeeding Chiang Kai-Shek who died yesterday. Government forces are abandoning the key district town of Chon Thanh, 45 miles north Saigon, which has been cut off by liberation troops. High level talks continued in Phnom Penh at the initiation of Acting President Soukham Khoy with a view to offering unconditional capitulation of the Phnom Penh government to the liberation forces.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 9: In the wake of firm action taken by the Government on the Pelmadulla deal, news has reached Colombo of yet another transaction under negotiation by an "unquoted financial services group in Singapore" to acquire a 50 per cent stake in another British-owned Company in Sri Lanka—Rajawella Produce Holdings: observers in Colombo feel that the negotiations are on similar lines to the Pelmadulla deal—CDN. Guaranteed prices for sorghum and maize and the stopping of all imports of maize were among measures considered yesterday by a special committee appointed by the Prime Minister to recommend methods of ensuring fair prices for cultivators of these crops—CDN. A significant increase in the average cost-of-living has been recorded for the month of January 1975: according to statistics compiled by the Central Bank, the average cost-of-living index for the month of January 1975 was 10.5 percent higher than the index for 1974—CDN. Under the Low Cost Housing Programme the schemes that are in hand, consist 1762 houses in 32 ongoing projects: the total estimated cost of all these projects is calculated at Rs. 36.3 million—CDM. Farmers have sold 1.2 million bushels of paddy to the Paddy Marketing Board during the first three months of the year—CDN. The Central Committee of the Communist Party of Sri Lanka (Moscow) in a resolution adopted during the weekend expressed "joy at the victories won and the sweeping advances made by the national liberation forces in South Vietnam and Cambodia"—CDN. An investigation by the Ministry of Foreign and Internal Trade has revealed that the shortage of milk foods in the country was a result of the Milk Board not meeting its supply commitments due to lack of containers and packing material—CDN. A 24-hour curfew was slapped on Saigon after a Government fighter bomber raided the Presidential palace dropping three bombs in the grounds. Liberation forces advanced closer to Phnom Penh as political leaders continued their search for a

formula that could lead to unconditional surrender of the Phnom Penh side.

THURSDAY, APRIL 10: Sharp increases in the prices of essential imports last year caused a record balance of payments deficit of Rs. 1,082.4 million: this is nearly Rs. 1,000 million more than in 1973, when the deficit was Rs. 97.6 million: the import price of rice went up by 200 per cent, flour by 87 per cent and sugar by 65 per cent over the previous year—CDN & CDM. Minister Dr. Colvin R. de Silva will inquire into the proposed transfer in London of shares of Rajawella Holdings which owns tea and rubber plantations in Sri Lanka—CDN. The Prime Minister is scheduled to visit Iraq on April 23 on a three-day official visit: during her stay in Baghdad Mrs. Bandaranaike will meet the Iraqi President, Sd. Hassan Al-Bakr and the Vice President Sd. Saddam Hussein: thereafter she will leave on April 26 for London where she will meet the British Prime Minister regarding UK's continuance in the Common Market, its implications on Sri Lanka and other matters of mutual interest: she is also expected to meet Guyana's Prime Minister Mr. Forbes Burnham—CDM. Government has decided that all tea estate workers to whom the decision of the Wages Board for the Tea Growing and Manufacturing Trade are applicable and who are employed in any tea estate not less than 100 acres in extent, shall receive a wage supplement computed in terms of the average net sale price per pound for all mid-grown teas at the Colombo auctions for the previous month—CDM. Mr. Hector Kobbekaduwa, Minister of Agriculture and Lands, has said that the next stage of planned settlement on excess land acquired by Government under the Land Reform Law will soon be launched—CDN. The Deputy Commander of the Military region which include Saigon was found dead in his office yesterday with gun shot injuries. Hard pressed government forces and advancing liberation troops were locked in a fierce battle for a strategic post on besieged Phnom Penh's Northern defence line.

FRIDAY, APRIL 11: The Government has decided to offer a guaranteed price of Rs. 1,500 per ton for sorghum and maize—CDN. The Government has decided to publish the report of the Royal Commission of Inquiry into Agency Houses and Brokering firms: this document, which has been anxiously awaited by members of both the plantation and commercial sector is expected by observers to call for significant changes in the present structure of Agency Houses: it is anticipated that the UK-controlled Agency Houses which are linked with the big estates will be replaced by a central body under the Ministry of Plantations which will formulate policy and also plan and direct various aspects of the industry—CDN. "The association of a Financial Group with the firm holding a interest in Rajawella Produce Company (Ceylon) Ltd., strengthens the financial base of the company": this was stated in a press release from Rajawella Produce Company in reference to the Daily News item of April 19 that transactions were in progress abroad for purchase of a 50 per cent stake in the Company—CDN. The Government has decided that public officers, employees in the Local Government Service, State Corporations, banks and universities should not be granted extensions of service beyond the compulsory retirement age of 60 years—CDM. Utilization of foreign loans in 1974 amounted to Rs. 361

million of which Rs. 99 million was by way of project loans and Rs. 262 million by way of non project (commodity) loans—CDM. A psychiatrist attached to the mental hospital Angoda was yesterday sentenced to 2 years jail and Rs. 10,000 fine by the Special Bribery Court of Hulftsdorp for accepting Rs.200 as bribe to issue a medical certificate— CDM & CDN. Cambodia's acting President Sautham Khoy presided over an emergency cabinet meeting as the military situation around Phom

Penh deteriorated following attacks on the capital and its northern front lines: The pilot who bombed President Nguyen Van Thieu's official residence escaped and landed his plane in PRG held territory was promoted to the rank of captain and decorated by the Viet Cong for his exploit. Indian troops have disarmed and disbanded the personal guards of the Chogyal (ruler) of Sikkim the Himalayan kingdom recently made an "associate State" of India.

INDIA

Bihar, Gujerat and Jayaprakash

from Tribune's Special Correspondent

New Delhi, April 17,

The zig-zag of history in contemporary India seems to follow a bizarre pattern, whilst events in the rest of the world continues to be even more outlandishly grotesque. Could anyone have imagined even a few months ago that the Thieu regime in South Vietnam, in which the USA has invested several hundred billions of

dollars and over 50,000 American lives would collapse in the fashion it has done: that the Lon Nol regime would disappear with the Americans fleeing from the beleaguered Phnom Penh in helicopters long before the ship had really begun to sink? Would anybody have thought that the Ian Smith regime would free its black nationalist leaders? These are only a few of the unexpected events that have hit the headlines.

IN BIHAR, the Prime Minister has agreed to something which nobody ever thought she would concede that the local Congress party should be allowed to elect a leader of its choice and not accept a leader imposed from Delhi. Apologists for the Prime Minister argue that she was only trying out a new strategy in Bihar. Earlier, ever since she assumed the leadership of the Congress and the Government, she had insisted that a local legislature and party should adopt her nominee as the Chief Minister. But now after the notable failures in Gujerat and Bihar (and elsewhere without such disastrous consequences), she has made a right-about-turn in her tactical strategy. She has now permitted the local legislative party in Bihar to elect any local leader who was able to

muster the requisite support to become Chief Minister. This is a far cry from her earlier technique of imposing one of her confidants in the State Congress Legislature Party through a consensus stage-managed from Delhi.

This break in Bihar from her earlier strategy has evoked a great deal of comment and interest not only in the Congress but also in all political circles. It is felt that if this new methodology succeeds in this faction-ridden state, it may be a pointer to resolving problems in other States which seem equally ripe for change. Political commentator, G. K. Reddy, very aptly summed up the situation thus:

Mrs. Gandhi was not particularly happy at the beginning with the candidature of Dr. Jagannath Mishra, brother of the late Mr. L. N. Mishra, since he was not the kind of personality on whom many of the group leaders could agree as the best available man in the circumstances. But when he seemed to make the grade by outmanoeuvring his rivals in the Congress Legislature Party, which was more of a coalition of contentious factions than a single party subject to the normal disciplines, she readily accepted his candidature and assed the word round that he would receive her fullest support if he managed to get elected on his own steam. Thus no attempt was made this time to conjure majority support for the leader of a minority group by mobilising support in the Prime Minister's name.

Commenting on imperatives which make the position of Chief Ministers very difficult, Reddy went to say:

But the trouble with the Congress politicians is that a person changes when he becomes Chief Minister, whether it is on his own strength or as a result of the Prime Minister's patronage, and tends to become somewhat abrasive in dealings with his party colleagues.

Almost all the nominated Chief Ministers have come to grief by imagining themselves to be much more powerful than they really were and displaying their authority in a most thoughtless fashion. So the Central leaders are not sure whether Dr. Jagannath Mishra will be able to shed the legacies of the past and project himself as a leader capable of heading a problem State like Bihar particularly at this difficult time.

IN GUJERAT the developments have taken another turn. Last year, when President's rule was imposed on this State (also faction-ridden in spite of nominees of the PM being made the Chief Ministers), there had been widespread violence and rioting. The PM did not relent nor agree to the demand that was made for an early elections. This year, Morarji Desai switched tactics, and unwilling to follow in JP's footsteps of invoking mass upheavals led by student agitators, resorted to limited satyagraha which culminated with a fast-unto-death by the aged leader himself demanding early elections before the onset of the Monsoons. At first, Mrs. Gandhi was reluctant to agree to an early elections under such pressure, but when Desai's health began to deteriorate she agreed to have the elections at an early date—June 7—and Desai therefore broke his fast. She had stated that she could not bear to see a veteran and respected leader sacrifice his life in this fashion. But equally important was the reason that this flexible attitude to the Gujerat problem is believed by many as an important step to undermine the J.P. Narayan movement.

Before one examines the implications of JP's "people campaign" it is necessary to mention that the events in SIKKIM are likely to cause an increased tempo in the Pak-China propaganda campaign against India. But there was noth-

ing India could do but to support the elected representatives of the Sikkim National Congress. The Chogyal is a feudal relic and was unwilling to change with the times. Unfortunately, he had also begun to involve himself in international politicking with reactionary circles which wanted to create a free and independent Federation of Himalayan Kingdoms (Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim) to become a kind of permanent pinprick on India's northern and northeastern boundaries. The Chogyal was isolated by the popular support engaged by the Sikkim National Congress but he did not want to accept the role of a constitutional monarch. There was no doubt that the Palace Guards had become a threat to the growth of democratic trends and leadership; and at the request of the Prime Minister, the Indian Army disarmed and disbanded the Palace Guards. If the Chogyal had accepted the role of being a Constitutional head and the new Constitution, there would have been no occasion for the demand earlier by the Sikkim Congress for a status of an Associate State within the Indian Union. And today in a national plebiscite (or referendum) there has been an overwhelming vote in support of the Legislature's resolution to abolish the 300-year old monarchy (Chogyal) and for the state to become an additional unit in the Indian Union. Sikkim is in a different position from that of Bhutan and Nepal which have an international status of a different kind with representation in the UN, but what has happened in Sikkim should be a warning to certain elements in these two countries which are now seeking to derive undue advantages by intriguing with countries hostile to India at the moment.

IN THE MEANTIME, there is growing concern in the capital and throughout the country at the growth of violence and indiscipline. Though the murder of L. N. Mishra, the presence of an armed intruder in the Allahabad High Court when the Prime Minister was due to give evidence, the hand grenade attack on the Chief Justice—and many other acts of violence and lawlessness—may seem to be isolated and unconnected events, but they are regarded by discerning observers, only highlights

in an atmosphere engendered by the cumulative impact of student unrest, communal and caste problems, regional agitations, social evils like hoarding and blackmarketing in the face of shortages, and above all inner-party confrontations and factionalism.

What worries governmental circles is that this growth of violence is set in the background of a real security threat to the integrity of India that has been building up over the years. This threat is along what is known as the spinal cord of the country, the strip of territory stretching from Nagaland and Mizoram through North Bengal, the tribal tracts of Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Andhra to the Cauvery basin. It is from these focal points of insurgency, dissidence and plain discontent that the new climate of violence has been branching out to other States. The so-called "peoples' movement" of J. P. Narayan seems to derive support from all dissident and subversive elements; and an attempt has also been made to unite all the forces opposed to the Government under the image of JP who has built a reputation for himself as a kind of Gandhian recluse. There is no doubt that JP had taken part with Gandhi and Nehru in anti-British satyagraha struggles, but after a lengthy period of isolation in the Sarvodaya ashram he now calls for a "total revolution" in the country with the aim of establishing a "partyless democracy"—allegedly

on the basis of Gandhi's postulates. He now proclaims that India has forgotten Mahatma Gandhi's ideals after his death in 1948; and this, he says, is the root cause of the many problems facing the country today centred around the worsening of the economic situation, the hierarchical lapse into unlimited corruption and the like.

Jayaprakash's current politics is a strange mixture of Gandhi's teaching with an eclectic conglomeration of modern western theories, notably that of Marcuse, but with this hotch-potch (or because of it) he has been able to win a sizable following in Bihar and other states mainly among students and the middle classes—both sections which have been adversely affected by the worsening economic situation. All the frustrated and dissatisfied, who have not been able to get realistic answer from the ruling Congress Party or its ally the Communist Party regarding these questions of life and living, have turned to JP.

It is a mistake to regard Jayaprakash as a new Mahatma Gandhi although he claims to be an adherent (at least in principle) of non violence and justice professing only one ideology—of personal integrity. Accusing the ruling Congress leaders of Corruption, Narayan does not refuse to collaborate with persons said to be corrupt: persons like the former Chief Ministers of Bihar, (eg., Mahamaya

LETTER FROM THE MALDIVES

Tribune has received an unauthenticated letter by post from Male the capital of the Republic of Maldives. The author has used the name the pseudonym WELLWISHER (whose well-wisher?) We do not publish letters which are not properly authenticated. We had received a similarly unauthenticated letter also from Male, (typed on the same style machine and in the same aggressive keep-off-Maldives tone), sometime last year after our article of August 17 and August 31. As the letter was unauthenticated we did not want to risk publication although its rather abrasively sophisticated idiom had intrigued us. The letter we received last week was dated April 13 and though it is unauthenticated we propose to publish it in our next issue together with a further instalment of our series on the Maldivian Mystery. The burden of this letter is that all the *Tribune* articles on the Maldives are the diabolic work of the Sri Lanka Press Commission (and Censor) who, according to the letter writer, has compelled us, almost at bayonet-point, to write what we have written about developments in the Maldives. Little does the letter-writer know about the reactions of the Administration and the Establishment to what we have written about the Maldivian muddle. Our comments on the letter will probably take more space than the letter itself, but this cannot be helped...

Prasad Sinha and Karpuri Thakur), the leader of Punjab Akali Dal Party, Prakash Singh Badal, and even Karunanidhi who has been thrown very much on the defensive by charges of corruption and financial jugglery in collaboration with certain colleagues (the charges have been made by a section of the DMK which broke away to form the ADMK). Such contradictions do not seem to worry Narayan. His life has been complicated and tortuous one. He has staged so many memorable somersaults and it is difficult to keep pace with his politics. Before he became a follower of Gandhi, he was a socialist, or in his own words, he "was under the influence of Marxism." His political perambulations were always connected with the changing political situations in the country, but the one discernible thread in all such changes was his desire to reach out to supreme leadership. Some of his attempts to attain the highest leadership had caused many old Congress leaders to be cautious and chary about Jayaprakash. Vallabhai Patel, one of the bulwarks of the early Congress struggles and one of the top men in the first years after Independence, had gone on record in 1948 thus: "...If the future of India is in the hands of men like Jayaprakash it would probably be a most unfortunate circumstance....."

Thereafter, for over twenty years, Jayaprakash aloof from National politics was involved in the Sarvodaya movement—in propounding the theory of the "partyless democracy" of the Sarvodaya. He lived in a distant corner of the state of Bihar. And now, he has suddenly transformed himself from an ascetic recluse into the supreme all-India leader of integrity. This transformation did not stem from any divine motivation, but from mundane political forces, possessing large financial resources. His base is the Rightist parties which have been striving to undermine the power and prestige of the ruling Congress. The efforts of the Rightwing parties in the last four years and more had not met with any success, and it was at this stage that Jayaprakash had stepped into fray. It will be recalled that the Rightist Parties had lost the general election in 1971 and the local elections in 1972 and 1974. It was after this that these parties had

decided to shift the struggle from the hustings on to the streets and it was to give this shift a gathering momentum that JP had emerged with his slogan of a Sarvodayan "party less democracy". For the disunited and disparate anti-Congress opposition parties, whether claiming affiliations to Gandhianism or otherwise, JP became a rallying centrifugal force. And it is significant that all Jayaprakash's mass campaign have been characterised by a high degree of organisation, and this was provided for, in the first instance, by the Jana Sangh and the Bharatiya Lok Dal. And what is even more significant is that all these parties have rejected the basic tenets of Gandhianism especially its adherence to secularism, collective land ownership, etc. Furthermore, in direct opposition to the non-violence of Gandhianism, JP's movement relies heavily on the para-military RSS (Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh), the militant wing of the Jana Sangh, which regards violence as a legitimate weapon to protect and promote the Hindu religion. The Jayaprakash movement also derives much support from the Anand Marg sect whose leader is now held in custody charged with being involved in the murders of several of his former followers who had broken with the sect.

Jayaprakash has no lack for money. His movement is supported by some of the richest and most important business houses in India. Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi, in a public statement last July had pointed out that the Goenka group (which controls over fifty private companies with aggregate assets of over five hundred million rupees with the tentacles reaching out to industries in the processing of jute, in mining, in energy, and in the tea growing sectors).

The Goenka group also owns the largest newspaper trust: *Indian Express Newspapers, Bombay, Pvt. Ltd.*. Among other things, the Goenka group publishes Narayan's paper *Everyman's Weekly*, a newspaper of sixteen pages containing no advertisements. The editorial office of JP's paper is located in the Express Building in the Fleet Street of New Delhi (Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg). It is also well known that some years ago Jayaprakash went on a prolonged foreign tour at Goenka's expense.

It was intrigued many knowledgeable political circle that the present accivisation of the JP Narayan movement in Bihar and elsewhere had coincided (in the matter of timing) with the charges framed against the head of the Goenka clan, Ramnath. He has been charged with serious offences of financial malpractices, and other similar misdemeanours. Goenka is a member of the Lok Sabha having been returned to Parliament with Jana Sangh support, but he had classified himself into an Independent). All attempts to hush up the scandal have failed so far. It was when these efforts failed that Goenka, observers believe, had sought to bring pressure on the Prime Minister by threatening her with "troubles". Within a short time, after this threat, Jayaprakash and his followers had started their campaign in Bihar for the dissolution of the local legislature and raised aloft the slogan of a "partyless democracy" to fight corruption and to bring about a change of government.

It was not difficult for Jayaprakash to utilise the seething discontent in the country to incite mobs and crowds in different places to resort to violence and lawlessness. Food shops, ware houses and administrative buildings were set on fire. They fought pitched battles with the Police. It was clear that the objective was to create a situation of chaos and anarchy, to disorganise the functioning of the traditional democratic institutions and to impress upon the population that the Government was not able to govern, and that it therefore had to be replaced.

This naturally led to violence on a widespread scale. It encouraged political murders and assassination. Members of the Bihar legislature were threatened with violence to compel them to sign letters of resignation from the state legislature. Jayaprakash's main appeal was to the students. He flattered them calling them the salt of the earth destined to decide the fate of India. He called upon college (undergraduate and graduate) students to stop their studies for one year to devote themselves fully to the movement of civil disobedience to bring the downfall of the Government.

On the whole the response from the students has not been very

great. They are not willing to forgo their chances of getting high academic degrees with clean records. Even the students wing of the Jana Sangh has not responded to this call. The students are willing to participate in demonstrations and clashes with the Police but they have not shown any enthusiasm for quitting their studies.

But more than anything else, Jayaprakash has no lack of moneys. It is said that his *bandh* (the people's march) in Patna on November 4, 1974, cost nearly five million rupees. A similar amount is alleged to have been spent for the Delhi demonstration for the "peoples' march to Parliament." His expense during the present campaign meetings, processions and demonstrations must run into lakhs of rupees. Where does all this money come from. Goenka and his friends undoubtedly provide big sums. It is known that organisations like Asia Foundation, the Congress for Cultural Freedom and the like provide vast sums to the Sarvodaya Movement. Naturally, the CIA is said to be in the picture. Many people recall that Narayan had his higher education in the twenties in the United States.

On March 11, at a press conference, Mrs. Gandhi had been asked by a UPI correspondent whether there was any proof of CIA involvement in the outbreak of violence in India. The following is a PTL report of the PM's replies:

The Prime Minister, Mrs. Gandhi, has said that when they in India hear "about the involvement of the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) in other countries, not only in Chile but in many other countries," then it does become a matter of concern (to India). Mrs. Gandhi was replying to questions by a UPI correspondent on March 11. She told the correspondent that India did not have the sort of sophisticated equipment that could give it the fullest information about what was happening and hence it was very difficult for them to prove. "We can only say, well, there is circumstantial evidence why people are taking interest in particular things and so on" she said. When the correspondent asked what could motivate the CIA to get involved in the Jayaprakash Narayan movement. Mrs.

Gandhi countered "what motivates them (CIA) to get involved in other countries? To us it does not always make sense."

Asked whether it is conceivable that the CIA might have facilities in India, Mrs. Gandhi said: "You would know better". But she made it clear that she did not lose her sleep on that account. Question: As far as the CIA joining forces with India to gather intelligence on the Chinese-Tibet border is concerned, a few years ago you were saying there was some co-operation. Prime Minister: I don't know whether it was on that border or where it was. There was some talk.

It will be remembered that Secretary of State Kissinger during his visit last year to New Delhi had denied that the CIA had any cloak and dagger operations in India and had declared that if a US citizen was even suspected of such activities by the Government of India he would have him removed from the country within 24 hours. But much of what Kissinger had promised has faded away after the lifting of the arms embargo to Pakistan.

There cannot be the slightest doubt that neither Kissinger nor the State Department can seriously think that Narayan could replace Indira Gandhi as the Premier of India. But, Jayaprakash Narayan's movement can bring pressure upon Mrs. Gandhi's government to make it pliable to the rightist reactionary forces inside India.

BUILDING A VILLAGE HOUSE—29

SINKING A WELL

By Herbert Keuneman

IF I WERE EVER to build a house again, whether in the tank country or in the town, whether either Act of God or non-act of a municipality in foreseeing and providing for future growth could result in sudden deprivation of an accustomed source of water, I should begin by building a well. It would not be easy to find an uncontaminated site in a town—it is not all that easy even in the village—

and municipal bye-laws, I am aware may forbid it. But if you are going to build, and if there is place any where for it, build a well. First. There is plenty of need even for contaminated water, beginning from the first soil you have to soften or the first bricks you have to soak; besides which, you can always do something to de-contaminate it for later use; and though nothing seems quite so mean as water to be parsimonious about, nothing is quite so urgent to have or laborious to provide as water in sufficient quantity at the right place and as quickly as it is needed.

What a series of truisms with which to start an article! And yet—perhaps because I have seldom had to draw the water myself—it has taken me nearly three years and the awe-inspiring progress of a really formidable drought to bring home to me how short-sighted I was as a builder in not making a well the first of my priorities.

Even in my very small household of two or three more or less permanent residents, more or less, it takes 16 to 20 gallons a day to keep, merely, the two water-closets flushed; drinking-water another 2 gallons; water for washing and washing-up 6 to 10 gallons more; say 30 gallons a day, at a regular minimum. Bathing and laundry, if there weren't the tank (as is rapidly becoming the case would raise the total to 50 gallons at least. And 50 gallons of water weigh 500 lbs: not far short of a quarter of a ton, no negligible item of portage! In the old days, when Nesan and his successor (strong as young oxen) used to do it and the tank lapped the garden fence and our drinking water came from the temple well barely a hundred yards away I was not so conscious of all this. But now that the tank has receded—it self to nearly a hundred yards—and the temple well is all but dry so our drinking-water must come from the well in the village, which is distant almost a quarter of a mile, and now that all the water for the household (to say nothing of water for a kitchen-garden which is her gallant challenge to the drought) is fetched by Dinga, the matter has been newly on my conscience. YOU WILL REMEMBER Dinga (the real name is Dingi, for Dingiri Amma; but the very feminine

diminutive suggests a relationship that is irrelevant, and—I still cannot quite adjust to village *machismo*—maybe my conscience condones the acceptance under a less female *nom de guerre* of a degree of servitude that unprotected chivalry would writhe under) you will remember Dinga, I was saying, as the wife of Banders to whom this will go when I have ceased to live in it. Seeing the difficulties I have had with Nesan and his kind, Dinga has completely taken over to eliminate them. Which she has, most competently. That is why I have lately longed increasingly for a well. And not a well only, but a pump and an overhead water-tank besides.

A mere well would not markedly lessen Dinga's burden: she would still have to draw the water and carry much of it into the house including some of it upstairs. But a pump would almost certainly ease her situation. P. B., her young brother-in-law, who sleeps in the house and lights the lamps and keeps the frig going and does the marketing and thus helps Dinga out within strict limits, could almost certainly be persuaded to work the pump (which, as a machine, even a manually operated one, would fall under the dignity of the male purview) whereas to draw the water, argue as you like that a pulley is a sort of machine too, is demeaningly women's work. If, then, I had an overhead storage-tank in addition, and piped water in the house, my conscience which receives a buffet each time I see Dinga (who is slightly-built and slender as a doe) struggling with her waterpots would quickly recover its natural elasticity.

But though we are going to have a well, are in the throes of building one at this moment, this alas! is not the ideal system we are going to have. *mea culpa!* *mea culpa* entirely.

When I first set out to put this house up, a friend wiser than I gave me a serviceable hand pump and urged me strongly to have a well dug before I even dug my foundations. But since he is an amateur agriculturist rather than an amateur architect I was leary of his advice, fancying that he advocated the well (as I believe, indeed, he did) primarily to win me over to growing things. I had never up to that time grown so

much, as a bed of zinnias, and had never wanted to. My prime consideration was to build my house (a) as livably and (b) as cheaply as I could. My plan was therefore to have a simple oil-drum at ground level, to be filled by buckets from the tank; and another oil-drum amongst the roof beams (to be filled by the pump from the one below) chiefly to serve the lavatory cisterns and perhaps a couple of usefully disposed taps, including a shower. When it turned out that a 2-gallon bucket of water poured by hand efficiently flushed the toilets and that without much hardship of which I was then aware I could save six to eight-hundred rupees—about 5% of the estimated cost of my house—merely by omitting the luxury of pipe-borne water I decided to omit it. I returned the pump to my friend, who had use for it.

Thus (but now under the triple bludgeonings of conscience, drought and food-shortage) I am back at scratch, save that—with less money than ever before—I find myself committed to a well, a well moreover whose chief purpose is apparently going to be to help grow things. When did I ever think to prove the possessor of a green Achilles' heel!

TOWARDS THE END OF LAST YEAR two friends—intending I am sure, also to help me while equally helping Pinhamy—foreseeing the coming drought and failing crops, and hoping to make at least a portion of Pinhamy's *akkare* (the portion surrounding my house) viable, gave him a gift of Rs. 200 with which to start work upon a well.

What discussion took place I know not, for it was evidently intended that the scheme be kept secret from me until it was too far advanced for me (out of pride, stubbornness, or any other form of intransigence) to repudiate it; but I have no doubt that Pinhamy stated—what is true—that Government would make a grant of Rs. 500 towards the cost of any properly built well when it had been built up to ground level; and I have no doubt they thought that with the labour of Pinhamy and his family—since there was no labour in the fields in prospect—could make an adequate well for that sum. Perhaps, too, they thought that once the well was begun I would inevitably

become involved with it (which I have) and should deservedly divert some funds towards it. For even my best friends do not believe I live as penuriously as I do, and in any case—I admit my friends are the more practical—disagree with my table of priorities.

Nevertheless I wish I had known something of this beforehand; because—my friends were right—I should have refused, at this juncture any part in it. I could have told them, for one thing, that a well built last year in the next garden had cost the owner close on Rs. 3,000; and that, though this was with hired labour, it was optimistic in the extreme to think that there would be much saving in the labour Pinhamy was likely to put in. It is a fact that manual labour is probably the least liked thing amongst most of the male members of Pinhamy's family! and that there is nothing Pinhamy more wholeheartedly enjoys than being an employer, preferably of friends and relations!

The first inkling I had of the new well was when I found two of Pinhamy's relatives—his brother-in-law and a nephew—engaged in digging a largish hole in the garden. Pinhamy, who was supervising from the shade of a tree, said it was a well. I asked what diameter it would be and what it would be lined with; and he told me 8 feet, and it would be lined with specially-moulded curved cement bricks, 2 inches thick, of a 1:6 mix. He had the whole thing taped; indeed, he had the mould for the bricks already borrowed. He had not yet, it is true, any cement nor river sand; but he had better than that, he had patronage, and was already putting to use what he did have!

FORWARD, AS USUAL, I begged Pinhamy to begin with the bricks for the lining. But he explained that there was no money for the materials for these—I did not yet know that there was money but it was being expended on the family 'relief employment' scheme I saw before me—and, so delighted was I to see something really constructive being done, I rashly promised to provide the sand and cement—after all, I could always sell a couple of my more valuable books—if he would begin on the bricks without delay. He was

quite sure the drought would hold and it was, in fact, a ticklish question: in this region of no springs, only percolation water you can know how deep to dig only by digging in the height of a drought; on the other hand, if it did rain the unlined sides of the well might fall in—and he was quite sure the sides would hold also. All the same, when the sand and the cement had actually been paid for and delivered he did get down to considering the mould more carefully. It was then we discovered that not only was the mould very badly designed—it required the bricks as turned out to be laid to dry in a trough spaded into the earth—but it had also been cut down with no adjustment to the curve to yield bricks for a 5' well instead of the 8' for which it had originally been made!

We now needed a new mould. I undertook to help Pinhamy make one. I drew plans, sections, templates, and was perfectly ready to share what I could of the actual carpentry of the mould as well; but Pinhamy was 'estranged'. He had called—twice—early in the morning to begin the work with me as arranged and found me still asleep. Instead of waking me (as he had been instructed to do) he chose rather to feel aggrieved that I had not been awaiting him; and by the time we had again achieved *rapprochement* it was necessary for me to leave for a long stay in Colombo. What with similar setbacks repeated *ad nauseam*, it was finally March before the mould was ready and the first bricks were turned out, and then by Banders here on a briefly holiday. P. B., stirred to emulation by his brother's example, turned out several also, with a volunteer friend to help him. However, no more than 200 bricks were done (out of about 750 we shall need) when both Pinhamy and P.B. went off to work on a State sponsored relief-employment scheme for the villagers of the area, and the matter of the well is in abeyance.

Meanwhile, sure enough the well has fallen in. Three sharp showers in December—and only three—which accomplished nothing to relieve the drought accomplished that. But I have a feeling that Pinhamy was not innocent of an unintended part in the debacle. When the diggers had got down to 18 feet (which

was about as far as it seemed necessary to go; since some four feet of water would collect overnight at that depth) they came on rock. It was unavoidable to blast. I begged that the operation be handed to someone skilled in it. But none is as stubborn as the village Jack of all trades. The do-it-yourself blast made not a hair-line crack in the rock (a second blast—with dynamite, caps and fuses at black-market prices—did not go off at all) but I am sure it loosened the soil around; and the next day came the first shower!

When I designed my mould I designed it for a 10' well. Seeing that all the water we should get would be by percolation only (there is considerable high ground to the east, and the cline sets our way) and seeing that a 10' well would yield more than one-and-a-half times as much as an 8' one, I felt the

increased cost of material would be more than justified, so long as Pinhamy was not required to meet it. Also, and on the same terms, I made the 2" bricks 3" ones: they would be stronger; and they could be turned out under shelter and on a cement floor—a slower process, but surely making for better curing. Finally, there was the difference in cost of excavation: for each succeeding fathom down Rs. 20, 40, 80 for an 8' well; but for 'mv' size (a little unfairly, I thought) Rs. 40, 80, 160. These differences I undertook to pay, and have done so. I shouldn't grumble if there was a well in exchange.

But all there is is a large unprotected hole, an inadequate pile of bricks, and the hope I haven't poured Rs. 450 (i.e. my copy of *Sinhala Banners and Standards*) down the—er—excavation!

CEREAL SELF-SUFFICIENCY—I

Eight Pounds A Week

By R. KAHAWITA

One of our eminent Political leaders threw out a challenge to the people of this country that he would provide them with 8 lbs of cereals a week per person if his party were to be returned to power. The challenge was ridiculed in certain quarters, others raised very pertinent questions and still others made very frivolous remarks.

From where is he going to beg for it? Is he going to bring it from the moon? Is his grandmother going to give it to him, when the whole world is facing starvation? Here the whole world means the developing countries which want to go socialist and the socialist countries which have contracted with the capitalist countries to purchase massive quantities of food grains.

As far as Sri Lanka is concerned, the challenge is worth examining to find out, to what extent our Political leader could fulfil or carry out his challenge, particularly when we ridiculed and mocked at a "green revolution" that was taking shape in 1970, triggered off by a departed Political leader.

THE CHALLENGE is to provide 8 lbs. of cereals a week. He did not say it was going to be given free like "Ping Bath" nor did he say it was going to be in rice, wheat flour etc. Cereals cover a large variety of food grains, Rice, wheat, kurakkan, sorghum etc. On the face of it, supply of 8 lbs of unspecified cereals to feed a population of 13.5 millions is not something beyond achievement.

But the moment the cereal is brought down to what the people

of Sri Lanka are used to eat it becomes a serious challenge and a problem no Political Party has come to a near solution so far. Nevertheless it is worth examination at least to find out how ridiculous the offer is and throw it to the limbo of similar Political Promises made in the past to get your and my vote. Nothing appeals to a hungry man than the promise of wholesome food he yearns for in his agony of starvation. This is politics for him, and our scavenging politicians will pull out anything to satisfy the hungry people from their garbage cans.

The people of Sri Lanka were used to eat kurakkan, meneri, *Thana Amu*, during the days gone by and a little of rice and "American flour" in the Colonial days. So they are used to this variety of

cereals compared to *Sorghum*, *maize adalay*, etc. It may be that these are the cereals—cereals our people are used to eat, the Politician had in mind when the challenge was thrown. What proportion of each is also not clear.

Therefore for the purpose of this analysis I assume that 8 lbs. of cereals are to be supplied is Rice 4 lbs. Kurakkan and other similar cereals 2 lbs. "American Flour" 2 lbs.

I prefer to use the word "American Flour" rather than wheat flour because "American Flour" is some thing our villager knows what it is and how to prepare it as an item of food. But for me, it is the *Hall mark of Capitalism and the most effective tool to exploit the starving people of the under developed countries in spite of their ideas of socialism.*

Getting back to the subject, the weekly ration will be 4 lbs. of rice, 2 lbs. of Kurakkan etc. and 2 lbs. of "American flour". The first two items the country must produce or pretend to be attempting to produce and the last item can be had under P.L. 480 and tie ourselves down to a generation of bondage or get as gifts and aid in kind etc. Sri Lankians have got used so much to live on charity and tightening the poor man's belt for the sake of giving him a welfare state he has lost all human dignity and shame; he does not mind being an "international beggar."

THE TARGET for our Political leader to provide the nation with 4 lbs. of rice per week per person is to produce 88 million bushels of paddy each year to meet the needs of the present population at this instant. This quantity of rice has to be produced on the land, normally cultivated in paddy today. In the year 1970 according to the Central Bank reports the local farmer produced 63 million bushels from a cultivated area of 1,465,000 of crop acres. The difference is only 25 million bushels to reach the target to fulfil the promise.

That year, according to the same source the national average yield was 43.1 bushels per acre, so if the national average could be raised to 60 bushels per acre our Political leader will get away with

his promise, cultivating the same acreage as in 1970 viz 1,756,000 acre of which 1,465,000 acres were harvested.

However if the issue of rice is rationalised and a more realistic pattern of consumption is adopted and removed all fears of shortages, the annual requirements of rice at 4 lbs per week per person but estimated on a family basis the net is to produce around 75 million bushels of paddy a year to meet the needs of the moment; in order to remove fears of shortages, the country will have to build up buffer stocks—shortages are due to crop failures, which, according to our weather or rainfall pattern cannot be prevented.

To meet the short fall in production in the lean years annual production should be such that the country produces in three years her needs of five years. This requirement brings the total annual production to about 102 million bushels per annum. Maha season producing 60 to 65 million bushels and Yala season 37 to 42 millions bushels. This is possible and can be done if there were to be no obstruction to production, what they are I shall deal later.

IN ADDITION to what is required for consumption we must produce the **SEED PADDY** which is around 2.5 million bushels per annum. Production of seed paddy of quality and of selected varieties is a highly technical operation. The average peasant cultivator cannot be expected to do it. If high yields are to be maintained, then quality seed material must be available to the cultivator.

The production of seed paddy should be the responsibility of the Department of Agriculture, which they can do if the officers can sink their differences and get about their business as specialists and not as political stooges. The Dept. has set up a Paddy Research Institute which should also be entrusted with the responsibility of multiplication of approved strains of seed paddy.

Out of the 2.5 million bushels required, Department should be set the target of producing 2 million bushels or about a million bushels of seed paddy per season. With all the resources the Department can command and the expertise

and experience its officers are supposed to have acquired, their target yield per acre should be about twice the national average or 150 bushels per acre. Thus they should cultivate about 7500 acres per season. They have this acreage now scattered around the Island in various Experimental and Research stations. According to my analysis of the task ahead it is possible to meet the rice part of the 8 lbs. of cereals a week.

But as I mentioned earlier there are several road blocks which have negated any effort to be self sufficient in food. It has happened in the past and is happening today.

The first, is political. No political party in the country is prepared to accept what the other party does in the field of nation building as correct. We have seen the destruction over night of previous efforts to produce a "green revolution" and reduce the people to starvation levels. Having destroyed, the party in power then attempts to build up under a different name as for example "Myangana Complex." To succeed in nation building all politicians must agree on national aspirations. To be self sufficient in food and throw away for ever the begging bowl should be the highest priority in any Government Plan

Foreign Subscriptions Rates

TRIBUNE

AIR-SPEEDED

Annual Subscription

| | | |
|-----------------|------|-------|
| ASIA | — \$ | 15-00 |
| U.K. | — £ | 6-50 |
| EUROPE & AFRICA | — \$ | 17-50 |
| AMERICA | — \$ | 20-00 |

TRIBUNE

43, Dawson Street,
Colombo-2,
Sri Lanka.

and all Political Parties must agree including the parties that see red when a country is prosperous.

The second obstruction is Government Policy. Taking over the land and redistributing it does not increase production. Likewise there is no purpose in socialising Poverty. To be self sufficient in rice, every farmer must produce a surplus. Unless he has capital to invest and the working capital, he will fall back to the level of subsistence farming that is what has happened since 1970.

Farming is capital intensive, labour alone cannot produce a surplus. Ours is a war against hunger so let every individual who is prepared to take the risk and produce the rice irrespective of how much land he owns and how he does it. Better production needs capital, and capital can be commanded only if the individual who wants the capital is credit worthy. A pauper cannot borrow money, not even from another pauper, much less from a rich man or a lending institution.

In food production to feed the nation Government Policy must be different. Give all the security assurances and assistance to produce higher crops. While the country is starving a Government cannot experiment with new social structures, new patterns of community living and so forth. The people will end by roasting and eating each other as it happened in one of the countries not long ago, at least in my living memory. First keep the people fed and content, then the changes can take place. For such changes the people must consent, it cannot be forced down their throats, it can be done only by a blood bath. No human being desires that. Encourage every man who is prepared to produce and contribute to the national pot to do so within his democratic right—to that extent a Government must change its policies.

The third block is a Government monopolistic control of in-puts that are needed for production. They are implements, equipment, agro-chemicals, spares for machinery, building materials and a host of others now controlled by various Government Corporations. They have a strangle hold on the farmer.

Paddy farming has a very tight time schedule. At the beginning of

each cultivation season the farmer must have with him all the needs for his cultural operations, implements fertilizer, seed paddy insecticide and the capital both for cultivation and maintain himself and his family till the next harvest. The controls have let loose on the farmer a host of bureaucrats and petty officials and co-operatives etc. like the rats in a barn, he the farmer cannot get anywhere.

In disgust he sinks back into subsistence level. The farmer must be able to get what he wants and when he wants to suit his cultivation programme. He cannot waste his time, filling forms etc. and hang about offices where most of the officers do nothing, or so little at a time that nothing is ever done.

The fourth block is Government Monopoly of buying and selling. This is the biggest disincentive to a farmer. His philosophy is "I take to cultivation because it suits my way of life, I seek independence and choose my own working cycle, I take all the risks in the world in taking to my way of life, my family too follows me so what I grow and produce I must be free to sell at whatever price I like and to whomsoever I like and when it suits me."

It will be generations before the farmer adopts another philosophy or any other *ism*. Give him some of the freedoms, we say we won and he will produce all the rice we need also export some as one of our Ministers is anxious to do.

Next we will examine the growing of other cereals.

AGRICULTURE

Backyard Poultry Scheme

Raising poultry in the backyards is usually not considered as a scientific way of egg production by experts. Even in Kerala where this was resorted to by many poor families for supplementing their income, the organised intensive system of poultry rearing has been accepted by many farmers. But the difficulties in obtaining feeds at reasonable prices along with the low prices for eggs, during the last two years has hampered this development. But thanks to the widely scattered efforts in the unorganised sector of backyard poultry

in Kerala, this State is still able to maintain its production level to some extent. Production of eggs by the masses has in a way made up for the setback in mass production.

It has been considered worthwhile to encourage these large number of small farmers to take up backyard poultry as their commitment will be less than the organised sector because they utilise kitchen waste and other materials coming in handy. According to the Production Manager, Central hatchery, Chengannur it is possible to obtain a profit of nearly Rs210 per year from a back-yard unit of 10 birds even when more expense (to the tune of Rs. 440) is incurred for feed and medicines to make the effort more scientific. These details have been given in the "Farm Guide" brought out by the Farm Information Bureau, Government of Kerala.

The "Guide" includes valuable details about breeding and maintenance of cattle. Two new diseases of livestock, described in this from the browsing of plants belonging to the Mimosae family which is said to be fatal if it is not diagnosed early. Rearing of Khaki Campbell ducks for egg production and incidentally for eradication of pernicious water weed *Salvinia auriculata* or the African payal is another interesting topic dealt with. Vital statistics on agricultural development in the State and details about the crop pests and diseases, high yielding varieties of paddy and tuber crops have also been given to make the information complete.

Ecology will be introduced as a new subject in the Punjab Agricultural University to help achieve optimum production and land use through a study of agrometeorology, crop ecology and disease epidemiology, pest outbreaks population dynamics and crop pollination and environmental pollution. The research work will initially be confined to problems relating to the major food crops of the State, wheat maize and rice. An effort would be made to start weather forecasting service for farmers. An agro-climatic zoning of the State will be made to identify suitable cropping patterns and avoid weather hazards such as frost, windstorm and drought. Pest management problems also will be studied.

—Hindu

IS IT TRUE?

Sherlock Holmes

• JR Edges To Centrism?

IS IT NOT A FACT that the New Year Message of the Prime Minister had evoked a response from the UNP leader, Mr. J. R. Jayawardene, which has surprised many people? That what he has issued is a reasonably long-winded (to be impressive) statement to further clarify the real implications of his demand for an election in 1975? That sometime ago he had climbed down several pegs when he had said that it was legally correct that the Government could continue until 1977 but that it was morally wrong to do so after May 1975? That itself was a far cry from his earlier slogan that it was illegal for the Government to continue after May 1975 and that the UNP would not recognise or accept the validity of any action taken or any contract entered into by the Government after May 1975? That JR had therefore announced his decision to resign his seat by May 1975 on the footing that the NSA was an illegal body thereafter? That the statement now made by JR in reply to the PM's new Year message (that elections will be in 1977—not before and not after) is an intriguing one which calls for comment? That JR began by congratulating the PM?

It is heartening to know that the Prime Minister accepts the sovereignty of the people by stating quite categorically that Parliament will be dissolved and general elections held in 1977. She has thereby rejected the pronouncement of Ministers and influential members of her party that they will seek to extend the life of Parliament beyond 1977.....

That JR, not to be outdone, went on to say

She has now asserted the sovereignty of the people in 1977. This is exactly what we wish her to do in 1975. We say that a general election should be held in 1975

and not in 1977 as another assertion of the sovereignty of the people.....

That after thus making his peace with the Prime Minister and after mildly upholding his plea for 1975 elections, JR went into a labyrinthian dissertation why the Government was morally bound to dissolve Parliament and hold an election in 1975? That this logic-chopping (hair-splitting) quibble about the moral validity of a 1975 election will not convince anybody except those who like him are committed to saving face with a 1975 election because they had erroneously raised the 1975-election slogan in the days of the satyagraha gimmickry and adventurism? That the sum and substance of JR's declaration came at the tail end of his statement? That it was to demonstrate full agreement with the Prime Minister, except for a mild proviso?

We who say that a general election should be held in 1975 cannot be compared with those who think that they can force or compel the Prime Minister to postpone the elections beyond 1977. They seek to destroy the sovereignty of the people by the use of a two-third-majority. We seek to assert and protect the sovereignty of the people now enshrined in the new Constitution. Our purpose is to persuade and convince the nation and the Government that to postpone a general election beyond 1975 or beyond 1977 is to tamper with the sovereignty of the people without their approval. The Prime Minister has accepted the latter proposition. May she have the wisdom to accept the former also.....

That there is no doubt that this is one of the most conciliatory statements ever made by the UNP leader vis a vis the Prime Minister? That this is an indication that JR may

soon see wisdom in accepting the PM's view of non-alignment and her centrist strategic techniques to win the support of the widest masses? That until JR drops his old-time inhibitions of ensuring a tilt towards the West under cover of non-alignment he would find it difficult to make common cause with the centrists in the SLFP? That the Left was able to have a common programme with the SLFP not only by accepting SLFP's centrist policies on non-alignment fully (this was not difficult for the Left) but also by endorsing SLFP stand on religion and language but this compelled the Left to turn many somersaults to go back on their earlier policies on language and national minorities and also their proclaimed views on secularism and religion which was regarded by them as the opiate of the masses? That the Left had sealed the Common Programme of the United Front with pirith and poojas at the Dalada Maligawa? That religion and language will not create any obstacles in the way of the UNP getting close to the centrists of the SLFP? That UNP's openly avowed pro-western allergic predilections will prove a major stumbling block if the UNP does not know that it is necessary to stoop to conquer? That UNP demogogy about free enterprise (and capitalism) will cause further estrangement with SLFP centrism? That above all UNP should not seek to embarrass SLFP centrists by demanding the reversal of many of the "radical reforms" put on the Statute Book by the SLFP and the UF? That, as recent events have shown, the UNP has still a long way to go before it can find common ground with the real centrists of the SLFP? That JR's latest statement is clear indication that the UNP he leads will make a serious effort to find an area of consensus and agreement with the SLFP the Prime Minister leads? That JR will soon learn (from the example of men like Sadat) that it is possible to denounce publicly imperialism and the rapacity of the West whilst at the same time quietly developing close and intimate ties with the West? That the West has now learnt that the publicised words of leaders of many developing nations (generally hypocritical but always double-edged) do not really matter? That what really matters is what is done (and this usually behind the scenes)?