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Letter From The Editor

IN THE *TRIBUNE*, last week, February 18, 1978, our columnist *Serendib* had raised a query about what the government was doing about the full-blooded communal agitation that was being carried on by a group of Sinhala extremists on the plea that the removal of standardisation was a betrayal of the Sinhalese student population. Even before that issue of *Tribune* was released, the government has taken stern and drastic measures to curb the activities of these extremist elements. In a surprise proclamation, the Government on Wednesday, February 22, decided to close all schools on February 23rd and 24th. For the record, we publish the full text of the communique issued by the Minister of Education, Mr. Nissanka Wijeyeratne in this connection: "There have been false and misleading statements that Sinhalese students who would have been admitted to the University this year in terms of the previous policy of standardisation of marks would now be kept out on account of the Government's decision to abolish standardisation. These statements are completely untrue and have been spread by persons who are politically opposed to this Government and are motivated solely by a desire to create communal disharmony and conflict in the country and to persuade students to boycott their classes. These statements are being made even before the University admissions have been finalised and even published. I wish to categorically assure all parents and students and others genuinely interested in the welfare of our children that there will be no disability caused to any student on the ground that standardisation has been abolished. On the contrary, my Ministry together with the University authorities have made the necessary arrangements to ensure that any student who would have obtained admission on the principle of standardisation would not be deprived of University studies on account of the decision by the government to abolish standardisation. While this would apply to all academic courses generally, it is especially true of such courses as Medicine, Engineering and Science. Those who have started agitating even before the University admissions are announced, do so because they are fully aware that such arrangements have been made and wish therefore to cause apprehension in the minds of parents and students as the opportunity of misleading the people will not be available to them when admissions are known. I appeal to all parents and teachers, educational administrators and students and to all those who have the future of children and the harmony of this country at heart not to be misled by false propaganda spread by these mischievous elements. The action of the Government in this regard is in accordance with the overwhelming mandate it received from the people at the General Election and while the Government accepts the right of any citizen to disagree with its views and to give expression to any disagreement in a democratic and peaceful manner, it will not change its policies in the face of attempts at undemocratic coercion or terrorism by a few warped pseudo nationalists who try to mislead University students and innocent school children for their personal political ends. The Government has taken a most serious view of the current situation and will take the most stringent action against all those racial agitators whose words may lead to racial riots once again. The Government has decided, in view of the current situation, that all schools throughout the Island will be closed on the 23rd and 24th, and will be out of bounds to all students who are not residents. Parents are advised to ensure that their children remain in their homes and do not participate in any demonstration organised by these disgruntled elements. Any child found doing so will be expelled from school. Any teachers participating or in any way instigating any such activity will be dismissed from service. It will be the responsibility of Principals and staff of schools to remain in schools, and to ensure that there is discipline and control." The Government must be congratulated on taking firm action to check the activities of racialist agitators. It is pertinent thought that if S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike had taken similar measures *ab initio* in 1957 against those who agitated against his Reasonable Use of Tamil Bill and the Bandaranaike-Chelvanayakam Pact he may yet be alive and the country saved a great deal of the turmoil and dissension it has undergone in the last twenty years. This is one of the "ifs" of history from which the Jayawardene Government seems to have learnt a lesson.

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CONTENTS

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK —Foreign Affairs, Premadasa p. 2
THE SYDNEY SUMMIT —From The Indian Press p. 6
THE FRENCH ELECTIONS —Background p. 8
ROLE OF THE NON-ALIGNED —Yugoslav View p. 9
SRI LANKA CHRONICLE —Feb. 15 - Feb. 21 p. 11
SINGAPORE'S HUMAN RIGHTS —Concluded p. 14
MAHAWELI —Problems Of Settlement p. 15
RURAL HEALTH —Two Views p. 17
SHORT STORY —Pol Pala p. 18
CARAVAN FAMILY—5 —Inginiyagala p. 19
LETTERS —From Our Readers p. 21
VIETNAM —Peace Efforts p. 23
CONFIDENTIALLY —Code Of Conduct—2 p. 24

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

- Middle East ● Horn Of Africa ● Sydney Summit ● Premadasa ● Language

Colombo, February 24,

In the two weeks the Editor was away from his desk on a busman's holiday, a great deal has taken place in Sri Lanka and the world. This brings us back to the truism which we are fond of repeating *ad nauseum* that we live in exciting times in which events tumble one over another in a way that it has become impossible even for the most adroit to keep pace with the fast changing scene.

To take the world at large, for a start, even while attention was being focussed on the successful Ethiopian counter-offensive against the Somalis who had occupied Ethiopian territory in Ogaden and who had also supported the Eritrean rebels, the sensational murder of the Egyptian Secretary General of the Afro-Asian Solidarity Organisation, Sebai, in Nicosia in Cyprus where the Bureau of the movement was meeting at the Hilton Hotel came as a profound shock to the world, especially the Third World. Sebai was Sadat's friend and confidante and had replaced Heikal, who was Nasser's conscience-man, as the editor of the prestigious Cairo paper *Al Ahram*. No sane person can or will condone such terroristic acts whatever the provocation, but Egypt's action is sending a plane-load of commandos to avenge Sebai's murder Entebbe-style has evoked sharp reactions. Egyptian leaders now take refuge behind the claim that Cypriot authorities had given them permission to mount a rescue operation (in the same way that Bonn had got the sanction from Mogadishu before the commandos went into action), but the Greek Cypriot government denies that they had given any such permission—and what is worse, the Cypriots say that the Egyptian commandos went into action at a time when Cypriot leaders had talked the gunmen into releasing the hostages. In any case the Egyptian commandos did not cover themselves with

glory. They were virtually annihilated by the terrorists on the one hand and the Greek Cypriot forces on the other.

Sadat is now in a difficult position. General Dyan has now placed the "onus of peace" on Sadat by stating that Sadat had no alternative but to sign a separate peace treaty with Israel compelling Jordan and Syria to enter into separate treaties with Israel (if they so wished), and abandoning the Palestinians to the mercies of the Zionists. The murder of Sebai in Nicosia was allegedly by pro-PLO Arabs, but discerning observers realise that the fracas in Nicosia is a gift of the first magnitude to the Zionist Lobby not only to break Arab solidarity but also to isolate the PLO.

An AFP report from Washington, dated February 17, stated: "Egypt will have to decide in coming months whether it is ready for a separate peace agreement with Israel," the Israel Foreign Minister, Gen. Moshe Dayan has said. At present Egypt did not want a separate peace, and the other countries involved 'are not coming' to the negotiating table, Gen. Dayan told newsmen here yesterday after meeting President Carter and Secretary of State Vance. During the next few months, King Hussein of Jordan would have to make up his mind about joining President Sadat in

peace talks. "If he did join in, it would be possible to find a solution acceptable to Egypt, Jordan and the Palestinians," Gen. Dayan said. But if King Hussein decided against participating, Egypt would then have to decide whether to accept a separate peace, Gen. Dayan said. Israel was agreeable to a statement of general principles before talking with Jordan, but where we do not agree is a matter for negotiations, not pre-conditions," Gen. Dayan insisted. He reaffirmed Israel's intention to maintain its settlements in the Sinai desert because they formed part of his country's 'security belt'."

Gen. Dayan's re-affirmation of maintaining its 'settlements' in occupied territory makes it clear that peace is a long way off in the Middle East. The Zionist Lobby in the USA is too powerful for Carter to compel Israel to withdraw from all occupied territory.

Tensions have become sharper and more acute in the Middle East—in fact in the whole of West Asia including the Horn of Africa. In the OAU, there is a sharp division between Black Africa and Arab Africa over the war in Ethiopia. The OAU and even all the Big Powers accept that Ogaden and Eritrea are part of Ethiopia; that Somalis had unlawfully occupied parts of Ogaden and had also joined the Eritrean rebels in their fight for a separate state. The

COVER

SELF-CORRECTION

There is a tradition among certain believers that sin in a previous birth or even in this birth can be atoned for by self-punishment verging on self-torture. The picture on the cover depicts one of the lesser forms of self-punishment religious devotees inflict upon themselves notably in temples like Kataragama. We have used this picture not to preach a religious homily, but to draw attention to an important clause in the Code of Conduct for MPs in which regular "self-correction" has been prescribed as a method for Parliamentarians not to be carried away by the magic of power or temptations of the flesh-pot. If Parliamentarians, who feel that they have succumbed to the devil of corruption, want to inflict self-punishment and atone for their waywardness by exhibitionist austerities in a places of public worship, they are welcome to appease their conscience and their constituents in this fashion. But if they have "self-correction" conferences regularly, they will not have to do this. In the new NSA we have a new generation of young parliamentarians who have not been tainted by the corruption that had corroded the souls of a large number of parliamentarians of the past. Only a small number of the older generation of parliamentarians, who had regarded the acceptance of money compensation for services rendered or promised as an accepted way of life, have survived into this NSA. It is to be hoped that the Code of Conduct will keep those of the older parliamentarians, who belonged to a generation which saw no wrong in receiving commissions, cuts or bribes, from leading the newer MPs astray.

OAU's sympathies—especially all of Black Africa—are with Ethiopia. The fact that pro-Western Arab oil-rich countries like Saudi Arabia and other pro-Western countries like Iran had given adequate largesse to Somalia to throw out the Russians (who had earlier helped them in their newly-won freedom) made most Black African countries shut a blind eye to (or even welcome) Russian and Cuban assistance to help Ethiopia build its military forces. The West has done its utmost to intimidate Ethiopia, Black Africa and the rest of the world with cold war propaganda that Soviet Union was interfering in the Horn of Africa by making massive air lifts of armaments to Ethiopia, but to no avail. Cold war propaganda today has no value: more often than not it boomerangs. And a few days ago we witnessed the strange spectacle of an envoy of President Carter wanting assurances that Ethiopian forces will not cross the Somali frontiers when they pushed their enemies out. All along, the Ethiopians have declared that they were not interested in Somali territory and that they will not cross the borders. It is noteworthy that the US took this step of starting a new dialogue with Ethiopia when Black Africa had made it clear that they were totally opposed to Arab interference in the Somali occupation of Ethiopian territory. The Somalis have refused to quit Ogaden and have been howling "woof! woof!" about Soviet military assistance to Ethiopia. The Ethiopia-Somali conflict is a hang-over from the colonial control of these territories for over a century and such conflicts will end only when the last vestiges of colonialism are eliminated.

In this connection, an editorial in the Delhi paper, *The Sunday Statesman*, of February 19, 1978, entitled TURN OF THE TIDE sums up the situation most admirably: "Somalia's announcement of the participation of its regular army in the war in Ogaden goes way beyond acknowledging an involvement that began last year when officers were given leave to lead the Western Somali Liberation Front forces. Considered in the context of the national emergency declared last week and mass mobilisation ostensibly to fend off an invasion by Ethiopia, Somalia's intention is clearly to escalate the war with a view to forcing an in-

tervention by Western Powers on its behalf. President Siad Barre of Somalia has lately been displaying his angry impatience with the Western Powers for not taking any action against what he considers Soviet aggression in the strategic horn of Africa. President Barre would have preferred a negotiated settlement but his appeal to the organisation of African Unity was a bit late in the day. Ogaden is part of Ethiopia and Addis Ababa has left no one in doubt that its territories are not negotiable. Moreover, the Ethiopians are in a mood to make their points on the battlefield now that they have received vast supplies of Soviet hardware and are assisted by Russian and Cuban 'advisers'. Colonel Mengistu Haile Mariam seems well-entrenched in Addis Ababa and it is a measure of his self-confidence that he has allowed a number of Western newspaper

correspondents to take a close look at the Ethiopian performance both on the domestic and war fronts. The Ethiopian forces are still a long way from the Somali borders and it is too early to say whether the counter-attack is an overture to the invasion President Barre has spoken of. Mr. Cyrus Vance, the US Secretary of State, is on record that he has received Soviet assurance that Ethiopian forces would not cross the frontier into Somalia. The Somali leader may have overreacted to Ethiopian air strikes deep into Somali territory, a consequence of its heavy involvement in what is supposed to be a liberation struggle by the people of the Ogaden region. Application of the principle of self-determination on ethnic and linguistic basis could, however, create dangerous complications in Africa. No African state is prepared to accept this principle.

QUIDNUNCS

TENDER FOR CURRENCY NOTES

*QUIDNUNCS in and around the Fort and places of high finance in Sri Lanka have become deeply concerned about alleged Ministerial interference in the affairs of the Central Bank where tenders are about to be called for the printing of currency notes. Hitherto the tenders had been awarded on the lowest quotations. The previous Finance Minister of the LSSP had tried to intervene in order to get the tender for a firm which had approached him through the local agent and also personally. The local agent has now turned colour and is dusting his hands with flour in anticipation of the contract coming to his principal. The intervention by the then Minister was strongly resisted by the Monetary Board and the tender was awarded to the lowest bidder. Quidnuncs say that there was in fact no tender from the party sponsored by the then Minister but yet he had tried to get a fresh notice published calling for tenders so as to load the tender notice in favour of his party.

Quidnuncs further recall that demonetisation by the last Government was done without any tender procedure presumably on the grounds of security. What was the name of the firm that was given this special task? Wasn't the Governor taken into confidence and if he was not, how was his signature to the notes, obtained? Now Quidnuncs say this same firm is attempting the same method with the present Minister of Finance, who should know better about the antecedents of the firm which he is alleged to favour. Sporting under wildlife is an interesting camouflage. Quidnuncs say that the tender notices were about to be published when the Minister intervened through his Secretary to get the notice changed. Quidnuncs say that the local agent had seen the draft notice and had wanted changes in the notice.

Responsible Quidnuncs are positive that the tender documents have been passed to the local agent, and the Quidnuncs are asking whether this is not an interference with the independence of the Monetary Board. The present Minister, Quidnuncs are perturbed, seems to be falling into the same error as his predecessor and assert that the repercussions for the Party as well as the Minister will not be happy. Quidnuncs are emphatic that this is a matter that the President should intervene and see that Ministers do not interfere in such matters to favour favourites. Tenders for the printing of currency notes should not be subject to petty interference by power-brokers and jet-set tycoons. Quidnuncs wonder whether the President will not be compelled to take reluctant decisions to change Ministers who indulge in such activities.

least of all Somalia's neighbours—Ethiopia, Kenya and Djibouti—which have long been suspicious of President Barre's Greater Somalia ambitions. Admittedly Soviet involvement is a disturbing factor but Western intervention in strength is not the answer, which explains what President Barre has described as Western indifference. Once a patron of Somalia, the Soviet Union is now solidly behind Ethiopia, an unmistakable pointer to its long term aims in the horn of Africa. These cannot, however, be considered in isolation of growing African nationalism. The Soviet Union has had some experience of it in Somalia which was not very different from the American experience in Ethiopia. This explains why Western Powers are not inclined to share President Barre's view that the Ogaden war is perilously close to triggering World War III."

Nearer home, the Sydney Summit had claimed front page headlines from the time President Jayawardene left to attend the meeting. In our daily newspapers there were full reports of what he said and also about the utterances of Foreign Minister Hameed. There were short summaries of what other Commonwealth leaders who attended the Conference had said. But one looked in vain for interpretative analysis or informed comment about the implications and achievements of the Summit in the context of the current global perspectives. There was a great deal of cock-crowling about Sri Lanka's part in the Summit, but little or nothing of an overall summing up of this historic meeting. Sri Lanka seems to be so completely buried in introspective self-glorification that its daily papers tend to reflect only this trend.

We publish below a *Scmahar* summing up which appeared in the Delhi daily *National Herald* to give our readers an idea of the important issues that were discussed at the conference: 'Heads of Commonwealth Governments representing some 900 million people east of Suez, who concluded their first regional conference in Sydney on Thursday, for the first time, came face to face with the reality of changing pattern of international relations and the anxious moments it has given many a country in Asia and the Pacific, reports Samachar. Tied as they have been till recently to what has been described as

mutually exclusive economic and political groupings, they have now come to recognise, according to observers, that they have a lot more functional co-operation and joint action in the political and economic spheres. The complexity of problems facing a majority of them, who are still in various stages of development, was such that inward looking policies within the narrow group will take them nowhere in dealing with powerful industrialised countries of the world, according to these observers. Of the 12 nations, which joined the four-day deliberations in the provincial capital of New South Wales on the Pacific coast, two countries, Australia and New Zealand are development, while the third India with a population of over 600 million is now a fairly advanced stage of development industrially. Britain's entry into the European Common Market and the loss of imperial preferences which provided free access to bulk of the exports of Australia and New Zealand into that country until a few years ago have according to observers, forced them to give up sentimental loyalties of the past, and identify themselves with the region to which they belong. In this new role, these countries also hope to act as a link both between developing countries of the region and between Asian countries of the Commonwealth and the island States of Pacific which have recently won freedom like Tonga, Fiji and Nauru. This new awakening formed the dominant theme of the Sydney conference, which observers feel, has established that despite the diversity and variegated interests the Commonwealth could become a dynamic forum than remain a mere historic relic. In the words of Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser and Prime Minister Morarji Desai, the Sydney meet is a big step forward, holding great promise. The conference was described by Secretary-General of the Commonwealth Secretariat S. Ramphal as one having enormous significance both for the region and the Commonwealth as a whole. The participants have realised that they could think of enlarged economic and functional co-operation in various fields without sacrificing the interests of their sub-regional groupings like ASEAN and thus set an example. Besides opening new opportunities for enlarged

co-operation towards individual and collective self-reliance, they are convinced after the conference that such association would only add to their bargaining strength. It is this realisation which, according to observers, has motivated Australia and New Zealand to think of the new dimensions in the region outside extending beyond their traditional political linkup with western powers. This shift was amply reflected in the unanimous views of the Sydney Conference on issues like Indian Ocean, growing protectionist trends in industrialised countries, on the multilateral trade negotiations, southern Africa and energy problem."

In Sri Lanka the most notable development is undoubtedly the manner in which Prime Minister Premadasa has begun to get into his stride. He has also begun to win the respect of many people who had entertained sceptical doubts about his competence to be an acceptable Prime Minister in view of his earlier record of an acidically sharp-witted polemically-inclined politician. But, for some months now, Prime Minister Premadasa has visibly undergone a welcome transformation that has made him the Prime Minister that he is today.

Already as the Minister of Local Government, Housing and Construction, he had shown that he can get things done and also initiate and implement purposeful and meaningful policies and programmes.

Unlike many Prime Ministers since Independence, Mr. Premadasa, like Mr. J. R. Jayawardene, has maintained a healthy note about national concord and racial amity. His keynote address in the NSA on February 23, is worthy of record: "Mr. Speaker, it is with a surging sense of pride tempered however with a deep feeling of humanity that I stand before the Honourable Members of this House as Prime Minister of Sri Lanka. To our revered President, to the voters of Colombo Central, to the Members of Parliament and through them to the people of Sri Lanka, I am eternally grateful for the great trust and confidence reposed on me. The void created by the departure of our Leader from this House cannot be easily filled. I can only endeavour in my own small way to strive to per-

form the tasks that have now fallen on me ever mindful of the high ideals and noble example of our Leader. For this in all humility, I shall always seek your guidance, goodwill and co-operation. Correct me when I am wrong; encourage me when I am right; support me when I am in need and share my responsibilities in the fulfilment of the tasks before me. To reach here I have had a long and arduous journey in public life. Victory, defeat, joy, sorrow, exaltation and humiliation have all been my lot from time to time. These have chastened me and today I am ready once again to rededicate myself to the service of my country and my people. I am confident that I will be able to draw heavily from the lessons learnt in public life for a period of nearly thirty years and from the collective wisdom of this House. There is one matter to which with the leave of the House I must advert at the outset. When I look back over the years, I cannot fail to recall the many things that I have left undone. I may even in the thrust and parry of debate have said things which might unwittingly have hurt the feelings of others. Much of it stems from the sincerity of purposes the forthrightness and the speed with which I act. It takes this opportunity to ask all concerned to erase from their minds all that is bitter and carry forward only what is sweet, in the true spirit of the noble principle of "Maithri". Ours is a multi-racial, multi-religious and multi-linguistic society. But we are all one People and this I shall always bear in the forefront of my mind. It shall be my constant endeavour to attempt to build unity and a respect and regard for the diversities of race, religion and language. Let us therefore create together a new national spirit of unity, national integrity and trust amongst us all. Let us live together, learn together and work together always confident that in the end we will all triumph together. This country is a blessed one in a multitude of ways. Nature has been generous to us. We have fertile soil, abundant rainfall, luxuriant forests and unmatched scenic beauty. The diversity of climatic conditions within a small island is in a sense unique. We have been free of natural disasters, such as typhoons, earthquakes and volcanoes. We have no

border problems. Our human resources are plentiful. The talents and skills of our people are the envy of all. How then do we continue to remain a developing nation? We have not forged ahead to take our place at the helm of things. The answer is simple and not far to seek. We just do not work enough and nothing comes without work and very hard work at that. It is indeed sad to contemplate that even our basic needs such as food, clothing and shelter are yet far from being satisfied. A country which was a granary in ancient times is today dependent on imported rice. An island surrounded by the sea is without fish. The dry-zone cries for water; the wet-zone resents floods; the producer seeks markets; the youth clamour for work. This is the challenge. Let us go forward together to face it. We have had blueprints but no practical plans. We have had plans which are airy notions unless translated into action. It is about time that we settled down to hard work. I am determined to set an example myself. I do not want excuses. I do not want very learned reasons as to why things cannot be done. I want results and results will necessarily follow dynamic action. We have through our leader set for ourselves new standards of conduct and behaviour. Let us add to these, new standards of hard work coupled with devotion and dedication to our country and our people. I do not for a moment deny that plans for socio-economic development have yielded some results. But has their impact been substantial? Have the benefits of planned development gone down speedily to the grass roots, the mud huts in the villages and the dilapidated slums in the towns and to the weaker sections of the community? The answer is most regretfully in the negative. Let us not forget that Sri Lanka lives in the villages and in the slums. Our people have borne immeasurable hardships. The youth have been vainly searching for opportunities, economic advancement and security. We must not take for granted the endurance and patience of our overburdened people. Their circumstances may drive them sometimes to desperation and none will be able to predict their course of action thereafter. Policies, their implementation and the necessary subsequent administrative

action have all to be reviewed in the light of these considerations. Speed appears to be the essence of all matters; speed in the translation into action of well thought-out plans and policies. Our greatest asset is our people and the youth hold the key to the future. May I in the words of John. F. Kennedy say that "We shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe" to ensure 'political freedom, promote economic strength and social advancement and secure equality of opportunity for all. It is the happiness and glory of a representative of the people to live in the strictest union, the closest correspondence and the most unreserved communication with them. Their wishes have great weight with me and their opinion I respect, their business receives my undivided attention. It is my duty to sacrifice my rest, my pleasure and all my time to theirs and above all, ever to prefer their interests to mine I propose to do not what appears expedient but what is in fact just and right. Freedom and not servitude is the remedy for lawlessness and religion and not lack of it is the true remedy for superstition. Mr. Speaker, it shall be the dedicated aim of this Government to create a land not for the privileged few and a less privileged majority but a just and free Sri Lanka.

*Where everyone has work, food and a home;

*Where no man or woman is exploited—or worshipped;

*Where merit and ability will receive due recognition;

*Where agriculture, industry and commerce aims to answer the needs of our people, and are not an endless battle for control, profit and rates;

*Where schools and universities have freedom without chaos and discipline without dictatorship;

*Where a person's character matters, not his birth or riches;

*Where right is approved and wrong condemned. Let our Clergy bless our journey; let our Press light our path; let our Foes check our steps; let our Friends inspire us and let our People sustain us."

It is significant that he made a special point of saying that if in the past in the parry and thrust.

of debate he had made remarks that had "hurt" the feelings of people, he would request them to erase them from their memory—no doubt, because the future would be different.

In this connection a report in the *Daily Mirror* of February 21, merits consideration as symbolic of the change that has begun to overtake the leaders of the country. The heading was a striking one: MY CHILDREN LEARN TAMIL IN SCHOOLS, SAYS NISSANKA. The report read: "My children and those of the Prime Minister, Mr. Premadasa, study Tamil in school. With a good knowledge of Sinhala and Tamil anyone in this country could travel from Point Pedro to Dondra Head, and feel quite at home. It is the Government's determination not to allow a division of this country arising from language differences", said Mr. Nissanka Wijeyeratne, Minister of Education. He was addressing parents and teachers of Badulla, Hali-Ela, Passara and Soranota electorates at the Badulla Maha Vidyalaya, on his first official visit to Badulla. Mr. Wijeyeratne said although his Ministry was making both Sinhala and Tamil compulsory subjects, English could not be made compulsory as it would be disadvantageous to the children in the interior of the country. English would be treated as a link language and every opportunity afforded to a student to study it."

The realisation by this government that language is the key to national unity and progress is one of the most important developments after this government has come to power. Instead of waiting to amend the Constitution and enshrine fundamental rights—all of which takes time—the government has begun the implementation of a three language policy. Although some people suspect something sinister in the three-language policy, there is no doubt that it is one of the most forward looking measures this country has seen for a long time.

The government's decision to close all schools on February 23 and 24 and if necessary extend the closure, is a clear indication that the government is aware of the dangers which threaten it—from the racial chauvinists on the Right as well as from certain trade unionists on the Left. Both these groups have enjoyed political power of a kind in the last 20 years. Their

actions have brought this country to the brink of ruin. Racial and language chauvinism has divided this country and generated tensions and communal blood baths—much of it under the pretension that such blood letting and conflict were necessary to usher in "socialism." Under a similar "socialist" umbrella the feather-bedding of unionised workers had been practised on a large scale because certain trade unions and trade unionists had proved to be extremely successful election agents and promoters. Between communal clashes on the one side and debilitating strikes for the most frivolous reasons on the other this country has been reduced to no-growth stagnation at a time when many other countries were pushing ahead with developmental work.

At the time of writing two of the leading agitators—Dr. Nath Amarakone and V. W. Kularatne—have been charged under section 120 of the Penal Code. Although this section of the Penal Code was available to the last and certain previous regimes they had preferred to resort to Emergency Regulations "to keep the peace."

FROM THE INDIAN PRESS

THE SYDNEY SUMMIT

TIMES OF INDIA, 18.2.78

Over To Sydney

In their very nature, communiqués issued at the end of conferences in which a number of countries, linked by one bond or another, have taken part cannot go beyond expressing the lowest common denominator of agreement on various issues. But that does not mean they are entirely valueless. To the extent that they represent a consensus of opinion among a bloc of nations facing roughly similar problems because of a mutual historical, geographical or cultural affinity, they present a unified perspective. Such a unity of outlook can and does have some influence in the international give-and-take that characterises the modern world today. The communiqué put out at the conclusion of the regional conference in Sydney of Common-

wealth heads of government of Asian and Pacific countries should be viewed from this angle. The Commonwealth itself is not much more than a glorified club of countries which once formed part of the British empire. The most severe blow to it was dealt by none other than the "mother" country, Britain, which, understandably, realised that its more substantial links were with Western Europe. A conference of nations making up a segment of the Commonwealth can, therefore, attract even less attention than fullscale Commonwealth conferences usually do. While it is important to bear this in mind in order to keep a sense of proportion, it is nevertheless true that, as far as this country is concerned, such admittedly limited parleys are, if not an essential, at least an important part of its attempts to share in and influence, however, slightly, the international debate on issues of direct and indirect concern to it. This is especially true of the Sydney meeting in which it played a major role if only because it is easily the most substantial Commonwealth country in Asia.

The communiqué itself refers to the moves over the past year or so towards a more co-operative and friendly relationship among South Asian nations, which have not exactly presented a picture of fraternal fellowship in the past. This country has had much to do with the initiation of these moves and they should accelerate with their endorsement at continental, if not international, levels. Nor should the Commonwealth tie be sneezed at here since Pakistan is reportedly seeking to rejoin it, a step which would further strengthen the forces of moderation and goodwill in this subcontinent. Of great and direct concern to the participants in the Sydney meeting is the preservation of the Indian Ocean as a "zone of peace", as declared by the UN General Assembly, free of super-power rivalry in which the littoral and hinterland nations are sought to be involved as client-states. On this issue, these states, by taking part in regional conferences such as that in Sydney, speak with first-hand authority and so can play a useful and tangible part in helping to resolve it by voicing a collective opinion. This is true, too, of other subjects directly affecting them like

third-world debt, the protectionism of advanced countries in international trade, raising food production and stimulating rural growth through the application of the right kind of technology.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES, 18.2.78

Sydney Decisions

It may seem a little queer that to repeat what has been stated ad nauseum in so many forums earlier the heads of government of the 12 Asian and Pacific member countries of the Commonwealth should have had to hold at Sydney extended discussions and produce a long 4,000-word joint communique. Trade, travel, terrorism—the Sydney summit's main preoccupations—are not new issues: nor has the outcome of the discussions gone beyond the decision to set up committees to study each of these separately. Nevertheless, the gathering has been useful, perhaps as a reminder of how vast a proportion of the world's population, resources and raw materials is represented by the participants, especially those from Asia who incidentally make up not even half their number; and its more immediate value has been in producing some degree of consensus on the need for regional co-operation, a theme which of late has been increasingly pressing on India's attention. This consensus has been possible because of the awareness that despite the region's territorial extent, vast resources and geographic contiguity mutual trade among the Asian and Pacific members of the Commonwealth accounts for not more than 15 per cent of its trade with the rest of the world. The potentialities for expansion are therefore immense provided due consideration is given to the pulls of Commonwealth fraternity. But the Sydney summit has done little else other than making the plea. The truth is that the Commonwealth is an association based not on ideology or geography but history. And the objections to giving Commonwealth economic co-operation formal shape have come precisely from such of its members who attach greater value to ideology and geography. The two committees, set up to deal with the Commonwealth's internal and external trade, therefore, have to work out a framework which must be flexible enough to allow some of its members to continue

within their already existing regional groupings in the area like the Association of South-east Asian Nations but yet have the compactness to give the strength to negotiate advantageous links with powerful groupings like the European Economic Community which has the largest share in the trade of the 12. As the EEC has expanded in membership the Asian countries of the Commonwealth have found themselves shut out from the market in varying degrees. This latter, perhaps, is the more serious problem since it touches on all the economic woes the majority of the 12 countries face. There is the question of the gap between rich and poor nations, the fear of impending economic recession including the continuing fall in commodity prices and above all the need to enable the 12 to secure in the world's wealth and enterprise a share commensurate with their potentialities.

THE INDIAN EXPRESS 18.2.78

The Sydney Outcome

THE usefulness of the first regional meeting of the Commonwealth heads of government just concluded in Sydney was in some doubt when the proposal was formally made by Australia's Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser at the full-scale conference of the association in London last year. There was the risk of the Commonwealth's Asia-Pacific leaders going through the same extensive debates on trade and development, transfers of capital, food and energy, as at many other international conferences without contributing much to the solution of the problems.

The 12 heads of government when they eventually met drew the world's attention not so much because of the agenda before them but because of the terrorist attack which just failed to reach its target. This provided the conference with another topic which could not otherwise have been assigned the same importance. One of the four consultative groups set up by the conference to follow up the discussions and provide guidance to the member states is on how to combat terrorism. The other groups will devote their attention to trade, energy and illicit drugs. It is by the work these groups do that the worth of the

Sydney conference will ultimately be judged. The Asia-Pacific members of the Commonwealth have expressed concern over the rising protectionism in industrialised countries and will necessarily have to coordinate their activities in the sphere of trade and development with many other countries. But it was forcefully brought out in Sydney, notably by Singapore's Lee Kuan Yew, that commodity purchases among the members of the group could only be fostered provided the necessary political will was added to the geographical fact of proximity.

On the political side the issue of keeping the Indian Ocean free from power rivalries and tensions naturally came up for exchanges of views. India is for the total elimination ultimately of all foreign military presence in these waters but some of the other members of the group seem to have doubts whether such a goal is not too idealistic to work for immediately. Mr. Vajpayee has claimed for India a big success in bringing the Australian leaders to the view that the Ocean should be regarded, in keeping with the UN General Assembly's recommendation, as a zone of peace. In the terms of the Sydney communique the forthcoming conference of the littoral and hinterland states in New York should lead to a bigger meeting on the Ocean and practical steps should be devised to keep it as a zone of peace.

PATRIOT, 18.2.78

Trojan Horse

If we go by the bomb explosion preceding the conference, the calling of troops and massive security arrangements, the red herring of a train journey to fool the terrorists while the participants flew safely to the luxury manor in Bowral and, combine these with the sensational headlines and the eloquence of the speakers and the 45-para final communique with an aggregate of 4,000 words, we may feel persuaded to agree with the leaders' assessment that their first summit possessed "enormous significance". The heads of Governments of 12 Commonwealth countries in the Asian and Pacific region covered in their talks a large number of subjects concerning them as well as others and, made it known that all the problems in the world

could be solved. Still, they sounded ineffectual and their joint communique gave a hollow ring. There may have been meaningful exchange of views but these were secret and presumably bilateral.

The communique is saturated with good intentions about the struggle of the African people in southern Africa, the West Asian dispute, the political climate in South Asia and the US-Soviet talks on the Indian Ocean and is full of concern about growing violence in modern society and the so-called big power rivalry. When it comes to the problems of the developing countries and the heavy responsibility placed upon the developed countries towards their unfortunate brethren it is no more than an importunate entreaty. The communique also speaks against protectionism and in favour of transfer of technology, debt relief, food security and the old, long forgotten promise of a common fund to stabilise commodity prices. On the whole, it is a prayer addressed to the lords of the earth to establish a new order where the poor can become rich. But the irony is that the Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser, himself representing one of the two developed countries in the region, was emphatic that he would not give up restrictive trade and protectionism when this issue was raised by the Prime Ministers of Singapore and Malaysia.

This takes us to the role Australia may play among the Asian and Pacific Commonwealth countries. Of the four consultative groups formed at the conference, while India will co-ordinate the energy group, Australia will look after the trade group, which will obviously deal with the most important problems. As an industrialised country, strategically linked with Anglo-American interests, it will surely act as part of the Western world in economic as well as political matters. It can prove to be a Trojan horse and help in opening still wider, the gates of the region to Western penetration. This will certainly not be revealed in the proceedings of the Commonwealth regional conference, which has now become a permanent body and will meet in Delhi next time, but the forum can provide as a convenient cover for dubious arrangements and deals. India with its shifts in home and foreign policies has to take care that its independence is not eroded.

FRANCE

Parties And Elections

Elections to the National Assembly have been set for next March 12 and 19. With two weeks still to go before the polling officially begins, the parties are already in high gear, and have been since the start of the year, such activity reflects the importance of the decisions facing the voters. Political life in France has been evolving since the start of the Fifth Republic, and right and left stand an equal chance of winning.

Towards a Bipolar System:

The party system changed radically under the Fifth Republic. Formerly there had been a great number of parties that often joined forces temporarily, depending on the circumstances; this situation produced wide-ranging instability in political life. The system under the Fifth Republic unquestionably facilitated and even prompted a marked trend toward simplification of the political set-up. The full effect of the majority system began to be felt as the President of the Republic and the Prime Minister began to resort on a regular basis to all kinds of constitutional means—motion of censure, "vote on the whole" (1), referendum, dissolution etc.—to oblige deputies and parties to make a clear-cut choice between the governmental Majority and the Opposition.

The result was that while a dozen or so political groups presented candidates in the 1958 legislative elections, by 1962 there remained only six parties and by 1967 only four major ones; this trend has been steadily confirmed since then, with the pro-government parties grouping together and the Opposition parties joining forces to form another group. By the second ballot in the presidential elections in May 1974 the two candidates who ran, Valéry Giscard d'Estaing and François Mitterrand, each represented one of the two current movements in political life in France. The results were very close—50.81% for Mr. Giscard d'Estaing and 49.19% for Mr. Mitterrand—which shows to what extent France was politically split with a victorious Major-

ity on one side and a strengthened Opposition on the other.

In the municipal elections held in March this year, the left won 50.9% of the votes in the first ballot and the Majority, 48.6%. The strength of the opposing parties is about equal. For this reason preparations for the national elections next March have caused the parties many problems, revealing the fragility of political alliances that are the key-stone of a bipolar system.

Whereas the parties of the Majority reached an agreement on their platform last July, the Opposition, and more particularly the three parties of the leftist coalition, are having serious trouble maintaining their alliance and updating the Common Program of 1972.

The Parties of the Majority:

How the Majority was formed:

What is referred to today as the Majority was shaped gradually, starting in 1958, by circumstances and by the opinions expressed in the various elections. The settling of the Algerian problem and the referendum on the election of the French President by popular vote were victories for the Majority and milestones in its history. By 1962 France had discovered government stability through the Majority system.

But on three separate occasions this Majority seemed about to split apart. The first time was in April 1969 after a referendum on regional reform and changes, in the Senate, which Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, then a deputy in the National Assembly and leader of the Independent Republicans, decided not to support, the "noes" won the day and the reforms were rejected. As a result, President de Gaulle decided to resign. However his successor, Georges Pompidou, gained support of the Independent Republicans in his election campaign in 1969. The second threat to unity came in 1974 after the death of President Pompidou when two candidates from the Majority ran in the subsequent election. But after Jacques Chaban-Delmas was defeated in the first ballot, the Majority gave its full support to Valéry Giscard d'Estaing.

The third crisis came about at the end of 1976 and the start of 1977 when Mr. Chirac resigned his post as Prime Minister and undertook to reorganize the former UDR Gaullist party. He chan-

French Elections

ged the name to Rally for the Republic (RPR) and accepted the leadership of the party. He did not conceal his opposition to President Giscard d'Estaing nor to the president's party, the Independent Republicans. However, in view of the growing popularity of the left, the Majority regrouped and apparently aims to present a united front for the general elections next spring.

The parties signed an election pact on July 19 this year in which they agreed that they would each put up candidates in the first ballot, after which losing candidates would automatically withdraw so that the Majority candidate with the most votes could face the Opposition candidate alone in the second round. Candidates from each party will sign a specific agreement to this effect before they are given the official backing of the Majority. On September 5 a common electoral program was signed.

Parties Belonging to the Majority:

The Majority, as far as the general public is concerned, encompasses three political formations:

—the Rally for the Republic (RPR), the Gaullist party;

—the Republican party (PR), Mr. Giscard d'Estaing's party; (Formerly the Independent Republican Party.)

—the Centrists, the principal parties being: the Center for Social Democrats (CDS) and the National Center of Independents

(CNI).

The Radical party, a member of the Centrist group, is not party to the recent agreements and intends to pursue an independent policy within the Majority.

Parties of the Opposition:

The Federation of the Democratic and Socialist Left (FGDS):

Since 1962 the Socialist party (PS) and the French Communist party (PCF), sometimes with the support of the Radical party, have sought to join forces at election time.

In 1965 the non-communist left rallied around Francois Mitterand to form the FGDS. In 1966 the FGDS and the PCF signed an agreement to back a single candidate in the second ballot of the approaching legislative elections, an agreement which held together and caused the Majority to win by a very slim margin.

This alliance did not last through the 1968 crisis and no agreement was reached in time for the 1969 elections.

The 1972 Common Program:

In June 1972 the PCF and the PS again joined forces to adopt a common program of action which was to be followed for five years, the period of time between elections to the National Assembly.

The PCF made major concessions in its stand on institutions and foreign policy; the socialists modified their position on nationalization and agreed to be more moderate in advocating European undertakings.

While the program has survived the past five years it has been the subject of frequent and often public disagreement among its adherents, the PC, the PS and the MRG or Leftist Radical Movement.

The Showdown in 1977:

The trouble started this year when the members of the leftist coalition met to update the 1972 Common Program. The parties have different social, economic and fiscal policies, and talks are currently at an impasse. No agreement has been reached on such important subjects as nuclear defense or the extent of nationalizations.

This does not mean however that the PS, PC, and MRG will necessarily run against each other in the coming elections. While there may be no Common Program there remains an electoral alliance patterned after that of the Majority. On November 9 the PS and MRG concluded an election agreement whereby in certain districts a single candidate would run for both parties in the first ballot; in other districts separate candidates would run in the first ballot and the one receiving the most votes would represent both parties in the runoff.

The PSU, or Unified Socialist Party, though not a member of the leftist coalition, is an Opposition party and draws some support from upper-level management and professional people.

The Majority, the Opposition: the dividing line now seems clear enough in French political circles, despite the internal squabbling on both sides.

As in previous years, a number of small parties will have candidates in the next elections. These

include on the right, for example, the Republican Alliance for Liberty and Progress, and on the left, Trotskyite and Maoist extremist movements. Michel Jobert, former foreign minister, started the Democratic Movement. Various ecologist movements also have emerged recently. While these parties have little impact on politics in general, their candidates can in certain districts siphon off votes from the big parties and cause upset victories.

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FURTHER GROWTH

In The Role Of The Non-aligned

by Mirko OSTOJIC

Assistant Federal Secretary
for Foreign Affairs

Belgrade, February (Tanjug)

Chroniclers of international events could consider that 1977 was a relatively peaceful year in which there were no exceptionally dramatic events to alter the existing world order. This in itself shows that the present structures of the international community are stable and that the basic trends are taking known directions.

Once again, an ever increasing concentration of force and power could be registered on the one hand and an ever widening of the gap between the rich and poor on the other hand. The military budgets of the super powers reached new heights and surpassed the figure of 130 billion dollars each. It is evident that if four hundred thousand scientists are working for military purposes that an era of new projects is on the horizon—the era of neutron weaponry. The developed economies are quickly adapting themselves to the new requirements of the world market, speedily developing technology and preparing themselves for a new cycle of prosperity.

There is, however, a shadow hanging over these "world prospects". Concern prevails in the business world of the developed countries. The growth rate has not reached the planned level. The balance of payments deficit of the developed countries of the West

has reached the figure of 37 billion dollars, as compared with 26 billion dollars last year. Inflation has not been halted but is in fact on the increase. This causes a decrease in the employment rate, which leads to a situation where six million workers in Western Europe are unemployed. The East European countries too have registered the lowest growth rate in the post war period. Few are those who believe that the golden era of prosperity in the developed countries—the decade before the 1973 oil crisis—will come again.

The developing countries are, however, those with the least cause for satisfaction at existing trends. The development strategy adopted at UNCTAD in 1972 predicted a 6 percent economic growth for these countries. Today it is evident that this rate will not even reach five percent and even this is thanks to the figures for the oil exporting countries which achieve great profits. The huge majority of non oil producing developing countries will not exceed a growth rate of two percent. At the beginning of this decade one thousand million people in the underdeveloped world had an income of 195 dollars per capita. If these countries develop as predicted, in 1980 their income will be 108 dollars, which means that each member of the population in this part of the world will receive three dollars more. The picture is quite different in the developed world. Here at the beginning of the decade the per capita income amounted to 3,100 dollars and at the end of the decade it is planned to reach 4,000 dollars. In this way, each citizen in these countries will have 900 dollars more. It is therefore evident that the gap is indeed widening.

These kind of world economic relations in the political sphere lead to a constant perpetuation of the policies of force, hegemony and world division. These policies originated in Yalta and have been present in all post war phases. They were the cause of the cold war and also the main instruments used in attempts to settle world problems in the period of co-existence and such criteria are still evident in the phase known as the "detente". In itself it is not detrimental that so many important international questions are in the negotiation "basket" of the

major powers. They negotiate not only on the limitation of the armaments race but also on the Indian Ocean, South Africa, Near East, the Horn of Africa etc. The question arises, however, of how to approach certain questions and to what extent to honour the essential interests of these countries or to subordinate these interests to their main strategical goals. In this respect, this must lead to the policy of interference in the internal life of these countries, attempts at modelling their internal development and the drawing of lines of new "zones of interest."

The world map of modern political trends is not marked only in block colours. There are also many other encouraging signs, for example the United Nations. At this year's XXXII session of the General Assembly, the world organisation achieved new success towards its own affirmation and the strengthening of its authority. It is inadequate to say that the nonaligned and developing countries are the dominant force which numerically speaking far outweighs other groups. In abandoning extremism, the policy of non-alignment has become even more mature and creative and is there by also registering an increasingly high level of organisation.

It must be admitted that those who thought that the mere transfer of economic problems to the organs of the United Nations would in itself yield results have been proved wrong. The developed countries, with respect to fundamental questions such as the debts of the developing countries, the protection of raw materials and the transfer of technology have kept to their previous positions. In the middle of December, however, the General Assembly passed a decision to call a special session in order to discuss the problems involved in the creation of a new economic order. This means that these subjects are not being taken from the agenda but rather that a lengthy and continual process is being formed for the gradual settlement of these key causes for dissent in world relations.

The UN has achieved the same level of success in the domain of the armaments race. After much active and passive opposition the Decision was passed to call a special session to begin on 23rd May

of this year. The non-aligned countries have gone even further. They have elaborated the draft of a Declaration on the principles on which the solutions to this problem are to be founded. They are also preparing an action programme in which will be set out the rate of work and the procedure in the treatment of this material. The preparation is also under way of the current acts referring to the adoption of the organisational instrument by means of which the largest number of countries from various parts of the world will examine all the concrete aspects of this complex material and influence the search for the best solutions.

A positive facet of world development is certainly European co-operation in the framework of the Conference of Security and Co-operation in Europe. Difficulties and hesitation of a temporary nature have occurred but they have not been such as to change the basic course laid out in Helsinki. An important role herein is played by the small countries within the blocks which see their prospects in the development of European co-operation. In an economic context, some NATO members such as Norway, Denmark and Holland are breaking off from the American strategy and taking their own measures with respect to the deferment or freezing of the debts of the least developed countries. They have also strongly protested against the production of new weapons and their location on European soil.

The non-aligned are able to register a further growth in their role, which is characteristic for the whole of the post-Algerian summit period since 1973. Not one single block or group of states is able to ignore the factor of non-alignment as of extreme importance. At the same time, block policy, regardless of its origin, its endeavouring to model non-alignment according to its own needs and turn it into an ally—an "extended arm". The success or failure of these efforts depends on the non aligned themselves and on the results achieved in crucial spheres such as disarmament, food production, the limitation of the monopoly of the major powers, the transfer of nuclear technology.

The primary preoccupations remain the removal of the danger

of war and the advancement of a world catastrophe. Considerable innovations have, however, been introduced in the actual handling of the problems confronting world peace. No longer is the sanity and reason of the major powers merely called upon. Concrete and elaborated programmes already exist in various domains. These also include the extensive system of measures aimed at the better position of raw materials on the world market, the change in the industrial map of the world, the protection of the environment, the transformation of desert into fertile land, the exploitation of the seas, the new development decade, a more efficient monetary system, not to mention the programme of decolonisation and the abolition of apartheid.

Last year was marked by the introduction of the problem of human rights on to the UN agenda on the initiative of American President Carter. This question was also at the centre of international pre-occupation. One single concept of freedom and democracy is being forced upon the world, a concept formed in the West in unique historical circumstances and in a situation of advanced material development. Mechanisms have also been proposed to assure the implementation of such human rights as conceived by Western leaders.

This kind of initiative has no chance of being accepted for this would mean the sanctioning of interference in the internal affairs of independent countries. The non-aligned countries have made great effort in an endeavour to

explain and render objective of the very concept of human rights. They have illuminated this problem and formulated their own approach to this subject. It is clear that more freedom, more democracy and more human rights are demanded in the world today and these demands will gain in momentum with the passing of time. This is the main task of all positive forces. There is, however, no single formula applicable for the whole of the world. Account must be taken of the various levels of development, different traditions, civilisations and cultures. Everything which appears on the surface as democracy and freedom has its own social roots and its own historical colours.

The many controversial phenomena leave the impression that a process is underway of the de-ideologisation of world politics. Countries of similar ideological systems find themselves in a state of confrontation. There has been no solution to the conflict between Turkey and Greece, there is a continuation of the propaganda war between China and the Soviet Union, and between the non-aligned and socialist countries of Ethiopia and Somalia, on the one hand Vietnam and Cambodia on the other there is a state of war. However, in the United Nations and the other fora, countries of different political and ideological regimes discuss together the question of a new international economic order. The key to the understanding of these phenomena lies in the comprehension of the real interests and policy, by means

of which many countries are endeavouring to defend their sovereignty and right to independence.

In a similar way there is a continuation of the deterioration of the crises of the large systems and the monolithic totalities. Under the pressure of the leading powers many small countries were in the first post-war years put in a situation where they had to neglect their own interests in the name of general goals. Many parties and political movements have found themselves in a similar situation. Blocks, by their very nature reflect such tendencies but also constantly perpetuate such processes. However, at the same time the tendency for movements, parties and countries to act independently is going from strength to strength. The political attention of these forces is becoming concentrated on the interests of the people and the country and it is from this vantage point that the common elements are seen and the common good achieved.

In a situation of increasing development of production forces, scientific progress and technological achievements, old schools of thought, out-dated theories and philosophical norms occur and impose themselves in modified form in politics. Social consciousness cannot catch up with the accelerated development of material production. We are therefore in a constant state of "psychological shock." This is why it is essential in 1978 to work on the creation of new political concepts on social, economic and political relations in the world today.

SRI LANKA CHRONICLE

Feb. 15 — Feb. 21

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

CDN—Ceylon Daily News; CDM—Ceylon Daily Mirror;
CO—Ceylon Observer; ST—Sunday Times; DM—Dina-
mina; LD—Lankadipa; VK—Virakesari; ATH—Aththa;
SM—Silumina; SLD—Sri Lankadipa; JD—Janadina;
DP—Dinapathi; SU—Sun; DW—Dawasa; CM—Chintha-
mani; WK—Weekend; RR—Rivirasa; EN—Eelanadu; IDPR
—Information Department Press Release DK—Dinakara.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 15: The use of arms should be controlled by a superior authority for the welfare of humanity and not for the advancement of ideologies or the welfare of people who are able to

create nuclear weapons, Sri Lanka's President told the regional meeting of Commonwealth heads now meeting in Sydney. Indian PM, Morarji Desai said in Sydney yesterday that it was possible that terrorist elements of the Indian-based religious sect Ananda Marga were threatening his life. Asian and Pacific Commonwealth leaders arrived at Bowral by helicopter and car today while troops and police mounted Australia's biggest peacetime security operation in case of a renewed terrorist attack. The Minister of Trade has directed that all officials in departments and corporations under his ministry should not attend parties hosted by the Embassies or foreign trade missions without obtaining the sanction of the Minister. Wholesale rice dealers and millers have agreed to bring down their prices with effect from February 20 in order to co-operate with the government's efforts to bring down the cost of living—CDN. The Minister of Trade said that we must equip ourselves for an open economy if we are to get international commercial co-operation for the speedy development of our country. Sri Lanka will receive

1.0 million Australian dollars as part of the special action programme pledged by Australia at the last session of the congress in Sydney—CDM. The deputy Minister of defence yesterday called for the immediate mobilisation of an adequate number of police reservists in order to provide protection for all branches of the People's Bank and the Bank of Ceylon in the island. Colombo came under a tight security clampdown on Monday night with police units from all stations in the city participating in a massive anti-crime operation—SU. The Labour department is according high priority to a series of inspections island-wide to ensure that employees are not cheated of the wage increase announced in the last budget to compensate for the changes in the rice rationing scheme—CO. The Minister of Education has said that a Code of Conduct for Teachers will be made possible before April. The Industrial Development Board is launching a scheme to establish an industrial estate in each electorate—DW. Most of the Middle Eastern countries have requested that the government should recruit workers to their countries—DM. A Bilateral Air Transport Agreement was signed today in Colombo at the Ministry of Shipping between Sri Lanka and the Australian Federal Republic; according to this agreement either contracting Party is entitled to operate air services, not more than two frequencies per week, between Austria and Sri Lanka—IDPR No. 46.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 16: Leaders of the Commonwealth from Asia and the Pacific have agreed to set up a joint committee to find ways to combat terrorism in the wake of last week's gun attacks outside their Sydney Hotel. Substantial incentives by way of generous tax rebates for both local and foreign investors in the FTZ will be offered according to a decision taken yesterday by the Directorate of the Greater Colombo Economic Commission. The government was expected to collect about 58 million bushels of paddy during the coming Maha season the Minister of Agriculture and Lands announced yesterday. Work on the 400 million rupee Canyon Power Project under Stage III of the Maskeliya Oya Power Project begins on February 20. The Ministry of Education will in future recruit teachers on a district basis and will post them to schools in the district to which the teacher belongs. The deputy minister of Trade yesterday appointed a ten member committee to look into the distribution of dried fish by the CWE—CDN. Members of the Special Committee appointed to find ways and means of bringing down the cost of living yesterday visited the Port of Colombo and found several shipments of essential consumer goods and raw material for industries lying uncleared in the Port's warehouses for periods ranging from a month to over an year. CTB buses were involved in a total of 39,000 accidents during the seven year period 1970-76 according to CTB statistics—CDM. All applicants for licenses and permits for explosives are to be rigidly screened and their applications forwarded to the Controller of Explosives for his personal approval. A code of business conduct will be set out in respect of all employees serving in the CWE as well as the Marketing Department outlets, the deputy minister of Trade said yesterday—SU. The government has devised a plan to ensure that the massive amount of agricultural credit pumped into the current Maha cultivation is recovered from the farmer—CO. The deputy Minister of Irrigation, power and Highways has decided to hold two land Kachcheries for the purpose of alienation of land to those permanent residents of the area who were given allot-

ment of lands under the Mahaweli Development Scheme by the previous regime and also for allotting lands to those who are able to prove that they have been treated unfairly in the allocation of lands—IDPR No. 50. The Heads of Government of 12 Asian and Pacific Nations will hold another regional summit conference in New Delhi in 1980. For the first time in history 100 families at Pattiyaapola in the Hambantota district will get electricity from solar energy—DW. The Minister of Agriculture and Lands has said that the government hopes to buy 580 million bushels of paddy in the next paddy harvest; he also said that Rs. 800 million has been granted as agricultural loans—LD.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 17: Main thrusts of the Sydney regional summit disclosed by the communique as agreement to expand trade between the 12 states and to combine in an effort to bring pressure against the EEC. The Norwegian Aid Organisation Norges Godtemplar Ungomsjorbund will give an outright grant of Rs. 3 million for constructing paddy stores in the main paddy growing areas in the country—CDN. Police have received complaints that some tourists have been found to be improperly dressed, bathing in the nude and indulging in acts of gross indecency in public places and peddling narcotics; the IGP has suggested that a Code of Conduct should be drawn up for tourists. All vacancies in state corporations and Statutory bodies will be filled through the job banks from March 1. The prices of onions, potatoes and locally produced pulses have tumbled in the last few days—CDM. The government is to appoint a National Salaries Commission to study and report on the wage structures prevailing in the state sector. The Sri Lanka Air Force is to acquire two twin-yeat engined helicopters for its VIP and commercial flights—SU. Since the packaging component of many popular groceries may run as high as 40% of its price, Sri Lanka's packaging industry is exploring ways and means of cutting costs and saving the consumer needless expense—CO. Since there is an increase in the demand for passion fruit in foreign countries, the Fruit Board has decided to cultivate passion fruit in 1800 acres in the Kalutara district; Sri Lanka earns roughly around 15 million rupees from exporting fruits—DW.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 18: International banking institutions and investors have sent special envoys for discussions with the Sri Lanka government with a view to making heavy investments here. The government has approved the setting up of the 160 million rupee Non-residential University Campus in the South; the Minister of Finance has negotiated with the Swedish government to get financial aid for the setting up of the University. Complaints of political victimisation by co-operative employees upto 1977 will be inquired by 26 special one-man tribunals appointed by the Minister of Food and Co-operatives. Nomination day for the Colombo West by-election will be on February 24—CDN. The Minister of Transport ordered the railway authorities to provide special goods trains to transport paddy stored at paddy stores in the Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa areas to milling areas. Various shipping charges payable by foreign ships calling at the Ports of Colombo, Galle and Trincomalee have been increased by 85% with immediate effect—CDN. Bangkok police revealed on Thursday that two women and a man arrested there earlier in the day on terrorism charges were probably members of the semi-religious sect

'Anard Marc' suspected of several armed attacks on Indian embassies and politicians. Economic experts of the World Bank have, in a report, pointed out to the government that with proper management of the irrigation facilities in the country, the waste of water could be checked and the result would be an increase of 200,000 tons of rice, equivalent to the quantity that would be imported for the year 1978. A 'security ring' is being thrown around the NCP to control the wave of criminal acts now reported to be occurring there—SU.

SUNDAY FEBRUARY 19: Private sector firms and industrialists who are members of the giant Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry have been given a deadline to increase their workforce by 10% before May 31. The Minister of Finance leaves for Pakistan and Geneva on Tuesday for a series of important meetings. The private sector will be compelled to pay its employees the special allowance of Rs. 90—SO. The government has provided 67,000 jobs in the State and Public sectors services between its assumption of office last July and January 12 this year, according to the quarterly reports published by the Ministry of Plan implementation. A tribunal with special powers to settle disputes between tourists and hotel managers, shopkeepers and taxi drivers is likely to be set up shortly. West Germany has doubled its aid to Sri Lanka this year—DM 78 million (Rs. 570 million)—ST. The foreign employment service of the Labour Department has been able to find jobs for 2550 person in West Asian countries during the past 12 months. Election to committees of Multipurpose co-operative societies will now take the form of a mini general election with secret ballot etc. The IGP yesterday ordered the police to exercise greater vigilance at the country's air and sea ports in a bid to crack down on any attempt of terrorism—WK.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 20: Measures will be introduced soon to vest the President with powers to obtain the verdict of the people by way of a Referendum on questions of major national significance. The UNP would take steps within the next six years to eliminate poverty and provide every citizen in this country to lead decent lives as citizens of a free and just society said the PM yesterday. The Socialist Republic of Vietnam will seek the personal intervention of Sri Lanka's President to help stop its current border conflict with Cambodia. A five member cabinet sub-committee has been appointed to report on the import and distribution of essential food items and the quick issue of existing stocks to ensure uninterrupted supplies to consumers. The modern history of Sri Lanka—not written from the days of the First State Council—will be committed to writing from this year; it will be written in Pali and Translated into Sinhala and other languages—CDN. The Constitution will be amended shortly to provide for further guarantees in regard to fundamental rights and the strengthening of the independence of the judiciary the Minister of Justice said yesterday. Para medical officers have asked the Minister of Health that they be promoted to Grade I after 17 years of satisfactory service, irrespective of the date of their joining the service. The Ministry of Industries and Scientific Affairs in a bid to save as much as possible of the kerosene subsidy which is Rs. 195 million per annum has called upon the Petroleum Corporation to explore the possibilities of getting as many people to use LP gas for cooking. A major export breakthrough

has been made by several small industrialists by the export of wooden utility wares—CDM. Mr. Abdul Aziz, a former appointed MP, was one of nearly 50 delegates held hostage by armed terrorists who stormed the Executive Board meeting of the Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Association at the Nicosia Hilton in Cyprus on Saturday. The government is to set up a series of job placement committees at electoral level. The National Crime Prevention Society, an entirely new undertaking initiated by the Commissioner of Prisons has drawn up its draft constitution—SU. The Minister of Agriculture has taken steps to construct a fertilizer depot with a capacity of 40 tons in every electorate—LD. Engineers who return from abroad and those who are working here will get a special allowance ranging between Rs. 100-600—DW.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 21: General managers of MPSC unions and managers of co-operative stores have been warned that they will be sacked on the spot or face heavy fines if they do not carry ample stocks of off-ration rice, sugar and flour; the general public has been asked by the Minister of Food and Co-operatives to bring to his notice immediately if goods are refused to them on request. No injustice will be done to any group in the country when admission to the university are made this year, said the Secretary to the Ministry of Education. The Minister of Irrigation, Power and Highways yesterday launched the final stage of the Maskeliya Power Development Project by triggering the first blast to commence work on the 13,200 ft long tunnel from the Mosakalle reservoir in Maskeliya this morning. The appointment of a Trade Commissioner in Kuwait to promote Sri Lanka exports to oil-rich Arab nations has been urged by the National Chamber of Commerce—CDN. The government will shortly allow public servants to go abroad on leave for employment. All employment exchanges run by the Labour Department will be closed down with the establishment of proposed money banks. The state purchasing mechanism was not able to cope with the bumper harvests of paddy last year; the purchase of the PMB during 1977 totalled 24.4 million bushels compared to 12.83 in '76—CDM. The government has finalised a series of top security measures to thwart any possible attempts to derail trains. The Minister of Irrigation yesterday disclosed that the IMF had approved Rs. 6000 million as aid to Sri Lanka. A two-member committee comprising the Deans of the Colombo and Peradeniya Medical faculties have submitted a report to the Vice Chancellor of the University of Sri Lanka on the feasibility of setting up medical faculties at Jaffna and Matafa. The Chairman-designate of the University Grants Commission, told newsmen that under the new plan envisaged the six campuses of the University of Sri Lanka will be run as separate universities and each would have a separate Vice Chancellor—SU. Tirunelveli in the Jaffna district has been chosen as the best place for soya bean cultivation by research conducted by agricultural experts—EN.

SINGAPORE—4

Conditions Of Detention Torture & The Press

This is the fourth and concluding part of Amnesty International's *Briefing on Singapore. Conditions of Detention, Allegations of Torture Released Prisoners, Capital Punishment and the Press* are discussed in this part.

CONDITIONS OF DETENTION

(i) *Moon Crescent Center*—Prisoners are separated in small groups of three to five with no contact between groups. Most of the time they are confined to single cells, where they are looked up for a total of four hours during the day and from 1900 hours until 0630 hours the next day. The cells are small and 'poorly ventilated. Six books (magazines are counted as books) and one newspaper are permitted at any one time, but all reading material is censored. Writing materials are restricted; one censored letter can be sent out each week. Food is said to be poor, with only limited supplement by the families allowed. There is one family visit of half-an-hour each week conducted by telephone across thick soundproof glass. A prison officer monitors all conversations, which are terminated if prison conditions are mentioned.

(ii) *Queenstown Remand Prison*—This is a large remand prison but it contains only a few political detainees. These are political prisoners who have been served with banishment orders but who refuse to be deported. It is believed that in at least one case family visits are limited to one in five weeks, and it would seem that all those held under banishment orders have minimal contact with the outside world.

(iii) *Solitary Confinement*—While under detention, political prisoners are subjected to periodic interrogations. During these periods, they are put under solitary confinement on the top floor of the Central Police Station for months at a time; a period of one to six months is the norm. Some ex-detainees

claim to have been held in solitary confinement in secret holding centers.

ALLEGATIONS OF TORTURE

In 1966 a constitutional commission chaired by the Chief Justice recommended that the Singapore constitution should be amended so as to provide guarantees against torture and inhuman and degrading punishment or other treatment. This recommendation was not taken up by the government.

(i) There have been consistent claims by ex-detainees and detainees' families that political prisoners are subjected to "mental and physical tortures", primarily for the purpose of breaking their resistance and securing statements of political confession and recantation. It is alleged consistently that:

- * Solitary confinement with all its deleterious effects is used as a psychological pressure to try to induce recantation.

- * prisoners wearing only light clothing are interrogated in very cold air-conditioned rooms. They are sometimes forced to strip and cold water is poured over them.

- * During round-the-clock interrogations they are often forced to do repeated and strenuous exercises, resulting in severe strain and fatigue.

- * while in solitary confinement, lights are switched on in the cell throughout the night to prevent sleep.

- * although much of the maltreatment is essentially psychological in nature, some detainees are also physically assaulted.

This evidence suggests that most ill-treatment of detainees takes place while they are in the custody of the Internal Security Department rather than of the Prison Department.

Allegations of ill-treatment very similar in points of detail to the above were again made following the release in December 1975 of a group of eight political detainees.

(ii) In September 1974, the Director of Prisons described at a specially-called news conference how certain convicted criminals are caged so badly that they are scarred for life. Caging may be imposed for rioting, trafficking in

drugs, rape and certain crimes of violence in addition to other punishments. A maximum of 24 strokes may be ordered by the courts. The prisoner is strapped naked over a special trestle which has padding to prevent accidental injury to the spine. The can is more than one meter long and more than one centimeter thick, and strokes are inflicted "with the full weight of the body" by robust specially-trained prison officers, at intervals of half a minute. Normally, after three strokes the skin at the point of contact splits open and the buttocks are covered in blood. Prisoners are said to struggle violently at first, but at the end those who have received more than three strokes are in a state of shock. Many collapse, but the medical officer and his assistants are on hand to revive them and apply antiseptic to the wound. Caging is intended to give criminals "a taste of the violence they had inflicted on their victims."

RELEASED PRISONERS

The Internal Security Act empowers the minister to suspend a detention order subject to all or any of a number of restrictive conditions, including the determination of residence and employment. The minister may prohibit an individual from being out of doors during certain hours, require him to notify the police of his movements, prohibit him from travelling without permission, and prohibit him from participating in any political activities. Released detainees remain under strict surveillance, and they live under the constant threat of re-arrest. They are also supervised through the Ex-Detainees Association, which they join to find employment.

CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

Trial by jury for capital offences was abolished largely because it was claimed that juries were reluctant to pass sentence of death in murder trials. In all cases where the accused is charged with an offence for which punishment by death is authorised by law, the accused is now tried by a court consisting of two High Court judges, whose decision must be arrived at unanimously.

It is common for executions to be carried out when the death penalty has been imposed. In July

1973, for example, a woman cabaret star was hanged in Changi Prison after being found guilty of murder. In February 1975, eight men convicted of murder were hanged on one day. In June 1975, two convicted murderers were hanged.

The death penalty can be imposed for a number of offences, including murder, unlawful possession of firearms and drugs offences. Drug trafficking was added to the list of offences carrying the death penalty under an amendment to the Misuse of Drugs Act in 1975.

THE PRESS IN SINGAPORE

Journalists and others involved in the running of newspapers in Singapore have often been among those detained in security operations, and a number are presently held without trial (see above: 3).

All printing presses in Singapore must be licensed by the government. A publisher also requires a separate licence for a newspaper, and both licences must be renewed each year. In 1971, the government detained four members of the staff of the *Nanyang Siang Pau*, deported the editor of a new English language daily, the *Singapore Herald*, and revoked his licence to print, and closed down the *Eastern Sun*. It was subsequently announced that a press council was to be formed to "guard against any newspaper taking a subversive line which might endanger the Republic's security." Further restrictions have been placed on journalists by the Newspapers and Printing Presses Act, 1974.

In November 1974, a local correspondent of the American magazine *Newsweek* was fined 1,500 Singapore dollars on being found guilty of contempt of court following the appearance of a "scandalizing" article in the magazine earlier that month. The article commented on the verdict in a slander suit brought by the opposition Workers' Party against a government member of parliament. The *Singapore* circulation manager of *Newsweek* and the retail sales agent were also fined. The prosecution had sought jail terms for the defendants.

ACTION BY AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

(1) Individual groups of Amnesty International were active in August 1977 on the cases of 40

men and women who were believed to be detained without trial in Singapore, including a number held under banishment orders.

In cases where it is clear after extensive investigation that men and women are imprisoned for the non-violent expression of their political or other conscientiously held beliefs, Amnesty International adopts such political detainees as "prisoners of conscience."

Amnesty International urges the Singapore Government either to present any evidence which it has against adopted prisoners of conscience in a fair trial, openly and in full accordance with recognized norms to ensure a fair trial, or to release them immediately and unconditionally.

Full publicity is given to the cases of all adopted prisoners of conscience.

(ii) Amnesty International opposes the practice of caning in Singapore. This cannot but be regarded as a violation of Article 5 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states that no one shall be subjected to torture, or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. Amnesty International has protested strongly to the Prime Minister of Singapore against the use of caning.

(iii) In accordance with its object of opposing by all appropriate means the imposition and infliction of death penalties, Amnesty International has protested to the Singapore government against the imposition of death sentences as punishment for certain crimes in Singapore.

MAHAWELI

Problems Of Settlement

By R. Kahawita

In my last article I said that as development progresses and as a preliminary to settlement of farmers in their new environment 59 villages and 17 Townships will have to be established. Without the basic amenities leading to social, and cultural unification of the early settlers, they will not take kindly to their new environ-

ment. When they are moved to a new village, they must feel that they are brought into an already established social and economic group not much different to where they were. To create this impression in the settlers mind is the most difficult exercise in the Mahaweli development programme. This has been the experience elsewhere.

I am pin-pointing these with no intention of criticizing the commitment and policies of a Government, but to bring home to the people the enormity of the task ahead of the Government, and that without the co-operation of the whole nation the targets set by the Government can never be achieved. To co-operate with the Government every one must discipline himself on a war-footing and push ahead to achieve the targets. It is a war and no war has ever been won by assuming the enemy to be weak and that the enemy can be crushed in a few weeks—in our case five years. There had to be the holocaust of a Hiroshima to bring world war two to a halt, our fight for economic freedom is similar.

It serves no purpose telling the people that the biggest development scheme in this part of the world can be completed in five years. The people must understand what has to be done to reach the five year target, at a pressure we never before experienced. It is a war for us to be free from our common enemy:—"Want and hunger". The people must understand and accept it. They must contribute their share to win the war on hunger by hard and harder work. They must co-operate with the Government and not confront a Government by unreasonable and unrealistic demands. In this war, there is no place for self-self must suffer for the greater good of the people i.e. you, me, and everybody else who lives in our country. We can, may be reach near the target, if all of us work with one common objective—to achieve success in five years. For this the people must understand the enormity of the task ahead. What I have written about Mahaweli is to create this picture in the minds of the People.

The new farming communities are to be settled in clusters of Villages; a village may consist of 100 farming families and others

to support their social and cultural activities and may command any thing up to 500 Acs. of farming land, if we accept the unit sizes recommended in the UNDP studies. In the present day context of food supply and the need to create a surplus, I see no valid reason to deviate from this recommendation. The main concept is to make each farming unit economically viable. Otherwise we will not be able to service the loans we are getting to construct the scheme.

A village should have a name and not a number as was done unimaginatively at Gal-Oya. A name will have a psychological attraction. Not Heen Banda in Village No. 3, but Heen Banda of Rook-gastenne. This is something after their own heart. The village becomes the focus of his social, cultural, and commercial activities. Therefore the village centre must be provided with all the amenities he needs to start his life anew in a new environment.

The basic requirements in the village centre are:— A Health clinic and residential accommodation for the health staff. A primary school for the age group 5 to 13 years and accommodation for teachers etc. A sub-post office inclusive of quarters for the post-master and his staff, Co-operative stores or a Basic requirement retailing point with accommodation and stores, and area for the private sector small traders to put up shops and living quarters, a market place and buildings, to sell and buy. A site for religious observances and practices, stores and quarters for a village level extension officer to cater for the agricultural needs of 100 farming units, Quarters for a Peace officer-cum cultivation officer, water-supply, and electricity to each Village Centre, Service Roads. Around this centre must be built the 100 farmsteads, complete with water supply, sanitary facilities, electricity development roads. These are the basic needs to be provided before the farmers are introduced to their Holdings.

Holdings:— Each village may command about 500 Acs. of irrigable land. This area will have to be developed jointly or independently of the farmers. The operations involved are—Jungle clearing and uprooting, Land levelling and ridging, ploughing and cropping. Before cropping, main irrigation chan-

nels, field net work of channels for 100 units, Internal drainage system and operating facilities will have to be constructed. All these are to be done before the farmers are brought into "residence." Several villages will have to be looked after and catered for by a service and administrative centre—a Township.

The basic infra-structure that should be provided include: a cottage hospital and quarters for staff, secondary education building and quarters for teachers. Post & Telegraph office and quarters. Co-operative stores and shops and accommodation for employees, Public Market. Civic and administrative centre for regional offices for Land Commission Dept. Police, Irrigation Dept. Market Dept. Agricultural Development, experimentation and Extension Service, Commercial area for the development of Private sector involvement in trade and marketing Veterinary Service station. Places of worship, electricity, water supply, sewerage and other sanitary facilities. All these have to be provided in the new townships and these services should be available when the farmers arrive to take possession of their farms.

Even if this infrastructure cannot be built in time the regional plans must provide for these facilities in the land use schedules. So that it will not result in haphazard development as we experienced in the earlier development projects. With the experience already available in this kind of development work spread over four decades, we should not repeat the mistakes we committed due to lack of foresight in those schemes. These are going to be serious omissions in our hastiness to get through technical development. i.e. construction of dams, hydro-power plants, diversion structures and Trans basin canals. These omissions are there in those sections already completed.

The fundamental consideration behind the so called "Headworks" is to take the resources to the farmer level, and establish him in a viable unit, where he can earn a living, consumerate with his farming efforts, and thereby contribute his share to the National Growth. The success of this massive project is measured not by how soon we completed the Head works, but by the time taken

to settle and re-habilitate the farmers to make a significant contribution to our National economy. This is the criterion of success.

The investment in the various engineering works, and the development of resources is enormous. And unless we go into production in the shortest possible time, the investment becomes a dead investment. This is the reason why all construction and development activities must be undertaken simultaneously. When we consider this requirement, the question necessarily arises—Can we complete all these tasks in five or six years to bring into the area, covered in Phase I alone—28,000 families and to re-habilitate 5300 families already living in those areas? This alone is a formidable task—Leave alone Phase II and III. The figures available so far from the UNDP studies are for Phase I. I repeat this to give some idea of the magnitude of the work involved in Phase I. While Phase II and Phase III are yet to be worked out.

The details of village and townships given above are only for a single village and a single township. These have to be multiplied by 59 times in the case of villages and 17 times in the case of towns, to complete Phase I to its logical limit—Put into production 345,000 Acs. of irrigable lands and bring under development, another 134000 Acs. of highland for other purposes. The above covers just about one third of what has to be done in a five or six year programme. The other two thirds have yet to be taken up for Technical Analysis and development programmes.

To bring this two thirds into the construction stage a host of technical analysis and studies, supported by field investigations and surveys must be undertaken simultaneously with similar studies in Phase I. Have we got the trained staff in various disciplines?—Engineers, Designers, Architects, Planners, Agronomists, Agricultural economists, the second line and third line technical staff etc? This work has to go on without the other priority jobs being effected! The people have been promised the implementation of a Free Trade Zone, Greater Colombo Development plan, and the Colombo development works. All these works too have their claim on our men and materials.

While the need and demand for trained men for the execution of four major development projects, we hear of a major exodus of technical men, artisans and skilled workers to the West Asian countries—The Department of Immigration and Emigration says that the daily hand out of passports are around 1000, and many of them for employment in West Asia.

While it may be a threat to our own development programmes, we cannot blame them, nor restrain their movement. In a free society, we have pledged to establish, we should not do it.

The emigrants want jobs and a means of earning a living, so they move overseas. The answer is to provide them with work. This is where we are slow in action. We have not got set to it yet.

Mahaweli development can provide the work—To do this we are not yet organised, nor have we grasped the magnitude of the task ahead. The target is still far away.

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TWO VIEWS

On Village Health Service

A Forgotten Past

Dr. P. H. Amarasinghe FRCOG in his report in the *Tribune* of 4.2.78, "Village Health service (Pilot Project in Polonnaruwa)"—has brought to me forgotten memories of our life in the jungles of Minneriya and Polonnaruwa. The years were 1935—1936 when the NCP tanks were dry, jungles were parched and withered, malaria was rampant in the few villages that dotted the jungles of Tamankaduwa and their inhabitants were dying by the dozen for want of medical care. All who were witnesses to the tragedy of our jungle villages in those days for want of any form of medical care have gone to a better world except our unfortunate selves—me and my wife. The names of those who struggled to arrest the disaster that was overtaking the Wannil villages referred to by Dr. Amarasinghe needing help are already forgotten.

and their work too. I can recount the names of HR Freeman, D. S. Senanayake, C. L. Wickremasinghe, L. L. Hunter, V. Cumaraswamy, Dr. Andreas Nell, the one and only DRO of Tamankaduwa Mr. De Silva, Dr. Stanely de Silva, Muhandiran Amerasena and Victor Guneratne, all of them were concerned with what was happening to the "jungle people", particularly Dr. Stanley de Silva who was working in the Polonnaruwa Hospital like Dr. Amarasinghe today. Surprisingly there seems to be no change after 42 years of Health Administration, according to Dr. Amarasinghe. In those days, there were no jeeps, no public transport except the two trains up and down, no roads—cart and cycle were the means of transport Dr. Stanely had to move into the villages. Nevertheless we struggled, and struggled to save what was left of the human remnant and repopulate the area to what it is today. What Dr. Amarasinghe sees today is that growth in spite of the Medical care or lack of it.

Today what interests me is the warning given by Dr. Amarasinghe—"In the meantime little thought has been given to the medical care of the workers and farmers who now live and soon will in the great rice producing areas around Polonnaruwa and Minneriya." Sad indeed to think that these two places have not moved forward since 1935 in spite of the wealth the inhabitants produce.

The warning of Dr. Amarasinghe is what may happen to the Great development undertaking of Mahaweli. It may fail to achieve the results desired just for want of the medical care to minister to the would be "rice growers". It is a timely warning and I hope the planners who are rushing to complete the project in five years, take heed of this warning and set up pilot projects as described by Dr. Amarasinghe to provide the medical care to the workers and farmer's alike by the time they are brought in. One cannot over-emphasise the need for established medical care centres when the new settlers arrive.

R. Kahawita

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Integrated Health Service

I was very interested to read the report written by Dr. P. H. Amarasinghe, FRCOG. on his Village Health Service (*Tribune* of 4.2.78) projected for the Polonnaruwa area. It was refreshing to find a medical specialist voluntarily willing to go to Polonnaruwa and getting involved in the medical care of the workers and farmers there. President Jayawardene and Premier Premadasa have on important recent occasions stressed the fact that there are 7 million people living today in Sri Lanka who do not have sufficient income to enable them to provide their basic needs. Telescoping the 30 year Mahaweli project into 5 years is an ambitious attempt to provide food and employment to millions.

Dr. Amarasinghe correctly points out providing medical care to the workers and farmers is essential for success. We are a poor country and cannot afford to provide fully qualified doctors to man all our Village Health Centres; nor is that necessary. Para-medical personnel; after a brief period of training can do most of the work. He refers to bare-foot doctors in China and says, "Sri Lanka urgently needs bare-foot nurses, midwives, Health Educators and Health helpers recruited from each village and trained for a few months."

I have some experience in this field. After doing Health Work for 25 years in Sri Lanka, most of it in the rural areas of South Ceylon I had a stint as Senior Advisor in a WHO MCH Project which expanded into an over-all Rural Health Project. The project worked in primitive conditions in the North of Thailand, bordering Burma. After almost a life-time of doing Health Work, I have come to realise that Health work should form part of an overall development programme embracing food production and other projects to provide basic needs of a people. Indeed I am now convinced that Health is almost a by-product of improving living standards, provide employment, adequate food, pipe-borne water to even a hut, proper disposal of waste (including human waste) and Health improves, let me repeat, as a by-product. Another interesting phenomenon is that with improving living standards

there is some factor which causes a drop in the fertility rate and the spectre of population explosion melts away. This drop in the fertility rate has already been noticed in Third World countries, showing the slightest trend towards improved living standards.

So, for Dr. Amarasinghe's Project to succeed he needs to integrate health work with overall development projects. He hopes, the WHO, UNICEF and Family Planning Association might be willing to help in planning the Project. I think a word of warning is needed here. Foreign organisations may give us aid. But the work will have to be done by us. We will need a band of men and women who are prepared, day in and day out, to do pioneer work under hard conditions. Giving them an extra allowance is not enough. Dedication cannot be bought with money.

As in everything it is correct leadership that is needed—leaders who are prepared to share all the hardships with their workers and farmers and accept no privileges. That is why I was pleased to find doctors like Dr. Amarasinghe. If we can find more like him, we will succeed.

Dr. R. W. Crossette Thambiah

SHORT STORY

Pol Pala For The O.A.

WHO is it in our town who has not heard of Uncle John? A retired Government Servant, he now spend most of his time with relatives in Colombo and puts in an appearance in his home town once a month to collect the proceeds of his pension voucher credited to the Bank Account.

UNCLE John is slim, of medium height with a prominent facial appendage—a cartoonist's delight. He is approaching three score years and ten. The son of a Rate-mahataya, Uncle John is proud of his aristocratic beginnings and connections. The people from his village and family servants address him as "Bandara Hamuduruwo" or "Walawe Hamuduruwo."

FROM the Bank, Uncle John's next port of call is the local liquor

bar, to down a few drinks. Here the "pin addas" gather around him in great strength. When fully fortified Uncle John would talk at length of men and matters. While he is holding the floor, it is perilous to interrupt him!

TO his friends, he is kindly and tolerant. His lively sense of humour endears him to them. His love of fun is inextinguishable. Uncle John resents invasion on his privacy. Should people ask questions about his family life, then a torrent of red, hot invective descends upon them. The victims slip away like water!

UNCLE John and I have been friends of many years standing. We hit it off wonderfully. I met him recently in town. He was nattily dressed, complete with coat and tie. There was an extra shine on his head probably because of liberal application of hair-cream! He was carrying a suit-case with difficulty.

"Attending a wedding Uncle?", I asked him. He took a little time to place me. He smiled—the dentures appeared to be newly acquired! Then adjusting his glasses, as is his wont, he yelled, "No Yakkol! I am on my way home to Colombo. Attended to all my work here. See you next month."

THE joker was not going to dismiss his friend so easily. Noting his discomfort with the suit-case, I asked him whether I could carry it for him. He was only too glad to be rid of that burden. It did not certainly contain his clothes. The contents must have been pieces of "Yakkada"!

ON the way to the bus stand Uncle John stopped to talk to some "old friends" and parted with a few coins! Others who tried to make fun of him, had a torrid time. The choicest "Kunuarappa" issued forth from his mouth. To their hoots and jeers, he had acquired the skin of a crocodile.

UNCLE John was lucky. There was a bus to Colombo and strangely very few people had queued up. When I returned the suit-case he asked me: "Umba buth kevada?" While speaking to friends in Sinhala or English it was a habit with him to use the words "umba" and "yakko". None got offended.

WHEN my answer to Uncle John's question was in the negative, he pulled out his purse from the trouser pocket, opened it and

handed me a rupee coin to the amusement of the onlookers! What could I do? I pocketed it amidst laughter. That action was characteristic of Uncle John—a comedian without compeer.

UNCLE John's high spirits had made him very popular while he was attached to the Kachcheri. It is said that he brought laughter and lightness into a bored, grim office. The mere mention of his name even now is productive of animated conversation. He had clowning his way into the hearts of his colleagues. He was not without his detractors. They were the people who licked the dust off his feet to get help. At all times, his sense of humour showed up. Many are the hilarious episodes in which he was involved. One such incident which took place long before his retirement, I wish to relate here.

THE Kachcheri Office Assistant (OA) was beset with "Urine trouble". The drugs prescribed by his Doctors were not having any effect on him. He discarded them. Instead, as advised by his neighbour the Vedamahataya, he was going to drink "pol pala kenda". About the efficaciousness of polpala, he had heard from others too.

OBTAINING the medicinal herb presented no problems to the Office Assistant, as he was aware it was growing abundantly in Uncle John's lands. The Office Assistant took Uncle John into his confidence. "It is a simple matter, Sir," Uncle John told his superior. "I will have a parcel delivered at your residence."

THE Office Assistant lived close to the Kachcheri. It was lunch time and as he was nearing his dwelling, he saw a bullock-cart parked in front and a man unloading something which resembled "piduru". Perplexed the Office Assistant walked up to the man and shouted in anger: "What is going on here, man?"

WHEN the Office Assistant was told that he brought pol pala at the request of the "Walawe Hamuduruwo", his circulatory system accelerated considerably. What was he going to do with this mountain of pol-pala? Uncle John's man assured him that the stuff was intended for him and not for a "Bath Kade"!

ON his return to the Office after lunch he summoned Uncle John.

"Mr. John, you said that you are sending me a parcel of pol-pala and a cart-load has been unloaded at my residence today. I am not a four-footed animal you know", he said in a hurt tone.

JUST the opening, Uncle John, the teaser and tormenter of men, had been waiting for. A mischievous smile mounted his lips. "I'm sorry for what happened Sir," he apologised. It is my watcher's fault. That idiot has not followed my instructions. I will give him a bit of my mind. Please forgive me." THAT evening Uncle John visited his estate. He called for the watcher "I wanted you to take pol-pala to the Kachcheri Mahataya. You have not done it!", he shouted: "Wala-we Hamuduruwo, amma pal, I transported a cart-load of pol-pala to the Office Kachcheri Mahataya today", the watcher replied trembling with fear.

"THAT is not enough, Modaya!" thundered Uncle John. "Take another cart-load of pol-pala tomorrow. Otherwise, I will have you tied and thrashed!" It is amazing the way that "Bandara Hamuduruwo", are able to instil fear and obedience in the people working under them. They seem not to 'mind' the scoldings and threats.

THE Office Assistant was again on his way home for lunch. What met his astonished eyes again? The same cart and the man, assisted by the Office Assistant's servant, unloading pol-pala. The stuff was strewn here, there and everywhere. A mess!

THE Office Assistant this time was really up a gum tree. He sank into a chair, exhausted and perspiring profusely. He did not entertain friendly feelings towards Uncle John either. But he had to cry-halt before his illness took a turn for the worse. "To hell with John and his pol-pala!" he muttered under his breath.

INTO the Government Agent's room rushed the harassed and excited Office Assistant. He reeled off the pol-pala story. "Please do something about it Sir", he pleaded. The big man was tickled to the funny bone. Out of sympathy, he refrained from laughing. Something had to be done about the perpetrator of the cruel joke! A little later, the Aratchchi, a relic of the colonial past, entered the Government's Agents sanctum with Uncle John, who as usual had an

air of innocence about him. The prankster was greeted with a "good afternoon" by a smiling Government Agent and was shown a seat. Uncle John exchanged glances with the Aratchchi, a practical joker like himself.

THE Government Agent, after placing his signature to a document, broke the ice. With a twinkle in his eye, he asked Uncle John: "Can you please send me a cart load of pol-pala?" Uncle John knew the game was up. He was grinning from side to side. When Uncle John got up to leave the room, the Government Agent's parting shot was: "My OA is a sick man. Please don't kill him with your pol-pala!"

S. Sivagurunathan

CARAVAN FAMILY-5

Inginiyagala

The Caravan Family are in Inginiyagala this week sight seeing in Uncle Raja's jeep.

They drove on to the bund of the Senanayake Samudra right to the very end, three quarters of a mile, close up to Inginiyagala hill. What a bund! What a massive, wondrous wall of earth and concrete.

Three cars could easily drive abreast, on top. The white road 90 ft. wide was a straight ribbon between grass covered sides. They got out and sat on the concrete seats overlooking the water. It was the sunset hour. Far against the flaming sky towered several hills smoky blue in the distance. The Samudra like a gigantic mirror, reflected a million multi multi coloured cloud shapes on its calm surface.

"This beautiful lake" said mummie, "who could ever imagine that man made it so vast, so completely a part of nature. Look at the little bays and creeks stretching out long silver arms into the jungle."

Daddy laughed—"Raja this woman of mine was a dryad in her former life. She's mad about nature."

"What's a dryad daddy?" came the inevitable question from Ranjit.

Daddy winked. "A wood nymph. Kind of forest fairy".

"What a nice name for mummie, Forest fairy."

"I wish the children could have seen this place before the Gal Oya was dammed up. It was as flat as my hand, except for this great Inginiyagala rock, with the river, usually sandy and dry, trickling through the almost impenetrable forest that covered all this part.

"First of all they had to uproot all the trees—I beg your pardon, they had first to settle some forest dwellers known as Biyas in another part of this project."

"Were they Veddahs?" asked Daddy.

"No, not really. There were about five hundred in all and they were allotted land like the other colonists and have settled down happily and are now tilling their fields, like the rest."

"Was all this part impenetrable forest?" asked mummie.

"More or less. See that mountain in the distance? That one over there is Vadinagala, the veddah stronghold. Who could ever have approached those mountains, even Inginiyagala for that matter, before the land was opened up over the Gal Oya scheme. It was the back of beyond. Only a few interpid explorers like Dr. Spittel ever came (anywhere) near it."

"Were their wild animals here?" asked Ranjit.

"Sonnie, they still are round us on every side." Mr. Medapatha.

"Why, at Cobra Gulch the other night, when one of the ladies stepped out to throw some water through her kitchen door, what did she see but a leopard seated under the arc lamp by her house. At the sound of falling water he calmly looked at her as if to say: "What the devil is this?" Cha! What a shot with a gun!"

"Go on Raja" said daddy, "Are you still blood-thirsty?"

"Aiyo man, what blood-thirsty!" Mummie interrupted—Cobra Gulch! What a strange name. Who gave it?"

"Americans! They were here when there was all the jungle clearing and the names they gave to places still remain."

"What happened during the great flood of 1957?" asked Daddy.

"Nothing very much—considering."

"Considering what?"

My god man, you should have seen the samudra. There were waves like the sea, at least 4 ft. high. The water was lapping near the top. If it poured over the bund would have been like the spill. But the bund held."

"Good work done by the Americans?"

"Chal! Fine work and they were given the money too. Every inch of this great bund is made up of earth stamped down from 12 inches to one inch by sheep's foot stampers."

"What are sheep's foot stampers? asked mummie."

"Madam, the ancients used to consolidate earth by making sheep walk over and over any ground that had to be really firm. To this day they haven't discovered anything better, but now instead of using animals, steel stampers are used, shaped exactly like the coven foot of a sheep. Hundreds of these rolled over. 12 inches of soil till it was beaten down to one inch."

"Amazing!" said daddy. "Tell us a little of what happened on that terrible night."

"You see this chap in the sentry box at the end of the bund? A watcher is here day and night, but at the spill where wild animals often go, there are two. That night when those men saw the water rising, one of them ran a little distance to telephone headquarters. By the time he finished, he couldn't get back. He was saved with difficulty and the other man climbed Inginiyagala hill in the darkness and rain, and escaped."

"You saw those twisted concrete pillars, taken and flung as if they were toys. My god, the power of water! Bridges were carried away as if they were made of matchwood. We, ourselves, were waiting each with a small suitcase packed to climb this hill if the water flowed over the bund. Then we were for it! Once the water began to flow over the top, it would have found a weak spot and eaten into it till the whole bund was gone."

"Well, let's get along," said daddy. "It's dinner time."

That night the children snuggled into their bunks happily. Jason was a fine home and they loved

him. The moon had risen and through the little windows they could see the tank shining in the moonlight.

Little waves beat against the shore with a soft splash. Suddenly the quietness of the night was shattered. Scream after scream, like an old train engine letting off steam. Nila covered her head with the pillow. Ranjit and Varuni ran to daddy.

"What's that" they asked.

"Elephant! He has seen Jason and he's angry."

"What shall we do?" asked mummie.

"Nothing. Keep very quiet. He'll go away."

After several shrill trumpet blasts, he receded into the distance, cracking branches as he went. Jason was a real refuge.

Next morning uncle Raja called for them in his jeep. What didn't they do! Where didn't they go! He had arranged for them to ride in a bulldozer while it cleared the forest.

They held their breath as the monster went straight at an enormous tree. Bang! The tree only shook a bit. Bang again! Bang! Bang! First on this side, then on the other. A pitiless assault on a giant of the forest! How he stood up to this iron-clad monster, so proudly, with branches upheld! But down at the bottom, the banking went, till the tree began to shiver, a live thing, in pain and fear.

Mummie couldn't bear to look. "Oh! Oh! How cruel!"

It was a tense moment. Then there was rending and a crash. The great tree lay stretched out before them, its roots in a plaited maze exposed to the sun, the branches like arms flung out, pleading for mercy.

"There you are" said uncle Raja. "Like to see any more?"

"No", said mummie, very firmly.

"Then let's watch a road being made, Road makers follow jungle clearing. There they come, the motorised graders! Look at that blade in front, the full width of the vehicle! See how it flattens out the ground! Watch those hillocks disappearing beneath the great blades that slice them away like an onion being cut."

They saw the airfield and visited innumerable workshops. They

were shown playgrounds for workers, floodlit where volleyball can be played even up to midnight; and clubs for officials with floodlit tennis courts.

Uncle Raja turned to the children.

"You are lucky children to see a town being born. All this was forest where elephants and other wild animals roamed. But now look, a town has come up! A river turned into a lake! Man has triumphed over nature!"

"Umph" said mummie.

Daddy laughed—forest fairy.

"Sorry madam, forest fairy. Needs must you know. What do you think of our Amparai? We have a picture house, churches, temples, schools, the best training Technical Institute in Ceylon, the best workshop, we'll soon have a sugar factory. We have at least 800 acres of coconut. There are 5,000 colonists' cottages where they live in comfort."

Mummie broke in—"I prefer Inginiyagala."

"Pray why, may I ask?"

"It's unspoilt. There are no dusty streets; no clutter of houses and shanties; no crowds. It's like a park."

"Ah-ah-ah. That's so-o-o-o-o."

"And the lake. I mean tank! Inginiyagala is unique! It's beautiful".

Sir,

"World Leprosy Day"

On behalf of about 15,000 Leprosy Patients of Sri Lanka I say "Thank You" for collaborating with our activities by giving the maximum Publicity in your widely read journal,

The publicity has had a great impact on the hearts and minds of your readers and the response to our appeal has been a great success.

I wish to thank your readers through your columns. I regret I am unable to thank them individually as the number is so large.

Al-Haj S. M. A. Raschid, J.P.

Chairman of Council

The Leprosy Association

of Sri Lanka,
490, Havelock Road,
Colombo 6.
7.2.78

LETTERS

Discipline And Courtesy

Sir,

The British maintained a very high standard of discipline in the Public and Police services. Ever since the country got Independence this has deteriorated to such an extent, that people say it has gone to the dogs.

There is a lack of respect for authority and for superiors and even for law and justice. What is the reason for this? I would put it down to politics and the politicians. The interference by them with the administration of the Public Service and the Judiciary are the main reasons for this.

It is probably due to this indiscipline that the recent riots between the Sinhalese and Tamils took such a bad turn. Public servants and judges must be free to take any correct and appropriate action in any matter. The Police must be free to act according to the law without fear or favour. Ministers and Members of Parliament must not misuse their powers. Their stooges and big-wigs must not be allowed to interfere with the administration of any Public Department or any individual officer. Police officers and Public servants must not be allowed to have fear of victimisation or reprisals.

Courtesy too in the Public and Police service has deteriorated badly. Public officers must remember that they are the servants of the public. Recently several Superintendents of Police were promoted DIGs. I sent them congratulatory cards but up to now none of them have acknowledged receipt of these. I feel that it was a waste of money having done this but however I am glad that I did my duty. Some of them served under me when I was in the service.

On the other hand, I sent messages of congratulations to the Prime Minister (President to be) and one or two Ministers known to me and they promptly acknowledged receipt of these and thanked me for the same. Superior officers should set a better example to their subordinates.

There is only one person in Sri Lanka who could restore this

discipline and courtesy in the Public Service and this person is no other than Mr. J. R. Jayawardene. He is a very strict disciplinarian and as far as I am aware of he, as a politician, never interfered with the Public Administration or any individual public officer unless an injustice had been done.

I am fully confident that very soon he will restore this to the highest level in all government departments in Sri Lanka.

Jack Van Sanden

18, Seventh Avenue,
Camprie, NSW 2194,
Australia.
25.1.78

UNP Should Seek A Fresh Mandate

Sir,

The UNP came to power by an unexpected majority mainly due to its election promises to give each person 8 lbs. of grain per week, and to reduce the Cost of Living, and solve the Unemployment Problem.

The majority of the Voters, especially the poor, were not concerned with FTZ, amending the Constitution to have an elected Executive President or any other such things. Their main concern was to get the essential foodstuffs for everyday living in reasonable quantities, at reasonable prices than were prevailing during the last regime. In fact, they voted to have their stomachs filled.

Have the UNP fulfilled these promises? To a certain extent they did in its initial stages by bringing down the cost of Bread and Flour and the people welcomed this move and expected that soon the promise of 8 lbs. of Grain and the cost of living reduced would follow in its train. That the UNP under the new Leadership would honour its election promises and now is a mass organisation catering to the poor and needy and not a Capitalist one as before.

Before the Budget the Finance Minister made a trip to the World Bank. His Budget Speech revealed that he is carrying out the behest of the World Bank in order to get a loan irrespective of the con-

sequences which befall the poor people. Instead of providing the 8 lbs. of Grain per person per week as promised by them, he snatched the free Grain (Rice) and the Rice Subsidy originated by that great Leader, the late Mr. Dudley Senanayake and continued by the previous regime with certain modifications. The subsidy of Sugar was withdrawn but the price of Sugar has been reduced which again affected the poor juggery makers, but benefitted the Capitalists, to get their Sweets, like Cakes, etc. cheaper. Then, instead of bringing the Cost of Living down he made it rise up by devaluing the rupee by 100%; thereby the cost of living going up by 100%. Does the UNP think that a salary over Rs. 300/- per month is a princely one, to withdraw the Rice Subsidy from those who earn over this amount. Most of the Capitalists who rear dogs in their bungalows spend over Rs. 300/- per dog per month by the way of feeding them with meat, milk, biscuits, medical veterinary attention and keeping persons to look after the dogs. What is Rs. 300/- in the context of the present day context of prices. Now the UNP intends to increase the price of Bread and Flour and God only knows what more would follow.

The UNP should as their Leader said including the Leader himself turn the searchlight inwards into their own hearts and ask for themselves have we kept our election promises on which we came to power. Have we given the 8 lbs. of Grain per person per week. Have we reduced the cost of living. Have we given the jobs to our Job Card Holders. Have we not quite contrary to the above promises withdrawn the free rice ration and the rice subsidy, and the sugar ration and also devalued the Rupee making the cost of living rise up steeply, violated our election promises and betrayed our voters. In short, instead of giving relief as promised we have increased the burdens of the Voters. Under these circumstances have we any right if we are Dharmistic as we profess to be to remain in Seats of Power without seeking a fresh Mandate from the people.

If the UNP is absolutely sincere and honest as they profess to be the answers to the above will leave them no room but to resign their Seats and seek a fresh Mandate.

But will they do this, is the million Dollar question.

It reminds us of Buddhist Stanza that:

*Man needs must fight
To make true peace his own
He needs must combat right
with might
Or might would rule alone.*

How true this has been is shown by what happened to Hitler and Mussolini.

Solomon Gunasekera

18th February, 1978

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Education Muddle

Sir,

I have from early years sent my young sons to Government Village Schools. I feel constrained to sum up my experience for what it is worth.

In village schools neither Principals nor Teachers stay for long. Either for Political or Personal Reasons the Teachers are moved around like pieces on a Chess Board. This habit erodes any "school atmosphere". Bureaucrats who smirk behind the Political Party in Power perhaps find relief from their frustrations in this way—they can play with the People/Teachers and enjoy a sense of Power. The continual transfer of Teachers makes sure that the village school remains a 'soulless thing'. Despite the maximum state support of education, it must be admitted that no state school has captured the imagination of the peoples—outside of Royal and Ananda.

It is a fact that most Teachers send their own children to 'Private' or 'specially favoured' schools. A clear sign that Teachers do not believe very much in the work they themselves are doing! They should perhaps be required to keep their own children in the school they work in—this would then establish an 'existential' desire to improve the school work programme.

In proclaiming a new era in education—Education authorities are falling over each other in their haste to condemn the Education of the past seven years. We can ask why they did not speak out when all this distortion of child-

rens' minds was taking place—their excuse will be that they feared punishment. But is it not fear again that makes them all sing in high praise of contemporary policy and doctrine? The System is still Feudal—in each District all bow to the MP of the area—all fall over backwards to do his bidding. Few speak out whilst a Party is in power—so no serious dialogue takes place at the local level.

Centralised or even District Control of Education has become a 'demon' and unless it is exercised no amount of money will save our schools or children from the Educational wilderness which confronts the average child. 'Weep Weep, Oh Parents for your children. Fight to have real participation in determining the Content of Education and the appointment/transfers of Teachers in your schools. Perhaps one should bring each school under the direct control of the Pansala and the local Village Council and give Malay Street and the local Political authority only Advisory Status. But I know that this existing educational monster will not be easily exorcised.

Dr. Bryan de Kretser

Prithipura Infant Home,
Hendala - Wattala.
16, Feb. 78

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The Language Of Dialogue

Sir,

Dr. Bryan de Kretser's "Mother Tongue Privileges" (Tribune of 4.2.78 4.2.78) fails to recognise that the link has to begin in schools. My Sinhala student today follows the Sinhala stream. The Tamil students today follow the Tamil streams. Two parallel streams. And parallel lines never meet.

So would be Sinhala-Tamil unity. If English is well taught in schools, the youth would have a language for their dialogue.

If a J. R. Jayawardene and an Amirthalingam of the two linguistic streams have to their dialogue in English, pray why deny this privilege to the student-body?

Dr. Bryan de Kretser's general contention of the English elite, who smother language growth is certainly true, even at official

levels; (where a free mind must be available.) "Officialdom is hostile to the rural child learning English," is too true.

It would be cruel to deny youth a knowledge of English, which is their link language. They also want it, because they accept English as an Economic Asset; for envious Dollar jobs in Oil-rich countries. All that has to be done, is to teach English in a rational way.

John B. Kumarakulasinghe

Senior Sinhala School,
Batticaloa.

Double Doctors

Double Designs

Sir,

Mr. Roy Muthaya's point of view on "The LSSP and Strikes" (Tribune dated 4.2.78) made interesting and instructive reading. The learned writer rightly touched upon worthy facts and notably the lines that run thus: "Strike is the ultimate weapon of trade unions. In breaking the Bank Strike Dr. N. M. Perera dealt a blow to the Trade Union movement of this country, which no other Minister of Finance has done before or since." Quite truly so, I do endorse every word of this writer. For one thing today the so-called saviours of the working classes who shed crocodile tears for the current cost of living conditions, surely happened to be the very cut-throats of the working people when these times-saviours occupied the foremost positions of power and prestige in the former regime. Apart from forgetting the cause of the working class then, they also in all manner possible educated the capitalist employers to break a strike and go against the very principles of trade unionism in this country.

To the many learned doctors of the LSSP fame who are so used to political methods of double designs cultivated from the past regime, I wonder if their conscience will forgive them, if for once they were to realise how conveniently and slovenly they tackled the pressing issues of the working people when these double doctors were in power. And that too in what unforgiveable manner they dealt with a hartal or strike, little realising

the silent sufferings of the working people at one time in the past history of our country. So therefore it is time now everyone took a lesson from the past and kept on the alert to beware of the double designs of the LSSP famed double doctors in this country.

N. Sri Kantha

Alwis Town
Hendala.
7.2.78

The Christian Attitude

Sir,

"To the poor man God dare not appear except in the form of bread, and the promise of work,

Grinding pauperism cannot lead to anything else—than moral degradation

Every human being has a right to live and therefore to find the wherewithal to feed himself."

These words of the late Mahatma Gandhi brings us Christians to the realization that our secluded lives apart from the society and community we live—only enlightens the mere fact that our Christianity is really not what it ought to be.

Each man has an individuality. Let us respect him for his individuality. Let us not judge him because he was installed on this earth to be what he is, no matter what colour, creed or caste he belongs to.

Jesus calls us to be a part of the process of building "A new heaven and a new earth". We cannot but obey him because the very breath of our life we owe to him.

But remember—that God called not only the Jews but gentiles and all other peoples—blacks, whites, browns—to be a part of this process. God as our father knew the purpose of each man when He installed him on this earth.

One was called to fight, for the freedom loving people of Namibia

Another to fight against racism and Apartheid in Southern Africa.

And another to be imprisoned for life, for the sake of the rights of dignity" he is fighting for.

He may be a black or white or a Buddhist or a Hindu but

"from each according to his ability, to each according to his need."

As Christians let us not sit in judgement but let us unite all forces working for peace, Justice and Equality.

Christians are morally committed to support more radical means aimed at a deep transformation of society based on the principles of Justice and Humanism.

Only such transformation can do away with enslavement of man by man and liquidate the glaring inequality that dooms masses of people to hunger, poverty, misery, physical and moral degradation.

At all levels should Christians be involved in the reasonable and humane transformation of relations among peoples and nations and support every good initiative and on the contrary repudicate any form of injustice, whatever, specious excuses the adherents to "status quo" may employ to justify it.

Kumudhini Rosa

13/3A Sri Dharmarama Road,
Ratmalana.



REVIEW

Vietnamese Peace Efforts Thwarted

by Jayantha Somasundaram

"World public opinion has repeatedly denounced the blood bath that is taking place in Kampuchea; but Kampuchea does not seem to regard such policy as being mistaken," said H. E. Mr. Nguyen Van Sinh, Ambassador of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam when he met the press last week.

Mr. Van Sinh who resides in New Delhi was in Colombo to participate in our Independence Day Celebrations. Vietnam intends to station an ambassador in Colombo, but at the moment the *charge d'affaire* Mr. Le Bao is in charge of the Embassy. (He is now Ambassador—Ed.)

Referring to the conflict between Vietnam and Kampuchea, Mr. Van Sinh said that there was a three point proposal put forward by Vietnam to end the fighting. The Ambassador said that

many thousands, had already been killed in border incidents.

Last week the Ambassador also delivered the statement of the Vietnamese Government to Mr. A. C. S. Hameed, Sri Lanka's Foreign Minister.

This statement draws attention to the repeated attempts on the part of the Vietnamese to resolve the conflict. Kampuchea however is stubborn in her refusal to enter into negotiations. In Kien Giang, An Giang and Tay Niu provinces, Kampuchean troops have butchered Vietnamese civilians.

The Vietnamese peace formula which is both fair and comprehensive is as follows:

1. An immediate end shall be put to all hostile military activities in the border region, the armed forces of each side shall be stationed within their respective territory, five kilometers from the border.

2. The two sides shall meet at once in Hanoi or Phnom Penh, or at a place on the border to discuss and conclude a Treaty, in which they will undertake to respect each other's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, to refrain from aggression, from the use of force or the threat to use force in their relations with each other, from interference in each other's internal affairs, and from subversive activities against each other, to treat each other on an equal footing, and to live in peace and friendship in good neighbourly relationship.

The two sides shall sign a treaty on the border question on the basis of respect for each other's territorial sovereignty within the existing border.

3. The two sides shall reach agreement on an appropriate form of international guarantee and supervision.



Confidentially

Code Of Conduct—2

IS IT NOT THE CODE OF CONDUCT FOR MPS, tabled in the NSA, a fascinating document? That, in this column, last week, we had examined the first three clauses of the Code? That the fourth clause is that MPs (of the ruling party) should further the policies and the new image of the UNP as presented in the course of the election? That this would apply to MPs of other parties in respect of their respective policies That this would also apply to new policies that any Party may adopt, in its wisdom, in the course of the life of any NSA? That the fifth clause also dealt with party discipline? That MPs should not in public speeches or private conversations suggest that there was dissatisfaction within or lack of unity in the Party? That the Sixth clause hastened to add that the above dicta did not mean that Ministers, Deputy Ministers or MPs "should not engage in constructive criticism or point out defects in the government party machine and work?" That such criticism, however should be confined to discussions with Ministers or in the Government Parliament Party or in Party circles or organisations? That the seventh point was an exhortation that MPs should maintain communication with the people, especially in their electorates and show "the same concern for their welfare as when they canvassed their votes during the election campaign"? That this is a stern reminder to MPs that they should not follow the example of many MPs in the past who lost contact with their voters and electorates because they got enmeshed in the high living provided by vested interests who made use of these MPs to make private profit? That Clause eight in the Code stipulated that Ministers, Deputy Ministers and MPs should study and understand both "the general problems of the country as well as the particular problems of their electorates"? That they should familiarise themselves with the policies and programmes of the Government and convey them to the people so that they were made aware of the govern-

ment's efforts to solve the problem of the common people? That this is a necessary warning to MPs that the task of keeping the people informed of the work of the government was not solely delegated to Information Department, to the official and semi-official media and to the non-official media? That in the past MPs of the ruling party had thought that the Information Department would do the work for them and had neglected their obligations in this respect? That nearly all political parties have paid a price for failing to keep the people informed about their policies and programmes either while in the Government or in the Opposition? That the ninth Clause in the Code directed MPs to participate fully in the programme of national development, involve the people, especially the youth, in such work and obtain their co-operation and advice in their performance. That the tenth point had become necessary because of the conduct of many MPs in the last NSA? That this Clause in the Code calls upon Ministers, Deputy Ministers and MPs to maintain "at all times within the precincts of the Assembly the highest standard of conduct and decorum even in such matters as proper dress..." That readers will recall that in the last NSA many MPs and even Ministers had behaved in the most unbecoming manner? That many had often been drunk and disorderly? That a Minister had assaulted another Minister inside the Chamber? That what was unbelievable was that neither the then Prime Minister nor the then Leader of the House had publicly reprimanded these MPs or had taken any action in this regard?

That the eleventh point in the Code is that all Ministers, Deputy Ministers and MPs should declare their assets under the provisions of the Declaration of Assets and Liabilities Law No. 1 of 1975? That such a declaration is the first bedrock for the elimination of corruption in public life? That, as provided in the Law, all those who make false declarations should be dealt with in the most drastic fashion? That Clause twelve is an important one and related to a matter that was the source of great corruption and bribery in the last regime? That clause 12 calls on MPs "not to interfere directly in the administrative affairs of Government offices and

Corporations" in a way that would lead to a violation of the principles of natural justice and fairplay and lead to subversion of work? That special mention was made of "interference in police activities or in attempting to get transfers and appointments etc., made at departmental or sub-departmental level"? That there is no doubt that the biggest opprobrium came on the last regime because of such interference by Ministers, Deputy Ministers and MPs in appointments, promotions, transfers and dismissals? That the term Chit System was coined to denote the manner in which the interference was exercised? That it was a fact that many Ministers, Deputy Ministers or MPs of the ruling party in the last regime received a consideration in cash, kind or otherwise for interfering in police activities, appointments, transfers, promotions and the like? That the operation of the chit system (very often it was done over the phone) had become so deep-rooted and widespread that it became difficult for single person to fight against it or even resist its spread into every walk of life? That it had become a way of life in which even parties like the LSSP and CP had become involved? That the outcry against the Chit System had become so great that public-spirited men like Bryan de Kretser had started a national campaign to abolish the Chit System? That the UNP in its election campaign had undertaken to end the Chit System? That though loud professions were made that the UNP government would not resort to the Chit System, there is no doubt that political patronage and interference in appointments, transfers, promotion and in police activities have become rampant and endemic in the administrative procedures of many Ministers and MPs (thank God, not all) of the new J. R. Jayawardene government? That the former Prime Minister (now President) and some Ministers and MPs had set a good example in this matter? That a number of Ministers and MPs however had fallen from grace by the wayside? That the public proclamation of the Code of Conduct should be followed by a determined attempt to see that it is implemented?

(To be Concluded)

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