

Vol. 21 No. 33 — January 29, 1977. — RUPEE ONE

# TRIBUNE

CEYLON NEWS REVIEW



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The Rates:

One Year Rs. 10.00

Two Years Rs. 16.00

PEOPLE'S PUBLISHING HOUSE,

124, Kumaran Ratnam Road,  
Colombo 2.

Phone: 36111

## Letter From The Editor

ON THE COVER this week we have a picture of a tree. We do not intend, on this occasion, to preach a sermon on the preservation of trees and the need to grow more trees. We have done that so often that our readers may well turn round and tell us that our hobby horse has been well nigh ridden to death and that it was time we laid off from trees for a while, especially now that the Prime Minister, the Government and all important politicians have called upon the people, young and old, to plant trees. Last month there was a massive tree planting campaign in which it is said many many millions of seedlings were planted. Even if only a small percentage of the trees so planted survive, it will go a long way towards restoring the ecological balance so disastrously disrupted by the wanton destruction of trees and forests in the island. With a little more care than has been shown in the past, the casualty rate of trees planted can be cut down drastically. Our Cover Picture this week depicts a parasite growing on a tree. Some may mistake this clinging growth to a useful vine like pepper, but it is not. Though parasites are part of nature and constitute an integral part of the environment, it is essential that in cultivated vegetation and trees, parasites have to be eliminated if the main plant is to survive or produce its full quota of fruit. Many people know the importance of destroying parasites which take root in the trunks or branches of cultivated trees and they do not hesitate to eradicate them. But not many people realise that parasites in human society constitute an even greater danger (than parasites on trees) to the well-being of human kind. Unlike their counterparts in the world of flora, human parasites cannot be classified or categorised as easily identifiable genus, species or sub-species. Parasites are found in all human groups, communities, races, castes and tribes, but they are not readily recognisable. An oversimplified, but nevertheless accurate definition of a human parasite is a human being who lives largely on the sweat and toil of others without himself (herself) doing proportionately adequate to justify whatever benefits he (or she) derives from the wealth of the community. The most easily identifiable human parasites are these who act as middlemen and brokers between producers and consumers and many of whom are able to extract unconscionable profits far in excess of the services they render. There is no doubt that brokers and middle men do render a service to the community to facilitate barter in the era of the cash nexus. Jargon-ridden pundit terminology has been devised to describe some of the brokers and middlemen created by colonial and imperialist trade in Asiatic countries: eg. comprador bourgeois, brown sahibs, mudalalis, etc etc. Politicians, especially of the leftwing species, have taken it upon themselves not merely to expose some of the anti-social (and often anti-national) activities of this breed of human parasites but also to demand that they be exterminated by replacing individual and private brokers and middlemen by co-operative and nationalised undertakings to do the brokering. Only the future will reveal whether this substitution has done more good than harm or vice-versa. Instead of having a few individual privately-operating brokers many countries today have an army of faceless individuals who become tainted with the incubus of brokering in national and co-operative undertakings with the result that corruption, pilferage, cheating and other forms of parasitic existence have proliferated on a large scale. This has been the experience of many developing countries which have sought to replace private trade with co-operative or nationalised trade. It may take many more years (and many bitter lessons) for new nations to learn to control (and eliminate) parasitism in nationalised and co-operative undertakings. In theory and on paper, nationalised ventures can and must automatically eliminate parasitism, but experience has shown that nationalisation engenders new forms of parasitism. Moreover, parasitism has also become an outgrowth of modern political life, be it left, right or centre. Messianic ideologies have persistently pontificated that if one became imbued with a new religion or an ideology—Christianity, Buddhism, Confucianism, Marxism, Maoism—one was transformed into a new being free of all the sins that afflicted man including parasitism. The fact is that a large number of devotees of religious faith or political dogma have become parasites of the worst kind, either in the garb of priesthood or revolution. Human nature, being what it is, the new man envisioned by the prophets is a mirage: and modern society has to devise ways and means to keep parasites under control in the manner older societies had done and also in the way nature keeps them in check in the forests. Unless this is done, there is great danger to any community especially when parasites flaunt their ill-gotten gains in flamboyant opulence, as our CRAs and gem mudalalis do. In Cairo recently, crowds had gone on the rampage owing to high prices of essentials and high living (new limousines, night clubs and five-star hotels were the main target) by a parasitic elite.

# TRIBUNE

Founded in 1954

A Journal of Ceylon and  
World Affairs

Editor S. P. Amarasingam

Every Saturday

January 29, 1977

Vol. 21 No. 33

TRIBUNE

43, DAWSON STREET,

COLOMBO-2.

Telephone: 33172

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**EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK****• Current Developments**

January 9,

UNLESS ONE VIEWS THE CURRENT SITUATION in the country with an abiding sense of humour one is liable to go off at a tangent into realms where comprehension and understanding are clouded by over-earnest "convictions" of one kind or another. To understand what has so far happened and all that which continues to happen is to understand the baffling puzzle that Sri Lanka is today.

It had all begun very simply. Christmas is traditional time in Sri Lanka for bonus, santhosams, presents, and the like. Every Christmas, for as long as one can remember—ever since trade unions and what not had come to stay—there have been strikes, stoppages and go-slows in the week before Christmas to extort a little "more" from the employer, private as well as public. From the beginning of December, 1976, it was known that some of the Unions in the Railways had staked a claim for a Rs. 500 "festival" advance. So far the "festival" advance was only Rs. 100; and the excuse for this "festival" advance, in a land where Christmas was frowned upon as something "foreign" and "un-buddhist", was that the money was needed to buy books and clothes for children for the new school year.

The first bit of hypocritical humbug which enveloped this "affaire" was that this "festival" advance was not for spending in the "festive" season. The second interesting feature was that the demand in 1976 was pitched so high that nobody took it seriously. Everyone thought that some "compromise" would be arrived at somewhere between Rs. 200 and Rs. 300. But, unfortunately, the Union which had first wanted this Rs. 500 festival allowance was LSSP-led, and the Government—very conscious that it had broken with the LSSP—did not want to concede anything to a LSSP union because such a "victory" might have added to the prestige of the LSSP. And so it was that the Government negotiated

with a "Federation" in such a way that only the SLFP and CP unions came into the picture and to these unions the Government graciously offered to increase the "festival" advance to Rs. 200. But the LSSP, which was waiting for opportunity to extort its pound of flesh, took high ground and the Union concerned set in motion a creeping go-slow and strike that paralysed the Railway by December 22/23. At this point, the Government sought to place its understandable reluctance to negotiate with the LSSP union (which Government thought would be a prelude to a dialogue with the LSSP political leadership) on the "high" principle that a Government, a popular Government at that (which felt it had done much for the common man), should not and must not negotiate with "strikers."

Even the late Mao Tse-tung's Thoughts on CONTRADICTIONS cannot help one to understand why a Government, in this era, should refuse to negotiate with those on strike: that it should insist that negotiations were possible only after the men returned to work. This high principle had also been enunciated when the doctors in the public service had resorted to "trade union" action in the form of a devastating work-to-rule. The Government, when it found that the dispute with the doctors was unresolved, in spite of the biggest propaganda offensive by the entire gamut of official mass media, adopted a face-saving device by asking a Sectoral Committee of the Cabinet to look into the matter. The Sectoral Committee, not being the "government," had discussions with the work-to-rule doctors and succeeded in re-establishing a dialogue that was needed to resolve matters.

In the case of the Railway Union, the Government was more sensitive than they were with the doctors. The medical trade unionists, it was admitted, were not tainted with the LSSP incubus, and the Government was happy about having devised the Sectoral Committee bypass to save face. In the case of the Railway, the Government waited until the brink was reached whilst the propaganda media resorted to every known trick in the game to pres-

surise the strikers to go back. When everything failed, a face saving formula with a "strong-arm" touch was devised as the ultimate solution. The Rs. 500 demand was conceded but with a gimmick that took the element of grace from the concession and made it appear as a difficult bargain (although it was in reality a "surrender"). The Government laid down that it would offer an interest-free festival advance of Rs. 200 and an interest-bearing bank loan of Rs. 300, making a grand total of Rs. 500. But this offer was coupled with an over-anxious insistence on promulgating the Essential Services Order requiring everyone on strike to report for work on January 6.

It is common knowledge as to what happened. The Order was defied by the Railwaymen's Federation and though a certain number trickled back to work to enable the Government to run a few trains in a tragic-comic fashion with advance and rear guards and a helicopter cover, the bulk of the strikers did not return to work immediately. On the contrary, the strike began to spread and at the time of writing a general strike has been called for January 12. The call has come from the LSSP-led CFL but it is clear that there is a feeling among some trade unions that it would be "suicidal" for trade unionism to accept the Government's proposition that a "popular" government should not negotiate with "strikers." A great deal of hot air has been let off in trade union circles that this principle is the negation of the "right to strike" which is entrenched in the fundamental rights of the Republican Constitution of Sri Lanka. But what these idologues failed to see is that principles are today enunciated to suit situations. Kissinger, the democrat, bombed the royal liberal regime of Sihanouk out of existence to establish a temporary pro-US Lon Nol puppet regime to carry on the war in Vietnam, only ultimately to bring into being an ultra-left and rigidly inflexible Khmer communist regime. Mao Tse-tung, the arch enemy of reactionaries, thought it necessary to support the regime of Pinochet in Chile. Actions today are dictated by circumstances not

by romanticised "principles." A hundred other examples can be cited to show that it is wrong to hold aloft principles and adopt postures as if the future depended solely on upholding what one holds to be a "principle" right "unto death".

In this case, the Railwaymen's Federation (whatever its exact name) could easily have accepted the Government's offer and taken the strong-arm bombast in the Essential Services Order in their stride (with a pinch of humour) and brought peace to a much harassed community plagued with shortages owing to a breakdown in the transport service. The Railway Unions could well have responded to the Government's offer with grace and settled the strike having got the Rs. 500 "festival" advance. In the same way, it can be argued that the Government could well have given the Rs. 500 advance after due negotiations and secured for itself a better image among the working people. But neither the Government nor the Railway Unions on strike seemed to be blessed with a sense of detachment and humour to meet realities as they should be met.

And today, the country has begun to witness a confrontation that bodes no good. Humour has gone out of the situation and far too many people are adopting deadly-earnest postures. It has become clear that the Railwaymen's Unions, which had initiated the Rs. 500 advance demand, were really after a new dialogue between the LSSP and the Government, and, the Government, on the other hand, seems to be unnecessarily obsessed with the idea that anything LSSP should be taboo.

The position seems to be simply this: a section of the trade union movement is anxious to ensure the start of a new dialogue between the LSSP and the SLFP. With the strike situation having developed to what it is today, the LSSP feels that it will be in a position to speak from a position of strength: that as the "sacred" trade union principle centred on the "right to strike" has been invoked by the unions concerned, all other unions, even those far removed from the LSSP, could not stand idly by.

On the other hand, the Government, labouring the belief that it is a "socialist" government, which has done much for the working class, seems convinced that the "right to strike" should be understood in the background of the realities of the United Front Government: and that the government was entitled to ask of the working class not to indulge in unnecessary strikes (as everything reasonable and possible had been conceded without strikes) and also that if a maverick union resorted to strike action the Government was entitled to refuse to negotiate with it until the strike was called off.

It is an altogether funny situation, if one is inclined to look at it that way—and there does not seem to be any other way of looking at it just now. Here we have the trade unions which have for years extolled the UF government as being a kind of "socialist" government demanding from it a right which trade unions insist upon in their relations with capitalist governments, viz, the right to strike and the concomitant right to hold negotiations whilst the strike was on. This is a right which trade unions in truly socialist countries do not insist upon. And we now have a Government which has developed the simplistic belief that it is a "socialist" government (that had brought "socialism" to Sri Lanka) demanding from the trade unions the acceptance of the principle that in socialist countries the right to strike was circumscribed by other considerations which entailed a suspension of the class struggle. Government sources, very correctly perhaps, point out that in all admittedly socialist countries the Governments does not tolerate strikes on the footing that the exploiting capitalist classes had been eliminated. It is a moot point, however, whether the United Front government is a "socialist" government, but if the speeches and statements of the parties involved, including the leaders of the trade unions, are taken into consideration, there is no doubt that the Government is entitled to regard itself as "socialist". However, it is equally true that nearly

all these statements are expressions of faith and hope rather than a true description of the realities. And that is why the country is faced with the current confrontation between the trade unions and the government.

There are other even funnier aspects to the matter. The LSSP now holds the naive position, (no doubt for political propaganda purposes), that the United Front government could be regarded as "socialist" only as long they (the LSSP) were part and parcel of the Government. But the moment, the LSSP was out of the Government, the UF government was described as being not "socialist". On this same logic, if the LSSP rejoined the United Front government, it would once again become "socialist".

There was a time when many people really believed that the LSSP was the true essence of everything that was "socialist" and that its presence in any setup endowed it with the magic qualities of "socialism". This belief was nurtured in the "conviction" that the LSSP was out to exterminate all capitalist and exploiting classes. But after the years of the LSSP in the UF government, many people have become disillusioned because the LSSP, whilst liquidating some section of the older capitalists, had successfully created a new and extremely vicious capitalist class in Sri Lanka in the form and shape of the CRAs and the gem models.

When the LSSP quit the United Front government, the SLFP believed that it was in a position to do without the LSSP in the governance of the country: that the SLFP had acquired adequate prestige and influence in the trade union field to eliminate and negate the long-standing connections the LSSP has had with the working class in this country. The CP had serious doubts about this over-simplified approach of the SLFP, but there was little the CP could do about this in view of the over-abundance of cocksure self-assurance the SLFP has developed in the years after 1970 about its own strength in the political and trade union spheres.

This self-assurance had increased greatly after the successes achieved at the time of the nonaligned con-

ference. The SLFP had been led into the belief, wrongly as new developments now show, that the LSSP had ceased to be a major factor in the trade union and political sector. This view had been strengthened by the fact that LSSP efforts to stage a major comeback in the political arena through the trade union action had failed on two or three occasions after the LSSP quit the Government. It is on record that the LSSP had tried to trigger major confrontations between the trade unions and the government in the last fifteen months but had failed. This was perhaps one reason why the SLFP had developed the view that the LSSP was no longer a major force in the trade union sector.

LSSP hardcore unionists want the LSSP to be a government party and have sought to create confrontations to make it necessary for the SLFP to seek a dialogue with the LSSP. The SLFP was also very conscious about such continuing and persistent efforts to create situations in which the LSSP would be in a position to speak from a position of strength to the SLFP. This conscious determination of the SLFP not to enter any kind of dialogue with the LSSP has in many ways inhibited its policies and attitudes vis a vis the trade unions; and that was undoubtedly the reason why the SLFP did not settle the Rs. 500 advance dispute through direct negotiations with the Unions concerned.

The SLFP tried to resolve the problem by conceding the demand as a purely "economic" issue, unilaterally, first by offering an increase (Rs. 200) and later by conceding the Rs. 500 itself. To make this unilateral decision appear to be the result of some kind of "negotiations", discussions were held with representatives of pro-government CGR unions. But this does not seem to have satisfied the LSSP unions (and no doubt the LSSP leadership). And this has not fooled anybody else. Any direct negotiations with the LSSP unions, whether on strike and otherwise, was believed by all par-

ties as opening a way for a direct SLFP-LSSP dialogue. The fact is that the LSSP has badly wanted to re-open a dialogue with the SLFP and the UF from a position of strength but the SLFP has entertained the belief that it was strong enough to resist this and do without the the LSSP.

The SLFP method of dealing with this matter will remind discerning students of politics about the manner the SLFP (and indeed the LSSP and CP as part of the UF government) had sought to resolve the Tamil problem. Ever since the UF government was installed in 1970, it had followed a policy of ignoring the elected representatives of the Tamil peoples and had sought to woo and win the Tamil "masses" through its loyalists who offered various concessions to Tamils willing to discard the FP and the TUF. This policy, which was vigorously supported by the LSSP and CP, has failed miserably and the situation on the Sinhala-Tamil issue has become considerably worse than in 1970 with a demand for a separate state for the Tamils.

The SLFP still seems to harbour illusions about solving the Tamil question by negotiating with "brokers" who have no standing among the Tamil people. If the same logic the SLFP had adopted to the current trade union dispute is extended to the Tamil question, it is conceivable that the SLFP might say that it will not negotiate with the TULF as long as it was committed to a "separate state" demand; it is similar to the position that the Government will not negotiate with workers while they are on strike.

The world is today in an era where unilateral decisions, however correct, cannot resolve disputes; and that unless consensus was achieved in discussions even the best of unilateral decisions will prove meaningless and futile. There have recently been unilateral decisions which create major headaches on a national well as international levels. Take the case of Rhodesia. Ian Smith's unilateral decision to make Rhodesia independent no doubt satisfied the white racists in that country and in neighbouring South Africa (and also in other parts of the world). But this uni-

lateral decision has brought more trouble to the white racists than any other single decision in recent times. Ian Smith has now been compelled to negotiate with the blacks whom he thought he had liquidated or had consigned to prisons for the rest of their lives.

Negotiation is the essence of contemporary politics and all those who seek to play this game only want to do this from positions of strength. The LSSP wants to talk from a position of strength to the SLFP and the CP, but the SLFP does not want this. The CP trade unions are caught between two fires and their position is unenviable. This manoeuvring for positions of strength in the political sector (through trade unions) and the consequent conflicts and contradictions have created a situation in the country which has brought hardships to a people already burdened with many difficulties.

Even before the strikes had begun in real earnest, flour was short and bread queues had become the order of the day even in the city of Colombo. There is no information as yet as to how this situation had arisen but it seems likely that either shipments were delayed or that orders were not placed in time (it may be that foreign exchange may have been short or the credit agreements had not been signed). Whatever it is, the flour situation was bad, and even when the flour shipments arrived the railway strike made it impossible to restore normalcy in regard to the distribution of flour.

The flour question opens up many other matters. It has been revealed that Sri Lanka will import at least 500,000 tons of wheat flour in 1977 besides 300,000 tons of rice from different sources. The US alone has agreed to ship 200,000 tons under PL 480. In spite of all the protestations and professions of the Government, the import of the staple basics have increased. Furthermore, the Sri Lanka has now become a wheat eating nation without any chance of ever being able to grow wheat. Many people have become so habitually accustomed to eating bread and other wheat preparations that they now do not

want rice: in fact they have discovered that wheat has a higher percentage of energy-giving carbohydrates than rice, and even if local rice production catches up with demand the government will be faced with a situation where a major section of the population will demand the import of wheat. Food is habit-forming and the country has to be prepared to meet the consequences of this wheat-eating habit.

The low rainfall during the years after 1973 and the drought of 1976 is now the standard excuse being trotted out for the low production of all agricultural produce in the country. Whether it is coconuts or tea, the official excuse for all our ills that stem of decreased production is the drought. While it is true that the drought has been bad and has had an adverse effect on production, it would be wrong to ignore or gloss over other factors that have in fact contributed to decreased production. At one time, all the ills of the country, including decreased production, were attributed to the sinister actions of "reactionaries" and "earlier" governments. This was only an oversimplified explanation to sidetrack the people from realities. Today, we have the drought as the standard excuse. It is unnecessary, at this stage, to go into the question of the real extent of the impact of the drought on the eco-

nomy (in relation to other relevant factors). But it is necessary to point out that the current strike and their escalation has brought hardship and misery to very nearly everybody in the country. In the outstations, the situation has been particularly bad.

There is no doubt that the Government has done a tremendous job in meeting the problems created by the railway strike by transporting food and fuel to all the provincial and rural areas. The way this transport and distributions has been organised is a clear indication that the administration and bureaucracy can rise up to an occasion and meet a difficult situation in a way that has undoubtedly reduced the hardships considerably.

The common man, in urban as well as rural areas, is fed up with the strikes and is sick and tired of them. They blame the unions for indulging in them and the Government for not being able to resolve them. They are not concerned with the shadow-boxing for positions of strength in the game of politics. It is not clear, at the time of writing, how and when to present impasse which is threatening to develop into a general strike of sorts, will be settled. The country cannot afford the luxury of strikes to determine the high

trade union principle that the Government should negotiate with workers who are on strike. To the ordinary man this is an inconsequential matter.

But the ordinary man is not the Government or the leadership of the trade union movement. And he knows that strikes of this kind have a most debilitating impact on the economy. A long and difficult strike will throw everything out of gear.

It is yet too early to say whether the present wave of strikes will result in major shift in political alignments before the coming elections. The UNP had hoped to sit and watch the current fight which will weaken its political opponents in the United Front movement but it recklessly jumped into the strike. The LSSP is still a part of the Left movement in this country, and it is inconceivable that the LSSP and the UNP can ever get together. The natural allies of the LSSP are the SLFP and the CP. The UNP wants lies and is looking for them primarily in the SLFP and TULF, but JR has left the door open to have a "National Government" with the LSSP, CP, TULF and sections of the SLFP.

SRI LANKA CHRONICLE

Jan. 9 — Jan. 20

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

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

**SUNDAY, JANUARY 9:** Amidst loud cheers from the members of the public, two Kandy-bound goods trains left Maradana railway station yesterday at 6.40 a.m. and 6.50 a.m. respectively. Both trains transported rice, flour and oil to the provinces: one locomotive, Isurumuni had 18 wagons attached to it while the other named Menike had 23 wagons; a trolley carrying several railway employees and an engineer left before the two trains to remove any obstacles on the way: flying overhead was a helicopter: it was therefor security purposes: the two trains and the

trolley were in constant radio communication with the Trains Control Maradana. Thousands of peasants who lined the 3 mile long bend of the Huruluwewa tank broke out into cries of joy wawa as the Minister of Irrigation Power and Highways, Mr. Maithripala Senanayake, ceremoniously released the waters part of which were diverted from the Mahaweli River into the parched lands of Huruluwewa: addressing a public rally after the ceremony, the Minister appealed to the strikers to heed reason and get back to work: he gave the assurance that discussions with the striking trade unions would commence the moment they came back to work. Volunteer forces which have been mobilised since 1973 have been called in for duty since yesterday. The Minister of Transport, Mr. K. B. Ratnayake met representatives of the four CTB unions yesterday morning at the Ministry of Sports to discuss the 25 demands submitted to the minister by these unions—SO. Mr. S. K. K. Sooriarachchi, General secretary of the SLFP has issued a statement that the Sri Lanka Jathika Pravana Sevaka Samithiya was the only CTB union which the SLFP recognises: the President of the Samithiya is Mr. M. Madanayake and the General Secretary is Mr. Afavi Moulana. The entire membership of the Ceylon Federation of Labour is expected to come out on

strike on Wednesday January 12, according to its general secretary Mr. Batiy Weerakoon. According to the Ministry of Information a total of 12,000 railway employees have reported for work. The newly acquired oil tanker of the Petroleum Corporation, the *Mahaweli*, created history by being the first tanker to enter Galle harbour; it is entirely manned by regular Sri Lanka navy personnel it carried a large consignment of fuel to replenish the depleted stocks of diesel and kerosene due to the current railway strike. A major fire aboard a cargo vessel, the *Tongthay* in mid-stream in Colombo harbour was brought under control by the Colombo Port Fire Brigade yesterday. The Information Ministry accused the *Sunday Times* of trying to create mischief by the publication of a news article entitled *Halt! Look Who's Here*; the editor denied the charge of malice and mischief—ST. Eight trains including 6 passenger trains ran yesterday. The 20 unions belonging to the Electricity Board have sent an appeal to the P.M. to remove the present Essential Services Regulations, to settle immediately all the grievances of the striking unions and to grant the demands that they had submitted to the Minister of Irrigation, Power and Highways—VK.

**MONDAY, JANUARY 10:** The work-to-rule campaign of the GMOA and the AMS was called off yesterday at a special meeting of the two associations held at the Anatomy Lecture Hall; GMOA sources said that the call was effective from today; the Association also decided to extend their fullest co-operation to the Health Minister to run an efficient health service in the country. The decision to call off the campaign which began on October 25 last year was taken following a discussion by the membership on the action taken by the Health Minister on the 13 demands of the two associations. The railway yesterday ran a number of passenger services for the first time after the railway strike which began on December 2; the General Manager also said that the goods trains which began operations on Friday carried vital supplies of food and fuel to the North and NCP. Four unions in the CTB controlled by the UNP, LSSP, and CP and Mr. Nanda Ellawalla had given notice of a strike in support of the railway workers demands with effect from midnight yesterday. Meanwhile the Ceylon Oil Workers Union comprising workers of the Ceylon Petroleum Corporation the 20-union front of the Ceylon Electricity Board and the State Corporation Workers Union have given notice of strike action unless the government held immediate discussions to solve the dispute with the railway workers. The Sri Lanka Janaraja Karyalaya Sevaka Sangamaya will not participate in the present strike. The secretary of the Sangamaya told its members that the sangamaya had decided not to strike as it felt that there was an anti-government element behind the present strikes. The present strike has been launched by certain interested parties to topple the government and instal a dictatorship, and not so much to win for the workers their demands states the Sri Lanka Independent Trade Union federation. The federation has advised its affiliated unions in the public sector that they should not hold any discussions or participate in any conferences with trade union federations recently formed in their departments if they have had such discussions already, with regard to strike action, such action should be abandoned forthwith, if any affiliated union found that its membership faced difficulties in carrying out its normal duties it should

be reported to the department concerned and also to the Federation's office. The recent oil price hike will put up the country's oil import bill by Rs. 250 million Mr. Mahipala Senarayake said at a public meeting at Huruwewa yesterday—CDN. Six persons have been arrested for inciting CTB employees to strike, according to a broadcast by the SLBC. The Public Relations Officer of the CTB said in a press release that there is absolutely no truth in the rumours being spread in the outstations that sections of workers in the CTB depots in Colombo are on strike. The CTB chairman said yesterday that CTB employees will not be held responsible for damage caused to CTB property by outsiders. The SLFP controlled Lanka Jathika Pravahana Sevaka Samithiya which has a membership of 19,000 employees in the CTB have refused to join the strike—CDM. CTB workers who did not report for work today have been issued an ultimatum by the Chairman. They have to report for work tomorrow or they will be considered to have vacated their posts. Nearly 2000 tons of flour and 618,409 gallons of fuel were issued or distributed throughout the Island on Saturday. This was stated by the Food Department and the Petroleum Corporation. The GA Kandy has taken steps to ensure that adequate food stocks are made available in the district under his supervision. There is an unprecedented glut of fish in the Western coastal belt stretching from Negombo to Kalpitija, according to fishermen. The fishermen are of opinion that if the present glut continues a single fisherman could easily earn over Rs. 1000 a month. All strikers in the public sector, who defied the Essential Services Order enforced by the government and who failed to turn up for work by January 6 were deemed to have vacated their posts. The government issued this ultimatum to the strikers in the public sector at a special meeting of the Cabinet on January 5. State officers will not be granted leave during the period of the current wave of strikes in the country. This directive went out from the Secretary of the Ministry of Public Administration. The Minister of Trade and head of the Public Service, T. B. Langaratne, told 89 recruits to the public service who were being put through their paces that the UNP and the LSSP were the two powers behind the series of strikes which were paralysing the public services—CO.

**TUESDAY, JANUARY 11:** The bus strike launched at midnight on Sunday by four CTB unions proved ineffective yesterday with the 20,000 strong Sri Lanka Jathika Pravahana Sevaka Samithiya, the largest Trade Union front in the CTB, turning out in full force to maintain a service throughout the country. Striking unions conceded that the work stoppage was a failure in the city. According to the figures of the Ministry of Transport the bus services were a 100% in the Central region and Badulla, 85% in the NCP and in the Western Province 80%. In Colombo 1397 buses were on the road. Thirty eight persons have been taken into custody for inciting CTB workers to strike. The Secretary to the Ministry of Defence and External Affairs yesterday summoned a conference of the heads of Police, Army, Navy and Air Force today to discuss the situation in the country following the strike by some employees in the public sector and in the transport services. The CGR was running more goods and passenger trains yesterday. A Press Censorship was imposed yesterday under the Emergency Regulations. Mr. Ridgeway Tillekeratne, Secretary to the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, has been appointed



competent authority. All news in regard to the essential service has been censored. A meeting of all the Opposition MP's will take place at the NSA tomorrow. Twenty six million yards of textiles will be available from February said the Chairman of the Salu Salas they will be released to the market through the regular channels in February well before the festive season—CDN. As the political situation hot's up the spotlight is on Mr. Peter Keuneman, Minister of Housing and Construction, the only Communist in the Cabinet; the question posed in political circles yesterday was "What stand will the Communist Party of Sri Lanka take?" The Sri Lanka Air Force volunteers have been called up. Since the strike, the first train carrying 52,000 gallons of oil reached the BIA yesterday. The Ceylon Teacher's Union yesterday urged the government to reduce the steep price of books and other school requisites. There is a scarcity of kerosene in Jaffna. Mr. A. Aziz, MP and General Secretary of the Democratic Workers Congress has appealed to the strikers to accept the settlement that the government has already suggested in respect of the festival advance and negotiate further after returning to work—CDM. The CTB Chairman, Mr. Jack Kotigalwala, described the bus services as "excellent" and said that several employees who did not report for work yesterday had reported for duty today; except for a few areas like Galle, Matara, Tangalle and Ratnapura which did not run very smooth services yesterday all other areas had very good services. The Price Control Department is taking stringent measures to ensure that consumers throughout the island get adequate quantities of bread; all bakeries have been warned of severe consequences if they do not comply with the price control directive to utilise all their quotas of flour to bake bread. Meanwhile Price Control men are checking on traders in Colombo and the suburbs to ensure that they do not hoard kerosene. Queues of patients were attended to in record time yesterday by the doctors, who had called off their work-to-rule on Sunday in most of the hospitals in Colombo. One incident of a throwing of a bomb at a CTB bus was reported from the outskirts of Colombo yesterday. The bomb exploded close to the bus but nobody was hurt. The Committee appointed to inquire into and report on the absorption of all local government employees attached to local government institutions has handed over its report to the Minister of Local Government, according to a press communique from the Ministry of Local Government—CO. 5868 tons of cargo were handed in the Colombo Port today, according to the Ministry of Shipping and Tourism. 972 tons of flour and 1335 tons of rice were unloaded—DM. Four unions in the Petroleum Corporation want to go on strike in support of the railway workers—ATH. The Union under the Chairmanship of Mr. Nanda Ellawala has changed its name. In the Bentara-Elpituya areas there are long bread queues and since there is a shortage of flour many people have to return home empty-handed—JD.

**WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 12:** There was every indication that the CTB will return to normal today. Yesterday the CTB deployed over 90% of its fleet. Workers of certain depots which were badly affected by the strike on Monday reported for work yesterday. The ultimatum by the CTB asking the workers to return to work by yesterday and police protection contributed to the increased turn out of workers at many depots. All employees attached to institutions under the Local Government Service and outside it should

be amalgamated to the state services: in future all appointments to the Local Government Service should be considered as those in State service: this is a recommendation made by the Minister of Local Government Mr. W. P. G. Ariyadasa to the government. The marking of NCGE answer papers of nearly 250,000 candidates scheduled to begin yesterday has been postponed owing to the non-receipt of most of the answer papers by the collecting centres. Registered shirt manufacturers will soon be permitted to import shirting utilising convertible Rupee Account funds for the production of shirts mainly for sale in the domestic markets—CDN. The Central Committee of the Communist Party of Sri Lanka held an emergency meeting yesterday to consider the current political developments in the country. A crucial item on the agenda was the relations between the CP and the Government. Residents in many suburban areas south of Colombo did not get their water supplies yesterday morning: the areas affected were Dehiwela, Mr. Lavinia, Kotte and Moratuwa. The Government of Japan has undertaken to provide the Government of Sri Lanka with a gift of fertiliser valued at Rs.18.42 million. The gift of fertiliser forms part of Japan's contribution of food aid to Sri Lanka under the Food Aid Convention of the International Wheat Agreement. Stage One of the multi-million rupee headquarters at Church Street, Fort, for the police will be completed shortly. Police sources said that it would be able to house the various branches of the police scattered in Colombo. The most modern sophisticated equipment used in crime detection and traffic control would be installed making this headquarters the most modern in the South Asian region—CDM. Any employee who has been misled and who wishes to come back to work will have to make up his mind immediately as otherwise the consequences of their decision will be irreversible, a Government communique broadcast over the national radio said today. The Essential Services were maintained without disruption despite strike launched by employees in some of these services, authoritative official sources said today. The strike situation in the country is far better than it was three days ago, said Mr. Alavi Moutana, Secretary of the Sri Lanka Independent Trade Union Federation. Three more trains carrying food and fertiliser left Colombo Fort railway station this morning. Petrol was issued without permits in Kandy to vehicles on Monday. The GA had permitted the issue of two gallons to each vehicle. The GCE (OL) results should be out early next month in all probability—CO. 90% of the workers in the Port Commission have returned to work, according to the Ministry of Shipping and Tourism. All Opposition MP's will hold a meeting under the leadership of Mr. J. R. Jayewardene—VK.

**THURSDAY, JANUARY 13:** The CGR ran a large number of goods and passenger trains while the CTB returned to normal yesterday. 13,380 railwaymen reported for work yesterday. Passenger trains in the inner Colombo district are scheduled to be operated today for the first time since the railway strike. Some of the People's organisations in Kandy have taken steps to provide food parcels to CTB bus crews who do not participate in the strike as a gesture of gratitude. The President, Mr. William Gopillawa, yesterday promulgated a new emergency regulation empowering any police officer to arrest without a warrant any person who incites, intimidates or encourages any worker employed in the Essential Services to strike: all SP's

have been authorised in this regulation to order the detention of persons contravening this regulation to be detained for a period of one month without producing them before a magistrate. The Democratic Workers Congress, the second largest trade union in the plantation sector, will not join the strike called in the estate sector by LSSP and CP unions. CTB strikers who failed to keep to the deadline set by the Chairman yesterday appealed for an extension of the ultimatum. The government will give priority to those using tractors and other agricultural machines in the issue of fuel—CDN. The LSSP and the UNP trade unions in association with other trade unions have launched upon a series of strikes for their own political ends, according to a government communique issued yesterday; it also stated that workers belonging to trade unions affiliated to parties in the United Front Government should realise that they cannot support the strike as well as the government: it has to be one or the other. Opposition members of Parliament who met yesterday have sent a letter to the P.M. to take immediate steps to settle the present strike. The Opposition has also requested that Parliament be immediately summoned for a public discussion on matters arising from the strike. The Supreme Court resumed sittings at Hulsidorp yesterday after the vacation. The incidence of coronary diseases among persons between 30 and 40 years was very much higher in Sri Lanka than in the US. Dr. Tony Don Michael from the University of California and Los Angeles said yesterday. Britain is giving approximately Rs. 59,262,400 as an outright grant towards the costs of a major irrigation project in Northern and North Central Sri Lanka, under an agreement signed in Colombo yesterday—CDM. The back of the present strike appears broken and official reports from various areas affected by the work stoppage indicates that the situation is rapidly returning to normal. Bus services throughout the island have now returned to normal. The secretary to the Ministry of Public Administration and Home Affairs in a press communique explained the circumstances that have led to a strike by the Joint Front of Clerical Service Unions and states that the strike launched by the front is without a foundation. Water services to the Colombo North region will be normal from today. Over 5,000 new science teachers for grades 6-9 will be appointed to schools mostly in remote areas during the course of this year—CO. Leaders of the opposition parties went on a deputation of protest to the President, because of a communique broadcast by the CBC attacking the Opposition Parties—VK.

**FRIDAY, JANUARY 14:** There seems to be every prospect of the strike in the public sector fizzling out on Monday after a three day holiday which begins today. Yesterday five more sections of the railway—shunters, signalmen, shedworkers, messengers, carriage workers—called off their strike. Strikers in the essential services yesterday had begun to return to work, their numbers increasing hour by hour. The government has renewed the emergency regulation which empowers magistrates to refuse bail to persons who are alleged by the police to have obstructed state officers in the performance of their duties. The General Manager of Railways, Mr. V. N. Navarajam, yesterday submitted his "resignation" to the Ministry of Transport; he asked the Secretary to revert him to his substantive post in the Sri Lanka Administrative Service; the Secretary to the Ministry of Transport Mr. K. C. F.

Wijewickreme has been appointed co-ordinating officer of the railway with powers to issue directives to the respective heads of sections of the railway. 84 persons have been taken into custody so far for inciting workers to strike, under the Emergency Regulations—CDN. The Education Ministry yesterday postponed the re-opening of all government schools to January 24. They were scheduled to re-open on the 18 of January. The opposition group met yesterday and decided that an opposition delegation should meet the PM to discuss the strike. Several patients warded at the Colombo General Hospital have been requested to purchase their drug requirements from outside; General Hospital sources said that they are unable to order drugs and confessed that several drugs were in short supply. The Customs Preventive Office yesterday simultaneously raided a house in Bambalapitiya and two business establishments in Pettah and seized over Rs. 50,000 worth of textiles believed to have been illicitly imported—CDM. 40 trains were operating throughout the island yesterday according to railway sources—VK.

**SATURDAY, JANUARY 15:** An immediate meeting with a delegation of the Opposition as proposed by the Leader of the Opposition was not necessary, the PM said yesterday in her reply to Mr. J. R. Jayewardene's letter this week; the PM also said that there was no need for her to advance the date of the meeting of the NSA as it was due to meet next Thursday; she said that the decisions of the government were moderate and limited to what was necessary to maintain the Essential Services. The River Valleys Development Board will not close down. There is continuous work for the RVDB and for its employees for the next 10 years, the Ministry of Power and Highways said yesterday. With the development of the Right Bank of the Uda Welawe substantially completed and the work of the Left Bank slowed down due to excessive use of water of the Right Bank and partly due to the limited funds available for the Left Bank there was a reduction in the volume of work. For these reasons the re-organisation of the RVDB had become necessary. The Philatelic Bureau of the Posts and Telecommunications Ministry will issue two stamps on January 18 to commemorate the museum centenary—CDN. Tourist earnings for 1976 reached an all time high of Rs. 232 million according to the Chairman of the Tourist Board. He said that this was an increase of 40% in the targeted income for '76. The arrival figures for last year was 117,000 tourists, an increase of 14% on the estimated arrival figure. Five price control men and a car driver have been nabbed by detectives of the Bribery Commissioner's Department for allegedly demanding a bribe of Rs. 3,000 from a textile businessman of Dehiwela—CDM. Express trains such as the *Yal Devi* and *Udarata*, Menike which have not been running for the past three weeks, will run today according to railway sources—VK.

**SUNDAY, JANUARY 16:** The President, Mr. William Gopallawa, acting on the advice of the PM declared by Proclamation today the Maritime Zones of Sri Lanka. The proclamation declared a 12 nautical mile territorial sea, a 24 nautical mile contiguous zone, a 200 nautical mile exclusive Economic Zone and a 200 nautical mile Pollution Prevention Zone. The same proclamation also declared the limits and the status of the historic waters between Sri Lanka and India in the Palk Strait, Palk Bay and the Gulf of Manner, thus bringing to a successful conclusion the decade-long negotiations between the two countries on the division

of the waters in this region. Sri Lanka has made vast strides in the export of ready made garments, and internationally known departmental store chains like the Sears Roebuck of USA have now become regular buyers of Sri Lanka goods following the promotional work done by the Export Promotion Secretariat. Sri Lanka earned Rs. 1675.6 million from the export of tea last year. This is considered the highest on record in the hundred odd years history of the tea industry—50. The LSSP's draft programme for a United Socialist Front is now ready. It will be printed this week in all three languages and circulated throughout the country in order to stimulate a nation-wide discussion, particularly in socialist and radical circles and in mass organisations. The Government will introduce amendments to the Credit Council Law to ensure more benefits for public servants. "It is customary in all democratic countries for the PM to accede to the request by the official Opposition to meet her and place before her it's point of view on any matter of national importance, particularly when the parliament is not sitting" states a press release by the joint Opposition from the office of the Leader of the Opposition. The Government has decided that tomorrow will be the last day on which strikers could return to work. Commencing from Tuesday steps will be taken by all government departments and corporations to recruit new personnel for vacancies in their cadres arising from the present strike. Small exporters and progressive businessmen will benefit from the Packing Credit Guarantee Scheme launched by the government this month to help to push Sri Lanka's non-traditional products into new markets: the purpose of the scheme is to make credit more readily available to small producers and exporters who have hitherto found it difficult to obtain financial help from banks while at the same time reducing the risk of loss to leading banks through a government guarantee—ST.

**MONDAY, JANUARY 17:** All trade unions in the public and local government sectors have decided to call off their strike with effect from 8 a.m. today. Late last Friday, the United Front of Railway Trade Unions decided to suspend their strike and return to work today. This decision was conveyed by the United Front of Railway Trade Unions and to all other Unions in the public sector which struck in sympathy with the railway strike. Following this move, all unions decided to call off the strike from 8 a.m. today according to the General Secretary of the Public Service Trade Unions. The CTB, GCSU strike was a complete flop in Jaffna. The railway began operating its normal mail services yesterday. Last night mail trains to Jaffna, Batticaloa, Talaimannar and Badulla left Colombo Fort railway station. Gifts worth nearly Rs. 100,000 come to unidentified addresses in Sri Lanka, from Male every two months. The Customs who believe this is part of a major smuggling operation on the Singapore-Males Colombo run now have clear evidence that the racket is being carried out with assistance from within—CDN. 3,015 motor vehicles were imported last year according to statistics maintained by the government: this is an all time record. This includes 1,451 new vehicles and 1,564 second hand vehicles: according to government sources the imports in both categories were the highest in any given year. The dispensaries run by the CMC are a disgrace to this institution, according to a report by the Chief Dispensary Medical Officer. The Ceylon Ceramics Corporation is now a big foreign exchange earner. Last year the Corporation's foreign exchange

earnings by way of exports and local sales shot up to Rs. 34 million. Ample supplies of bread are available in the city, said the Controller of Prices. He said that the 70 bakeries in the city were visited by price control officers daily to ensure that stocks of flour issued to them were not diverted elsewhere. The price of coffee in Colombo last week was Rs. 40 a pound—CDM.

**TUESDAY, JANUARY 18:** Public sector employees who were on strike returned to work yesterday, adhering to the deadlines set by the government. The Commissioner of Police described their return to work as a "peaceful re-union" between the strikers and the non-strikers. A strict security was provided. Armed police courteously told returning workers to avoid demonstrations of any kind. They adhered to police instructions. The railway will operate its normal complement of 465 trains from today. This includes 366 passenger trains, 72 goods trains, 17 harbour and oil trains, and 10 trains which will operate on a "stand-by" basis, according to a Transport Ministry spokesman. Twelve employees of the National Water Supply and Drainage Board (NWSDB) have been arrested by the police on suspicion of having sabotaged the water treatment plant at Mulleriyawa: over two million residents have been without water as a result of the air chamber valve being blown out by explosives. The NWSDB with the assistance of the army engineers was repairing the damage. Water supplies should be resumed by this morning. The daily supply of coconuts to the Marketing Department from the coconut growing areas has dropped to 5,000 nuts a day. This is hardly sufficient to meet the department's contractual obligations with state institutions, and it is thus unable to cater to the needs of the Colombo consumer in this commodity. Employees of the Local Government Service will be entitled to the Pension privileges currently enjoyed by public servants: an amendment to the Local Government Service Pension minute to make this effective has been approved—CDN. Though the strikes have been called off two issues remain, causing considerable speculation among members of the Government parliamentary group. One is the propriety of a trade union claiming allegiance to the SLFP and led by Mr. Nanda Ellawala, which supported the railway strike by calling out its membership in the CTB. Three other SLFP members of parliament are alleged to have spoken critically of the government's attitude towards the strike and the measures adopted to deal with it. They are Mr. A. M. Jinadasa (Kekirawa), Mr. Tennyson Edirisuriya (Tissamaharama), and Mr. Gamini Ariyaratne (Maskeliya). The conduct of these MP's is to be discussed at the next meeting of the Government Parliamentary Group. A tin of SMA—a popular infant's milk food cost Rs. 17 in Pettah yesterday. The normal price is Rs. 4.90 a tin—CDM. Foreign fishing vessels are once again operating the Pesalai area according to local fisherman—VK. The CTB chairman said a big 'Thank You' to all employees, police, armed services etc for their co-operation in keeping the bus services working during the railway strike. The fire at the Weaving Supplies Corporation was no accident. This is the view of the special police team that conducted investigations into the fire that ruined Rs. 21 million worth of goods on Dec. 21 last year. There will be a water cut in the Colombo South area in order to provide water to the residents in the towns south of Colombo who have no water because of the damage caused at the Ambatala Pumping Station.

There is an acute shortage of coconuts in the main coconut growing belt of the North Western Province. Growers believe that this unprecedented short-fall of nuts may be due to the lengthy drought: the Pitigala Korale South Coconut Small Holders Association has warned that if the present trend continued the country would have to import coconuts by 1980: it urged the government to induce growers to manure their trees at the appropriate time. The City police and the Social Services Department will shortly launch a joint operation to rid the city of beggars. The 'beggar' menace has reached alarming proportions and is a major threat to the tourist trade. An allocation of synthetic textiles to 142 multi-purpose co-ops, throughout the island for January have now been made by the Ministry of Industries—CO.

**WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 19:** The Committee appointed by the government to report on unified conditions of service for the plantation sector has recommended that the highest salary payable to future recruits as Superintendents should not exceed Rs. 2500 a month. Strikers in the public and the local government sectors who defied the government deadline for return to work on Monday will lose their jobs. Circulars regarding this and about new recruitments have gone out to government departments. Problems facing the plantation workers were only problems of a period of transition from private ownership to public ownership; in the near future most of these problems would be solved and plantation workers would get a better deal as employees of state organisations than they had in the past under private employers, said the Labour Minister yesterday. He was speaking after inaugurating a seminar on Problems of young Rural and Estate workers. The damage caused to mains near Mulleriyawa has been very severe and the date of resumption of water supply will be announced as soon as repairs are effected according to a communique issued by the Ministry of Local Government—CDN. The consumption of flour has almost doubled after the reduction in the price of flour last November. According to Food Department sources the consumption before the price reduction was 35,000 tons per month. But the average consumption shot up to nearly 70,000 tons in November and December. This was apparently one of the reasons for the shortage of flour. The six campuses of the University of Sri Lanka are likely to re-open on January 31. The Vice Chancellor of the University yesterday recommended to the Ministry of Education that since conditions were normal the campuses could be re-opened soon. Mr. Hiran Dias, the President of the Colombo campus has tendered his resignation to the Vice Chancellor of the university. The police have warned the public against buying outdated capsules and tablets being sold by certain pharmacies in the city and the suburbs. The Opposition yesterday decided to move a vote of no-confidence on the government in regard to the recent strike. Notice of the motion was submitted to the clerk of the Assembly yesterday—CDM. The State Gem Corporation earned a record of 287 million rupees in foreign exchange last year. This is the highest ever contribution to State Revenue for a single year by the Gem Corporation, according to corporation officials. Emergency Regulations have been enforced to check errant butchers—CO.

**THURSDAY, JANUARY 20:** The Ministry of Plantation Industry in collaboration with the People's Bank

has inaugurated a loan scheme to assist the various organisations or persons interested in modernising their rubber factories for the production of crepe and new forms of rubber. This Bank Loan Scheme, says a press release from the rubber Controller, supplements the already existing Rubber Factory Development Subsidy Scheme administered by the Rubber Control Department. Over a thousand five hundred prosecutions have been filed by the Inland Revenue Department since the inception of the Tax Court in June 1976 by the Minister of Finance and Justice. Consumers will receive half an ounce of Maldive fish on each ration book next month. Persons who distinguish themselves in different branches of cultural activities will soon be awarded special insurance cover by the insurance Corporation of Ceylon in recognition of their achievements—CDN. One of the biggest ganja plantations was discovered by the police—18 miles in the heart of the Bible jungles. Police sources said yesterday that the quantity of ganja was so vast that it would require a full army to clear the plantation. The estimated value of the plantation discovered is reported to be couple of million rupees. The NSA meets today at 2 p.m. The government has decided to declare tomorrow a day of mourning in connection with the death of the Yugoslav PM following a plane crash. Trade Union leaders at the Railway Chief Mechanical Engineer's workshop Rasmalena where the recent railway strike originated met the Minister of Transport yesterday and urged him to effect deductions in monthly instalments from their pay for the period they were on strike—CDM. One million housing units are to be constructed in Municipal areas throughout the country over the next three years. The Minister of Local Government who recently returned to the island from the Soviet Union, inspected several housing complexes there. He has directed the Director of Town and Country Planning to study this housing programme after which there will be negotiations between Sri Lanka and the Soviet Union for the construction of one million houses with Soviet assistance. Anuradhapura, Badulla, Jaffna, Kullinagala, Rantapura and Trincomalee will connect direct dialling facilities under stage II of the outer Colombo Area Development scheme of the Department of Posts and Telecommunications—CO. The Customs Department has discovered seven lakhs worth of smuggled goods for the month of December last year—ATH.

## INTERNATIONAL DIARY

Dec. 21 - Jan. 10

**TUESDAY, DECEMBER 21:** According to figures released in London, world's wheat and rice productions have kept well ahead of the population explosion since world war II. Top awards of the Soviet Union were showered on Leonid Brezhnev at Kremlin yesterday at a ceremony held to celebrate the 70th birthday of the Soviet leader. Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin of Israel yesterday dismissed the National Religious Party (NRP) from his coalition Cabinet prompting new predictions that Israel's next general elections may be held earlier than scheduled: the Independent Liberal Party said that it too would leave the government if satisfactory replies

were not forthcoming immediately for long-standing demands of the party for social reforms. Mr. Rabin explaining the dismissal of his coalition partner said when the Opposition tabled a no-confidence motion against the government the NRP abstained from voting. At least 10 people died in the Kenya-Uganda border clashes between coffee smugglers. South Africa announced that it has struck oil after 10 years of exploitation work.

**WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 22:** According to a UN survey, America got 30 billion dollars aid from the Third World developing nations because of brain drain: the survey estimated between the period 1961 to 1972 it would have cost the US administration this amount of money if it had to train its own men for skilled jobs: the survey also revealed by the same way Canada has got 60 billion dollars and Britain 3.5 billion dollars. At the southern border of Lebanon Israeli gun boats fought for two hours with Leftist forces of Lebanon: in Israel this report was denied: the South port area of Lebanon is still not under the control of Arab peace keeping forces. A meeting of the Co-ordinating committee of the Press Agencies Pool of Non-aligned countries will be held in Cairo from January 10, next year according to Chairman of the Committee Mr. Mohammed Yunus.

**THURSDAY, DECEMBER 23:** President-elect Jimmy Carter repeated his campaign pledge to withdraw American ground troops from South Korea. Malaysia is to form a new army division to counter a possible upsurge in Communist insurgency, the PM, Dato' Hussein Onn, announced. Mr. Ivor Richard, British Chairman of the Geneva Conference on Rhodesia, met US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger today to discuss Britain's role in an interim Rhodesian Government that would pave the way to black majority rule. Egypt and Syria yesterday announced the formation of a joint political command to co-ordinate and strengthen ties between the two countries. Many leaders were killed in the wake of a foiled coup attempt against Head of State Francisco Maciao in Benim. Israeli Defence Minister, Simon Peres, during his recent stay in the US, was given assurances that the New American administration would likewise render large scale military assistance to Israel.

**FRIDAY, DECEMBER 24:** Indian Premier Indira Gandhi looked like splitting with the pro-Moscow Communists after they had branded her son Sanjay a reactionary, it was reported. Military sources reported fresh clashes between troops and Muslim rebels in the Southern Philippines as talks continued in Libya to end the rebellion. After the killing of a deputy governor of the Southern Province of Surit Thani, crack Thai paratroops were rushed to the area, it was revealed in Bangkok. Takeo Fukuda, the former deputy Premier was elected President of the ruling democratic party, in Japan, it was announced in Tokyo. Riot police patrolled Madrid today to forestall demonstrations against the arrest of Spanish Communist Party leader, Santiago Carrillo. The Lebanese government today asked parliament for special powers to help it tackle the problems created by 19 ruinous months of civil war. A state of siege and a night curfew were proclaimed today in NW Madagascar following clashes in which 12 people were killed and several hundred injured. Rival Palestinian factions fought fresh gunbattles in Southern Beirut tonight, upsetting the five-week truce brought about by the arrival of the Syrian-nominated Arab peace force. Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew's

People's Action party won its sixth election victory today when it captured all 69 seats in Singapore's parliament.

**SATURDAY, DECEMBER 25:** Takeo Fukuda was elected PM of Japan after the former Premier Takeo Miki stepped down. Burmese President Ne Win announced that he had married Maqame Yadana Nat Mai. Shamsudin Tung, a defeated candidate in the Singapore elections was arrested for allegedly trying to incite "Chinese chauvinistic emotions", the government revealed. The Philippines government and Southern Muslim separatists signed an agreement in the Libyan capital of Tripoli for an immediate ceasefire in the four year old war it was reported. An Egyptian airliner crashed into a factory on the run up to Bangkok's Don Muang airport, leaving at least 55 people dead. President-elect Jimmy Carter yesterday completed the senior appointments to his administration by putting former defence secretary James Schlesinger in charge of energy and naming Theodore Sorenson as the new Director of the CIA. The Reserve Bank of India today devalued the rupee by 3.3% against sterling, setting a new middle rate of Rs. 15.20 to one pound.

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 26:** Twenty two Thai soldiers were killed when their convoy was ambushed by Communist insurgents in the Northern Province of Nan, near the Laotian border, it was reported from Bangkok. The death toll in the Egyptian airline crash mounted as more bodies were found beneath the rubble of the factory near Bangkok's Don Muang airport into which the jet crashed on Christmas day. The Philippine government and the Filipino Moslem separatists have agreed in principle to end the four year old Moslem insurgency but time was needed until next March to work out details of their agreement, President Ferdinand Marcos disclosed today. The Ambassadors of Egypt, Morocco, Syria and Somalia representing the Arab League called on the Secretary of State, Dr. Henry Kissinger today: they expressed serious concern over increased American arms sales to Israel. Mr. Leonid Brezhnev, CPSU General Secretary has publicly pledged the fullest Soviet support for the anti-fascist struggle in Chile and for the prescribed Chilean Communist Party. A record number of foreign pilgrims visited Bethlehem today and other holy places in Israel.

**MONDAY, DECEMBER 27:** A top Chinese leader, Chen Yi-sung, a member of the standing Committee of the National People's Congress, said in Tokyo that the normalisation of Sino-American relations could take place within the coming year, depending on the actions of President-elect Jimmy Carter. Chen called on Carter not to give support to the 'reactionary' Chinese Nationalist regime in Taiwan. Thanat Khoman said in Bangkok that the Soviet Union had built silos in Laos for missiles that could be turned against China "or the south". The Parliamentary elections in the State of Mauritius have ended in victory for the Mauritian Militant Movement; this left-wing party has gained 29 seats in the Legislative Assembly. Police who arrested Spanish Communist Party leader, Santiago Carrillo offered him a choice of deportation or a trial in Spain, Communist Party sources said yesterday. Over 100 pilgrims were reported missing as an Egyptian passenger ship 'Parra' caught fire and sank off Jeddah, S. Arabia, the *Al Aheam* reported. The Chilean government's announcement of the release of around 300 political prisoners was welcomed by Amnesty International: but

at the same time Al took issue with the Chilean authorities that the releases represented the total hold without trial under the country's state of siege. The President of OPEC has said that they have set aside 3% of its GNP for aid to developing countries.

**TUESDAY, DECEMBER 28:** Cambodian gunboats sank a Thai fishing vessel in the Gulf of Thailand on Dec. 24, said a Thai navy spokesman. Soviet deputy Foreign Minister Nikolai Firubin had talks with premier Lee Kuan Yew in Singapore. A top Palestinian commander of the Marxist PFLP led by Dr. George Habash was shot dead today; his wife also died in the machine gun attack. President Ephraim Katzir, Israel's head of state was consulting with two parties on the formation of a new government after Mr. Rabin's resignation. The Opposition insisted that elections be held next May. The Chinese Premier set the guidelines for 1977 at a speech last Saturday. An African guerilla group reported yesterday that major battles were taking place in Eastern Ethiopia between government forces and pro-Somali guerillas. Egyptian and Thai officials yesterday held a joint enquiry into the explosion and crash of an Egyptian Boeing 707 airliner which killed all 52 people on board and 3 Thais on the ground. Twenty four people were killed and 100 wounded in bitter fighting between blacks in two African townships near Capetown over Christmas weekend, police said today.

**WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 29:** Armed conflict arising from political unrest in Peking, Northern China, was being quelled, according to reports from Peking. Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Nikolai Firubin arrived in Malaysia for a two day visit. Indonesia's President Suharto announced large pay rises for civil servants and members of the armed forces, to take effect a month before next May's General Election. Air Siam announced it was suspending flights from Jan. 1. Several shooting incidents were reported from between Thai and Cambodian forces. Israel's minority caretaker government has pledged to press on with efforts to achieve a Middle East Peace Settlement. Palestinian Commandos moved heavy weapons and truckloads of ammunition away from the main Lebanese civil war battle fronts today in line with the efforts by the peace keeping force to diffuse tension. The Kremlin today approved wage increases averaging one or four roubles a week for 31 million workers in industry and public services. Lebanese PM Selim Al-Hoss, apparently seeking Egyptian support for the re-building of his shattered army, conferred today with President Anwar Sadat.

**THURSDAY, DECEMBER 30:** Former Bangladesh President Khondakar Mushtaq Ahmed was charged with corruption and other offences. Agreement was announced for Thailand to purchase 45 million US dollars worth of ammunition left after the US military pullout. The Secretary General of the People's Front in Singapore, Leon Mung Kwai, was jailed for 18 months for defaming Premier Lee Kuan Yew. South African police authorities said yesterday that 72 blacks died in violence around a township near Johannesburg and Capetown. No details were given. Meanwhile the Chairman of the Rhodesian Conference in Geneva, Mr. Ivor Richard had his final briefing before he left on a tour of several African countries. Rhodesian troops have attacked Mozambique and fighting is still going on. The Mozambique news agency reported today: the Agency said troops with air support attacked a black province. It said napalm bombs were used. The number of casualties

was not known. Bombs and gunfire today ended the Irish Republican Army's X'mas ceasefire in Northern Ireland and security forces rushed back to full alert.

**FRIDAY, DECEMBER 31:** Political strife in China had led to civil war and serious loss of life in Szechuan according to a local radio report. Spanish Communist Party leader Santiago Casilla and seven other senior party members were freed on bail today after being detained for eight days charged with ill gal association. A new coalition government formed by PM Sir Seewoosagur was sworn in today in Mauritius. According to reports from Manila, President Ferdinand Marcos said today the government intended to grant the Muslim population in the south of the country autonomy within the framework of the Republic of Philippines. Indian External Affairs Minister, Y. B. Chavan, and visiting Vice President Ahmed Hilmi Did of the Maldives signed yesterday an agreement demarcating the maritime boundary between the two countries and the trijunction point with that of Sri Lanka extending from the Gulf Mannar towards the Indian Ocean.

**SATURDAY, JANUARY 1:** Gulf oil paid 3.2 million dollars to South Korea's President Park in 1969 and 1970, an NBC television report alleged. A senior military aide of the Moro National Liberation Front was expected to observe the ceasefire in the Southern Philippines announced defence under-secretary Carmelo Barbuero. President Anwar Sadat of Egypt has set conditions for an Israeli-Arab peace, including a Palestinian state linked to Jordan and a swift Israeli withdrawal from occupied territories. Two trains left Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh city simultaneously today to mark the formal opening of the trans-Vietnam Railway, Hanoi radio reported today. The Commander-in-Chief of Portugal's Air Force has tendered his resignation in a move which could put pressure on other young officers holding high military positions. Mr. Ivor Richard, Chairman of the Geneva Conference on Rhodesia said yesterday that the chances for a breakthrough in the talks were good. Singapore's PM Lee Kuan Yew, today announced a new 11 member Cabinet which showed little change from the present line-up.

**SUNDAY, JANUARY 2:** 'A few problems remain' following the incidents surrounding the 'gang of four' but the situation was now under control, a Chinese official said in Peking. Diplomatic sources claimed that provincial radio reports of disturbances were part of a concerted campaign and that there was no evidence of disturbances at the moment. Bangladesh leader General Ziaur Rahman began a visit to China. Opposition sources in Pakistan said they had agreed to establish a common front for the forthcoming general election. Former Nepalese Premier B. P. Koirala and a number of followers had been detained, Premier Tulsī Giri announced. Israelis reacted with cautious optimism to President Anwar Sadat's statement indicating that a future Palestinian state should be linked in some form to Jordan. Police have arrested 70 members of the Communist Party of India on the eve of a campaign organised by the party against rising prices. Communist sources said in New Delhi. The Indian government freed two more Opposition leaders detained since PM Indira Gandhi declared a state of internal emergency in June last year. Vietnam has drafted a code for foreign investors, aimed at attracting investment in exploiting natural resources, agriculture, industry, construction and transport.

**MONDAY, JANUARY 3:** Pakistan's defence and foreign Affairs Minister Aziz Ahmed said the purchase of a nuclear reprocessing plant from France would be finalised. The Army had taken over operations at one of China's key rail junctions, Cheng-Chow, according to a provincial radio report. The Rhodesian PM Ian Smith has rejected outright a British suggestion that an interim government here leading to Black Rule should consist only of a Council of Ministers with a British-appointed Chairman. Rhodesian sources said today. Israeli Peace Campaigner Abie Nathan was allowed to sail his ship through the Suez Canal today in what was seen as another pointer to Egyptian determination to reach a middle east settlement.

**TUESDAY, JANUARY 4:** Plans for a major naval base at Pagna, on the Indian ocean coast, was announced by the Thai Navy. A referendum should be held in 13 Provinces in the Southern Philippines to determine which wanted to join a proposed Muslim autonomous region, President Marcos announced. A classified document allegedly smuggled out of China put the July Tangshan earthquake death toll at 655,237. The Nepal PM Dr. Tulsī Giri said necessary action would be taken against ex-premier Bisheshwar Prasad Koirala and three followers who are in custody here, the official news agency reported. The Lebanese government announced yesterday that the Lebanese press would be censored.

**WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 5:** An official Chinese spokesman denied international press reports of continuing provincial disorder. Several areas in Southern Thailand were declared off-limit to civilians as part of counter-insurgency measures. Mr. Ivor Richard, Chairman of the Geneva Conference on Rhodesia, said he was convinced of the chances of a peaceful settlement in Rhodesia. He was believed to have tried to convince Mrs. Vorster of the necessity of accepting Britain's compromise proposals to increase the tempo of the progress towards majority rule in the breakaway colony. Israel's caretaker Premier, Mr. Yitzak Rabin, said that Israel was ready for compromise along its defence lines if the Arabs were ready to make peace. Christian East Beirut was paralysed by a near-total strike today in protest against the deaths of 35 people in a huge car bomb explosion, the worst single act of violence since most fighting in the civil war ended on November 15.

**THURSDAY, JANUARY 6:** President Suharto announced a draft Indonesian Budget of 1,100 million US dollars for 1977-78, an increase of about 20% over the current year. China's Communist Party Chairman Hua Kuo-feng accepted an invitation to visit Bangladesh. Bangladesh's Chief Martial Law administrator Major-General Ziaur Rahman signed two agreements in Peking covering trade and technical co-operation. Thai military authorities have declared a number of areas, in Southern Thailand as off-limit for civilian movement in a new effort to combat communist guerrillas in the region. The guerrillas hard-pressed in the southern province of Surat Thani by government forces, are known to be receiving re-inforcements from other Communist units in neighbouring regions. The PLO yesterday accused 'Zionist agents' of assassinating hardline Palestinian militant Mahmoud Salch outside his Latin quarter bookshop on Monday night. All the principal figures of revolutionary Vietnam have been

re-elected to the Politburo and Central Committee of the Vietnamese Workers' Party, to be known in future as the Vietnamese Communist Party. President-elect Jimmy Carter said today he will give up his substantial peanut business while in office to avoid any conflict of interests.

**FRIDAY, JANUARY 7:** Libya's leader Col. Khaddafi pledged to help the Philippines fight for "true independence from the US." Vietnam accused Thailand of provoking trouble with its neighbours while issuing "pious statements" of friendship. Press censorship in India has been considerably relaxed and now there are no controls at all on the foreign press, the Chairman of the Indian News Agency Samachar said. Zambia has served notice that Rhodesian PM Ian Smith would risk engulfing Southern Africa in nuclear war by using foreign mercenaries against black guerrillas in the breakaway colony. Changes of a negotiated Rhodesia settlement have improved slightly. Mr. Ivor Richard, Chairman of Britain's stalled conference, said tonight.

**SATURDAY, JANUARY 8:** Former military strongman Field Marshal Prapas Chatsirak returned to Thailand after three years in Taiwan. President Marcos denied US allegations that political prisoners had been tortured in the Philippines and warned that the future of the US bases in the country was still under scrutiny. The Chief of the Malaysian Armed Forces made a secret visit to Thailand, according to Bangkok sources. The anniversary of Chou En-lai's death brought crowds onto the streets of Peking demanding the execution of the four purged radical leaders. Japan would probably expand its territorial water limit from 3 to 12 miles in the next few months instead of declaring a 200-mile coastal economic zone. The Venezuelan President has accepted the resignation of the entire cabinet; however he said, it did not mean a government crisis, but merely allowed him a free hand to reshuffle the cabinet.

**SUNDAY, JANUARY 9:** A poster calling for the appointment of Tang Hsiao-ping as Prime Minister appeared in Peking. Thai government forces launched an offensive against communist guerrillas. At least six people were killed in election rally clashes in Pakistan's Northwest frontier province. Tanzanian President Julius Nyerere today assured British envoy Ivor Richard that the guerrilla war in Rhodesia would stop once true majority rule had been achieved there. President-elect Jimmy Carter unveiled a two year, 30 billion dollar economic programme that would provide tax cuts to individuals and business and create jobs for hundreds of thousands.

**MONDAY, JANUARY 10:** Thai forces said they had killed 70 guerrillas in the current offensive against Communists in the South. Vietnam said that Thailand's desire for a return of US troops constituted a reversal of the historical trend following American defeat in Indo-China. A two-day meeting of five South African leaders of the so-called "first combat line" states opened here on Saturday to analyse the latest situation in racist South Rhodesia. Baghdad Radio today reported that Syria had arrested a large number of people from the army schools and universities. Pakistan will go to the polls on March 7 and 10. PM Zulfikar Ali Bhutto said that the National Assembly would be dissolved tomorrow. Brazil, the World's largest coffee producer has rejected a proposal by Columbia, the second largest coffee producer to freeze coffee prices.

MEMORIES

Joy's And Sorrows  
Of Aging

I am in my late seventies and having passed the psalmist's allotted span of life should be awaiting to be picked up and put away. I have always felt guilty that I was not coming upto the Psalmist's expectations. The old dog kept on feeling there was a lot of life left and refused to lie down.

Now I am beginning to feel perhaps the old Psalmist was a little out of date, in the year of grace 1976 and there is still time before I sing my Nane Dimitris—let thy servant depart. I am supported in this unch by a British gerontologist, and author of books on agi g, Alex Camfort. In this latest book, 'A good Age' he tracks "agism" as a prajudice against the elderly which he considers society's most stupid b s. He says, "Most of the handicaps of oldness in our so i ty are social, conventional and imaginary. The physical changes are i ffling by comparison". Be u se of "redn ck bigotry" and "the steady drip of misinformation the elderly are patronised, over-medicated and arbitrarily excluded from any significant social roles." In fact, he says the elderly are "simply people who have been here longer", and are no less creative or mentally intact than anyone else. Most mental and attitudinal changes seen in old people are not biological effects of aging. "They are the result of rol playing. They are supposed to be physically and intellectually infirm" He notes that "the human brain does not shrink, wilt, perish or deteriorate wi h age". It normally continues to function well through as many as nine decades.

Comfort urges those over 65 to take no guff about their age. He advises "blo dy mindedness". Be ruthless to rudness, show you expect respect". He suggests those over 65 stay active and reject leisure ("leisure is a con") and retirement. "Two weeks is about the ideal length of time to retire". He believes that loneliness among the elderly is vastly exaggerated. All the elderly really need, says comfort, is a better shake from society—and more bloody-mindedness.

My difficulty is being bloody-minded on my pension. Like all over sixty-fives I am a pensioner. When I say like all sixty-fives I am not forgetting two groups that don't comply. How the group at the bottom; the poor over sixty-fives on no pension live, don't ask me. That is a problem between them and their Maker. The other group also have a problem. They are the top Big Business-Boys whose problem is what to do with the income of their incomes. That too I will leave for them to settle with their maker.

When I retired over 20 years ago I got a pension which I thought would be adequate to sustain me till the end of my days. Alas, I did not reckon with the thief called Inflation, which steals your money. It has stolen about 3/4 of my pension. In civilized countries they adjust fixed salaries, wages and pensions to compensate for increased cost of living. In Sri Lanka the land of Matri, we still have not got on to that. Thus when my needs are increasing my income is decreasing. The prospect is that with every passing year the situation appears to get worse. That is why I derive no comfort from Dr. Comfort's essay into the joys of aging. What about its woes, with inflation and unemployment?

I will enumerate just a few. In the old days I had two cars. Now it is the bus. I have no objection to bus travel—the great leveller like death. What gets me down is the waiting and when the bus does arrive the struggle to get in. Nine times out of ten one has to stand with both arms outstretched to clutch the bar, thoughtfully provided by the CTB. There is no objection even to this, if it did

not leave you at the mercy of the pick-pocket boys, who seem to spot me with ease, while I can't seem to see them. The Police boast they can spot a pickpocket a mile away. I wish they would reveal their secret to me to enable me to spot the ones who seem to surround me the moment I get into a bus. I have had every conceivable thing picked from me. Providence in its wisdom has attacked my head firmly to my body, otherwise, I am sure to have lots it by now.

Bus travel is not my only woe. Now that I think of it, I must consider it a blessing. Consider the headache old cars can be (not being one of the Big Business Boys entitled to CRA, or an MP or a staff officer in the Police or Army, I must manage with a car, the kindest thing to do to which would be to let it enjoy a well earned retirement) an old car is the most I can aspire to possess. When I retired I opted to give up European dress and wear the cloth. I was encouraged by the example of our political leaders, though I did not follow it through by changing to European att when going to the dogs in Nuwaraeliya. One would imagine that the example of wearing the cloth by the leaders would command respect from our people. You could not be more wrong. I have met nothing but slight because I wear cloth. I happen to be a professional man and when pressed into admitting it, I am given a stance of disbelief after a passing glance at my cloth. In fact the only thing that helps me to get by is to come out with a few chosen words in English spoken in the accent made familiar to us by our SLBC English announcers. I was a nice little if I got into European

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clothes I would be more successful in my professional dealings with the public, advice I did not take. I preferred to be a failure in cloth than a success in European clothes.

I could go on multiplying my woes. But, really, these are not the woes of aging. They are the woes of our "progress". I wonder if it is a sign of sensibility that I chaff at "progress."

KUMAR

IN A TEA ESTATE—17

Tina Kangany

By Inna Trimmer

Friday dawned bright and full of sunshine. The joy of living was in the air. It was a Friday in early June. It was the day "my people" from Galle were expected.

A week of violent rain and wind endured by the Tamil labourers with stolid acceptance, and me with much grumbling and longings for the Sahara, had changed, and a sudden metamorphosis that only nature could effect had taken place overnight.

Instead of heavy sullen skies and driving vicious rain, a blue heaven was above us. Drifting white clouds, wisps of glowing softness chased each other rapidly as if playing some celestial game known to themselves alone. The wind was high up amongst the citrus clouds, not roaring down the valleys and robbing the tea bushes of their leaves:

"Sweet is the sunshine after rain"  
And sweet the sleep that follows pain", I sang.

I could sing today my special "people" were on the way. A week earlier there was a telegram from Podimahaumaya Company leaving Thursday. "Arriving Wattergama Friday morning. Please meet". So my husband's very special Kangany Murugaya Head Kangany had left for Wattergama, our railhead, to escort them to Brae.

Seats had already been arranged for, with the A and E Transport Co, who did all our transport work. My husband thought that Murugaya was the most suitable of all

his kanganies to meet these newcomers and set them at ease. His coolies loved him as much for his kindness as for the strict honesty in all his dealings with them and he was held in respect by everyone in Brae.

He was certainly the best choice to meet the coming strangers and shepherd them through the vicissitudes and dangers on the way.

He saluted to my husband and left the afternoon before, a stalwart figure, dressed in immaculate white, a white thalappa on his head, gold gypsy earrings dangling, a mostrious gold ring like a knuckle-duster adorning his hand, and a gold chain round his neck. He was usually the simplest of men and except for the coat he always wore even to the field he was no more pretentious than his men.

But this was a special occasion. He was his Dorai's representative. He must do honour to the role appointed to him and so he dressed his part. The company from Galle must surely be impressed by such a figure.

So he set out, striding up the steepness past the factory, accompanied by one of his myrmidons, a young boy, a companion to run his errands and to keep up his spirits. A Tamil labourer away from his habitat is an unhappy man.

As for me, the day was all too short to attend to my chores. A real warm rousing welcome must await the expected strangers. A home from home must be provided. They must feel contented and happy from the very beginning. First impressions are of primary importance.

I walked down to the lines prepared for them, waiting only to be occupied. They were within sight and sound of the factory chosen with great care and discrimination to suit what I thought would be their individual tastes.

"Teddie," I had said, when we inspected various homes for them. "We must choose a place where they won't have far to walk to the muster ground. They must not be tired before they begin work."

"What about a tot of brandy for each to start off with? Or a little bit of Scotch would be such a fillip," he said dryly.

I gave him a scathing look. "Now these lines; they are JUST right," I said.

"Not too close to factory sounds and yet within sight of the lights that will remind them of the street lamps of Galle and prevent them from feeling cut off and lonely".

My husband's snort of decision was, to say the very least, irritating but I held myself in check. There was too much at stake for useless show of temper.

'And PRAY—That pray of his was a danger signal. Teddy usually "prayed" when he was annoyed.

"Pray where do you propose to send MY coolies if their lines are to be commandered?"

"Please Teddie darling don't be annoyed. Put on your thinking cap and decide where they could go—I mean your coolies"

Just then Samuels the conductor stumped along; immersed in his own thoughts and hardly aware of us.

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"Samuels"  
 "Yes Sir! Coming Sir!"  
 "Look here! The lady is in search of lines for the Galle coolies. Where do you think we can put them?"

Samuels scratched his head and looked up into the sky.

"No, no, my dear man. Not up there! Come down to earth. Let's first find them a place here, before they are transferred to heaven."

Samuels was thoroughly mystified. "S-i-r-r!"

I could see the twinkle dancing in my husband's eyes.

"Don't you understand me?"

"No Sir!"

"Have you or have you not a set of lines here on earth? I am not interested at the moment in the mansions in heaven."

Samuel floundered.

"Sir What mansions? We have only lines here."

"That's right. Now you've got me. Can we put up forty people in a line in this division. I mean in Lauragalla?"

"Lau-o-o-o-oragalla. Sir? I don't no. Must see Can't say like that"

Between them they fixed it up. The Tamil families who occupied that particular set of lines eyed by me were dispersed in various parts of Managalla and Lauragalla, the two divisions close to each other. By dint of wheedling and persuasion work was immediately begun on cleaning and whitewashing the premises, and I inspected it and found it good.

Now, there was another necessity—a well. The others went to a pelee not far away for their ablutions. These little spouts of water and runnels were very common all over Brae. But would my crowd like mixed bathing? It was safer to provide them with their own bathing place. To my utter amazement Teddie agreed like a lamb to a well being dug in front of the lines.

The water table in Brae was high. Crystal clear water gurgled up, and with a large flat stone for a washing machine, the well was a fait accompli.

Preparations were almost complete, but not quite. There was the question of blankets. The Galle folk must have a new set of blankets. No ones used for them!

These blankets or cumbles as the workers called them, were of

sheep's hair rough but warm, with the peculiar quality of being completely waterproof. The labourers sewed the sides together and turned them into hoods which they wore when working in the rain or wind.

In Brae we hardly ever saw them without these blanket hoods, all a dark grey-brown, reaching down far below their hips!

"What next! said my husband when I made my request. "From henceforth you will be known as Tina Kangany. In all my years of planting never did I have a more enthusiastic upholder of coolie rights."

The new venture was now about to unfold. Our stalwarts from the South were expected any moment.

The ropeway was working specially to bring down their luggage and incidentally to end up chests of tea on their way to London.

Already several packages had been received and were taken to the waiting lines. Many trips I made to see that everything was in order. There were jugs of hot tea to refresh them.

My husband inquired solicitously "What about some flowers? A few bowls of roses will look well eh?"

Then Murugaya Kangany arrived, followed by the newcomers. Quite a crowd marched up the steps for in addition to the Galle folk, inquisitive Brae labourers had also joined them.

Podi-ingo their leader, came forward with palms together in greeting to be received by us in

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 EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMME**

JANUARY - MARCH 1977

10 - 14 January

"RURAL INSTITUTIONS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF SRI LANKA"

Joint Seminar with the Department of Geography, Vidyalankara Campus, University of Sri Lanka. (Sinhala and Tamil media)

24 - 28 January

"EDUCATION AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN SRI LANKA"

Joint Seminar with the Department of Social Science Education, Faculty of Education, Colombo Campus, University of Sri Lanka. (English medium)

31 January - 04 February

"YOUTH AND CULTURE"

Joint Seminar with the National Youth Service Council. (Sinhala medium)

06 - 12 February

"3rd ASIAN SYMPOSIUM ON MEDICINAL PLANTS AND SPICES"

Joint International Seminar with the UNESCO and the National Science Council. (English medium)

14 - 25 February

"METHODS AND TECHNIQUES OF WORKERS' EDUCATION"

Joint Seminar with the Workers' Education Division of the Ministry of Labour, Division of the Ministry of Labour. (Sinhala and English media)

26 - 27 February

"ACCIDENTS"

Joint Seminar with the Sri Lanka Medical Association (SLMA) (English medium)

01 - 31 March

"PART-TIME TECHNICAL COURSES FOR SCHOOL LEAVERS"

Joint Seminar with the Non-Formal Education Branch of the Ministry of Education. (English medium)

10 - 11 March

"VILLAGE IN DEVELOPMENT"

Outstation Village Seminar in Galle. (Sinhala medium)

15 - 18 March

"SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND OTHER FACTORS AFFECTING THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE IN SRI LANKA"

Joint Seminar with the Department of Humanities Education, Faculty of Education, Colombo Campus University of Sri Lanka.

like manner. Then his mother Solo Hamine, an oldish "amandi" type. Then the rest one by one. There were fifty in all, men, women and children.

I walked down to the lines and settled them in.

"Done your good deed for the day?" asked my husband when returned and flung myself into a chair. "Tired old lady! Have a..."

"Brandy," I interjected. "Thank you, I will."

In the following weeks I visited those lines several times to assure the happiness and well being of my own special contingent.

It was a matriarchal state there. The old mother was undoubtedly controller and boss of that crowd, their chiefness.

"Khome da?" I asked. The usual question.

"Varahak naha". The usual reply. "Mama dhanamuthukem kiya kiya innawa." (I am here giving advise all the time).

"Are you all comfortable?"

"Not ba-a-a-d," she said non-committally.

Many were the little attentions I paid them, sending across what I thought would be additional comforts; bread, sugar, even tins of fish to help out with their menu, a bottle of eau-de-cologne when one of them had a cold.

"How are they getting on?" I asked my husband some days later.

"Not too ba-a-d. I have asked the conductor to give them light work till they get used to conditions here."

Less than a month later Palani-muru knocked on my door early one morning.

"Ammay from Galle wanting lady."

Solo Hamine was in the verandah. I asked if she would like a cup of coffee. She shook her head.

"Nonamahatmeya"—Then she stopped and cleared her throat.

"Yes, Solo Hamine", I said encouragingly.

Again she cleared her throat, louder. There was a slight pause.

"We want to leave."

I wasn't sure whether I heard aright.

Uncomprehendingly looked at her.

"You, wanted to leave"! I repeated. The words came slow. They didn't seem to register.

She nodded. "Yes, we don't like this place."

Blime, he was.

awoke at facts—"But why? Why do you want to leave? You surely don't mean it."

"Yes," she said firmly, with a snap. "Annay, koodallao sirisiri." (Crawling with leeches).

"But that's not a reason to give up and go. You are earning good money. Your lines are comfortable. I have looked after you. The estate has spent a lot to bring you all here. You have come free of all expenses."

"We cannot help that. Hari sithalaiyi". (It's real cold here)

"Won't you change your mind? Give it more thought. Don't decide in such a hurry."

She shook her head.

"This is too far from our homes."

"Is there anything I can do to persuade you to stay? Aren't you happy in the lines?"

"No, we must go," she said decisively. "Sammavenna" (Pardon us) "Uppi guhing ennawa."

"Ennawa" indeed! What a travesty was this courteous salutation on her lips.

Picking up her sandals she went down the steps.

I watched her till she turned the corner, an inexorable back with a dreadnought beam. Gone were my hopes, my colonisation of Utopia!

How to tell Teddie! How to broach the subject! What to say! Ten hours I carried the secret burden. Alone I did it.

"What's wrong with you Sunny?" asked my husband like that evening. "You seem to be carrying all the woes of the world on your shoulders. What's up?"

I couldn't hold it in any longer. "Teddie," I wailed. "They're going!"

"Who? Going where?"

Was he deliberately dense? "The Galle crowd."

To his credit be it said he never uttered one "I told you so."

## Grim Prospects

By A Special Correspondent

Paris.

THE ECONOMIC CRISIS WILL INTENSIFY in most capitalist countries in the new year; the high rates of inflation will continue and unemployment will grow. This conclusion is drawn by experts from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) whose members include the biggest capitalist countries of the West.

A report published by the OECD on "Economic Prospects of 1977", admits that the capitalist world is now living through "the most serious economic recession of the entire post-war period." In the opinion of experts, the leading capitalist states will fail, contrary to previous forecasts, to achieve a genuine recovery of economic activity in the coming year. The annual increase of the gross national product will be only slightly more than three per cent. In these conditions, the report says, "unemployment threatens to surpass all post-war records in 1977". In the second quarters of next year unemployment in the FRG is expected to grow by 6 per cent, in Britain by 6.5 per cent, and in the United States by 7.1 per cent.

Already in 1976 unemployment had grown in France from 3.8 per cent of the workforce in 1975 to 4.3 per cent; in Britain from 4 per cent to 5.5 per cent; in Belgium, from 4.5 per cent to 6 per cent and in Ireland from 9.2 per cent to 10 per cent. Just to cite a few instances, of the nine EEC countries the number of unemployed topped five million. "Inflation remains the problem that gives rise to great concern", the report says. In OECD member countries prices are to grow on the average by 7.5 per cent. There will be an increase also in the total foreign debt of OECD member states.

It follows from the OECD report that the developed capitalist states have actually split into two groupings. The first includes the United States, Japan, FRG and Canada which are engaged in an extensive foreign trade expansion

and are gaining ground on their competitors in international markets. The second grouping consists mainly of Italy and Britain. Their situation is characterised by a deep economic slump or full stagnation.

The new year will not deliver France from economic difficulties. This is a conclusion drawn by the National Institute of Statistics and Economic Research (INSEE) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) which issued forecasts for 1977 on the eve of Christmas holidays. According to the conclusion of these organisations, the retail price index in the country will go up by approximately 8-8.5 per cent next year and the growth of consumption will not exceed three per cent. OECD experts maintain that in these conditions the business activity rate may decline and the number of persons unable to find a job will again start growing. The INSEE is of the opinion that the number of jobless will increase by 200,000 and amount to 1,700,000.

The Israeli government announced a devaluation of the national monetary unit. The exchange rate of the Israeli pound against the main western currencies goes down by two per cent. This devaluation of the monetary unit has been caused in the first place by Israel's exorbitant military spending and will lead to a further decline of the living standard of the country's working people.

The outgoing year witnessed steadily growing prices in Turkey. The newspaper *Hurriyet* points out that prices of food and essentials, in 1975 increased by 36.5 per cent on the average. Prices of meat and dairy products increased particularly—from 35 to 70 per cent. Inflation in Denmark is growing irresistibly. According to statistics, prices of consumer goods went up, on an average, by 13 per cent, including food—16 per cent, in a period from November 1975 to November 1976. The pace of price-rise amounted to 5 per cent in the past three months alone.

Some Canadian steel companies have announced a rise in prices of their products. A representative of "Steel Company of Canada" has reported that the cost of a ton of steel will grow by 6.6 per cent, on an average, as of January

16, 1977. This will immediately entail a rise in prices of many consumer goods, the Canadian press agency points out. We are in for difficult times". This is the appraisal of the local newspapers on new year's eve of the prospects for the development of the Italian economy in 1977. The newspaper *L'Unita* is of the opinion that the Italian economy in the coming year will be marking time. Thus, in 1977 capital investments in industry will decrease by four per cent, gross national product will 1.01 grow, and the consumption of Italian families will diminish by at least 0.5 per cent.

The opinion of economic observers is that many thousands of young people who will graduate from Italy's schools and institutions of higher learning next year will be out of job. The newspaper *La Stampa*, organ of the influential business circles of Turin, expresses apprehensions that next year the rate of inflation growth can again exceed 20 per cent, which will lead to new serious problems in economic and social life of the state. A deficit of Italy's balance of trade in October this year ran at 330,000 million liras, the Central Institute of Statistics reported here on December 23. The basic cause of such a large deficit is connected with the fact that Italy has to buy large consignments of oil products abroad for industrial needs.

A further drop in the rate of growth of production is to take place in all the branches of industry of the FRG next year, said state secretary to the economic ministry K. O. Schlecht. A high rate of unemployment will remain in the country, he said, and the situation in the labour market will not improve.

"In the opinion of experts, the number of unemployed next year will top one million. The expected economic upsurge in the outgoing year has never come, the 'Westfaelische Rundschau' writes. The economic situation remains unfavourable. 'The future by no means looks bright', the newspaper 'General-Anzeiger' writes.

The year of 1976 will remain in the memory of the working people of Luxembourg as one of the most difficult years during the whole post war period. In the opinion of local economists, the

government has failed to overcome the aftermaths of the economic crisis in the outgoing year.

Industrial recession was continuing. Steel output has dropped by 25.3 per cent compared with 1974. The living standards of the working people have steadily declined.

—New Age

POPULATION Vs. PRICES

Why You'll Pay Even More In The Future

By Lester R. Brown

As more and more people compete for finite resources, prices are pushed higher. With 200,000 more consumers added to the world population every day, inflation poses one of the toughest challenges political leaders will face in the years ahead.

Abridged from "Twenty-Two" Dimensions of the Population Problem" by Lester R. Brown, Patricia L. McGrath and Bruce Stokes, published by Worldwatch Institute. © Copyright Worldwatch Institute, 1976.

(Mr. Brown, former official with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, is the author of "By Bread Alone" and is currently director of Worldwatch Institute, a private Washington research institute focusing on world economic problems).

DURING THE SEVENTIES, inflation has reached double-digit levels world wide for the first time creating extreme anxiety among national political leaders. The economists are puzzled by the failure of all traditional controls short of widespread unemployment. What few seem to realize is that an important new source of inflationary pressure has emerged.

World demand for goods and services has expended at about four percent per year from 1950 to 1975, nearly tripling during this 25 year span. About half of all

## Inflation May Become Chronic

production gains were absorbed by population growth, which averaged close to two percent per year, and about half by increases in per capita consumption. Meanwhile, it has become increasingly difficult, for economic and political reasons, to expand the supply of many strategic goods commensurately. The result has been scarcity-induced inflation. The impact on the price and production availability of such essential resources as food and energy has become dramatically evident.

Prices of petroleum, firewood, cereals, soyabeans and fish have soared since the sixties, and they have affected the entire world.

Underlying the escalation of petroleum prices was the realization that the world's petroleum supplies were dwindling and that their value was accordingly far greater than historical price levels indicated. Exportable supplies also happened to be concentrated in the hands of relatively few countries. This created a psychological climate that enabled the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries to quadruple the price of crude oil.

Rises in firewood prices, while less visible internationally, have been only slightly less sobering. Firewood was a cheap, abundant source of energy when villages were small. As village populations grew, forests receded. Now wood prices are a primary topic of conversation among the poor from the Himalayas to the Andes. Price increases of two or threefold over the past few years are commonplace. Today the average manual laborer's family in some West African cities spends nearly one-fourth of its income on firewood.

As world demand for cereals, spurred largely by population growth, has outstripped supply during the seventies, world grain stocks have been drawn down to a precariously low level. In 1976 they represented scarcely 30 days of world consumption, little more than pipeline supplies. Once stocks drop below about 60 days of supply, a psychology of scarcity begins to prevail and prices of major cereals climb rapidly. In 1974 and 1975 wheat prices doubled. The price of soyabeans more than doubled. Without a breakthrough in yields, the world confronts the

prospect that soyabeans will no longer be available at traditional prices.

The world's fishermen have been more strapped than its farmers. The catch, which had been expanding at an impressive five percent yearly from 1950, suddenly began to decline in 1971. Along with the difficulty of expanding supplies of soyabeans, the poor catch helped convert the world protein market from a buyer's to a seller's market.

World oil reserves are being rapidly depleted and no alternative sources of energy are readily available at the prices of the past. The rising cost imperils food supplies, dependent as they are on petroleum and petroleum-based fertilizers.

Those who suffer most under the burden of scarcity-induced inflation are the poor, whether in the "barriadas" of Lima or the slums of Naples. Inflation means that those living at subsistence level find themselves increasingly unable to make ends meet. When the price of grain triples, families that already spend 60 percent of their income on food can only eat less.

With 4,000 million consumers already on the scene and 200,000 more being added each day, inflation may grow chronic. Indeed, inflation poses one of the most difficult challenges that political leaders will face in the years ahead. Without a marked slowdown in population growth, it simply may not be manageable.



## Nutritive Value Of Temple Prasadams

Madras,

Panchamritam, the fruit mix offered to Lord Muruga at Palani, prepared by temple authorities using a small sized local plantain as the base ingredient, is not only a delicious and a nourishing food but also has astonishing properties which keep it in good condition for a number of days without refrigeration.

The Devarajaswami temple in Kancheepuram specialises in pre-

paring a special type of spiced iddies, each weighing about three pounds which is cut into one-inch slices to be given to devotees.

A study of the "Prasadams" offered in South Indian temples, undertaken by an American woman on a project "South Indian Food and Feasts" contains interesting findings about delicacies and other varieties. Mrs. Mary Louise Skelton is no stranger to India as she had been frequenting this country since 1969 along with her husband a musicologist who has learnt Nadaswaram playing. In association with Mr. G. Gopala Rao, a nutrition expert, she has analysed the recipes of the dishes in South India during feasts and tried them all. Her study will prove a corrective to prevailing notions that vegetarianism is both tasteless and poor.

South Indian food is associated with several Hindu Gods whose favourite sweets and savouries are made on their birthday celebrations. She regrets that these feasts are fast disappearing due to a variety of reasons, particularly urbanisation an change in food habits.

Included in her study are the 12 main recipes used in the temples in Andhra Pradesh and a few other States like Pongal, Sakkara Pongal, "Vada-pappu" and Milagu-hora. The peculiar taste of the Prasadams, particularly the Laddu in Tirumalai and Srirangam, is due to the ghee used in the preparation. During the mango season, a fruit-mash made of banana, mango and jackfruit is offered to Venkateswara in Tirumalai, Pal Payasam a preparation of rice in cow's milk is famous at the shrines of Lord Krishna in Guruvayoor and Ambalapuzha. A local variety of soft sweet pudding like a sponge-cake is offered to Lord Ganesa in Kerala temples.

EVERY PAGE OF THIS ISSUE WAS SCRUTINISED AND CENSORED BY THE COMPETENT AUTHORITY. DELAYS IN PUBLICATION HAVE THEREFORE BECOME INEVITABLE. WE APPEAL TO OUR READERS TO BEAR WITH US. WE ALSO APOLOGISE FOR THE ABSENCE OF SOME OF OUR CUSTOMARY FEATURES OF COMMENT.

# Confidentially

## • India • Elections

IS IT NOT A FACT that the decision of the Indian Prime Minister to hold the General Elections for the Lower House of Parliament in India in March—the Lok Sabha—had come as a real surprise to everyone? That, when the Indian Parliament adopted a Bill (by two-thirds majority) to extend the life of the Parliament by one year last November, it was felt that the earliest date for the Indian Elections would be sometime in 1978? That the General Elections in India should have normally been held in March 1976 but it was postponed, or another year? That when the life of the Parliament was extended by a year last November it was believed that the elections will also be postponed by a year? That there were speculations whether the elections would be held for a long time to come? That with the overwhelming majority Mrs. Gandhi had in Parliament there were quips that the elections would be postponed for ever? That in the West there was earping criticism that Mrs. Gandhi was seeking to establish a dictatorship by the process of postponing elections year by year. That insidious comments were made that whilst Pakistan was reaching out to a new kind of democracy, India was retracting into purblind dictatorship? That the stern Emergency Regulations which had been imposed by Mrs. Gandhi were cited as evidence that she was paving the way for a dictatorship? That the massive amendments to the Constitution adopted by the Parliament, which curtailed the powers of the Judiciary to over-ride the sovereignty of Parliament, were also regarded as major deviations from democracy? That the prognostications and proclamations of critics of Mrs. Gandhi that democratic India was being slowly submerged into a morass of dictatorial rule by Mrs. Gandhi (and these prophets were certain that no elections would be held in 1977 or 1978) have now been proved false? That ever since Mrs. Gandhi had sought to discipline the nation and frustrate an inscru-

pulous Opposition, (which had resorted to extra-parliamentary agitation and campaigns to destabilise the duly elected government), by imposing rigorous Emergency Regulations, there has been an outcry in the West that India had rejected democracy? That in recent months, the stringent provisions of the Emergency have been relaxed? That nearly all Opposition leaders who had been held in detention have been released? That Mrs. Gandhi's arch rival, Mr. Morarji Desai, who had at the last stages encouraged those who wanted to oust Mrs. Gandhi through extra-parliamentary campaigns has also now been released? That the press censorship has been virtually withdrawn and many foreign correspondents who had left the country are now back at their posts for some months now? That apart from "relaxing" the Emergency Regulations it is yet to be seen whether she will remove the Emergency Regulations before the election campaign gets under way? That the acid test, so far as the democratic West is concerned, is to evaluate the degree of "freedom" Opposition parties and leaders have in the conduct of their election campaigns?

IS IT NOT A FACT that most of the western countries which had criticised Mrs. Gandhi and her Emergency Regulations were not concerned about the absence of democracy in the Asian or African or Latin American countries? That they have welcomed and supported the Pinochet regime in Chile? That they have accepted the ruthless military government of Brazil as a bulwark of the so-called free world? That the military junta in Thailand, which overthrew the short-lived democratic regime, has been hailed by many western countries as a necessary outpost against "communism"? That even Pakistan, even in the worst days of its dictatorial governments, was a favoured country by many western democracies? That it will be remembered that India, even when it sought to practice the Westminster type of democracy, was condemned by the West for adopting independent (nonaligned) foreign policy postures? That it is impossible to decide whether a country was "democratic" or not by the comments and criticisms made in western countries? That it is necessary to remember that political

in July Or August?

comment emanating from any Establishment, even in the so-called democratic countries of the West, are derived from the requirements of their foreign policy imperatives? That the comments of pro-establishment papers, journals and commentators and politicians have been consistently anti Indira Gandhi from the beginning of her regime in 1967? That after she resorted to Emergency Rule to put many matters to right in India the criticisms levelled at Mrs. Gandhi reached hysterical proportions? That in this obsession against Mrs. Gandhi (and nonaligned India), many western observers had failed to note that India had made rapid strides in economic growth during the current Emergency era? That she has become self-sufficient in grain whereas earlier she had been a deficit nation compelled to import food grains? That, from being a country chronically short of foreign exchange, India now has an adequate foreign exchange surplus which has increase year by year through a bouncing export trade? That those who know India say that all these positive developments would not have been possible without the discipline imposed by the Emergency Regulations? That the curtailment of certain freedoms for a small number of people, it is claimed, has been more than offset by the achievements in many spheres of activity? That apart from everything else, the black-marketers and the urban thug has been virtually wiped out? That operations of the rich underworld of smart operators who made big and easy money by exploiting the vagaries of supply and demand (often artificially induced by them) have been ended? That Mrs. Gandhi could not have thought of a better moment to announce the dissolution of Parliament than the present? That elections, it has been announced, will take place in March? That Pakistan goes to the polls on March 13? That if Sri Lanka holds the General Elections in 1977, as she must, it will be a full round on The Subcontinent? That there is speculation about the Sri Lanka general election? That many still hope that a two-thirds majority will become available to reverse postponement before the NSA is dissolved on May 22, 1977? That the astrotlogical, -induced predict elections in July or August? That political ailments need snap election almost immediately?



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