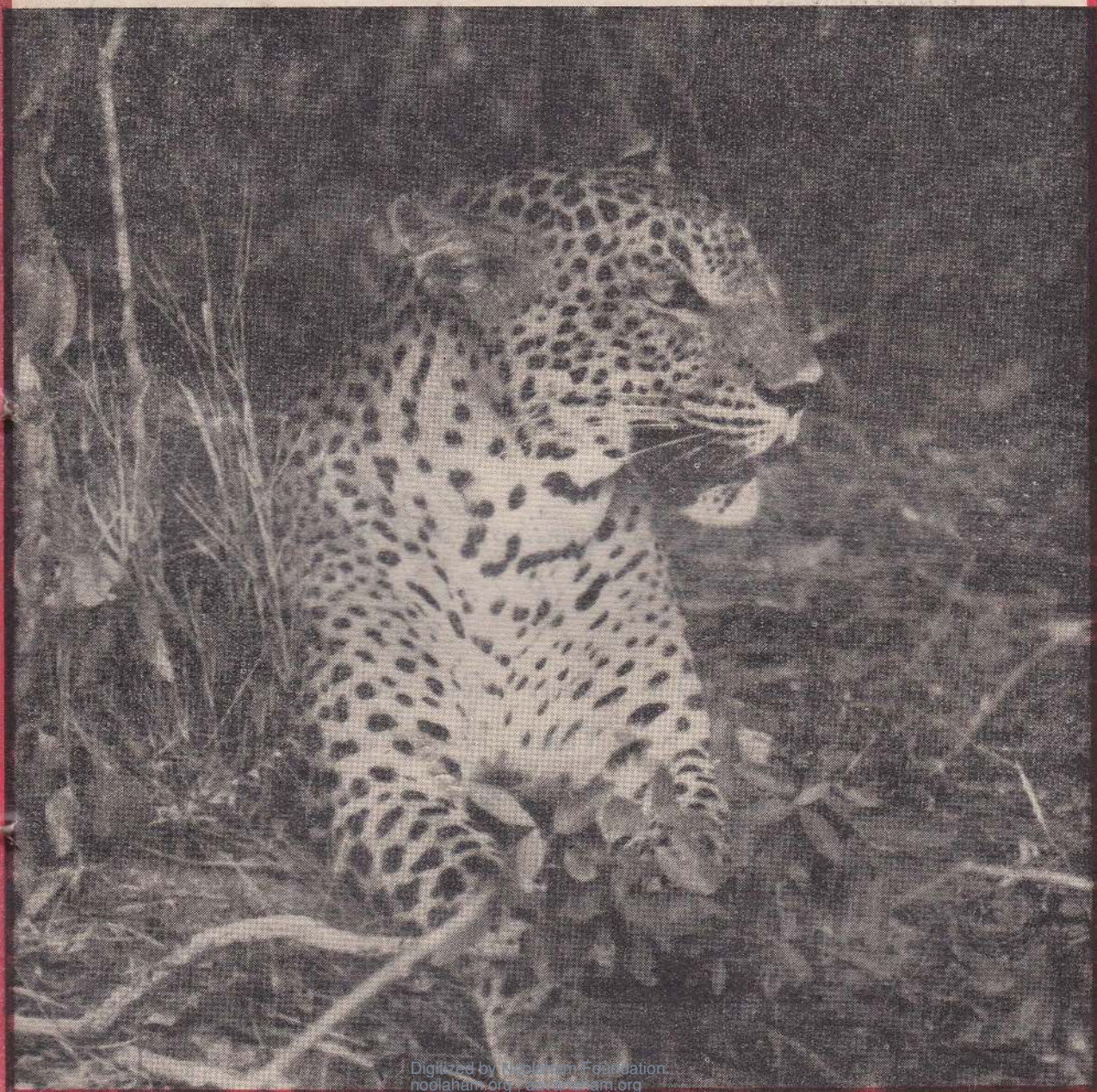


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TRIBUNE



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Letter From The Editor

THE LEOPARD is a fast disappearing animal in this island. It has been virtually shot out of existence by those who wanted its skin—mainly for export. Although regulations were promulgated many years ago to protect this animal and stop the export of skins, until very recently, these laws were not enforced in an effective manner. On a year or so ago, a foreign sojourner in the Island was caught with three or four dozen leopard skins, and it was discovered that he was in business exporting the skins. The fact that he was attached to a west European mission had enabled him to indulge in this profitable pastime without let or hindrance. Protests and representations by official and non-official circles in this country had resulted in the hurried "export" of this gentleman. It is not known how many skins he had exported in the years he had been in Sri Lanka, or how many others have carried on a similar trade. It is, however, known that the highest price ever paid to a local hunter for a full-length leopard skin was around Rs. 450 a piece and that the same skin fetched no less than US \$ 5000 (five thousand, if you please) in any city in western Europe. Environmentalists and protectionists will be happy to know that the United States has taken the initiative sometimes ago to ban the import of leopard skins and the skins or feathers of animals and birds protected in any country. A few other countries have followed suit, but only half-heartedly so far. If all the rich and affluent countries of the world follow the example of the United States, and adopt similar laws in regard to the skins of protected animals, then the chances of saving many of the fast disappearing species will be greater. This new US policy towards protected fauna is an indication of the growing upsurge of a new morality in the United States which has, obviously, led to the election of the (virtually) unknown Jimmy Carter as President. Carter is a Christian from the Baptist denomination, and he seems to take his religious ethics seriously. During his campaign he had stressed that it was necessary to infuse morality into the policies pursued by the USA in the spirit of the founding fathers of the United States. Many had thought that the religious and moral tinge in the Carter propaganda was a gimmick to win votes. But, within two weeks of his assumption of office, Jimmy Carter has made it clear that he intends to implement something of what he meant by a new content of morality in governmental policies, programmes and work. He had started off with a bang on Inauguration Day when he walked the two miles to White House instead of riding in the bullet-proof Cadillac nicknamed Queen Mary. Much has already been written about the elimination of pomp, pageantry and privilege at the White House. ".....No more trumpets will blare to herald the entry of the President into the East Room. No more chauffeured limousines for the White House staff. No more personal photographer for the President.....He promised to issue a pardon to Vietnam draft resisters during his first week in office. Despite protests from left and right, he did so on his second day in the Oval Office. He criticised the use of tax funds to pay for chauffeured limousine service from home to office for top members of the White House staff. On January 24, he ended the practice.....Mr Carter deplored locked doors in the Justice Department building—an anti-crime measure. It was, he used to say, a symbolic locking-out of the poor, the disadvantaged and minorities from the system of justice. On January 26, his new Attorney-General unlocked the doors, and the President pledged they are going to stay open, even though that might at times prove uncomfortable.....Mr. Carter is proposing as well that Cabinet meetings (except when "sensitive matters are under discussion-Ed.) be opened to the press on the grounds that the public has a right to know how business the press on the grounds that the public has a right to know how business is being conducted....." Walter M. Sullivan concludes his article, in which he set out a large number of other similar changes in White House thus: ".....Taken together, these actions reflect a carefully cultivated aura of departure from past White House practices and habits. The President has relied heavily on symbolism in his first days as he crims back the trappings of the 'Imperial Presidency', the short-term Americans use to describe the concentration of power and privilege in White House in the years since World War Two. No one, of course, knows how long the new aura will withstand the pressures of governance as Mr. Carter moves from symbolism to more substantial areas requiring not unilateral actions by him, but co-operation by Congress and the bureaucracy." There is no doubt that Carter has made an excellent start: a start, that has impressed thinking people in many countries of the world: and that what he has done so far has the ring of sincerity without any taint of gimmickry.

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EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

Censorship Law, Competent Authority And Coconuts

February 7,

This is the first issue of *Tribune*, this year, that is being got together without being restricted by the compulsions of a growing strike movement (which paralysed the Railways and disrupted the transport of essentials to and from the metropolis) and under the shadow of a comprehensive Censorship Law that effectively inhibited comment of any kind.

Owing to the dislocation caused by the rail strike, the issue of *Tribune* of January 8 (Vol. 21 No. 30), could not be produced on schedule and it was therefore decided to combine it with the issue of January 15 as a double-number (Vol. 21, Nos. 30 & 31) and to release it early in the week, say on January 12. When this combined issue was ready for printing, the announcement that a Censorship had been imposed was made over the Radio on the afternoon of January 10. The radio announcement referred to three matters which were subject to censorship, but it was not clear how it was to be implemented. It was also announced that Mr. W. R. P. Tillekeratne, Secretary to the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, also the Director of Information, also Chairman of SLBC and also the Director-General of the SLBC, had been appointed the Competent Authority.

On the next day, January 11 it was not possible to find out how the censorship laws would be applied to weeklies like the *Tribune*. We assumed that only articles and comments touching on the three matters referred to in the "Schedule" had to be shown to the Competent Authority for scrutiny, and as we did not want to delay the printing, we extracted the articles which we thought had to be scrutinised by the Competent Authority and printed the rest of the paper. It was only on the next day, January 12, that we received a communication from the Competent Authority about

the manner in which the censorship would operate. The letter dated January 11 read:

Further to my letter of 10th January, 1977, you are hereby notified that all news items, articles and pictures should be submitted to me in duplicate, before publication.

These could be submitted to me at the places mentioned below: Mondays through Friday—9.00 a.m. to 3.00 p.m.—Department of Information, 7, Sir Baron Jayatileke Mawatha, Colombo-1. 3.00 p.m. to 10.00 p.m. at Department of Information, Colombo-1 or at the Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation, Colombo 7. Saturday and Sunday—9.00 a.m. to 9.00 p.m. at Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation, Colombo 7.

Please inform me immediately if you require these times to be changed.

The letter of January 10 referred to was attached to this letter and it set out the DIRECTIONS GIVEN UNDER PARAGRAPH (1) OF REGULATION 14 OF THE EMERGENCY (MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS AND POWERS) REGULATIONS, NO. 12 OF 1976, BY THE COMPETENT AUTHORITY APPOINTED FOR THE PURPOSE OF THAT REGULATION.

THE DIRECTIONS are set out below together with the Schedule.

(1) No person shall publish any such document, as is described in the Schedule hereto—

(a) unless it has first been passed for publication by a Competent Authority; and

(b) except in the form in which it has been so passed.

(2) A person shall, before publishing any such document, as is described in the Schedule hereto submit it to, or exhibit it before, a Competent Authority for the purpose of having it passed for publication.

(3) In these directions—

"Competent Authority" means a Competent Authority appointed for the purpose of regulation 14 of the Emergency (Miscellaneous Provisions and Powers) Regulations, No. 12 of 1976; and

"document" includes any newspaper, journal magazine, pam-

phlet, poster or other publication.

Schedule

Any document containing news, comment, opinion, pictorial representation, photograph or other matter relating to:

- (a) the activity of any person or group of person engaged or employed in an essential service;
- (b) Any trade union activity in an essential service; or
- (c) Any action taken by the relevant authorities to maintain an essential service.

In the envelope in which we received the letters of Jan. 10 and Jan. 11, was another letter which read as follows:

I wish to bring to your attention that page proofs of all pages of all editions (provincial, city & others) of your publication should be forwarded for approval before they are published, if they carry any alterations or additions to pages already approved.

Please be good enough to instruct your staff to see that this requirement is strictly adhered to.

This made it clear that the whole paper, every page of it in page-proof form had to be submitted to the Competent Authority (CA). There was no ambiguity in the original Directions, if one read them carefully.

We therefore submitted the already-printed paper, datelined January 15, to the Competent Authority. We did so with trepidation even though we had withdrawn articles which we thought might be "objectionable". Any cut by the CA would mean that the entire issue would have to be scrapped. But the CA passed the copy.

On January 17, a further communication was received from the CA. It read:

Directions given under paragraph (1) of regulation 14 of the Emergency (Miscellaneous Provisions and Powers) Regulations, No. 1 of 1977, by the Competent Authority appointed for the purpose of that regulation.

THIS ISSUE of *Tribune* of January 15 (Nos 30 & 31), of January 22 (No 32) and January 29 (No 33) were scrutinised and approved by the CA. Vis a vis our issues of the 15th and 22nd of January, we did not submit any articles which

though the CA might find 'objectionable'. With the strike over on January 17/18, we submitted the Editor's Notebook, dated January 9, (and which had been intended for the issue of January 15 and which we had withdrawn) to the CA on January 25 (having with us three to four pages of alternate non-objectionable matter) to substitute for these pages if the CA imposed any cuts. We were surprised when the whole of article was okayed by the CA without a cut, and it was this piece that appeared in our issue of January 29 (No. 34). We had thought that many portions in that article would be 'cut', and it is necessary to place on record that the article was approved without any cuts or changes. It may be that the tensions stemming from the strike had subsided and that such comment had become permissible. (We were sorry that we had not submitted this piece contemporaneously on January 11 to know how the CA would have reacted then.)

The last issue, of *Tribune*, February 5 (Vol. 21, No. 35), was prepared for submission to the CA on January 31 or February 1 because we had wanted to catch up with our printing schedules. The whole paper in page proof was ready on January 31 to be submitted to the CA on the next day. But it was announced late in the evening of January 31 that the Censorship was lifted. It was therefore not necessary to submit the issue to the CA. In that issue, the *Confidentially* column (originally written for the issue of January 15) was part of page-proofs to be submitted to the CA, and one does not know how he would have reacted on February 1. The *Editor's Notebook*, last week, was a continuation of the Notes started on January 9, and the subsequent daily notes maintained until the censorship was lifted will be published in the *Tribune* in the coming weeks.

The three weeks of censorship was an exhilarating experience. During the emergency of 1971, the Competent Authority insisted on scrutinising only articles and comments which related to the "insurgency". Furthermore, the CA, then, had delegated his authority to a number of assistants who looked through

the manuscripts and okayed them (or cut them, or withheld them) most expeditiously. This "insurgency" censorship had gone on for a long time—nearly six months, if we remember right—but after the tense eight or nine weeks had passed, the whole business had become a routine matter.

But, the three weeks of censorship this time was a more memorable event. The CA was a single entity and he (for reasons not disclosed to the press or the public) did not delegate authority to any assistants. One can only venture to guess that the Government wanted a single individual to discharge the functions of a Censor because there is no doubt that a consistent and uniform policy could be pursued only by one individual. Whoever had decreed that one single individual had the job of approving every single page of the printed word in the fourth estate in Sri Lanka did not foresee or appreciate the burdens that would be cast upon this single individual.

To Mr. Ridgeway Tillekeratne's credit, it must be said, he shouldered this burden with stoic calm and supreme sangfroid. He was always sweetness itself on the phone even after 18 hours of continuous work (looking at everything from advertisements—no doubt to prevent obituary notices of D.E.M.O'cracy—to 'spores' pages, foreign news, everything in fact). *Tribune* had many fears and apprehensions about how the CA would deal with us. It must be recalled that *Tribune* had carried comments and articles which had been critical of the SLBC and more especially about the mess-up in the Press Centre during the Non-aligned. And the boss of the SLBC and the Press Centre was (and is) Mr. Ridgeway Tillekeratne.

Knowing the ways of bureaucracy and bureaucratic power in Sri Lanka in recent years, we had thought that the CA, Mr. Ridgeway Tillekeratne, would "take it out of us" in the way other bureaucrats do and have done. To our surprise, he did not. He was quite "understanding" about our produ-

cing a fully (uncensored) printed paper three days after the Censorship Law had been brought into force, and he gave us the okay. *Tribune*, however, did not test him by submitting any might-be objectionable articles until the strike was well and truly over.

But delays were inevitable and they did occur—what with the morning and evening dailies crowding on the CA's time—*Tribune* cannot grumble. Our issues of January 22 and 29, however, were on schedule. In this connection, it would be pertinent to recall that the supreme British method of invisible censorship is DELAY. We cannot remember whose autobiography or memoir it was that mentioned that in the UK the Government had the right to issue a D-NOTICE to the BBC to stop any news or comment being put on the air. D meant delay, but the item might be delayed for one hour, one day, one week, one month, one year, and may be for ever. Britain prides itself on freedom of expression and communication, but the D-NOTICE is the most effective censorship ever conceived. News or Comment becomes "dead" if delayed for one hour or one day. In Sri Lanka, there is no infrastructural machinery to operate a D-NOTICE. That is why the slightest emergency calls for the most heavy-handed Censorship Laws.

THE TOPIC of the day in political circles, during the last few days, has been speculation as to how the Government will take the CP statement on the strikes. The CP statement is noteworthy for the following points: (1) the CP justified the strikes as being a natural and spontaneous outbreak because of insufferable economic conditions too long endured by the people; (2) the CP said that strikes were not "politically motivated" to topple the government; (3) the CP stated that it was justified in participating in the strikes; (4) the CP statement insisted that the government should and must negotiate with "strikers"; (5) the CP reiterated the oft-repeated dictum that the UNP (and Reaction) was the main enemy and that

It was necessary to unite all progressives to defeat the UNP; (6) the CP was sharply critical of the LSSP in a reply to the LSSP criticisms of the CP during and after the strike; and (7) the CP laid down in the statement the minimum on which a new Common Programme could be hammered out between the SLFP and the CP for the next elections.

The CP, it will be seen, has differed sharply from the Prime Minister and the SLFP on one main issue, that the strikes were politically-motivated to topple the Government. *Tribune*, (vide issue of January 29th) did not go so far as the PM, but believed and still believes that the Railway and subsequent strikes were politically-motivated by those who wanted to open a dialogue with the Government, (and not to topple it) from a position of strength: that these groups and parties wanted the confrontation to come to a culmination before the campaign for the next General Elections got under way. There is no doubt, however, that the CP was not part of any "conspiracy" even to start strikes which would lead to a political dialogue. The CP was obsessed with the idea that "workers" had gone on strike that the CP thought it was their proletarian duty to support the strikes and participate in them.

How the PM and the SLFP will look on the CP statement is yet uncertain. The CP has certainly taken high ground both with regard to the SLFP as well as the LSSP. Will the SLFP be tempted to throw the CP out of the Government and end the United Front? Or will the SLFP decide to forget the whole matter and take up the position that it was possible for "friends" to "disagree". The statement makes it clear that the CP is in no mood to quit the Government unilaterally and break up the United Front. But, it does seem willing to take the risk of being thrown out by the SLFP. How calculated is the risk? Will the SLFP risk a break and go-it-alone at the Elections?

In the meantime, there is also much speculation about what the SLFP will do about the four dissident SLFP MPs. These gentlemen have not attended any of the Parliamentary Party group meetings; and though the CP members did not attend the last group meeting, Mr. Pieter Keuneman is reported

to have attended a Sectoral Committee meeting (he had not attended Cabinet Meetings after the mini-confrontation between the CP and SLFP had hotted up during the strike). There are rumours that the dissidents, together with other dissatisfied and frustrated elements in the SLFP, may form a new Party, but at the moment they are only having closed-door meetings.

What the immediate future has in store is hard to envisage or anticipate. But there is no doubt that political climate is beginning to get "hot". This is not merely because of the impending General Elections but also because of the worsening economic situation. It is funny that State marketing agencies should take pride in announcing the sale of coconuts at 85 cents each when just three years ago a coconut was considered expensive at thirty or forty cents each. The ordinary householder's budget is based on a price index with coconuts ranging from ten to twenty cents each. For a long time now, politicians and bureaucrats have blamed the "drought" for the shortfall in coconut production. *The Tribune* however, had spotlighted a number of reasons for the shortfall and three years ago had predicted that if certain trends were not reversed, this island would have to import coconuts for domestic purposes.

In a speech, recently, the PM called upon the people (a) not to pluck and sell kurumbas; (b) not to cut down the leaves from the coconut trees; and (c) not to cut down the trees for timber or firewood. She wanted more trees planted and fertiliser applied to ensure greater production. *Tribune* has always said this (and more) for over three years, and it heartening that the Prime Minister should have thought it necessary to tell the people what we have been saying for a long time. Mere sermons will not help to remedy matters: the root cause for the malady must be removed. Politicians, bureaucrats and even the "masses", must realise that true Land Reform is not mere land distribution and fragmentation but a purposeful programme of land utilisation so as to ensure greater production. In Sri Lanka, as we have said so often in these columns, the cart has been put before the horse, and our Land

Reform took over land and distributed it without any concrete, workable and practical plans to ensure the proper utilisation of the lands so taken over. Now, not to mix our metaphors, after the horses have bolted from the stables, our policy makers and administrators are wanting to bolt the stable doors, and are proclaiming grandiose schemes and plans to bring about the millennium.

But, coconuts continue to sell at anything from Rs. 1.00 to Rs. 1.40 each in the city of Colombo. Very soon they will fetch Rs. 2.00 each. The governmental agencies and the goyisalas have, so far, only a small quantity for sale each day, at 82 or 85 cents each in Colombo and some of the suburbs. But the early birds at these places get the nuts even though the number of person can get is restricted. It is irony of the highest order that people have to queue up to buy a rationed quota of coconuts at unbelievable and unconscionable prices in a land where coconuts (only a few years back) were plentiful and were available at prices within the means of ordinary people. The current propaganda barrage claiming the sale of coconuts at 85 cents each, by the grace of the National Livestock Board, is probably nothing more than a spectacular gimmick similar to the packeted meat (boneless) gimmick during the Non-aligned Conference in Colombo and in a few selected suburbs.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

BY KAUTILIYA

- Carter Policies
- Diego Garcia

A NEW ERA seems to have dawned in regard to America's relations with foreign countries. President Carter, as indicated by him during his campaign, has made it his first priority to establish closer relations with the "traditional" allies of the USA, viz. the big affluent capitalist countries of Western Europe and Japan. He sent his Vice-President, Mondale, within a fortnight of his assumption of office, on a trip round these countries to explain

the basic priorities of the Carter administration. In reality, there is no basic change of a fundamental nature in US policy towards these countries, but during the Kissinger era the US had taken many of these countries by surprise by the measures Nixon and Ford had taken to secure greater detente with Russia and China. There were many occasions when these "traditional allies" of the US had felt that the US had not "consulted" with them on several international problems of consequence. Ford, latterly, had tried to remedy this tilt in US diplomacy, but that did not prevent Carter from making a campaign issue of the fact that these allies of the US had become resentful of Kissinger's cavalierly big brother attitudes to powerful (economically) countries like West Germany and Japan.

Vice-president Mondale was well received in these countries and he assured them that US would not take any major step in dealings with the communist world or the third world without prior consultation with her longstanding allies whose economic systems and political ideologies had kept them together. Mondale had also made it a point to stress that the three economic giants of the capitalist world—the USA, West Germany—and Japan—had a special responsibility to usher in a new international economic order (no doubt in the image of their own systems) that would reduce poverty and the inequalities in the world.

It must also be noted that the statements made by the new Secretary of State, Cyrus Vance, on a number of topical matters of international significance are indications that a new wind seems to be coming out of the USA. At a press conference in Washington, on January 31, Vance set out the guidelines which would motivate the foreign policies of the Carter administration. For the record, it is worthwhile reproducing some of the highlights from this press conference (as contained in a USIS release).

SECRETARY OF STATE VANCE has pledged that the United States government "will speak frankly about injustices both at home and abroad" when it sees threats to human rights. On human rights issues, he said January 31 at his first news conference, "we do not intend to be strident

or polemical. But we do believe an abiding respect for human rights is a human value of fundamental importance and that it must be nourished." Mr. Vance told a questioner that he did not agree with the position of his predecessor, Henry A. Kissinger, that to criticize other governments publicly for violating human rights would be counter-productive. "No, I do not share that view," Mr. Vance said. "There will be times when we feel it appropriate and necessary to speak out, and there will be other times when we do not."

Mr. Vance spoke to the press for forty minutes during which time he announced he would go to Moscow in March for Strategic Arms Limitation Talks. (It was later decided that he will go to Moscow on March 28). He told questioners that he did not think that critical statements by the United States on human rights issues in the Soviet Union would hamper negotiations with Moscow on international and bilateral matters.

In his wide-ranging press session, Mr. Vance announced also that the Carter Administration "will strongly support the repeal of the Byrd amendment," legislation under which the United States imports chrome from Rhodesia.

Mr. Vance warned that "Rhodesian authorities should understand clearly that under no circumstances can they count on any form of American assistance in their efforts to prevent majority rule in Rhodesia."

Mr. Vance, who will visit six nations in the Middle East starting February 14, emphasized that it is "critically important that progress be made this year" on an Arab-Israeli settlement. He said he would set no specific deadline for reconvening the Geneva Peace Conference on the Middle East, but he emphasized it should be done in 1977. If the Middle East problem is "allowed to drag out, and we are not at a conference, all kinds of disruptive factors may occur," he warned, adding, however, that while it is "incumbent that we proceed as fast as we properly can, it would be foolhardy" to hold a conference "until the ground has been thoroughly explored." Mr. Vance broke other new ground for the Carter Administration by disclosing that

"later this week" the United States will announce the name of the person "we will be sending" to Greece, Turkey and Cyprus to "discuss bilateral relations and also to examine the Cypriot problem itself."

As for Latin American affairs, Mr. Vance reaffirmed a position he had taken at his confirmation hearings earlier this month that he hoped "there would be indications" that the Cubans are "anxious and willing to live within the system of nations, and if that were the case," then he "hoped we could bring the process of moving towards normalisation." He was asked if the removal of Cuban troops from Angola was a prerequisite for normalization of US-Havana relations. "With respect to the presence of Cuban troops in Angola," Mr. Vance answered, "the presence of any outside forces is not helpful to a peaceful solution." But he said that he thought that the Cuban presence in Angola "is a matter which should be settled by the Africans themselves." He said "I don't want to set up any pre-conditions at this point" about Angola and the possible normalization of Washington-Havana relations.

Other matters discussed by Mr. Vance were the Brazilian-West German nuclear plant deal and the French-Pakistani nuclear reprocessing transaction. Topics also included Vietnam, the People's Republic of China, State Department-Congressional relations, and Mr. Vance's plan for an "open approach" to the press.

The following points stressed by Vance during press conference reveal that the Carter administration is of to a good start on foreign policy matters.....

HUMAN RIGHTS—He said the U.S. Government "will couple what we say publicly" on human rights "with private conversation with various countries, and we hope that will strengthen the process of progress in that area." He asked if Washington would feel freer in condemning human rights violations in smaller countries than in criticizing Soviet practices. "No, I hope we will not have a double standard. So far I think that we have not," Mr. Vance said. In its first days in office the Carter Administration publicly accused

Czechoslovakia of violating the provisions of the 1975 Helsinki Agreement by detaining and harassing human rights activists. Following that statement of January 26, the State Department on January 27 said that if Moscow tried to silence the political dissident Andrei Sakharov such action would be in conflict "with accepted international standards of human rights". Mr. Vance told the news conference that he had not seen nor, therefore "cleared" the statement on Mr. Sakharov but that he has "responsibility" for the State Department and accepts the "responsibility fully" for the statement. Mr. Vance said he respected Mr. Sakharov "very deeply", including the dissident's "principles and his pursuit of those principles."

MOSCOW TRIP—Mr. Vance said he would announce the exact date of his visit to Moscow "later this week." The Secretary was asked if President Carter's recent statement that he did not want the new U.S. cruise missiles and the new Soviet backfire bomber to be stumbling blocks to a second Strategic Arms Limitation Agreement (S.A.L.T.) was advocating the two issues be side tracked and another S.A.L.T. accord be reached now. Mr. Vance replied that Mr. Carter "was not suggesting they be put aside." He said the President "was suggesting that he did not want to see the negotiations fall apart if resolution could not be reached at this time on those two issues." Mr. Vance said he was "sure that there will be an attempt to resolve" the two issues when the Carter Administration starts negotiations with Moscow. Answering another question, Mr. Vance said it was not inconsistent for the Carter Administration to urge Senate ratification of two already-negotiated treaties with Moscow setting a 150-kiloton limit on underground nuclear explosions while at the same time the administration has the objective of agreement to stop all testing. He said the two treaties now before the Senate are "stepping stones on the road to the ultimate objective which is a complete cessation of testing, and I do not believe that there is any inconsistency."

MIDDLE EAST—After emphasizing that it is "proper and reasonable to say" that there should

be a peace conference "in 1977," Mr. Vance was questioned whether he had any ideas on how to deal with the Palestinian issue. He acknowledged that "I do have some thoughts on this," but he said that "I prefer not to talk about them at this time." The new Secretary of State said that the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) "up to this point has refused to recognize the right of Israel to exist" or to accept the "framework for negotiations" under United Nations Security Council Resolution 242 and 338. "Under these circumstances," Mr. Vance said, "it is difficult to see how progress can be made." But he quickly added that "in saying this, however, I want to emphasize that we continue to believe that the recognition of the legitimate interests of the Palestinian people will be critical to a settlement." He said that "there are a number of views held by the parties as to how one might address" the Palestinian issue and that "this is one of the subjects...I expect to discuss with the leaders of the various countries when I go to the Middle East." Mr. Vance was asked if he or one of his staff members expects to speak to Palestinian representatives on the week-long trip. "Not at this time, as long as the circumstances are as I have indicated," Mr. Vance said.

ARAB BOYCOTT—The Secretary said that "I fully support the legislation which is currently on the books" in the United States dealing with the matter of Arab boycotts of firms doing business with Israel. He said he expects to testify February 28 at a Senate hearing on new legislation and believes that "by that time we will have a government-wide position which I will be prepared to enumerate."

NUCLEAR SALES—The United States, Mr. Vance said, wants to "work harmoniously" with Brazil and West Germany in seeing whether or not a way can be found to prevent the construction of nuclear reprocessing plants provided for in a deal Brazil signed in 1975 to receive West German reprocessing technology and equipment. "The concern which the United States has expressed with respect to that transaction reflects the general concern we have on the whole problem of the spread of nuclear weapons," he said. He

said "we have discussed the matter" with the West Germans and have "begun to discuss" it with the Brazilians. Noting that "we are very fresh in office," he said, he hoped "very much" that Brazil and West Germany would not go ahead with implementing the transaction "until we have had a chance to further discuss the question of what alternatives there are to proceeding" with it. He said that U.S. concern about nuclear proliferation "applies across the board and not to just one or two countries" and Washington hopes that in the case of the French agreement to sell a reprocessing plant to Pakistan that "ways could be found not to proceed."

ARMS SALES—Mr. Vance said Washington is "committed to a basic principle to find a way to reduce the sale of arms" abroad not only by the United States "but by other nations." He said it was "possible to make progress towards that goal but that it would not "be easy." Mr. Vance said "we as the largest seller of arms have a responsibility to determine what our own policy will be and having done that to work with other nations to see whether they will work with us in developing programs and policies." The Carter Administration has under consideration, he said, "whether or not it would be constructive to issue regulations which would require any arms manufacturer in the United States" to receive State Department permission before the manufacturer even approaches other countries to make arms deals.

He told a questioner that a mutual arms supply cutback with the Soviet Union in the Middle East was a "constructive" idea but that he doubted progress could be made in that respect "until you get a political settlement in the region. He set two standards for the U.S. supply of weapons to the area. First, he said, the "arms must satisfy, or must be fitted to, the legitimate security needs of the country concerned." Second, he said, "they must be looked at with respect to their effect on the overall situation with respect to peace in the Middle East."

INVITATIONS—Mr. Vance said that when he goes to the Middle East next month he "would expect that we would extend in-

invitations to all of the leaders to meet" with President Carter to the United States. The invitations would include one to Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, he said a questioner.

RHODESIA—Mr. Vance was asked if he thought that Rhodesia would have to negotiate with black nationalists for a transition to majority rule if pressed to do so by South Africa. "I don't think it really is quite that simple", he replied. However, he said "South Africa can play a very important role in this area. We have been in constant communication with the South Africans and will continue to do so." He said, "we very much regret that efforts to reach a satisfactory negotiated settlement to the Rhodesian problem have, for the moment at least, been dealt a serious blow" by the position announced by Ian Smith. The Smith stance, he said, "has resulted in a new and more dangerous situation regarding prospects for peace in southern Rhodesia." Mr. Vance said that the Smith "so-called internal solution" for Rhodesia "will not produce a peaceful settlement, and, therefore will not have the support of the United States." He said "yes" when asked if the Geneva Conference is still the proper forum for black-white negotiations on Rhodesia's future. Asked if Washington would send a special emissary to southern Africa he said "I do not have any final conclusion in my own mind. I want to think about the problem and study it." He said he wanted to get the views of Andrew Young, the U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, when the Ambassador returns from his trip to Tanzania and Nigeria. But Mr. Vance emphasized the US view that "in so far as the southern Rhodesian problem is concerned the British Government properly is taking the leading role. We will support the British Government in this effort."

CYPRUS—Secretary Vance said he was "encouraged" by the fact that Archbishop Makarios, President of Cyprus, had met for the first time in 15 years with Rauf Denkash, the Turkish Cypriot leader. He said the results of the January 27 meeting "seemed to be generally constructive." "The working out of a (Cyprus) settlement is going to be immensely complicated and very difficult, but at

least we now have the first step having been taken," Mr. Vance said. He vowed that the United States "will do everything that we can to help facilitate such a settlement."

VIETNAM—Mr. Vance reaffirmed a position he had expressed earlier this month that "it was in the interest" of the United States and Vietnam "to proceed towards normalization of relations. We hope we will be able to start that process in the near future," he said. But he emphasized that he hoped the issue of seating Vietnam in the U.N. "would not be raised until we have had a chance to start our discussions with respect to normalization."

PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA—He said "I do support strongly the normalization of relations" between Washington and Peking. He said the matter of pace and mode is "under intensive review" in Washington, and "I would hope we could complete that review in the not too distant future." He reaffirmed U.S. dedication to the principles of the U.S.-Chinese Shanghai Communiqué.

REPUBLIC OF KOREA—Reporters questioned Mr. Vance about whether Washington plans to put pressure on South Korea to improve the human rights situation there. "The question of human rights is obviously one we will be discussing with the Koreans. I think I should say nothing more at this point," he replied.

PRESS RELATIONS—Mr. Vance said he intends to have an "open press conference at least once a month" to explain the foreign policy objectives of the Carter Administration and "as much as possible how we intend to proceed in meeting those objectives." He said that when he goes on overseas trips he intends to speak to the press "on the record in almost all cases."

STATEMENTS by Carter, Mondale, Vance and Andrew Young on a number of matters reveal that there is a definite attempt to break away from the cold war policies first initiated by Truman and made into a messianic global ideology (in theory and practice) by John Foster Dulles during the Eisenhower administration and which was followed by Kennedy, Johnson,

Nixon and Ford (with recognisable and substantial weakening in the detente era of Kissinger). In Japan, Mondale had reiterated what Carter had said that the US would phase out and withdraw (gradually albeit) American troops in South Vietnam. While it is true that Mondale had assured them that the phasing out would be done in consultation with US allies in the region, Mondale had made it clear that US troops would be withdrawn from South Korea and that they would not be posted in any other places like Guam or Okinawa. The Carter administration will continue to be an Asia-Pacific Power, Mondale had said, but without committing American troops in Asia.

In regard to Vietnam, the Carter administration is likely to soft-peddle the issue about information about the Americans "missing" in the war and seek normalisation of relations without being completely inhibited by this problem. There are many indications that the Carter administration has taken steps to usher in a detente with Vietnam. Many international agencies in which the US has major influence, like the World Bank, have already sent teams to Vietnam to find out what kind of aid and collaboration would be possible with the new Socialist Republic of Vietnam. Carter spokesmen have also not made any categorical statements about clause 721 of the Paris Agreement by which the US had agreed to help Vietnam rehabilitate its "war damage" to the tune of a few billion dollars. (This is a tricky matter now because the US Congress will not vote the necessary funds if it was made to appear that the US was paying disguised "reparations" as the defeated country held responsible for causing the war. This offer of aid was really made to persuade Hanoi to come to terms with Saigon, but the complete and total collapse of the Saigon regime has put a different complexion on the matter).

Another matter of startling significance is the statement made in Tanzania by Andrew Young, the new UN Ambassador of the USA, that the Whites in Southern Africa were seeking to engineer a clash between the super-powers by "luring" Cuban troops into Mozambique and thereby making

the US to send troops to area. Vance had already made it clear that the US would not insist, as Ford and Kissinger had done, that Cuban troops had to be withdrawn from Angola (and Africa) before the US normalised relations with Cuba. Andrew Young's statement goes one step further and makes it clear to the Whites in South Africa that the US will not pull their chestnuts out of the fire because of the cold war slogan of the threat of "communism". The Carter Administration has made it clear that it was for Majority Rule in Southern Africa, but that it only wants to help towards bringing this about through peaceful means.

WITH THIS BACKGROUND, there is a growing hope in Sri Lanka that the new Carter administration would spell out a new policy towards the question of Diego Garcia. The Indian Ocean Peace Zone proposal was first formulated by Mrs. Bandaranaike and has now found acceptance not only in the nonaligned world but in the UN itself. One of the major obstacles towards the achievement of the peace zone is presence of foreign bases, and the US base Diego Garcia has become symbolic because of the plan to expand and extend its facilities and offensive potentialities.

Diego Garcia, lying in the heart of the Indian Ocean and half-way between the US communication centre at North-West Cape in Western Australia and the Kangnew base near Asmara in Ethiopia is, therefore, of crucial importance for the success of the American naval strategy in the Indian Ocean. It is located almost midway between Mauritius and India, its distance from Kanya Kumari (Cape Comorin) is 1,200 miles. From Diego Garcia, Seychelles is 1,500 miles; Dar-es-Salam (Tanzania) 2,350 miles; Aden (South Yemen) 2,500 miles; Bahrain 2,900 miles; Cape 1,750 miles.

It is interesting to recall that in his testimony on oath before the US House of Representatives Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Near East and South Asia, Rear Admiral General Rocque, former Director of the Navy Strategic Planning, said on March 14, 1973: "The Navy began looking for post Vietnam missions with which to occupy

itself—we are kind of running out of commitments and if we could make a commitment out of Diego Garcia as permanent place to defend, we could then rationalise coming to Congress for a permanent Navy in the Indian Ocean. The name of the game is 'The Russians are coming'."

The question today is whether this cold war battle-cry "the Russians are coming" will swerve the Carter administration from the foreign policy postures it has adopted.

While the Pentagon, according to the testimony of officials before the Subcommittee, has everything ready to build in Diego Garcia a "multipurpose base capable of launching air, ground and submarine operations", the US and its NATO allies continue with their assertions about "growing Soviet presence" in the Indian Ocean.

This excuse becomes however untenable when one takes into consideration the statement, in March 1974, of Seymour Weiss, Director of the US Bureau of Politico-Military Affairs, before the same Subcommittee that the US would have gone ahead with the Diego Garcia base expansion even if there were no Soviet presence in the Indian Ocean "without any qualification whatsoever."

Cold war imperatives were the prime cause of US desire to make Diego Garcia a farewell base.

There is no doubt about the economic importance of Indian Ocean region to the US and other Western industrial countries. The US is totally dependent on the Indian Ocean States for the supply of 20 out of 40 strategically important raw materials. It meets 85 per cent of its natural rubber and 80 per cent of tin needs from the South-east Asian nations. While the US oil industry with an investment of 1,500 million dollars has extracted a profit of 12,000 million dollars during the last twenty years from the Persian-Gulf-Indian-Ocean region, American private capital investment in the area amounts to about 10,000 million dollars, which brings handsome profits to the American coffers every year.

The US investment in Australia alone reached the figure of 5,000

million dollars already in 1971. Besides, America has substantial investment in Malaysia's chemical petroleum and rubber tyre industries. In Indonesia, America's Caltex alone controls 70 per cent of its oil industry, and there is huge American capital investment in Indonesia's mining, forestry, fisheries, sugar and general manufacturing industries.

The Indian Ocean region, according to a West German expert on Indian Ocean affairs, is important to the entire West from the economic point of view. He stated that apart from its enormous dependence on Persian Gulf oil, Europe still needs many raw materials from the Indian Ocean countries. Zambia ships annually nearly 50 per cent of its half-a-billion dollar worth of copper through the Indian Ocean ports. Malaysia's tin, rubber, Indian and Bangladesh's jute, and tea from India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and East Africa, all go to the United Kingdom. Japan and many European countries import iron ore and manganese from India.

Only four out of five ASEAN countries, namely, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines and Thailand, produce 85 per cent of the world's natural rubber, 98 per cent of abac fibre, 84 per cent of coconut products; 60 per cent of tin, and copra about 60 per cent of hard-wood timber and spices, and they also handle 60 per cent of the international trade of rice.

An overall estimate shows that the Indian Ocean region contains 90 per cent of the world's natural rubber, tin, jute and tea, and abounds in cobalt, copper, manganese ore, silver, salt, sulphur and coal. Besides, the region has about 60 per cent of the world's oil reserves, 98 per cent of the world's supply of diamonds, 60 per cent of the uranium and 40 per cent of the gold.

WHILST THE INDIAN OCEAN region is important to the US and the industrialised countries of the West, it is even more important to the littoral countries to safeguard and advance their sovereignty, independence and economic integrity. The economic development of the Indian Ocean region in the interests

of the littoral states would be possible only if it becomes a zone of peace and is no longer an arena for the super-powers and big powers to test their respective military strength through mini-confrontations from time to time.

Countries like Sri Lanka and the other littoral countries cannot compel the withdrawal of warships of the big powers from the Indian Ocean. Neither Sri Lanka nor even the Non-aligned Movement can wish away the bases in the region. The

big powers and super powers have to get together and agree to quit the Indian Ocean and dismantle the bases. It is time the US and other countries realised that the days of gun-boat diplomacy are over and the economic potential of the Indian Ocean region can be better "exploited" in peace, in joint collaboration (and not economic domination)—without bases like Diego Garcia.

If the Carter administration is able to overcome the cold

war strategies and practices of the Pentagon and the pressures of arms-manufacturers' sales lobby (with powerful tentacles reaching out into every part of the Legislature and Administration of the US) and is able to initiate policies to reverse US military commitments since the end of World War Two, there is no doubt that a new era will dawn in international relations. If the US takes positive steps in this direction there is no doubt that other nations, however powerful, will be compelled to follow.

SRI LANKA CHRONICLE

Jan. 27 — Feb. 1

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—Dinamita;
LD—Lankadipa; VK—Virakesari; ATH—Aththa;
SM—Silumina; SLD—Sri Lankadipa; JD—Janadina.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 27: The government of India has promised assistance to develop our Ayurveda system of medicine on a government-to-government basis, following official talks Deputy Minister of Health; Mr. Rajah Welegama had with his Indian counterpart in New Delhi last week; the Indian government has agreed to release some of their leading experts in traditional medicine to train young Ayurveda Physicians here and also help conduct research at Nawinna; under the exchange programme India will train some of our physicians in the best known Ayurveda institutions in that country. The rate at which the Central Bank lends money to the commercial banks—the bank rate—was increased from 6½% to 8½% yesterday. The Chairman of the Bank of Ceylon said that the bank did not intend to pass on the increased lending rates to its borrowers. Seven thousand seven hundred and fifty tons of flour worth 1,245,269 Australian dollars were handed over to the Minister of Food, Small Industries and Co-operatives by the Australian High Commissioner yesterday in a brief ceremony at the Colombo Harbour. The country's production of Handloom textiles estimated to be around 96 million yards will reach the consumer at reasonable prices through 500 sales outlets to be set up shortly; a spokesman of the Marketing Services said that the setting up of these outlets would not only bring down the prices of handloom textiles but there would be a general standardisation of prices in all parts of the country. The Motor Traffic Department made a profit of Rs. 40 million last year as compared to Rs. 30.7 million in 1975—CDN. The Paddy Marketing Board will commission four more paddy mill stores this year: the first at Hessala will be opened by the PM on February 5; three others, will be set up at Galagana, Inginiyagala and Polonnaruwa respectively. The new direct Air Ceylon Service

Colombo-Delhi was inaugurated on Tuesday. A decision on the re-opening of the University of Sri Lanka is expected to be taken at a Cabinet meeting today—CDM. The UNP with Mr. Thondaman's help is going to the estates and is engaged in the task of persuading people in the estates which have already come under the land distribution scheme; not to move from there; this is a hindrance to the implementation of Land Reform legislation, hence cannot be tolerated said the Minister of Agriculture and Lands—VK. Sri Lanka has out-done all countries in South and South East Asia in Population control; according to a Colombo Plan publication, Sri Lanka has been able to reduce her population growth rate to the remarkably low rate of 1.8 from 2.2 which had stood at the 1971 census. The Minister of Education has appointed a five-member committee headed by former Chief Justice, Mr. G. P. A. Silva; to go into student welfare problems in the University of Sri Lanka and to report to him on measures to remedy them; he also asked the committee to let him have the report within three months. The Fisheries Department will set up a fish breeding centre at Pambale in the Chilaw District under its inland fisheries programme next month; the centre which is estimated to cost Rs. 634,000 is the tenth in the series of 19 such centres to be set up in the different parts of the country. Police have rounded up nearly 130 beggars during the first 25 days this year in its operation to rid the city of beggars. The Sri Lanka Middle East Shipping Conference has decided to extend the period of validity of the promotional freight rates offered for the carriage of a number of non-traditional exports from this country; for Middle East destinations—CO.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 28: The PM will shortly introduce a bill in the NSA to provide an institutional framework for participation of people in development planning at the local and regional level; the bill will give legal sanction for the establishment of Divisional Development Councils and Development Co-operative Societies and other collective forms of organisation. The government has appointed a five member committee headed by Mr. G. P. A. Silva to study and report on the welfare problems of university students. The University of Sri Lanka is likely to reopen its six campuses in the first or second week of February; however it is learnt that no definite date has yet been fixed; the education authorities are still taking stock of the food and transport facilities available before arriving at a final date. The CTB has begun conducting inquiries

into a number of acts of sabotage alleged to have been committed during the recent strike: the Chairman of the CTB, said yesterday that a number of employees are interdicted for committing acts of sabotage on CTB vehicles and property during and prior to the strike—CDN. A large scale racket in the operation of 'non-user' vehicles has been detected by the police acting in consultation with the Department of Motor Traffic: the department found that many owners of old vehicles who had garaged their vehicles after obtaining non user permits had put these vehicles into use again without informing the department: after obtaining these permits the owners are exempt from revenue licenses in respect of the vehicles which are garaged. Scene-of-crime officers of the Government Analyst's Department will operate from special provincial offices to be set up shortly: these officers will assist the police in scientific investigations of all cases of murders, burglaries, rape, hold-ups and other crimes requiring expert evidence: this was decided yesterday at a conference of officials of the Government Analyst's Department and the police. Sri Lanka teas are now riding on the crest of a boom with very few varieties being available below Rs. 14 a kilo at this week's auctions. Parents of children seeking admission to many popular government schools are perturbed by the increasingly large donations demanded by school heads: parents complain that some principals refuse to admit children unless the 'donation' is paid or unless they purchase furniture from dealers named by the principal—CDM. A giant installation which could be a potential danger to life and property is now taking shape in the heart of Colombo: despite fears expressed from many quarters and the refusal of permission by the Colombo Municipal Council, the Ceylon Petroleum Corporation is planning to go ahead with the building of a 20-ton capacity highly inflammable Low Pressure Gas Storage Tank at Gas Works Street Pettah. Sri Lankans employed abroad will be able to open their foreign exchange accounts here from next week: this is in keeping with a proposal made by the Minister of Finance in his last budget speech. The government has granted Rs. 50,000 to the Coconut Fibre Miller's Association to help revive some of the mills in the fibre producing areas of the country. The Colombo Municipal Council has launched a 'round the clock' Scavenging service in the city: the Mayor's optimistic about the new scheme and says that Colombo will soon be one of the tidiest cities in the world—CO.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 29: The National Livestock Development Board will supply the Marketing Department and Marketed with around two million coconuts a month from February 1: yesterday 25,000 nuts were delivered for sale at the Mahajana Pota: The present wholesale market price of unselected coconut is in the region of Rs. 950 per thousand nuts but the livestock development Board has decided to supply the coconuts at a much lower rate so that the Marketing Commissioner could sell the better grades at around 85 cents a nut. The recent strike was a political coup aimed at overthrowing the government: the workers were used as political pawns and the government had to suppress it because it was not aimed at winning genuine political rights said the PM yesterday when speaking at a public meeting after the opening of the wall tile factory at Balangoda, set up in collaboration between the Ceramics Corporation and the Japanese firm of Danto Ltd. If the Ministry of Education had acted promptly on the Premawardene

committee report, which found that the President of the Peradeniya Campus, Prof. P. W. Vithanage, had forfeited the confidence of the student community in the Peradeniya Campus, the tragic incidents which resulted in the loss of the life of a student could have been avoided: this is stated in the finding of the Justice Wimalaratne Commission, which was discussed by the Ministers at last Thursday's meeting. Ample textiles will be available from February and every ration book holder will receive an allocation of three yards each, two yards of which will be imported material said the Chairman of Salu Sala, Mr. Pieter Keuneman attended the Cabinet sub-committee meeting on Health services which was held on Wednesday: he has not been attending cabinet meetings since the Government decided to declare the entire public sector an essential service early this month: the Central Committee of the Communist Party meets today to consider its attitude towards the opposition-sponsored no-confidence motion in the government expected to be debated in the NSA next month. The ban on public meetings in Colombo imposed early this month under the emergency has now been withdrawn—CDN. Eleven Tamil youths detained under Emergency Regulations, for four years without trial, were released on Thursday on Government orders: according to informed sources, 29 Tamil youths regarded as security risks by government were detained: almost all other Tamil Youths detained would be released in the next few weeks, sources said. The General Secretary of the Ceylon Federation of Labour, met the Commissioner of Prisons on Wednesday and assessed for himself the facilities made available to persons detained in connection with the recent strike: it is learnt that he was informed by the commissioner that no lawyers would be allowed to see the detenus: only blood relations would be allowed this facility. Pro-Government unions in the railways have asked the government to probe last Thursday's rail disaster at Haputale in which 16 persons were seriously injured: the train which left Colombo for Badulla was badly damaged when a number of goods wagons and passenger compartments broke their couplings and telescoped into each other. The Swedish government has accepted a recommendation by the Swedish International Development Authority to increase the grant aid to Sri Lanka by 40% in the Swedish fiscal year 1977/78. The LSSP had accused her of selling the country to the Japanese: she had not sold the country to any nation: the trips she had abroad were not pleasure trips: they resulted in bringing additional aid to Sri Lanka: this was said by the PM, when she spoke at a meeting held after she opened the wall tile factory at Balangoda recently. Poultry farmers are badly hit as a result of a shortage of poultry food: a half-hundred weight bag which cost Rs. 28.50 at the end of last December, today costs in the open Market about Rs. 40—CDM. All estate schools which have so far not been taken over by the state, will be taken over shortly: they number about 770: 1500 new teachers are to be appointed—VK.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 30: The Adoptions ordinance will be so amended to make it mandatory for courts to insist on a report from the commissioner of probation and child care services in all cases of applications for adoption of Sri Lanka children by foreigners: this decision was taken at a top level conference presided over by the Minister of Public Administration and Home Affairs on Friday. People receiving EPF refunds will

now have the option of having their cheques sent to the Bank of Ceylon or the People's Bank to open savings accounts without a cash deposit. Coconut consumption in Sri Lanka has increased by about 250 million nuts annually; but the production in the country is not keeping pace with this need, coconut producers have said that the government should take steps to curtail plucking of Kurumbas and allowing indiscriminate toddy-tapping. The Ceylon Tourist Board and the Crime Detective Bureau have designed an action plan which officials described 'as measures to safeguard Sri Lanka's Tourist image' in the wake of the alarming rate of thefts in five-star hotels and guests houses—50. The findings of the Wimalaratne report, which was discussed by the Ministers last Thursday have been sent to the Attorney General for necessary action. The report which has about a dozen chapters, is roughly divided into consideration of the background to the shooting on November 12 the inefficiency of the present university set up and legal problems, the inaction of the education Ministry, and its failure to act on the Premawardene committee report, the incident itself and police action, and some thoughts for the future. The 50 member strong Communist Party Central Committee began a crucial meeting yesterday reassessing the role of the party and its alliance with the SLFP in the light of the current development in the country: although the current thinking in sections of the SLFP and LSSP is that the CP will not break up its alliance with the freedom party, powerful groups in the CP hierarchy are strongly urging the party to pull out of the government: the real test of the CP position will come when the joint opposition motion of 'no confidence' comes up for debate, probably on February 17. The leader of the UNP yesterday sprang a surprise on the Party's members of parliament and electoral organisers when he called upon them to choose an election committee of ten members who will also be members of his "shadow cabinet" if the UNP is elected to power. No decision has yet been taken by the Ministry of Education on the recommendation of the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Sri Lanka, that the campuses reopen on January 31: this continued closure is causing great dismay among many parents—ST.

MONDAY, JANUARY 31: The results of the GCE (OL) and the NCGE examinations which 705,000 candidates sat will be released today by the examinations department, within three weeks of the end of the examination: the education Minister said yesterday this was a noteworthy achievement, particularly because the results are being released in record time, despite the recent strikes. Thultex, the popular sales outlet and the only such one for the entire island for the products of the Thulhiriya Textile Mills will not be opened again: it is reliably understood that special privileges and concessions given to the workers is one of the reasons for the closure: there is a serious shortage of textiles in the island mainly as a result of the drop in production at Thulhiriya: Mr. R. Premadasa, MP, and Chief Party Whip for the UNP will deputise for Mr. J. R. Jayewardene as Chairman of UNP election committee when the latter goes abroad shortly. The PM has called upon the people to refrain from cutting down coconut trees, young coconuts and tender leaves to help the country to get over the present shortfall in coconuts—CDM. The government has given the green light to the Ministry of Transport for the electrification of the Colombo suburban railway network: this is

bound to bring about a re-distribution of the commuter traffic flows and this would reduce the pressure on road passenger traffic. Thousands of Sri Lankan shareholders of rupee company estates taken over by the government have not been paid the compensation promised to them: most of them are white collar workers, widows and pensioners who have put their life's savings into companies and are now living a hand-to-mouth existence, as they do not get any income from their savings. The PM speaking at the opening of the 70 million Lanka Wall Tile Factory at Balangoda last Friday, outlined the Industrial Policy which the government would follow in future. The Vidyalankara Branch of the Sri Lanka University Clerical and Technical Officers Union has requested the Minister of Education to reopen immediately the university campuses closed after the Peradeniya Campus incidents—CDM. One of the leading members of the TULF Mr. Amirthalingam has said that the TULF has no secret agreement to postpone the elections and that it was engaged in the task of preparing for the forthcoming elections—VK.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 1: Should the University have double sessions or conduct vacation classes to cater to a bigger intake of students in 1979? The Education Ministry wants it so, but the University has said that it is not feasible: this is the problem now before the Education Ministry. If the University accepts the proposal the Ministry is willing to provide additional staff, equipment and other requisites: the University course for the additional students admitted could be supplemented with radio lessons, correspondence courses and seminars under the 'open University system'. The PM yesterday presided over a conference at "Temple Trees" which discussed the Justice Wimalaratne Report in regard to the recent Peradeniya Campus incidents. The government will persist in its efforts to push food production both through increased yields of land already under cultivation by double cropping and by opening up large extended of uncultivated lands particularly in areas coming under the Mahaweli diversion project. The censorship imposed since January 10 to news relating to strikes and the essential services ceased from yesterday. Banks have been instructed not to purchase personal foreign cheques without prior Central Bank authority: they are however allowed to purchase bank drafts and cheques of foreign firms and establishments: this is one of the steps taken by the Central Bank to check the spate of ruses adopted by local exporters to racketeer in foreign currencies. The NSA meets today at 2 P.m. The Colombo Fraud Bureau has warned the public against bogus firms and individuals who offer foreign employment through newspaper advertisements—CDN. Medical Officers continue to occupy the class I paying ward of the Colombo General Hospital and patients who seek admission there are being kept away. They moved in there during their Work-to-rule and it was expected that patients would once again be afforded the opportunity of being warded in the paying section. Parents of school children are perturbed at the cost of school books that has skyrocketed: many school children go to school without the essential books and other material because their parents are unable to afford them: for most of them the Free Education System has become unfree. A society for the abolition of the MP's Chit system has been formed. Dr. N. M. Perera, the LSSP leader and MP for Yatiyantota tops the list of members of the legislature eligible for a pension with 34 years service—CDM.

POINT OF VIEW

On Dr. Abraham Kovoor

A Sri Lankan temporarily resident in Bombay sent us a cutting from the Bombay weekly *The Current* of January 8, 1977. The article was entitled **RAJNEESH BLASTS KOVOOR**, and with acknowledgements to *The Current* we publish the same in two instalments. Dr. Kovoor is now a legend in Sri Lanka challenging god-men, astrologers, black magicians, occultists and others of the same breed. His challenges are often backed by a lakh of rupees as penalty. Recently, on his return from India some local papers had a eulogistic reports about the manner he had laid Sai Baba and other godmen low. This article in *The Current* presents a point of view which readers of *Tribune* will find interesting.

Dr Abraham T. Kovoor, 80-year-old rationalist and atheist from Sri Lanka, who has kicked up a great deal of controversy by challenging Satya Sai Baba, was interviewed by *Current* in the December 18 issue. His replies have provoked Rajneesh into sending us a rejoinder, making Dr. Kovoor appear senile and juvenile.

Dr. Kovoor seems to be a nice old man, but a little senile. Senile, I call him, because a person cannot be both together—a rationalist and an atheist. Either you can be a rationalist or you can be an atheist. A rationalist cannot have any belief—in God or in no God. He can only be an agnostic who says: "I do not know."

The moment you say "I know", you are no longer a rationalist. The moment you say "I know that God does not exist," you are as irrational as the person who says God exists.

How can you say God is not? The whole existence has not yet been measured. There are depths upon depths, there is much still that is unknown.

A rationalist will avoid all temptation of dogmatism. He will say, "I do not know". Socrates was a rationalist, so were Buddha and Nagarjuna but they were not atheists. Atheism means you are against theism; you have chosen a belief to believe in God is a belief; to believe in no God is a belief again. You remain a believer.

—Editor

To be a rationalist is very difficult arduous, because man wants to cling to some belief.

Now this Kovoor is eighty years old. For eighty years continuously he has been travelling around, arguing, telling people that God does not exist. Why waste your precious life for something which does not exist? It is absurd, it is irrational, but if you look deep into it, he is clinging to this non-belief. This disbelief has become his practice, his religion. Now he cannot simply rest; he has to argue—against God, against religion and try to prove that God does not exist. For what?

It is simply stupid to waste your life in the service of something which does not exist. You don't have a soul, and there is no life hereafter, he says. And he has devoted his whole life to nonsense. How can he be a rationalist?

A rationalist will say that life is mysterious. He has to live without a conclusion, without a philosophy or religion.

Kovoor has made a religion out of his atheism. He is not a rationalist. That's why I say he must be suffering from senile dementia.

He is senile yet juvenile too, because atheism is a phase of adolescence. Every intelligent person becomes atheistic at a certain age. Near about the fourteenth year, everybody becomes atheistic. That is a natural part of growth because the child needs to say no. It is a psychological need.

Up to the age of fourteen the child has been protected by his parents; now he wants to be himself. And he wants to say no because only by saying no can he feel free, can he have a sense of freedom. He starts saying no to everything.

And when you say no to your father, you say no to the ultimate father, naturally. It is a corollary. The child has to deny everything to get free. He has to kick everything that his parents believed, that the society believed: This is natural, and good.

If you have never been an atheist, you will never really become a theist because one who has not said no, how can he say yes? His yes will be impotent. Your yes is meaningful only when you have said no.

But it is a phase and, naturally, people grow out of it. Atheism is a phase. After atheism comes theism: Theism is also a phase. First you say no to feel yourself, then you become a hard ego. Then it hurts. Then you have to say yes to relax: You become a theist.

But, to me, religion starts only when you have dropped both—no and yes, both. Then you come to silence, you don't say anything: A truly religious person is not a theist: He has simply become silent. The no is gone, so has the yes:

I myself was an atheist—and I was stubbornly an atheist. I was thrown out of one college just because of that, expelled because the professor said it was impossible to teach me. Because my no was so much that for small things I would not say yes. If the teacher would ask me, "Can't you see these walls?" I would say, "I can see them but I don't know whether they are or they are not because in dreams I see walls and they are not." And he would ask, "Can't you see I am standing here?" I would say "I see you but I cannot trust whether you are there or not because one day I saw you in my dream and in the morning I found you were not."

He was puzzled and I confused him so much that after eight months

of his effort, he simply resigned from the college. He said, "I cannot come. This boy is going to drive me crazy. Either he has to be expelled or I have to be relieved of my duties." I was expelled from the college. I had not done anything wrong, but I enjoyed saying no. I loved it.

Soon I grew out of it because my purpose was fulfilled. Then I became a theist, but one day I found that even the purpose of yes saying was fulfilled. I am now neither; I am neither an atheist nor a theist. I am tremendously silent.

That's why I say Dr. Kovoor must be suffering from senility and still he is a juvenile. He has become stuck at the age of fourteen. His physical age is eighty, but his psychological age cannot be more than fourteen.

Many people never grow beyond the fourteenth year. They remain adolescent, juvenile. Somehow it happens that the time you become sexually mature, whatsoever is in your mind becomes fixed, becomes imprinted deeply. Fourteen is the age when you become sexually mature. Whatever your ideology, you get stuck with it; you don't change. If you are a Hindu, you become a Hindu and you remain a Hindu. It is good to be born as a Hindu, but to die as a Hindu is ugly. It is good to be born as a Christian, but to die as a Christian? That means your whole life has been wasted.

One should grow out of all these constrictions—theistic and atheistic. Kovoor is not a rationalist; otherwise he would have outgrown these. God means the whole existence. How can you deny and how can you affirm?

Dr. Kovoor must be having a very childish concept of God—a great king emperor of the world sitting somewhere in heaven on a big golden throne and ruling from there. When the idea itself is stupid, your fight is meaningless. He has been fighting with dummies, and is thought to be a great rationalist. He is not at all a rationalist.

He has been fighting with very ordinary minds like Satya Sai Baba; who is neither a mystic nor a philosopher, just an ordinary magician. You can demolish him. And Kovoor goes on challenging him and

he never answers. It is very simple to fight Satya Sai Baba. Kovoor has never fought a real rationalist.

A rationalist mind is sharp like a sword. It says: I cannot believe or disbelieve anything unless I have experienced it. Has Kovoor experienced God? Has he ever meditated? Has he ever gone into the inner lab? Has he ever known a single moment of nothought? Then all his assertions are just meaningless.

Has he tried to know God? He is fighting with ordinary people, whose belief is just mumbo jumbo. An ordinary man has no foundation; it is very easy to demolish his arguments. In fact he has no arguments.

If Kovoor is really a rationalist, then he has to go into experimentation. He has to do yoga, meditation, go deep into ecstasy and from there he should assert whether God exists or not.

Whosoever has gone inwards has become a mystic. Whenever a person has meditated he has felt, the very heart, the very core of existence.

God is not a person. God is just a symbol to show a certain quality in existence. For example, if there is no God, it simply means life is meaningless that this cosmos is not a cosmos, it is a chaos. To say "God is" is just another way of saying that life is meaningful; it has poetry, music, coherence and harmony. To say that God is, is to say that existence cares about you, it is responsible towards you.

The word "God" is not metaphysical. The word "God" is just poetic. And there is no need to argue against poetry. Poetry can only be understood. You cannot prove or disprove it.

If you are really a rationalist, you will have to commit suicide. A real rationalist cannot live. Why? For what? I would like to Kovoor ask Dr. Kovoor why is he living at all. There is no God, there is no soul, there is no meaning, there is no love, there is no poetry, why does he go on dragging himself? For what? Why is he burdening the earth?

(To be Continued)

Undergraduate Studies

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THE FAILURE of the system of undergraduate education to change with the times has brought in its wake disregard for educational values, positive outlook and independent thinking in many countries of the world today. It is true to a large extent, that this situation exists.

Many tend to blame this situation on the social, economic and political situation and tend to offer solutions which are political in nature and even go to the extent of opposing the most progressive moves of them all, academic autonomy on political grounds. One of the oft repeated cliches is to make education job-oriented and socially relevant which is never precisely defined, but confusingly and dogmatically interpreted according to ones' own thinking and prejudices.

A measure of good educational achievement at the undergraduate stage of education should be in terms of definite learning outcomes, which could be assessed by the clear difference in the competence acquired and outlook developed after the student has completed his undergraduate education. If the student has merely read books without achieving anything significant, such as qualities of clear independent thinking, ability to analyse and synthesise information received and ability to take mature decisions, then his undergraduate education has not given him anything more than what he has learnt already at the secondary stage of school education except mere factual information. The aims of a positive undergraduate education should be to provide that kind of training which will equip a student to take up any profession or vocation where he has to do independent thinking and face new situations.

This brings us to the frequently suggested proposal of making the non-professional undergraduate

education job-oriented by introducing job-intensive courses along with others. But the question is whether this would solve the problem of making education more useful; in fact it will turn education into training, by teaching specific skills to suit a particular job. It is not suggested that job orientation of a non-professional course is not welcome, but casual introduction of a few professional courses in a good non-professional undergraduate education will not be useful. The student who pursues a non-professional education will compare unfavourably with those who follow the professional courses in the work force market because of the fact, that professional education would provide intensive training. A good undergraduate education should aim at forming with developing his critical and analytical faculties well developed and sufficiently pliable to be prepared to undergo any kind of pre-job training.

The particular needs of institutions and the divergent aspiration of the undergraduate of these institutions could best be served when structural provisions exist to respond to these various expressions.

This could be achieved better in the content of academic autonomy.

The system of campuses or affiliated colleges cannot ensure this autonomy. These systems would curb all the initiative and drive on the part of the campuses or the affiliated colleges in regard to their forming independent philosophies, innovations in curriculum and methods of teaching and training.

Autonomy means the freedom conferred on universities to plan their own courses and their combination and prepare for their own examinations. To deny this to the institutions of higher learning is a betrayal of the sacred duty conferred upon these institutions.

IN AUTONOMOUS UNIVERSITIES there is more hope of a truly meaningful curriculum reform in the form of dynamic syllabus. A syllabus or a curriculum is one that the teacher, who gives the course, formulates with the help of his colleagues in the department and one or more outside experts and students who have shown interest

in their academic pursuits. This syllabus should be subject to scrutiny which should be based on the idea of keeping it up-to-date in its content, technology and techniques. In a sense the feedback from the students perhaps in the forms of answers to the examinations also serve as a reliable guide.

Dynamism in the syllabus with regard to contents, methodology and techniques is important. The contents of the course will have to be chosen by the teacher through his own knowledge and experience together with a good 'text-book'. The text book should be supplemented by other suitable reading materials in the form of books and journal articles. Teaching material for the guidance of students to read the 'text-book' and other reading material cited may be prepared by the teacher. This would prove to be of considerable help to students, especially if they have language difficulties and low discriminative power in choosing reading matter from the references given.

An imaginative teacher could introduce some integrative approaches to the subject. This can be done by asking for alternative approaches to the problems already learned. The students can also be given reference work. This approach has an advantage from the point of view of professional advancement of the teacher as he will have to be on a continuous search for material in new books and in journals, both pedagogical as well as research, and study them himself critically before assigning them to the students. This may also lead the teacher to embark on investigations himself; this will be much more possible if the teacher is given an opportunity to teach at the highest level at the university and to carry on his personal research.

THE MOST COMMONLY USED conventional method of instruction is by the lecture method which has its advantages, but many consider it as the only method of university instruction. If one of the more important objectives of university education is to activate the thinking process, the lecture method cannot alone achieve it. Student participation in the teaching process is one of the alter-

native to make university teaching more productive, student seminars should not be arranged only as a co-curricular activity. Seminars should not be considered as a lower level for university examination and unnecessarily time consuming. Self-study is another method of university teaching; it may be described as self paced self study or learning. In this method the course may be divided into a number of units, study material may be given to the students in advance by the teacher. This method may be adopted to suit conditions of shortage of space and personnel. The actual study could be done in the class room or outside with the teacher present and assisted by a number of tutors. The student gain a lot from the process of self learning; students will have to do intensive thinking in this method.

Improvements in curriculum and methods have to be supported by better evaluation. Examinations should emphasise not merely factual learning but also higher skills as capacity to interpret to think and to apply principles to new situations.

An undergraduate educational system would be complete only if curricular orientation methods of teaching and the system of examinations receive appropriate and balanced emphasis. These should be based on the aims of getting feedback from the students and grading them for graduation.

SAFARI

The Vortex Of Life

By Alkardi Mugana

April 12,

Five years ago to a week, we heard that two policemen had been shot at from a moving lorry in Wellawaya, and that a curfew had been clamped down in five districts. In the rest of Ceylon that night attempts were made to drive the police from a number of police station and others were evacuated, and life was not quite the same again in Ceylon for years, and for some, who were at the wrong receiving end it was never the same again. The Emergency that was imposed then has

not yet been lifted, and it seems as if no longer can Prime Ministers go around as if they were private citizens, as Prime Ministers have done in the past, visiting friends, or turning up at funerals unannounced and unescorted. I had thought to write about something quite different, when I decided that I could not let the Fifth Anniversary of a watershed in Ceylon's political and social and economic history go by unremembered. I was waken up at 4 a.m. this morning to be told that someone was quite ill and that a hiring car had to be summoned. At the suggestion that the car be not summoned, the patient become quite frantic. So Rs. 50/- was spent on a car to take him to the nearest major hospital by 3 p.m. He was back in his house unexpectedly early apparently to be taken miles away again to be treated for hydrophobia by his being bitten by a dog six months ago, a dog which is still very much alive. His wage is not Rs. 6/- a day, and he returned by train and bus, belying the necessity for that car in the morning.

April 13,

A journey by bus was more in my style than a telephone call to find out the time of a function on Thursday, although the buses were very few because of the Sinhalese and Tamil New Year. Close by my destination was a large building that housed several friends of mine, a house I knew. Calling in, I met them one by one, and the conversation ranged from dairying to management to family foibles and to the need for change, which is a way of saying that each thing has its period of effectiveness, after which it begins to wane. This is a moot economic point, but about which there really need be no discussion, as it is an apparent philosophical truth. This is why with God there is no past and future, for with him past and future as we know it is eternally present. So he never grows old. Then I called in at another house opposite. The man I hoped to meet had just come in two minutes earlier. All these were chance meetings which had nothing really to do with my bus ride, but which I would have missed and been much the poorer for missing had I used the telephone instead.

April 14,

Hours spent reading the Pole, Isaac Dentsher's, Stalin, the time half an hour past midnight, and then the sudden realization that I had still to write this. Before that, time spent going through old letters before putting them away bound with string in a bundle into a drawer, and, of course, tearing up and throwing a few letters away. And before that again, calling on a few friends, or rather, old friends' houses, the friends away, whom I had not seen for years, and leaving my address for them. While this was going on, reflection, pondering on the most important facts about life, on where the emphasis should lay, on our ideal. A little religion crept in, and I could not help thinking that the finest way to evangelize would be to give an example to the world everywhere, on how groups of Catholics, or Christians if you like, should live, an example of living in harmony. Somewhere during my reflections came the thought that we ought not to aim too high, that our finest aim would be to follow our vocation in however humble or inconspicuous a capacity and in spite of whatever way the world looked at it. All this is so vague, and finally we came to a person not just a man, but the god-man.

April 15,

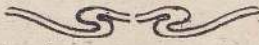
Woke before dawn, as is my wont, and felt despondent, in the blues, as if the future was a gray waste, and, of course, it had all to do with the estate. I had to be at Kotahena at eight o'clock, and then my departure from Colombo was, as usual, delayed. This necessitated a small change of plans, but it probably saved me some travelling. As we anticipated, there was hardly anybody in residence to carry out the usual chores. One person seems to have worked himself up into quite a state that he is a hydrophobia case, and I hear that they have just about pawned everything that the family has, to support this hypothesis. The history, which I do not think is the medical word, they have developed to support their diagnosis, the history to accord with all the normal symptoms of such an illness the symptoms, which to an amateur, the non-professional medical, or I should rather say

the non-medical, man point conclusively to hydrophobia and yet, which the expert says it is not, even the facts which they have reduced do not square with hydrophobia, if my memory of all this is clear. The germ or virus just does not exist for more than a few seconds outside the dog which has the rabies, so that the saliva from a mad dog soon becomes harmless. We have a problem on our hands, and I wonder what the tomorrow will bring.

April 16,

Good Friday was to me like that Good Friday five years ago when we could not attend the Good Friday service because of an all-day, Curfew. It happened this way. I set out on a journey to Colombo, and for one reason and another decided it would be more expedient to turn back. So I had to face in another direction to accomplish half the purpose of the longer journey. Again the bus was long a-coming, and just as I was about to board it, coin ready in hand, there was a man from the estate standing there telling me something, and although he used a word with which I was not familiar, he was telling me that so-and-so was dead. The medical diagnosis had been that the man, while he was alive had been suffering from a functional disorder, which I gather meant that any physical disabilities, the patient had, stemmed from the mind and not from physical maladies. In view of what did happen in the end, I must admit that I had no idea that this sort of thing could be so serious, but I think I ought to have known better. So his death really was a surprise, totally unexpected as far as I was concerned. The time was only eight to or nine in the evening, and I was so drowsy, it was really a painful and nerve-racking business keeping awake. Some of us have come up against inquests and post-mortems for the first time, the inconvenience of not being able to go ahead with funeral arrangements because of a delay in holding the inquest of, not being able to have the burial because of the post-mortem. Add to this the following day is a Sunday when nothing, it would appear, is likely to happen at all, and the situation becomes pretty grim. When the following day is Sunday,

the people ask themselves, is anything likely to happen at all on a Sunday? Then what of the body in this hot climate?



BUILDING A VILLAGE HOUSE—104

The Loves And Many Lives Of Simon Baas (ii)

By Herbert Keuneman

'As a little child' (said Simon Baas) 'I lived in Dias Place. In Colombo. In the Pettah. That was before they built the mispol.'

It is difficult to know what this strange feature might be.

I had better explain that from time to time, as Simon Baas' reporter, I shall have to quote outlandish-sounding words like this. They are Simon Baas' words, generally English by derivation but almost unrecognizably transmogrified by the time he has done with them; for example, *gampom mal* are 'gramophone' flowers: *datura*, *stramonium*, the Devil's Trumpet, named by him from their resemblance to a primitive tin gramophone horn! This is also as good a time as any to authenticate the style in which this story must be told. The sudden purple, the extravagant poetical phrase or figure that will occasionally appear are not mine: they are not only Simon Baas' but Sinhalese. They may read hyperbolic in an Englished narrative, but they are native to the Sinhalese style and in it their use is natural and sincere. Must we take over with the use of the language the Anglican convention—it is no more than a convention—that only understatement or a tied tongue can express sincerity? Is 'Uh! gm—glug' more 'sincere' than a sonnet? I remember not with embarrassment but with affectionate pride an old servant met after a lapse of many years, who said: 'Today a lotus has opened in my heart!'

Etymologically, *mispol* is easy: *mispol* is 'municipal(ity)'. But which *mispol* entity? In Simon Baas' use it could stand for Price Park. Or the Old Town Hall. Or Edinburgh Market behind it. Even the last had its foundation stone laid in 1870, and that would make Simon

Baas even older than I believe him to be. However, I have warned the reader, already, of such discrepancies:

'At that time' (says Simon Baas) 'Dias Place was a dwelling area, not a selling area: My great-grandfather had had a lot of land there; but by the time I was born all there was left to my father was a small plot on which our cadjan hut stood.'

'My father's name was Diyonis—Ranasinha Hettiarachchi-ge Diyonis Appuhamy. He used to take fruit out in a boat to passengers on ship in the Harbour, where they loved nothing better. But they did not love it so well that he made much profit. My mother did much better.'

'My mother was a basket-woman. Her name was Liza Hamy. The harbour men like my father were a hard-bitten lot—hard-working (not, says Simon Baas with a twinkle in his eye, 'like now-a-days) hard-living and hard-drinking—but nowhere near so hard-bitten as the basket-women like my mother. *vatti-amma-la hari amdan-karayo*' remembers Simon Baas, with awe, recalling the German raider *Emden* of World War I whose reputation had struck more terror into Ceylon's commonfolk than any other aspect of that time-diminished struggle. But clear it is his awe toward that formidable parent still far outweighs any remoter awe! For in Sinhalese idiom an *amdan-karayo* or *Emden-type*, is a sort of superdreadnought, even if its eponym was no more than a light cruiser!

'We were not a large family. There was a sister—the eldest—who died not long after I was born; and my elder brother, Brumpy Appuhamy; and I; that was all. So my mother bore—no, no! not bore (my mother bore nothing) she assumed with pride—more than a full share in providing for the home. She would not return with her basket until she had sold more than enough to bring home *peti malu*' (Note: *peti malu* 'slice' fish, that is fish large enough to be sold by the slice, and hence choice and costly.) *peti malu* for us family and a half-bottle of arrack for herself. She must often have accomplished this with no great difficulty, however; for she generally spent a considerable part of the day squatting with other *vatti-amma-la* near the tavern, where many a

man became a reckless patron and not only bought betel and cucumbers but treated the women to a glass, besides, as insurance against their caustic tongues. At the sight of the glass the tongues would be mollified and they would call their benefactor "Son (puta)". My mother made the most sales and earned the most free drinks of all. Oh! she was a very *nayakaya*, a leader, indeed! My father was a gentleman. He could put his drink away with any fisherman in the area, and often did and sometimes, but seldom, got fighting drunk; but he never touched my mother's half-bottle: he feared my mother even more than we children did!

'When I say that my mother was a *nayakaya* I do not speak only figuratively. We all—men, women and children—belonged to bands, as it were guilds or fraternities for one purpose or another; and each had its *nayakaya*, unofficial but acknowledged. My mother was a *vatyamma nayikava*. And my brother Brumpy was a *pin-pokat nayakaya*. All we boys were *pin-pokat*.'

Simon Baas' vernacularization of the word pickpocket may not be without some wry significance! *pin* is 'merit' or charity. And in the profession of *pin-pokat* matters were, after all, merely so nicely arranged as to ensure that charity began at home!

'The *pin-pokat* business was no haphazard affair. On the contrary. Although small boys conducted it, it was a highly organized undertaking. There were cadres to look after each part of the operation: some to observe who carried money where—all that this required was to hang about a kade or, better still, a tavern and watch the customers as they spent, tucked their cash away in some would-be secret recess amongst their clothes, and departed, and then quickly inform the more skilled operatives (so that the smallest boys of all were entrusted with this job) and others to perform the pickpocketing per se; and others yet to get the loot away. At 7 or 8 years I was of course a small boy, but I was no more than that old when I began to be allowed to operate with the active *pin-pokat*. I had (says Simon Baas with modest pride) a certain talent for the profession.'

Early Training

'Picking a pocket isn't really difficult, with a little practice; and we had a way to make it easier. A lot easier, too, when the money mightn't be in a pocket at all but in the fold of a sarong or some even more unco-operative place! We **pin-pokat** proper had accordingly to provide ourselves with one indispensable piece of equipment: a flake of glass chipped from the bottom of a bottle and ground smooth save at one edge. It was held with the sharp edge just protruding between the knuckles of a clenched fist, to be used as I shall describe. With a little knack you could so hold it that you could even spread your hands in injured innocence and it wouldn't show.

'It had to be a piece of *black* bottle: a white one wouldn't do. We used to believe there was something about the glass from which black bottles were made that rendered them especially fit for our purpose. Maybe that is so. But so strong was the taboo against white bottles that it seems to me now there was a paractical motivation underlying it: the black glass was less conspicuous between two dark fingers. I am told they use razor blades now. But that is surely risky, you could as well slice up your own palm as the cloth you intended to slit.

'Armed with this obsidian knife and accompanied by an accomplice or two, the **pin-pokat** would begin to follow the victim devoted to them by the scouts. To the casual observer they would appear no more than a party of idleurchins; but they would dog their quarry for a day, if necessary, until the opportunity came for the **pin-pokat** to make his snatch. You simply slit the man's pocket when you had the chance, and waited for the money to fall out—there wasn't much finesse about this method—or you were cleverer and took the risk and eased the loot out. In that case the crux might be not so much in getting the money as in safely getting rid of it: in passing it to one of the runners behind, who would then quietly fade from the immediate scene! So quickly and inconspicuously must this vital exchange be accomplished, that even if the victim felt a tug and looked round, or otherwise discovered his loss, he would naturally blame it on the little demon vanishing in the distance

and not on the cherub still at this side. And if the demon was chased and caught, naturally he hadn't the money: that was still with one of the innocents on the outskirts of the crowd. I had a face like an angel' (says *Simon Baas*, not batting a modest eyelid, and chuckling a complacent chuckle) 'but in my heart was a devil!

'With a little more equipment there was another use of our slivers of glass. You needed a hollow bamboo tube with one end sharpened, and a sort of scrip you could fasten to your waist-string under your sarong. You wore the tube stuck in your waist, like a knife, with its end in the scrip. In those days we all wore banian-like hang-out jackets if we could afford do so, and mother was particular to see her sons were respectably clad. The material to sew them of, if you could, was *Baticaloa* cloth, coarse stuff that would almost hold water like proofed canvas; but the fashion in banians we boys preferred was simply the largest possible garment. The larger and looser it was the better: it hid a bamboo and bag!

'In those days also there were, thank goodness, no lorries for transport (but I remember a steam traction engine and trailer so as soon as a scout reported that a bullock wagon of rice, say, or sugar or something of the sort, something that would flow, had left a wharf for the Pettah railway station—that was near the **mispol**: it is a market now—one of us would attach himself to it, walking apparently idly behind it with elbows resting on the tailboard, his billowing banians hiding the fact that the bamboo tube beneath it it led from a small hole cut in the bottom of the hindmost sack to the scrip at his waist, with a steady flow of profit-trickling from the one into the other! Soon the boy was waddling like a maternity case! When this point was reached he just withdrew the bamboo, gave the insignificant hole in the sack a few jabs with the blunt end, to reveal it (for we were not wasteful; neither did we wish to draw attention to our ingenious method) pulled down his all-concealing jacket, and simply squatted by the side of the road until an authorized collector—usually a grown-up—came along and relieved him of his

load. A succession of small boys with small bamboos inserted in small holes in big sacks could contribute a tidy total.

'All this I learned and practised before I was 8 years old.'

YUGOSLAV VIEW

Euro-Communism:

— what is it —

Belgrade, Jan. 17,

Socialism has become a world-wide process, and the various roads in building it best reflect all the breadth and scope of this struggle and historical realities in which the socialist forces in present-day world live and act. By their practical activity in the struggle for socialist transformations, these forces, who have grown in number, prove that socialism today is by no means a linear function or extended arm of the existence of socialist countries but a function of the struggle of the working class in capitalist countries and the struggle of developing countries for political and economic emancipation.

This was stated at the beginning of a *Tanjug* commentary winding up an opinion poll recently conducted by the *Yugoslav News Agency* through its correspondents in about a dozen European capitals on the subject *Eurocommunism—What Is It?*

The poll was aimed at shedding more light on the question of strategy and tactics in the building of socialism in individual countries and the positions of individual Communist and Workers parties on the forms of struggle for socialism. The term *Eurocommunism* originated in the 1970's—the commentator recalls—not as a political invention of West European communist parties, but in the vocabulary of bourgeois circles, primarily as a result of the grown activity, importance and impact of these parties on the political scenes in their own countries.

So far as the term *Eurocommunism* is concerned, in a majority of communist parties in western europe it appears as a concept

rather than a worked-out idea or substantively defined form of socialism. Generally speaking, however, the thinking about this concept may be said to contain essential characteristics of the road of building socialist society in highly-developed capitalist countries which, these parties point out, will differ from the roads of building socialism in East European countries. This road, free from all uniformity, implies a strategy of peacetime revolution of realistic, gradual changes leading to socialist transformations. Understandably, this road is adjusted to the specific features from one country to another, since involved here are also the different conditions in which these parties act.

The thinking about Eurocommunism—the Tanjug commentator continues—has not left the other European Communist and Workers' Parties indifferent either, thus among a definite number of parties in East European socialist countries the positions range from the extreme denial of any socialist road differing from the one in building socialism in East European countries, to a more flexible approach to the situation and conditions in which the West European Communist Parties act and the expressed readiness to recognize these parties the right to themselves determine their strategy and tactics in building socialism.

Generally speaking, Eurocommunism—although probably not the best term for the breadth of activity by West European Communist Parties—is a specific sign of the reality they stand for today: the Communist parties in some Western countries are becoming factors of growing importance in the workers' movement and political life in their respective countries and autonomous protagonists of elaborating one's own road to socialism. All of this—the Tanjug commentator says—points to the conclusion that the specific character and features of the Communist movement in Eastern Europe cannot be questioned today. In this context, any interpretation of Eurocommunism as an attempt to dress the Communist Movement in Western Europe in uniform or mark by it a kind of new centre for these parties, is completely unacceptable. Likewise, these parties do not accept this term if take

as a strategy directed against the Soviet Union and co-operation with the Communists in Eastern Europe. This position does not mean acceptance of the roads used by other socialist countries already for the fact that socialism in the West can only be built if going along "one's own way", the commentator of the Yugoslav News Agency concludes.

—Tanjug

RODENT CONTROL

WHO Plans New Drive Against Rats

New Delhi, Jan,

The World Health Organisation has proposed to train rodent control workers in South-East Asia and Western Pacific regions to develop effective and economical methods of rat control.

This move follows the finding by WHO's Rodent Control Demonstration Unit in Rangoon that control of rats by rodenticides can only be partially successful and that efforts to kill the rats should be combined with the use of insecticides effective against the rat flea which is mainly responsible for the transmission and spread of bubonic plague.

In co-operation with the National Health Laboratory of Burma, the Rodent Control Demonstration Unit has found indications of the presence of plague among rodents. Several strains of salmonella have been isolated from the rats captured for investigation. There is evidence also of the presence of murine typhus. The problem of rodent control has assumed a sense of urgency with this finding.

According to scientists' estimates there are ten times as many rats as humans in some countries of South-East Asia. They are known to carry diseases which can spread to humans.

According to WHO authorities here, the main reasons for the growth of the rodent population and the dangers of the spread of disease by rats lie in rapid urbanisation and general failure to reduce the growth of the danger to man health.

Rats consume an estimated 33 million tonnes of food a year and eat up or spoil 20 per cent of the crops, even before the harvest. One single rat, left free to roam a warehouse for one year, will eat about 27 pounds of food and deposit 25,000 droppings to spoil much more. Often, the amount of food the rats eat and spoil makes the difference between bare adequacy and famine.

Rats are prolific breeders too. They average three to six litters a year and produce about ten young to each litter. If all the offspring were to survive, one pair of rats could, on the basis of three litters a year, theoretically, produce 20 million descendants within three years. Fortunately, however, not all the offspring would survive owing to natural pressures and man's unceasing attack.

So, WHO feels that anything that will keep down rats will serve a double purpose. It will protect man against disease and reduce the constant pillage of man's food thus increasing the amount available for humans to eat.

—Hindu

COLLOQUIUM

On Balkan Linguistics

Balkan linguistics is an extremely interesting subject dealing with the common linguistic elements of the Balkan languages. This remarkable phenomenon is commonly called Balkan Linguistics Union. The need to study these common elements and similarities as characteristic features of the Balkan languages enjoined the holding of the First International Colloquium on the problems of Balkan linguistics, recently held in the town of Varna, Bulgaria.

The Balkan languages—Bulgarian, Romanian, Serbo-Croatian, Greek, Albanian and Turkish have an extremely great number of common elements which is a rare phenomenon in the case of languages of different origins. This is due to a convergent development of the Balkan languages in the course of many years.

Fiction

The participation of outstanding language experts from the Balkan countries, from the USSR, the GDR, the USA, FRG and others was of great advantage for the work of the colloquium.

The colloquium was extremely significant because it discussed problems concerning linguistics in general and the languages of the Balkan nations in particular. The main task is that the research work in this direction should continue so as to find those common elements which are specially characteristic for the Balkan languages, as for example, the formation of the future tense. The Bulgarian language which is a Slav language, forms the future tense in a manner untypical for the other Slav languages, while the Romanian which is a Roman language by origin forms its future tense the way it is formed in the Bulgarian language. Besides the disappearance of the infinitive and the declension, the formation of the degrees of comparison and others are some of the common features which are characteristic of these languages. Particularly interesting is also the fact that a Bulgarian can easily learn Romanian and Greek and may even master them to the extent of speaking without an accent. This is also true about the Greeks and the Turks and is due to the common articulation basis of these languages

—Sofia Press Agency

SHORT STORY

The Swami

The noonday sun is beating down relentlessly from the sky. Not a whisp of breeze to cool the air or to stir the leaves. A time when neither man or beast likes to sojourn in the dust and heat, except a bunch of village children playing some energetic game, with much laughter and noise. Three alien figures wend their way through the dusty village road. They approach the tank, refresh themselves with the cool water and sit down to rest under one of the huge trees on the tank bund. One of them sits a little apart, he apparently is their leader and guide. The other two get into

conversation with one of the villagers who comes to water his bull. They inform him of the greatness of their master, haven't the people of this village still heard of him? Then they must truly be behind times over here. In fact, they should consider themselves indeed privileged that such a great personality should deign to grace their village. Just now they are on a very important mission, collecting money to build a temple to Lord Shiva in some far-away place. See the greatness of their master, he chooses to brave the elements and go on foot to accomplish his mission. By this time the first villager is joined by quite a number of others who stare in awe at the great one.

The saffron-clad figure rises a little later, slings his bundle over his shoulder, picks up his staff and beckons to his followers. The villagers gaze in wonder at the man who a while ago was a nonentity walking through their roads. His flowing beard and hair, his calm countenance, his whole being the epitome of holiness and purity. They rush upto him and tell him that he must accept the humble hospitality their village could offer. They conduct him to their Headman, who with all reverence, puts at his disposal the new house he has just finished constructing for his son who is getting married very soon. The house itself will be truly blessed if his Holiness condescends to use it.

And so, the Holy man accepts their hospitality as well as their donations towards the proposed Temple. Morning and evening villagers from miles around come and offer gifts of fruits or honey, and whatever money they can spare in these hard times. In return the Swami gives them his blessings. News of the Great Man reaches far and wide.

Soon, it is time for him to move on, and to the great regret of the villagers of this little hamlet in the dry zone, he bids his farewells. They tell him of a man, a man who will surely help him in his mission far more than they, poor villagers could. A man who had cleared land right in the heart of the jungles, a learned man from the city who lives in isolation now.

Thus, the Swami sets off in search of him through blazing sun and dusty

paths, paths where no buses pass, then paths right through the depths of the jungle. Finally they reach the place and are greeted by an army of dogs. The Swami is a few paces behind, it is the followers who first approach the place. At the sound of the barking dogs, a man emerges from somewhere and informs his master about the arrival of the newcomers. At first, they think it the long-overdue labour which they have been expecting to work in their fields and they are questioned as to why they have taken so long. Later, at the sight of the Swami, and after explanations are given, enlightenment dawn on them. A spark of recognition lights up in the eyes of the man from the city, and he whispers something to his companion.

A while later, the most amusing sight meets the eye. The Swami divested of his saffron robes, hair tied up and clad in a pair of working shorts, his followers minus their shirts, are seen rather inexpertly building up the ridges of the paddy fields. Their protests fall on deaf ears, for a man stands by with a gun. And so, hands which had never held a mamoty in their lives, hands accustomed only to receiving and never contributing anything to society are at gunpoint forced to work. For ten consecutive days and nights a man with the gun never leaves their side. Food too, is forced on them at gun point—food which they claim was sacrilegious, consisting mainly of game.

Finally, on the eleventh day, three very sorry figures with caloused palms, blistered feet and aching backs are given their freedom. Their possessions are given back to them and they are paid ten days' wages for labouring in the fields. But, the most important thing is that they are given the direst warning by the owner of the fields, never again to try and dupe innocent, unsuspecting villagers, for he had previously heard from a friend who lived far away of this trio of frauds who in the name of God had been playing on the sympathies of gullible people.

VINODINI.

Confidentially

Paddy Production

WAS IT NOT HEART-RENDING to read in the first page of the *Daily News* on Monday, February 7, an extract from the speech Minister of Agriculture and Lands, Hector Kobbekaduwa, made during the tamashas centred around the opening of many new buildings and undertakings in Navaratta Nagaraya (after Deputy Minister Navaratne) in Minipe, that Sri Lanka would still continue to import rice? That he bemoaned the fact that in spite of the fact that the Land Reform had given peasants land "of their own" rice production had not come up to scratch? That Kobbekaduwa had gone on to say that whereas formerly "bureaucrats" were in charge of agriculture, now "farmers" themselves were in charge of operations? That apart from false logic and wrong assumptions inherent in the belief that once peasants "own" a tiny fragment of land and are placed "in charge" of the "system" through legislative fiat from on top, production and productivity must rise with phenomenal rapidity, it is necessary to point out that the attempt to "democratise" agriculture through the installation of Agricultural Productivity Committee (or Councils) has, in the vast majority of cases, turned out to be a mockery of democracy and farcical caricature of what was intended? That if case studies of the different APC units are made it will show that the "bureaucrats" and technical officers of the department of Agriculture had done a better job of helping the farming community than the present APCs? That, in practically all cases, and more especially in the non-SLFP electorates, the persons chosen as the Chairman and members of the Committee of the APCs, are not working farmers but political stooges of the Political Authority whose interest in farming is minimal and whose interests are political (and personal)? That in one glaring instance that has been brought to our notice, a manager of a private business (now superseded by the MPCS Ltd) is the chairman of an APC? That his only quali-

fication for the job was that he was a "loyalist" (for the moment) of the Political Authority? That the rest of appointees were also "loyalists" (allegedly) of the same Political Authority? That a few among the members of the APC could be termed "farmers" but they were in a minority? That even the farmer members were such that they, at every turn, subordinated the interests of the farming community to the personal interests of the Political Authority (and their own)? That in the 18 months this particular APC centre has worked, the facilities to the farmers have become much worse than when the Department's Extension Service had the responsibility to help farmers? That fertiliser is not available most of the time? That seed material is inadequate and late? That cost of insecticides and fungicides have been artificially inflated? That, for instance, the DAEO's Extension Service had sold a fungicide called Captan for Rs. 9.80 a packet? That, by a fiat and decree from above, the DAEO was asked to hand over this part of the Service (and the Stores) to the APC? That, within a short time, the price was upped to Rs. 12.75 not because the manufacturers had increased the price but because, it was said, the overheads of that APC had to be met? That the same fungicide is, even now sold by private retail stores in the area at Rs. 10.80 a packet? That when the APC gives loans, the fungicide is charged at Rs. 12.75? That this is only one example of what has taken place in this particular APC? That this has brought the APC into disrepute among the farming community of the area? That protests have not been made openly because the farmers fear retaliation, discrimination and victimisation by the stooges of the Political Authority? That a cursory survey of a number of APC centres in several areas indicate that the pattern is generally the same? That one contributory factor to decreasing paddy and agricultural production (and productivity) in many areas stems from the politicalisation (of the wrong kind) of agriculture in many areas? That many farmers now leave the APC centre alone except for those who want loans? That such loans are granted only to the loyalists and the stooges even though they do no real farming? That technical officers

of the department are now naturally more frustrated than before by the so-called "democratisation" of agriculture? That the APC centres (under the Agricultural Productivity Law) and other new legislation have been vested with such sweeping powers that a new tyranny has been imposed on the farming community without doing anything to ensure an increase of production? That it is Minister Kobbekaduwa will do well to critically examine the working of the APC-dominated agricultural system he and his administrators have created? That the reports of the bureaucrats and administrators who are part and parcel of this system will only perpetuate illusions and mirages? That a survey by "independent" persons will help to open his eyes? That the one test of the success of a system is results and in agriculture it is results in production? That in 1977, according to a speech of the Prime Minister, 45% of the country's rice requirements will be imported? That in addition the country will import 500,000 tons of wheat flour? That nearly ten years ago we were only importing one a third of rice requirements? That then we were only importing about 100,000 tons of wheat flour? That ever since this Government had come to power there were loud proclamations that soon we would be self-sufficient in rice? That at one stage it was even said that we would be able to export rice? That it is true that drought had plagued the country for three years—1973, 1974 and 1975? That 1976 was not a drought year but there was good rainfall? That 1976 was also the year of Mahaveli water? That, if in spite of all this, the shortfall in paddy production has increased, then it is time for a little critical self-examination? That the days of complacency based on cocksure self-proclamations of success are over?

NEXT WEEK

- ◆ CURRENT POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT
- Before the No-Confidence Motion
- ◆ ON DR. ABRAHAM KOVOOR
- Concluded

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