

Vol. 21 No. 37 — February 26, 1977 — RUPEE ONE

TRIBUNE



(PUBLISHED WEEKLY)



Printed by the Government of Ceylon at the Government Press, Colombo.

Subscribe Now to

SOCIAL SCIENCES

(4 ISSUES ANNUALLY)

The journal discusses theoretical problems of world and Soviet history, philosophy, economics, international working class movement, sociology law and literature.

All two year subscribers will receive wall calendar for 1977-78

The Rates:

One Year Rs. 24.00

Two Years Rs. 38.00

PEOPLE'S PUBLISHING HOUSE,

124, Kumaran Ratnam Road,
Colombo 2.

Phone: 36111

Letter From The Editor

THE MOST POPULAR SLOGAN of the leftwing in this island in the thirties, forties, fifties and sixties was centred round the plea to "diversify" the economy that had been structured by colonialists to serve the interests of world imperialism. It was said that the economy was "lop-sided", that it was a plantation export economy dependent solely on the markets of the international bourgeoisie, that it was an economy that extracted blood, sweat and toil (and profits) from the natives of this country and that it ground the ordinary people into economic slavery of the most degrading kind. In the seventies, the leftwing, (which had earlier enjoyed only fragmentary snatches of limited governmental power), was able to implement some of its most cherished dreams in land reform, in the nationalisation of the export and import trade and in a number of other spheres of activity. The left-oriented United Front from 1970 has, no doubt, performed near-miracles in "diversifying" our export trade. Ceylon's economy was never a monoculture, unlike that of many countries which had been subservient to imperialism for long years, but our leftwing pundits have been unhappy, that the island's economy was over-dependent on a clutch of three products—tea, rubber and coconuts—from which it derived over ninety five percent of its income and revenue. To the credit of the United Front government it must be said that it had been able to "diversify" the economy in a manner which no Sri Lankan government has been able to do since independence. The country today derives revenue and income from the export of gems, light industrial goods, non-traditional export commodities and from tourism. The leftwing which had demanded the diversification of the economy, and more especially the export trade, can now have the satisfaction of having achieved what it set out to do though not in as full a measure as they had wanted. The slogan of "diversification" has been concretised and made a reality in terms of trade. **BUT HOW AND AT WHAT PRICE?** We export gems through the good offices and the watchful eyes of the State Gem Corporation, but the incentives offered to private exporters have led to the creation of the most vicious, the most vulgar and most unscrupulous bunch of compradore bourgeoisie created under the benign benevolence of the socialist-inclined United Front government of the SLFP-LSSP and CP. Much has been written of the gem mudalalis and the only verdict history can give is that they are a curse afflicting the land—a curse far worse than the white and brown sahibs who had flourished under British colonialism. Sri Lanka now exports through private and public sector organisations light industrial goods and also non-traditional export commodities (everything bar tea, rubber and coconuts), and this has brought in its wake a breed of CRA profiteers and corrupt Corporation bosses who have accentuated social tensions through flamboyant and ostentatious display of consumerist affluence with the result that social conflicts more serious than the insurrection of 1971 have become inevitable (and exist right round the corner). Furthermore, the export of light industrial goods has pushed up prices and the local consumer suffers—not only because of the higher prices but also because of scarcities that stem from the priorities given to exports. But even more serious difficulties afflict local consumers of non-traditional items like prawns. Very soon, the people of this country—even though surrounded by seas and lagoons—will not know the taste of a prawn, crab or lobster. They will, however, have the satisfaction that these non-traditional commodities are being exported to earn foreign exchange and that the only local beneficiaries from this export are CRA types about whom the less said the better—but whose presence has already had the most baneful impact on everything "progressive" in this island. And, lastly, we come to tourism. Many who should know better are today shouting from the housetops about the millions brought in by tourism, about the employment given to young people (they do not seem to take into account the large-scale but invisible employment in prostitution drug-trafficking and other evils of tourist-affluence), and so on and so forth. *Tribune* has always criticised this diversion of our energies into tourism and there is nothing that can persuade us to change our firm conviction that the parasitism inherent in this kind of tourism will inhibit and retard Sri Lanka's attempts to become a productive, purposeful and meaningful society. If instead of all this hullabaloo about CRA, tourism and non-traditional exports, we had concentrated in developing our traditional exports and our traditional agriculture, this country will not be in the economic plight it is in today.

TRIBUNE

Founded in 1954

A Journal of Ceylon and
World Affairs

Editor S. P. Amarasingam

Every Saturday

February 26, 1977

Vol. 21 No. 37

TRIBUNE
43, DAWSON STREET,
COLOMBO-2.
Telephone: 33172

CONTENTS

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

—Emerging Perspectives p. 2

SRI LANKA CHRONICLE

—Feb. 5 - 7 p. 5

INTERNATIONAL DIARY

—Jan. 18 - 23 p. 6

BANK OF CEYLON

—Chairman and Rabbits p. 7

IN A TEA ESTATE—18

—The Staff p. 9

LANKA-SOVIET RELATIONS

—Diplomatic Recognition p. 11

UNIVERSITY EDUCATION-3

—Change Essential p. 13

SAFARI

—April 26 - May 1 p. 14

LETTERS

—G.G.P., Tamils, Schools,
Housing p. 15

INANIA

—Human Rights p. 18

MARGINALIA

—Detente in Sri Lanka p. 18

ETHIOPIA

—Stabilisation? p. 19

CONFIDENTIALLY

—Communist Party p. 20

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

Emerging Political Perspectives

February 23,

TWO EVENTS have generated a great deal of talk in political circles: the statement of the Communist Party on its withdrawal from the Government, and secondly the discussions the Prime Minister had with Tamil and Muslim MPs. The statement of the Communist Party was generally on the lines expected by knowledgeable circles. Many had thought that the CP would suffer some casualties as a result of this withdrawal. There were hints, innuendos and suggestions that some CP MPs may defect from the Party and stick to the Government and office, but the Party has remained intact at the end of the exercise. In fact, there are indications that the Party is stronger because of this act of withdrawal to an independent position clearly cut away from the official Opposition which (from the point of the progressives) is tainted with the "reactionary" UNP—and with the avowed objective of mobilising all progressive forces to fight the UNP and all rightwing forces (inside the SLFP too).

The CP statement, as pointed out elsewhere in this issue, (vide Confidentially Column on p.20), has been formulated in a way not to cause "personal" offence to the SLFP or its leaders. The CP statement has criticised the "right-wing" elements in the SLFP which has hampered the "progressive march" which the United Front government had initiated in 1970, but even this was done on a "political" level without any provocative diversions into personal attacks on individuals. The CP has also set out where it differed from the LSSP, but re-iterated the stand it has taken ever since the LSSP quit the Government that the LSSP should be brought back into the United Front—even into the New United Front with a greater socialist bias. The CP also took a realistic attitude to the SLFP breakaway group led by Nanda Ellawela and pointed out that there were still a large number of leftwingers and progressives

in the SLFP fighting the rightwing from the inside.

The Communist Party held a rally at Hyde Park on Tuesday, February 22. It was a surprisingly largely-attended meeting—far larger than the most recent LSSP rally after the strike. What many people noted was that there were a large number of SLFP trade union rank and file members and also a sizable number of SLFP intelligentsia present at the CP meeting. There were also significant number of University students. Mr. Pieter Keuneman outlined the policy of the Communist Party and the report in the Daily Mirror, 23/2/77, is a fair and accurate report of what he said.

To go into battle against the UNP under the banner of the policies of the SLFP rightwing was to surrender without firing a shot, said Mr. Pieter Keuneman, MP and General Secretary of the Communist Party speaking at a mass Rally at Hyde Park, yesterday. The meeting presided over by Mr. M. G. Mendis MP was held to explain the future policy of the Communist Party after its withdrawal from the Government. Mr. Keuneman said that the right-wing which had now taken command in the Government and the SLFP were disorganising and demoralising the progressive forces and leading from one crisis to another. That was the main reason why the Communist Party had to leave the Government. Instead of striking blows against the UNP led reactionary forces which still remained their main enemy, the right-wing was promoting confrontations and clashes with forces such as the workers and the students who had been in the forefront of the anti-UNP struggle. Mr. Keuneman said that in order to inspire and mobilise the progressive forces to defeat UNP-led reactionaries to consolidate and carry forward the gains made since May 1970: and to reduce the economic difficulties of the people, it was necessary to take a more decisive turn towards socialism. But both the UNP and the SLFP right-wing despite superficial differences, basically followed the policy of capitalist development. He said that a radical programme and a new alignment of progressive forces to fight for such a programme were the need of the hour. All forces of the SLFP who were prepared to

resist the policies of the rightwing had a part to play in this.

Mr. Keuneman said that he entered the United Front on a decision of the party and now left the UF on a decision of the party as well. He came into politics not to get portfolios but to carry forward the socialist march. "I was in the CP since its inception and will be in the party till I am taken to Kanatte" he said.

He said that when they left the Government the Central Committee of the Party issued a statement. Except for the Lake House papers other papers carried the statement in full. He would not enumerate the matters contained in that statement.

Some tried to make out that by their quitting they were only trying to help the UNP. It was true that the UNP was a force to be reckoned with. But they did not subscribe to the view that the UNP could not be defeated. It could be defeated if the progressive forces united and put forward a radical programme towards socialism.

The UNP gained strength not because of its policies but because of the weaknesses of the progressive forces.

Mr. Keuneman said that the CP had its own proposals in regard to a radical programme. It was ready to discuss these proposals with all other democratic, radical and left forces to evolve a mutually agreeable programme.

Mr. Keuneman said that the CP's differences with the SLFP leadership were purely political and not personal. "We recognise and appreciate the contribution that the SLFP had made in the past" and we are sure that the many healthy forces within that party will not tolerate for long the disastrous policies of its rightwing.

He said that some SLFP MPs had resigned because they resented the attitude of the right-wing. Yet others were fighting within the party.

Referring to the Peradeniya Campus shooting incident Mr. Keuneman said that soon after the incident he along with Mr. Hector Kobbe-kaduwa visited Peradeniya and submitted a report. Their report was not different from the Wimalaratne Commission report which found the shooting unwarranted.

He said the right-wing of SLFP feeling unable to face the UNP campaigned to postpone elections. The CP opposed this. The United Front had achieved much more than any other government. However elections cannot be won without putting forward a radical programme.

He said that some in the Government thought that by distributing rice, dhal, sugar and other items in plenty elections could be won. They had apparently forgotten that the people not only had stomachs but brains too. Such election 'gundus' would not work.

Mr. Keuneman said that if the present government did some good work they would support them even outside the government. They would not indulge in baseless attacks on the SLFP either. But their main enemy was the UNP and the rightwing of the SLFP.

He added that the policies of the Finance Minister would increase inflation by 25 per cent by August.

Knowledgeable political circles believe that the CP is stronger now with greater internal unity and cohesion as between the "hardliners" and "softliners". The hardliners want an independent stance: they have never been for a tailist policy, either tailing behind the LSSP or the SCFP. The softliners want a conciliatory approach to the progressives and leftwingers in the SLFP together with a strong political line against the rightwingers—without harsh words, personal abuse, venomous innuendo and provocative, demagogic onslaughts. The new policy hammered out by the Politburo and the Central Committee of the CP seems to satisfy both the hardliners and the softliners.

IN THE MEANTIME, the LSSP, whilst collaborating with the UNP and the official Opposition in waging a parliamentary struggle against the SLFP and the Government, wants to forge a new Socialist United Front under its leadership with the CP and the SLFP-breakaways as its junior partners. In the past there have been occasions when the CP has tailed behind the revolutionary sloganising of the LSSP, but present indications are that the CP has outlived that phase of its development. The CP, at different times, had also feebly tailed behind the SLFP, but the latest action makes it clear that

it no longer wants to continue what many felt was a subservient role. The LSSP has taken an increasingly patronising attitude to the CP, earlier giving it advice to quit the Government and now telling the CP to join forces in a SUF under LSSP leadership.

The LSSP has also taken a similar attitude to the Nanda Ellawela SLFP-breakaway group. The Socialist Nation, the LSSP English-language weekly, of 18th February, 1977, had a frontpage spread for Nanda Ellawela. The heading was "OUR PARTY: MARXIST-Leninist-NANDA ELLAWELA. The following excerpts from these Socialist Nation write-ups merit attention:

"Our Party will be founded on Marxist-Leninist perspectives.. We shall take steps to form a Left Front with the Lanka Sama Samaja Party, the Communist Party and other progressive parties in Sri Lanka." This was stated by Nanda Ellawela MP who along with three other MPs, recently resigned from the Sri Lanka Freedom Party. He was speaking at a meeting of SLFP branch members and youth leaguers, held at the Ratnapura Town Hall, to explain the circumstances that led to his resignation from the Government and the SLFP. Nanda Ellawela further stated that the

Prime Minister who came to power through the United Front of the SLFP the LSSP and CP, was now working in the interests of the capitalist class. She had completely forgotten the masses of the country. To the people of Ratnapura his resignation would have come as no surprise. It was the consequence of a decision he had taken earlier in consultation with his constituents. The four MPs had resigned from the Government not in search of position or personal gain; their goal was the difficult one of breaking the fetters of imperialism and capitalism in the country. While engaging in this struggle all they expected from the masses was their participation and enthusiasm. Although the SLFP no longer recognises the masses, the late S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike identified the masses as those who suffered oppression from imperialism and capitalism. Today, the same inter-related capitalist-feudal clans dominate both the UNP and the SLFP. When the UNP is in power the feudal clans within the SLFP trail behind the former in the name of "Sita Akka" (Sita Molamure Kumarihamy); when the SLFP wins power, the leading lights of the UNP rally round it in the name of 'Sirima Akka'. This is how both groups approach the country's problems. The LSPF today draws its strength from both these feudal clans as

ON THE COVER

THOUGH EASILY IDENTIFIABLE, we are only concerned with the fact that the picture on the cover is just one more of the five-star (and lesser-starred) hotels that have burst upon this island like the plague. Tourism, it is said, brought in over Rs. 150 million last year and tourist promoters like us to believe that the figure will be doubled within five years. Such statistics are soul-uplifting for those who do not seem to realise the kind of tourism Sri Lanka has developed is parasitic to an extent that it is self-defeating. How much foreign exchange does Sri Lanka expend to earn this 150 million odd rupees? Nobody seems able to answer this, or is willing to find the answer—because, we are convinced, the answer will make it clear that the less tourism of the modern package variety we have the better. Furthermore, tourism has already opened a Pandora's box of social evils that has made healthy and purposeful living in Sri Lanka impossible. Tourism has brought in its wake new kinds of crime that baffle our police. Tourism has also brought in a new kind of caste system of the most pernicious kind—a caste system in which the peddlers of smuggled goods, drugs and prostitution stand at the apex of the Sri Lankan pyramid with the base overflowing with CRA and FECC types. Tourism has already debased social and cultural life to an extent that could not have been imagined a few years ago. Ethical and humanistic values have been undermined to such a degree that the pimp and the prostitute, the chisseler and smart aleck, the cheat and the underworld operator have become the heroes and heroines of the wonderland fashioned by tourism in Sri Lanka.

well as the coteries of capitalist mudalalis.

When N. M. was Minister of Finance, he sought through the introduction of taxes such as the capital levy, the enhanced wealth tax, the company tax, the ceiling on expendable income etc. in his budget, to break the power of the capitalist class. However, Madam Sirimavo, distorting a chance remark of N. M.'s, joined forces with the Dasa mudalalis and feudal families, to remove him from office. Felix, who thereafter succeeded him as Minister of Finance, abolished N. M.'s taxation measures and granted relief to the capitalists and mudalalis.

NANDA ELLAWELA'S VIEWS of current political developments are highly over-simplified and are therefore far from the true intricacies and realities of the situation. Nevertheless, the Nanda Ellawela group will be able to make a significant populist (and demagogic) appeal to large number of SLFPers (but whether they will be able to siphon off a proportionate number of votes from the official SLFP is problematic). Nanda Ellawela has taken a stand that their Party would be a Marxist-Leninist one. Considering the fact that Nanda Ellawela and his group had graduated from pure SLFP dynastic politics to leftwingism under the aegis of Kumar Rupasinghe and his Janawegaya, it is no surprise that Nanda Ellawela should unfurl the Marxist-Leninist flag. (The full story of how the Nanda Ellawela group ousted Kumar Rupasinghe from the trade union federation he had set up is yet to be told. So also the story why Kumar Rupasinghe has abandoned his role in the Janawegaya and the local political scene. Will Kumar Rupasinghe stage a come-back if he gets SLFP nomination for the coming General Elections?)

Whilst all these developments are taking place among the left-wing parties and groups, the Pri Minister summoned a meeting of Tamil and Muslim MPs for a meeting at the BMICH on Monday February 21. The report in the Daily Mirror of Monday February 21 summed up the proceeding in a succinct manner.

The Tamil United Liberation Front which has been vigorously campaigning for a separate State for the Tamil people since its Vaddu-

kodai sessions, yesterday indicated its willingness to consider an interim political arrangement that could satisfy the aspirations of the Tamil people. This indication was given when the Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike, met Tamil and Muslim parliamentarians for a dialogue to settle minority problems, at the BMICH.

The General Secretary of the TULF, Mr. S. Kathiravelupillai who acted as the spokesman for the TULF summing up the Front's position in a four minute speech, said that it stood by its Vaddukodai decision for a separate State. However, he said that they did not want a confrontation with the Government and were prepared to consider an interim political arrangement that would satisfy the demands of the Tamil people. Such an arrangement could be worked out between them and the Government. Though no indication was available as to what the TULF had in mind in regard to an "interim political arrangement", knowledgeable circles believe that the minimum that the Front would be satisfied with some form of regional autonomy acceptable to the TULF. From the Government ranks one Minister pointed out that if agreement could be reached on a wider basis on the "interim political arrangements" the pressure for a separate Tamil State would diminish. Another Minister explained that by these talks the Government was not seeking to have any political alignments but to find a just solution for the problems confronting the Tamil-speaking people.

The consensus among both the Government and the Tamil MPs present was that real solutions to the live problems of the Tamil people could be found without either the Government or the TULF compromising on their respective political principles and objectives. All those present expressed their thanks to the Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike, for having summoned the conference. The first indication that the TULF was prepared for a compromise solution of the Tamil issue came when its team led by Mr. S. J. V. Chelvanayagam attended the conference. The decision to do so was taken on Sunday night at a meeting of its leaders. The hardliners in the front felt that there was no

purpose in attending the conference as the Government would not concede its demand for a separate state without a struggle by the Tamils.

But sober opinion is believed to have prevailed. It was the view of this group that they should show an attitude of 'give and take' with the Sinhalese leaders to end the protracted Tamil impasse. Mrs. Bandaranaike opening the dialogue said that her Government was anxious to settle minority issues reasonably. She asked the Tamil and Muslim parliamentarians to set out their grievances. Mrs. Bandaranaike was assisted by four of her senior Ministers—Mr. Maithripala Senanayake—(Irrigation Power and Highways), Mr. T. B. Ilangaratne (Trade), Mr. Felix R. Dias Bandaranaike (Finance and Justice) and Mr. P. B. G. Kalugalle (Shipping, Aviation and Tourism).—Education Minister, Mr. Badiuddin Mahmud was also present but as a parliamentarian representing Muslims political interests.

Though the "conference" ended on an inconclusive note—no more could have been achieved at a preliminary meeting to initiate a dialogue—but with everybody agreeing to meet again. The TULF has indicated, though it does not seem to have pressed the point, that a direct meeting between the Government and the TULF would be more fruitful of results. What the TULF suggested is that the dialogue with the minorities should be on a bi-lateral basis. The UNP had adopted this attitude and taken high ground that its members would not attend as individuals (the UNP had wanted the whole Party invited) but some UNP Tamil and Muslim MPs seem to have attended the meeting, but the TULF has not followed the UNP lead.

It is yet too early to say what would be the outcome of the new dialogue the PM has initiated. After following a sterile and futile policy towards the Tamils, the SLFP seems to have woken up to the realities of the situation. Whether the Left Parties, the LSSP and CP, would follow suit is yet to be seen, or will they continue their sectarian attitude that they will not have any truck with "communal" and "reactionary" parties of the minorities?

SRI LANKA CHRONICLE

Feb. 5 — Feb. 7

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

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

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 5: The Minister of Public Administration and Home Affairs has decided to change the system of public sector recruitment in order to afford relief to many families living on the verge of poverty because none of their members has permanent employment: the minister hopes that with the introduction of this system, there will be a more equitable distribution of jobs among the low income groups. The PM has ordered the polling of CRA earnings by the public sector, including the state corporations to be maintained by the Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs: the utilisation of these earnings will be decided by the External Resources Division of this Ministry. A high level meeting of the SLFP will be held at "Temple Trees" on February 10 presided over by the PM to discuss the present political situation. The PM, and Mr. Mohamad Yunus, special envoy of the Indian PM, yesterday exchanged views on recent developments in India and Sri Lanka—CDN. Mr. Justice D. Wimalaratne in his report on the Peradeniya Campus says that Professor Vithanage, President of the Campus must take the responsibility for the situation that resulted on November 12, last year in which one student died and several were injured. The cost of poonac has shot up from Rs. 600 to Rs. 2,000 a cwt. last week as a result of last year's drought and the acute shortage of poonac—CDM.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 6: The PM yesterday said that the public were well aware of the achievements of her government during the past six years and despite adverse propaganda being spread by the opposition the elections will prove victorious to her party: the PM was speaking at Hasalaka after she had inaugurated the Navaratne New Town; the PM also said that the government was taking specific steps to reduce the high cost of living and that sufficient textiles and items of food would be imported for the Sinhala New Year: she also asked the people not to erect pandals for her in future: she requested them not to fell valuable arecanut palms and cut off young shoots of the coconut palms for gokkola decorations. Local doctors will have a chance of being trained in acupuncture once official discussions with the Chinese Embassy in Sri Lanka are completed—SO. Will the young SLFP rebels led by Mr. Nanda Ellawela, MP for Ratnapura, form a new political party? Parliamentary lobbies were buzzing with this news on Friday: speculation was sparked off by the conspicuous absence of several SLFP MP's from last Tuesday's meeting of the Government Parliamentary Group; these MP's had either supported the recent strike or expressed sympathy with the Trade Unions; both government and Opposition sources said that any major moves on the political front would be known on February 17 when the joint opposition motion of no-confidence on the government would be debated. The exodus of accountants from Sri Lanka to take up appoint-

ments abroad is alarming because the rate of outflow has risen steeply in recent months: at present nearly a third of the entire registered membership of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Sri Lanka is employed abroad: the outflow from 71 to 74 represented about 15% of the total membership of the institute: the present rate is double that figure. MP's qualified for pensions are assured of a bonus for the next election: it will be in the form of their entitlement of pension dues from January 1 this year upto the date of dissolution—ST. The Teacher's Union of the Estate Schools in an appeal to the Education Ministry has asked that even in schools that cannot be taken over immediately, the Ministry should introduce a new syllabus, give free books, distribute biscuits etc—VK.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 7: The PM said in Minipe on Saturday that the government has no need to fight shy of the elections when they had achieved so much despite the various obstacles. The Minister of Agriculture and Lands, said it was a pity that we still imported a good quantity of our rice requirements, various steps taken by the government included the raising of the guaranteed price for paddy from Rs 14 to 33, the crop insurance scheme and the fertilizer subsidy scheme. Around 5,000 men and women will be appointed uncertificated teachers beginning February 10, this is the largest batch of uncertificated teachers to be appointed on a single occasion. The latest crime statistics for the City of Colombo indicate an increase in the use of hired thugs: overall figures showed an increase of more than 500 cases of grave crime over the previous year—CDN. As a Party of the working class, the Communist Party, would always stand by the working class and promote its interests: this was said by Mr. Pieter Keuneman, General Secretary of the CPSL, at a delegates conference of CP led Trade Unions in Colombo over the weekend: he also said that the present political situation which was very complicated and fluid, bore certain similarities to that which existed in 1958. Sri Lanka has negotiated a loan of five millions US dollars from the United Arab Emirates for the purchase of 150 trawlers, these are to be introduced to stop foreign trawlers poaching in our seas and to increase the catch. A mass meeting to explain the political situation after the recent strikes and to disclose news withheld by the government during the strike will be held on Wednesday: the meeting is sponsored by the Ceylon Federation of Labour, the Government Workers Trade Union Federation and the Government Clerical Service Union. Radical changes in the system of police patrolling will be introduced this week in view of the high increase in crime in recent weeks—CDM. Research by scientists on medicinal plants and spices would not only be of practical use for humanity but it would also do away with the snobbish attitude towards the use of herbal medicine, said the PM, in her opening address at the third Asian Symposium on Medicinal Plants and Spices at the Sri Lanka Foundation Institute this morning. The Controller of Prices, has directed his officers to use their powers under the Emergency Regulations to check errant butchers from today. The Pension Bill for the MP's will cost the tax payer nearly Rs. 63,000 monthly at present: between dissolution and the next general election the cost will be three times this sum and after the next election it would settle at around double this figure: these computations have been made by the Parliament authorities on the basis of working out the number of former parliamentarians who will be entitled to the pension benefit—CO.

INTERNATIONAL DIARY

Jan. 18 - Jan. 23

TUESDAY, JANUARY 18: Indian PM Indira Gandhi announced that elections would be held in March. A Laotian pilot had defected to Thailand by flying a bomber to the Northeastern Province of Udon Thani, Radio Thailand reported. At least five guerillas were said to have been killed in the first reported clash of the year in Northern Philippines. Moro National Liberation Front leaders began broadcasting appeals to their Muslim followers over government radio to observe the negotiated ceasefire. Eighty deaths were recorded in Australia's worst-ever rail disaster. Ten people were yesterday named to appear before a military court next month to face charges of plotting to kill President Marcos and attempting to seize power. A campaign to re-habilitate the purged moderate leader Teng Hsiao-ping yesterday spilled onto the streets of Shanghai, China's biggest city and until recently the stronghold of his radical enemies. Lebanon's banks, bedrock of the Lebanese economy before it was shattered in the 19 month war formally re-opened today just over two months after most of the fighting in the country halted.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 19: India's non-communist opposition parties had agreed to form a United Front to Fight the March elections, according to press reports. President Marcos of the Philippines and Singapore PM Lee Kuan Yew called for greater economic dialogue between ASEAN and Japan. Malaysian PM Datuk Hussein Onn ended a four day visit to Libya. In his last day as President, Gerald Ford directed that wounded and decorated Vietnam veterans who received other than honourable discharges should have their status changed to honourable discharge. Yugoslav PM Dzemal Bijedic died today in a plane crash near the town of Sarajevo, the official *Tanjug* news agency said. President-elect Jimmy Carter yesterday suffered a major defeat three days before his inauguration when Theodore Sorenson bowed out as his nominee for CIA director because of allegations of improper conduct. The Secretary General of the UN, Kurt Waldheim wants the Geneva Middle East peace talks re-convened to prevent the danger of a new confrontation. Thousands of Egyptian students and workers rampaged through Central Cairo tonight in an outburst of anger over wide-ranging price increases ordered by the government.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 20: The Indian PM, lifted the press censorship and ordered the release of political prisoners. During a visit to Burma, Laotian President Souphanouvong reiterated his country's desire for peace and friendship with Southeast Asian nations. Before the opening of the ASEAN economic ministers' meeting in Manila, Philippines and Singapore announced a 10% tariff cut on each other's imports. Egyptian demonstrators defied an official curfew and ran riot against President Anwar Sadat's government after a day of bloody street battle: Un-official accounts put the death toll in Cairo and Alexandria at about 20 with some 400 injured and hundred of demonstrators arrested; the riots were triggered by price increases on key commodities. South African PM, John Vorster, is reported to have reacted favourably today to progress made by British envoy Ivor Richard on his South Africa mission to find a Rhodesia settlement. Former PM, Jaques

Chirac, head of France's rejuvenated Gaullist Party, struck a surprise blow at President Valery Giscard D'Estaing tonight by announcing he would seek the powerful new post as the Mayor of Paris in Municipal elections in March.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 21: Petronas, Malaysia's State-owned oil company, announced plans to spend about 600 million US dollars on exploration and production in the next two years. Iraqi Vice Premier Taha Muhi-din Maarouf held talks in Tokyo with Japanese PM Takeo Fukuda. Japanese businessman Kenji Osano, a close friend of PM Takeo Fukuda, was charged with perjury before parliament in the Lockheed affair. The Indian government tonight lifted censorship on the domestic press on another roll-back of emergency regulations imposed 19 months ago. Egypt appealed for international economic help today after two days of violent rioting in which more than 40 people were killed in bloody demonstrations against increased food prices: heavily armed soldiers finally brought calm to the streets of Cairo. Pakistan's general election campaign hotted up today over allegations that an Opposition candidate was kidnapped to stop him filing nomination papers to stand against PM Zulfikar Ali Bhutto.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 22: Heavy rain threatened Jakarta with more floods, which had already caused the evacuation of an estimated 250,000 people. Japanese PM, Takeo Fukuda, denied a former US official's claim that Liberal Democratic Party members had been bribed by the Central Intelligence Agency. Jimmy Carter was sworn in as 39th President of the US and pledged himself to a new beginning a new dedication after the country's recent troubles: then the new President, who had promised a people's inaugural defied tradition and security risks by walking the full length of a two mile parade route to the White House. France's government coalition faced a possible split today over a surprise decision by former PM Jaques Chirac to run for Mayor of Paris in Municipal elections in March. Last evening Cairo was quiet under heavy army control. The Spanish government prepared to tackle the country's serious economic problems after soothing Basque nationalists by allowing them to hoist their flags at the town halls.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 23: Leadership of the sub-continent is falling into the hands of Pakistan, said PM Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. President Souphanouvong of Laos ended a five-day trip to Burma. A joint Philippine-Muslim rebel ceasefire committee had agreed to the release of all prisoners, the *Philippine news agency* reported. Talks between India and Bangladesh on the Farraka barrage broke down in New Delhi. President Jimmy Carter has granted a full and unconditional pardon to hundreds of thousands of America's Vietnam war draft dodgers. Nine Opposition parties in Pakistan have decided to contest the general elections in March as a unified front. Suddenly, in Peking's Tienamen Square, the very heart of China, ordinary Chinese are using wall posters to demand democracy, freedom and the right to choose their leaders. Egyptian authorities have detained over 1400 persons, including journalists, for questioning regarding the price riots in Cairo and Alexandria earlier this week.

BANK OF CEYLON

Not Rabbits Alone

—The Chairman In London—

by Special Correspondent

IN THE CONFUSED TURMOIL of the December strikes and the traumatic developments in January culminating in the prorogation of the National State Assembly on February 10, 1977, the spotlight which was turned on the activities of the Chairman of the Bank of Ceylon in London (during one of his visits) in the NSA on November 30, 1976, was turned off. However, as it is not a matter that can be so lightly dismissed from public notice and attention, a Special Correspondent has detailed the relevant facts for the record. It will be seen that the officer concerned has been served with a charge-sheet: but the "charges" are enough to raise a laugh anywhere. It is learnt that the Bank of Ceylon Officers' Union had made representations to the management demanding a full and fair inquiry. And, it is also learnt that the union's office bearers were "reprimanded" by the "management" for having had the audacity to demand an inquiry after the Minister of Finance had given a full reply in the NSA: it was even hinted that the conduct of the Union was tantamount to a breach of privilege. In spite of this, the Union has renewed its demand for a full and impartial inquiry. In the meantime, Mr. Silva has asked that the inquiry be held in London because the relevant witnesses and documents were in London. The last word is yet to be spoken and written about this sordid matter which is connected with a whole lot of other business activities of the Chairman ranging from gems to poultry (and rabbits).

— Editor

The Bank of Ceylon, its Chairman and the London Branch featured very prominently in the deliberations of the National State Assembly on the 30th November, 1976 and certain very interesting happenings were spotlighted.

Mr. Lloyd de Silva had been appointed as Branch Manager in the London Office in July, 1974 till July, 1977 during the period Dr. N. M. Perera was the Minister of Finance. Dr. N. M. Perera read out the contents of a letter dated 19.10.76 addressed to the General Manager by Mr. Lloyd de Silva listing irregularities or improprieties alleged to have been committed by the Chairman, Mr. Gamini B. Wickremanayake, during his holiday with his family in London in April, 1976. Consequent on Mr. Lloyd de Silva's reluctance to do anything not strictly correct where matters of the Bank were concerned, the Chairman when he returned to Sri Lanka had got the Board to order Mr. Lloyd de Silva's recall on 31.12.76 (Hansard page 1193).

The first point raised by Mr. de Silva was that Mr. Gamini Wickremanayake had visited the Bank with his family and had casually requested Mr. de Silva to cash a cheque drawn by one Mrs. I. Jayatilake for £ 50/-. Mr. de Silva took the cheque and after perusal drew the attention of Mr. Wickremanayake that the payee's name had been left blank. Mr. Wickremanayake thereupon wanted Mr. de Silva to enter his own name in the cheque. Mr. de Silva refused to do so till he was pressurised by the Chairman who used his official position to get him to do something irregular. It is still a sound principle of Banking that it is only the drawer or the person who had authority to fill up a blank cheque who could do so over the signature of the drawer. If any person did have such authority it is Mr. Gamini Wickremanayake who was the holder of the cheque. If any one else did it that person would be committing a forgery. Mr. Gamini Wickremanayake with all his experience as a Chartered Accountant, Chairman of the largest Bank in Sri Lanka and head of the Treasury was no simpleton. He was fully aware of the law and practice in regard to Banking.

He had not disclosed to Mr. de Silva that he had received this £ 50/- cheque as a gift from a friend. He deliberately refused to put his own name on the cheque. While Mr. de Silva was willing to help the Chairman, he wanted the cheque to be filled up legally. Mr. de Silva was unknown to the Drawer Mrs. I. Jayatileka and had no dealings with her. He refused to

oblige the Chairman by entering his name (Mr. de Silva's) in the cheque.

As a prudent and careful Bank Manager Mr. de Silva, prompted by Mr. Wickremanayake's refusal to enter his own name and on being pressurised to enter his name in the cheque, first obtained a photostat copy of the blank cheque, thereafter wrote his name "L. de Silva" as payee, drew out £50/- from his own personal account and handed over the same to the Chairman. He further in order to safeguard himself obtained confirmation from Mrs. I. Jayatilake through her Bankers that she had given his cheque to Mr. Gamini Wickremanayake.

It was no doubt embarrassing for Mr. Felix Dias Bandaranaike, Minister of Finance to defend the conduct of his brother-in-law, Mr. Gamini Wickremanayake. His reply which is found at page 1241 of the Hansard is interesting reading.

"Concerning the charge Mr. Lloyd de Silva says that Mr. Wickremanayake bullied him into cashing a cheque for £ 50/- drawn by Mrs. I. Jayatileka with a blank for the payee. It is common ground that Mr. de Silva encashed a personal cheque of his own for £ 50/- and handed over £ 50/- to Mr. Wickremanayake and received the cheque in question. Mr. Wickremanayake denies that there was any bullying in this matter and that Mr. de Silva acted with perfect willingness and indeed volunteered to encash the cheque. Mr. Wickremanayake says that this cheque was a gift from Mrs. Indrani Jayatileka."

This statement of the Minister is belied by the fact that Mr. Lloyd de Silva had taken a photostat copy of the cheque before he entered his name and drew out the cash. Almost immediately after Mr. Wickremanayake left the Bank he sought confirmation that this cheque had in point of fact been given to Mr. Wickremanayake by Mrs. I. Jayatilake. If according to the Minister Mr. Wickremanayake thought there was nothing wrong in the transaction, why did Mr. Wickremanayake the donee, who alone had authority to fill the blank cheque refuse or fail to do so. The Minister states, that the Bank of Ceylon would have been the last place to which he would have gone to cash the cheque. This is sophistry of a high order because

no other Bank would have accommodated Mr. Wickremanayake or anyone who he did not display honesty and courage by entering his own name as payee. It was only in the Bank of Ceylon, London that he could have used his official position in that manner. The Minister appeared to be satisfied with his own explanation.

The Minister at page 1243 of the Hansard states:

"I also asked the Attorney General whether the receipt of a cheque with the payee's name is illegal. He had advised me that, there is no prohibition upon any person receiving a cheque if the payee's name is blank. This would carry with it as implied authority from the drawer to the legitimate holder, to insert any name in the payee's space and would give valid title to the holder."

NO ONE will dispute the correctness of the Attorney-General's answer to this specific question. But this is no answer to the charge that Mr. Gamini Wickramanayake the holder of the cheque himself failed or refused to insert his name but had instead pressurised Mr. de Silva to enter his own name in his own handwriting. Further the Minister gets a long letter addressed to him by Mrs. I. Jayatileka complaining about Mr. de Silva's conduct in obtaining confirmation of the fact that she had given this cheque to Mr. Wickramanayake. Mrs. I. Jayatileka acting against all ethical or legal principles sends a letter addressed to her marked "private and confidential" without the permission of the writer, to the Minister and the Minister likewise tables this letter. In this letter Mr. de Silva had stated that the information was required for the Central Office. The Minister apparently reads the letter as stating that "the information is required by the Central Office and proceeds to say that this was not even a true statement.

Mr. Lloyd de Silva in his letter to the Board had drawn attention to a circular dated 31.12.75 sent to him:

"I am informed by Mr. Gamini Wickramanayake the Chairman of the Bank to inquire from you whether the cost of private telex messages despatched by officers attached to your office are recovered from them. If not please recover such costs from the officers concerned immediately. Please ack-

nowledge receipt of these instructions. R. K. Subramaniam, Personal Manager."

THE FOLLOWING are the events that took place during the Chairman's holiday trip to London.

(1) On 12.4.76 the Chairman telephoned Mr. Lloyd de Silva and wanted a taxi sent to him. When the Chairman arrived he wanted the Manager to pay for the taxi-cab out of Bank Funds. As this was not an official trip as he was on holiday the Manager instructed the Chief Clerk to note the payment clearly in the relevant charges account.

(2) The Chairman proceeded from London to the United States. Before he left he had booked a private telephone call to the States No. 0101-345-2498 from the Bank Office. The cost of this telephone call too had to be noted in the relevant charges account.

(3) While the Chairman was away in the States a Telex message arrived from Mr. R. Amarasinghe of the Central Office

about the payment of £ 275/- to the Hyline Rabbits Ltd. Manchester. The message further stated "also inform Mr. G. B. Wickramanayake, Chairman of this remittance." This again was an entirely private transaction of the Chairman on holiday.

At the request of the Chairman Mr. Lloyd de Silva, the Manager sent the following Telex message on 27.5.76.

"Attention: Mr. Ranjit Amarasinghe Supplies Officer.

Chairman Bank of Ceylon will be arriving Sunday 30th Air Ceylon Flight AEO 18 accompanied by a consignment of rabbits. Please arrange to clear this consignment—Manager 25.5.76.

On 29.5.76 the Chairman contacted the Manager for confirmation that the Telex message had been sent. The Manager also reminded him that the cost of the Telex message was payable by him. The Chairman reacted angrily to this reminder.

21st December, 1976

L. G. De Silva Esq.,
No. 3, Fernlea Road,
Mitcham,
Surrey.

Dear Sir,

You are required to show cause why you should not be dismissed from the service of the Bank or otherwise punished on the following charges:—

1. Using your position as the Manager, London Branch, to obtain information from Mrs. I. Jayatileka, a constituent of another Bank, for your private purposes by stating that such information was "of a routine nature" and was required by the Bank's Central office although you were not entitled to do so.
2. Using your position as the Manager, London Branch, to obtain information for your private purposes from Hyline Rabbits Limited, a beneficiary of a remittance sent by The Bank of Ceylon, Colombo, through the London Branch, although you were not entitled to do so.
3. Communicating information derived by you in the course of your duties as Manager, London Branch, and information obtained by you in such capacity, to persons not entitled to receive such information, in violation of your legal duties to observe strict secrecy in respect of all transactions and affairs of the Bank and of its customers.
4. By reason of the facts set out above and otherwise you have committed misconduct in the course of your employment.

Please note that your reply should reach me on or before 17th January 1977. Should you fail to reply, the matter will be disposed of without further reference to you.

Yours faithfully,

A. Navaratnam,
Manager.

Brae's Subordinate "Staff"

The Minister in his statement in the Assembly (page 1247 Hansard) stated as follows:

CHARGE 4—Mr. de Silva alleges that Mr. Wickramanayake has made improper use of Bank facilities in regard to (a) Telex messages (b) booking of a telephone call (c) the payment of taxi fare for Mr. Wickramanayake's first visit to the Bank. In regard to these matters, I had asked the General Manager to advise me as to the Bank practices. Mr. Wickramanayake says it is quite in order for any visiting official of the Bank to have information given of his arrival particulars in Colombo to the Bank in Colombo with instructions to inform his home. Thus it is clear that Mr. Silva's allegations are not denied but defended.

The fact remains that the Chairman was on a holiday with his family and not on an official visit to the Bank for matters connected with the Bank and the message was a personal message to Mr. R. Amarasinghe to arrange for clearing of the consignment of rabbits—a gain a private affair and so were the telephone call and the taxi fare.

No one can say that Mr. Lloyd de Silva has been remiss in his duties as the Manager of the London Branch. No doubt it would have hurt the feelings of the powerful and influential Chairman to find that an official of the bank did not overlook such matters. Therefore on his return he gets the Board to recall Mr. de Silva on 31.12.76 when he should have returned in July 1977.

The other matter raised in regard to the consignment of rabbits is a matter personal to the Chairman and the family which has pecuniary interest in the Farm and the attempts to justify this exercise with letters from Air Ceylon are understandable. But this also came to light because of the contents of the Telex Message.

However, it is in the interests of the State that these matters are investigated fully in fairness to the Manager, London Branch as he has acted correctly and has been penalised. Upto date a full inquiry by some independent person or body has not been made and the defence of the Minister in the Assembly should not be the last word on these matters that have been spotlighted. Let Justice also be brought into the

Finance Ministry affairs. Any other employee of a Bank could be placed in a similar situation.



LIFE IN A TEA ESTATE—18

The Staff

By Ina Trimmer

NEXT to the coolies the most interesting personages of the estate fraternity are the subordinate staff, the conductors, clerks, teamaker, dispenser and mechanic.

It was easier to know the coolies and to share in their joys and troubles than to step even into the fringe of the lives of the Subordinate Staff. There was a wall of reserve so high, so strong, that no amount of kindly feeling, sympathy or real interest could surmount it. The coolies were children of Nature. There was humility with them, but no bashfulness. They had reserve, but no constraint. But the Subordinate Staff treated my husband and me with icy aloofness.

Undoubtedly it was due to the 'respect' they thought was their moral obligation to the Dorai, and his wife, and nothing we could do ever changed their attitude. At Brae my husband had no Sinna Dorais (assistants) under him. He was in sole charge with the 'native' staff to help him.

Mr. Dawson, the Chief Clerk was my husband's right-hand man, trained by him ever since he was a young boy straight from school. He was efficient, quiet, a man of few words. If there were costs to be worked out, accounts of all kinds, Dawson was there efficient to the 9th degree.

But my husband did not believe in leaving too much to any of his subordinates. "The responsibility is mine," he would say. "It is not fair to put temptation in any man's way." And his finger was never lifted from the pulse that controlled the even running of the estate. Each item, whether it went out of the estate or came in, was his concern. His watchfulness never ceased however steady the man or trustworthy.

MR. DAWSON always came into our house barefooted. He would leave his sandals at the top of the

flight of stairs that led down to the bungalow from the kitchen. But Mr. Zechariah, the conductor of the Upper Division, tramped in clod-hopping along in his estate boots, his heavy tread shaking the house. But that again was only in work-a-day clothes. If my husband called for him after hours he appeared in spotless white cloth, long shirt and barefooted after the usual evening bath at the freezing cold 'pelee' (water spout) near his house. This 'pelee' was the special reserve of the staff. The coolies had many others, for at Brae there was water everywhere. They were a hardy crowd those Brae men and thought nothing of the icy water that gushed down from the mountains, or rain, or mist or biting wind.

Unlike Dawson who always worked indoors with his interminable accounts and writing, Zechariah had to spend his days in the field, in all weathers, from early morning till evening. Dawson called me 'Mum' often 'Um'. Has the tappal come, Dawson? 'Yes, 'Um'. He seldom had anything more to say than yes or no, and would look thoroughly uncomfortable if I addressed him.

Zechariah would call me 'madam'. I am sure he would have liked to expand but felt it was not quite proper to do so. He was a diamond in the rough and sometimes twinkled. His eyes did, anyway, if I asked foolish questions such as:

"What is that tree over there, Zechariah?"

"Which tree, madam?"

"That one with the quivering, shimmering leaves."

"That must be only a jungle tree," and he dismissed me summarily for asking useless questions.

He had a dry humour that suddenly appeared in spite of the great wall of ice that separated us.

"Zechariah, where's your wife? Why doesn't she live with you?" inquisitive-like I asked of him.

"She is in India, Madam, looking after her pearls."

"Pearls? What pearls?"

"Women don't care for love after one or two years, but they always love their pearls which mean more to them. I send all leaf'n to her."

Words of pure wisdom from Zechariah, the conductor at Brae. There were three other Conductors, one for each of the three lower divisions and their assistants.

Mr. Sebastian of the Lauragalla Division (he called it Lau-cora-galla) was a Christian. So were Mr. Dawson and Mr. Zechariah. They were Syrian Christians like so many who come from Southern India. But Mr. Sebastian was a Christian Scientist, he said. He believed in the triumph of mind over matter. When he or his wife fell ill, the dispenser was not allowed near the place. It worried my husband, particularly once when the former had a very bad attack of malaria contracted on the estate on which he had worked before.

Mr. Vadivel, the conductor of the furthest division of all that bordered the Rattota Road was a six-footer. I liked him though he would never by any chance speak a word to me. He was obviously bashful and would even avoid looking at me. He had a kindly face and a queer husky voice. He began all his sentences with a rasping "Ahrrr" that sounded as if he was clearing his throat. I think it was the difficulty of starting to speak.

"Ahrrr, Sir, I want an increase."

"Increase? What the devil for? You were given an increase six months ago."

"Ahrrr, My wife has had another child."

"What! Another one! Good Gracious! Vadivelu, you must call a halt. This is all nonsense. Which number is this one?"

"Ahrr-hrr—eighth, sir."

"Eighth." Good God! What are you about, man? This must stop. And you expect the company to pay because you have eight children."

"Ahrr-rrr, what can I do, sir? My wife is so frolicsome."

THE DISPENSER was a nice little man. Mr. Julius and his wife were kind-of-Burghers. They wore European clothes; they talked English freely, and they came from Trincomalee.

Mr. Julius had not a hair on his head. He was hardly middle-aged but he had lost his hair when quite a young man. All he had left was a thick, tiny tuft, right in the centre of the nape of the neck. This worried me, rather.

I had visions of myself going completely bald like Mr. Julius. I anxiously inquired from my husband whether it was catching whatever it was that had turned Mr. Julius hairless. No reassurance would satisfy me. I washed my hands carefully, hands and arms, after talking to Julius.

One day Julius asked to see me, particularly. He wanted me to speak to my husband on his behalf and persuade him to give him a week's leave to go to Wahacotte near Matale to make a vow.

"Mr. Julius," I said—"why do you want to do this? Do you really believe that the prayers of the saints can help you?"

He looked at me in surprise.

"Why, of course, madam. Have I not come to you to plead with the master to give me leave? When I asked him yesterday he refused, but when you ask madam, on my behalf he will never refuse you. So in the same way, my own prayers won't be the same as those of the saints in heaven. The saints who are closer to God, just as you, madam, are closer to our Dorai."

I thought it was a wonderful reply, so much so that he convinced me. His leave was granted.

We had two telephones in the Big Bungalow. One for the outside world, and the other for internal communication only. The latter was constantly in use. Zechariah in particular came often over it, sometimes driving me desperate with the noise he made. Sebastian also came on every morning to shout for various items from the factory and store at Lauragalla. He never seemed to believe that the telephone wires had anything to do with carrying his voice. If he spoke to the Lower Division he meant to be heard all the way.

"Hile, man, hile, send some at once"

"Vat? You don't know hile? O—L—L—hile!"

Once I wanted the dispenser to come and attend to my pet duck that was ill. I asked Zechariah to telephone to the factory to send a message to Mr. Julius. His stentorian voice rang out. (When Zechariah spoke there was really no need for a telephone). "Tell Mr. Julius to come at once, Madame's d-a-a-a-ark is sick." Evi-

dently the tea maker at the other end had no idea we had ducks or that calamities overtook ducks. Zechariah was obvious exasperated.

"Da-aa-ark. Da-a-aark" he shouted.

"Aiyo-o-o, what is this, man? You don't know da-aa-ark? That thing that makes paak, pa-aak in that backyard?"

But in speech Moses was the strangest of them all. Moses was the assistant clerk and Dawson's brother-in-law, a young man about twenty years old, very serious, with large round eyes like saucers, always opened wide, their yellow whites very evident.

During the war a young English sergeant anxious to visit us telephoned from Kandy before coming. We were away from the estate, staying at another estate, August, which my husband V.A.'d for a time for Dr. P. R. Thumbugala, an old and very special friend.

Moses answered the telephone call and tried to tell the sergeant where we had gone.

"Spell it" said the sergeant in despair.

Moses started. "Yay-Chu-Ghu Chu—"

The distracted sergeant strained his ears. What strange tongue was this, or what strange place had we gone to!

"Spell it again", he begged.

Moses began. "Yay-Chu-Chu—"

Then he came to the greatest stumbling block of all. He hissed, he blew. "Sa-sss-sss."

"What's that?" shouted the sergeant.

Moses hissed louder. Over the wires he blew till all breath had left him. Panting and exhausted he said at last—"Ans T—Yay'.

The sergeant was unable to contact us till we returned to Brae though we were in Kandy and so was he.

Where are they now, I wonder, all these men who held so intimate a place in our lives, whose well-being was in my husband's care; who shared the loneliness and vicissitudes of our existence, and who never left us as long as we were in Brae, and but for whom Brae could never have been a working possibility? But one of the key men in this team I have left for the last, the mechanic. His special responsibility was to keep the Ropeway

in repair. The Ropeway was the life line of Brae. If it failed there was no way of transporting goods except by cooly—unthinkable. A mechanic was of paramount importance to keep that cable of steel in perfect condition as well as to attend on the machinery in the factory.

It was a hard life and men came and went as endlessly as the ropeway. One afternoon a raffish looking man turned up at my husband's office. It was an interegnum between mechanics and an advertisement had appeared in the *Daily News* for a good mechanic with ropeway knowledge.

"I had your advert, sir and have come to apply for the job in person," he said as he entered.

"What's your name!" my husband asked.

"Jones, sir, Jones at your service
"Your nationality?"

"I am a Portuguese - Malaccan by the name of Jones."

"From where do you come?"
Asked my husband wondering what wind blew this distant wanderer over the Gap.

"I come from Dematagoda, sir."

Never before did such a phenomenon arise—a Portuguese Malaccan, by the name of Jones, from Dematagoda. What experience have you had? Where have you worked?"

"Here Sir, here. Here are my certificates. I was a mechanic at Messrs. Walkers, Browns, Walker and Greig's, Hoare and Co.

"Great Scott man! Where else have you been? You seem to be a rolling stone."

"Ah, sir, but I have gathered moss. Here, sir, here is the moss. Indeed here" and he tapped his head.

My husband read through the certificates.

"All right, I'll give you a chance, I'll try you on a month's probation. By the way, are you a married man?"

"Yes, sir."

"Any children?"

"Yes, sir, two sir, two and one underconstruction!"

"You seem to be a good engineer," said my husband. "Go down to the factory. The tea maker will show you your rooms."

He stayed a year. One morning he came to my husband boo-hooing at the top of his voice. Tears were rolling down his face.

"Look, sir, look at what the tea maker's wife gave me for hoppers this morning."

He held out three caramels.

"How can a man work on this sir? I get my meals from the tea maker's wife and this is what she gave me today for hoppers. She must remember I am a respectable man sir. I am a man of good family and I always eat hoppers in the morning. I am not used to eating caramels—Cha—Sir!

And he threw the caramels one after the other amongst my roses.



LANKA-SOVIET RELATIONS

Twentieth Anniversary

By V. Baidakov

THIS YEAR the Soviet and Lanka people are marking a significant event in their life. Twenty years ago government delegations of the Soviet Union and Sri Lanka, during talks held in Moscow from August 26 to September 1, 1956, reached agreement in principle on the establishment of diplomatic relations between their two countries, and on the development of trade, economic and cultural co-operation. Following this agreement, on February 19, 1957, full diplomatic relations were established between the two states at ambassadorial level.

The Moscow talks of August-September 1956 were a starting point in the development of official Soviet-Lanka relations. They marked the beginning of fruitful co-operation between our states, which later enabled us to not only broaden our bilateral friendly ties, but also view with greater confidence the future of that co-operation.

But it would certainly be wrong to say that this date marked the beginning of contacts between our peoples and countries. There are many glorious chapters in the history of our friendly relations testifying to their long-standing traditions. News about Sri Lanka first reached Russia back in the 15th century, and this, together with the subsequent establishment

of trade contacts, laid the foundation for cultural exchanges between our peoples. These exchanges were greatly facilitated by prominent Russian orientalists, among them I. Minayev, the author of "*Stories of Ceylon*" and "*Buddhism: Research and Information*," published in 1878 and 1887, respectively, and S. Oldenburg, who in 1894, published "*Buddhist Legends*" his major work, and a number of textbooks of the Pali language. Many representatives of Russia's progressive intelligentsia, including the writers A. P. Chekhov and I. A. Bunin, and a talented painter V. Varagin, visited Sri Lanka, which contributed greatly to the establishment of friendly relations between our peoples.

Following the victory in Russia of the Great October Socialist Revolution of 1917 relations between our peoples entered a qualitatively new stage, which was stressed by Prime Minister Sirimavo Bandaranaike of Sri Lanka during her official visit to the Soviet Union in November 1974. She said that the Great October Socialist Revolution had been a major event not only in the history of the Soviet Union." It was an important landmark in the history of all mankind. It had a deep impact in the countries which were languishing under the colonial yoke, and started liberation movements in many countries, including Sri Lanka. The teaching of the founder of the Soviet State, Vladimir Lenin," she went on, "had deeply affected the political revolution in Sri Lanka." ONE OF THE MOST CONVINCING PROOFS of this was the massive campaign of solidarity with the Soviet people, who bore the main brunt of the war and who played a decisive role in routing Hitler Germany, and militarist Japan. This campaign of support was launched in the country while it was still under British rule.

The campaign of solidarity and support for the Soviet people in their hard and selfless struggle against fascism was initiated and inspired by "The Ceylon Friends of the Soviet Union" society, set up in March 1942. Its members were workers, peasants, clergymen, teachers, trade union functionaries and journalists, all representing the most different strata of the country's population. The main task the society set itself, as was stressed in its manifesto

published at that time, was "to study the USSR and enlighten the public in general about it, to give as direct and practical aid as conditions allowed to the Soviet people in their fight against fascism and reaction and to work for full and friendly relations between the peoples of Ceylon and those of the Soviet Union."

In the initial stage of its noble work the society encountered tremendous difficulties as there was no material whatsoever about the Soviet Union—neither literature, nor photographs, nor even films to give the true picture of Soviet reality. Only by word of mouth could the broad segments of Lanka population learn the truth about the Soviet Union. Representatives of the country's progressive intelligentsia, including the present leaders of the Communist Party, Dr. S. A. Wickremasinghe and Pieter Keuneman, delivered lectures about the Soviet Union and supervised the work of study circles about the life and history of the Soviet people. They were the authors of the first booklets about the state and its political structure, about the culture and the system of education in the Soviet Union. "The Soviet Way" by Pieter Keuneman was the first edition of this series about the Soviet Union. Published in Sinhalese and English, it became very popular among broad segments of the public.

"The Ceylon Friends of the Soviet Union" society, among whose leaders were the well-known figures such as P. de S. Kularatne, President of the Ceylon National Congress, Anagarika Dharmapriya, General Secretary of All-Ceylon Peasants Congress, Cora Abraham, the Principal of the St. Paul's school in Colombo, A. Aziz, President of the Ceylon Indian Congress, and many others, conducted active work not only in Colombo, but also in other regions of Sri Lanka. There Local branches of the society sprang up one after the other. The scope of activity of the society continued to be broadened. At their mass meetings the people urgently demanded that the British Government open a Second Front in Europe, as soon as possible. In May 1943 the society launched a country-wide money-raising campaign for the "Medical Aid to Soviet Russia" Fund, which was actively supported, especially by the working people.

In October 1943 two remittances of £ 100 each were sent to the Soviet Ambassador in London, which was a rather big sum for that time. On November 6, 1943, another £ 100 remittance was forwarded, together with congratulations to the Soviet people on the occasion of the 26th anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution, and wished for the Red Army's speediest victory over Hitler's hordes.

"The Ceylon Friends of the Soviet Union" society widely marked memorable events in the life of the Soviet people. The "Soviet Week" sponsored by it to mark the 26th anniversary of the Great October Revolution, was observed in 11 towns from November 1 to 7, 1943, with thousands of Ceylonese taking part.

STARTING from November 1, 1943, "The Ceylon Friends of the Soviet Union" society regularly published the *Lanka-Soviet Journal*, its organ, which carried articles and essays about the heroic struggle of the Red Army and the selfless work of the Soviet people in the rear, as well as stories exposing the monstrosities perpetrated by the German occupation troops on Soviet soil. The journal gave wide coverage to memorable events in the history of the Soviet people, and provided comprehensive information about the Soviet way of life. The journal printed not only material about the Soviet Union. It gave a detailed account of the activities conducted in Sri Lanka in support of the struggle of the Soviet people against fascist invaders, and called on the working people of Lanka to step up their campaign of solidarity with the Soviet Union and to resolutely expose the design of local reaction which was denigrating that country.

"We in Lanka owe the Soviet people a great debt," wrote the first issue of the *Lanka-Soviet Journal*. "By holding fast and repulsing the Hitlerites at Moscow in 1941 and Stalingrad in 1943, the valiant resistance at Leningrad the Soviet people saved our country from fascist conquest by preventing the Germans from bursting through into Asia and thus disorganising the predatory plans of Japs against Lanka. May we make every patriot in our country realise and repay the debt we owe to the Soviet Union." This call of the *Journal* was enthusiastically supported by

the Lanka people, particularly by the country's working class.

The Lanka press often wrote that the workers spared no effort in meeting the orders for the USSR. "When an order for the Soviet Union came on," the newspaper *Janasaktiva* wrote in mid-1943, "the All-Ceylon Tea and Rubber Workers' Union, which is today one of the largest unions in Colombo, covering over 80 per cent of the workers in this industry, called its members to increase production and to finish up the order well ahead of schedule. Singing songs in their own languages about the Soviet Union, the workers increased production by 50 per cent and finished the order in record time. They put into each bale of tea intended for the USSR a leaflet in English containing greetings to the workers of Soviet Russia, and to the Red Army. There were plenty of similar examples of solidarity of the working class of Sri Lanka with the Soviet people. "It is a proud thought, not merely to the workers but to the peoples of our country," stated the *Lanka-Soviet Journal* on May 22, 1944, that today the Soviet armoured cars and lorries are running on tyres made of rubber from Ceylon and that the Red Army man in his trench is revived by a cup of the best Ceylon tea."

THE HEROIC STRUGGLE of the Soviet people against fascism was also highly praised by many statesmen of Sri Lanka. "The truly remarkable manner in which Russia has stood the terrible test of this war has proved that the spirits of the Soviet people have been lifted with new courage and hope—courage for overcoming inconceivable difficulties in the hope of achieving mankind's true heritage." So said Solomon Bandaranaike, then Minister for Local Administration, at the end of 1944. There is yet another statement made by the Minister of Health, Geo. E. de Silva, in December 1944: "If one looks to Russia's achievements during the short period of 27 years one cannot help but admire the heroism of the Soviet people, which has made possible the stupendous advancement in every sphere of human activity. When Hitler attacked the Soviet Union many wrongly thought that the Red Army would not be able to survive against the might of German arms. Today the Soviet Union has demonstrated to an astonished

world what a united people can achieve in defence of freedom and liberty. It is no wonder then, that the whole of freedom-loving humanity is looking to the Soviet Union for inspiration and guidance in the struggle against world reaction."

The international solidarity with the Soviet Union's courageous struggle against fascism, for peace and socialism, that was demonstrated by the Lanka patriots in the most difficult conditions of a colonial regime, will, no doubt, remain in the memory of the peoples as one of the most remarkable pages in the history of Soviet-Lanka friendship written by our peoples in the name of peace and happiness on Earth.

UNIVERSITY EDUCATION—3

Change Essential

By P. Chandrasegeram
Dept. Of Humanities Education
Faculty Of Education
University Of Sri Lanka

EDUCATIONISTS and philosopher statesmen consider innovations in education and change in the pattern of education as an essential condition for social change in countries all over the world; this is more marked in contemporary Asia and Africa. Job-oriented education, vocational education, work experience in education have all become new educational fields. Sometimes they are created for giving a new look to the existing structure. This is more marked in relation to higher education.

It is therefore necessary to examine some fundamental issues on higher education, see the relevance of courses of study with regard to the emergent social realities of particularly developing countries and also analyse the causes of confusion and pessimism in the minds of people.

In general the Asian and African academic system is monolithic in character, the exceptions being countries like Peoples' China and Japan. The Universities by and large follow one uniform practice in regard to courses of study, admissions of students, framing of syllabus and examinations. If we would examine the various reports

like the Radhakrishnan Report and the Kothari Report in India and the Needham, Gunawardena, reports in Sri Lanka, not to mention the 1972 report on University education which spoke of job oriented education they have said fundamentally the same thing about all important matters relating to higher education.

After every study and report so much energy is spent on the fringes of educational matters, and surface adjustments and compromises are made that at the most the system becomes 'ordered imperfection'. Sri Lanka's higher educational system is a case in point. It is not possible to build up an efficient system from inefficient components; enriching an out-moded system, and introducing redundancy into such a system can only result in increase of internal conflict and inner contradiction.

EXAMPLES of redundancy are provided by decision making in regard to curriculum and syllabus. A mere increase in the number of courses will not give a re-orientation for education. Improved instructional material and use of refined educational technology are important aspects of education. Another example would be that, in our concern to strengthen science and technology the Asian and African countries invite 'specialists', to examine the curriculum and syllabuses. Such experts discharge their duty with a sense of responsibility, but the changes do not fit into the general framework educational and cultural of the different countries nor are they balancing in terms of content. Schooling or University education is equated with the composite of the objectives set for subjects and the process as well as the product of teaching is lost sight of.

After the end of subject status of the developing nations there was a national urge among the people of these nations to enjoy the full rights and benefits of citizenship. But in spite of the profession of socialism and equality there continues to be a minority elite and consequently the large majority of the people suffer from disadvantages. In any of the developing nations education instead of being geared to the need of the disadvantaged has put emphasis on the perpetua-

tion of the elite minority and bestowed 'rank' and 'status'. Ironically enough, the so-called educational experiments have been made at the cost of the under-privileged. A curious contradiction arises in this process. On the one hand there is a persistent demand for more of the same kind of education even if it leads to unemployment and on the other, there is an equally persistent demand to abolish the system as it is considered ineffective and purposeless.

THE RISING EXPECTATIONS and aspirations of the majority of the people consequent to the attainment of independence reflected in the course of study in the academic institutions. In structure, content and orientation no desirable changes have been made. The mere enumeration of lecture hour and at best evolving ideas and concepts without being concerned about their relevance will not answer the problems. Besides being modern, even a semblance of contemporaneity is absent. Even the study of history which creates a sense of vision has been a neglected sector. 'A country that has no vision perishes. History is one of the best expression to create this sense of vision. The history of nations after regaining independence is generalised and it lacks any sense of positive nationalism. Many of the 'new nations', are multi-cultural, multi-religious and multi-lingual. Yet the history of distinctive groups has not yet been studied scientifically. For instance the history of the Tamil-speaking people in Sri Lanka has yet to be studied in the correct perspective. The history of nations cannot be the extension of colonial history. Ancient history and culture is considered to be of antiquarian interest. Unless these are done, it is not possible to look for historicity in a national context or a sense of historical perspective among the youth.

The structure and function of the centres of higher learning should pursue 'excellence'. Pursuing excellence is not cultivating establishment. Pursuit of excellence presupposes an atmosphere of academic freedom, stimulation and initiative. Many of the Asian and African nations, have achieved freedom from a number of restraints, but in the academic sphere this 'freedom from', has not been trans-

lated into 'freedom of'. The elitist minority enjoyed certain privileges due to limited access to education, but the large majority of the people have not been able to choose and re-fashion their real aspirations.

Any new knowledge is considered a threat to the charisma of the Government and affront to its limited capability and limited authority.

THE MACHINERY which has been set up to co-ordinate activities determine 'standards' and give grants in aid to institutions has never been effectively used. Instead of laying emphasis on its professional character and providing intrinsically academic leadership the University grants commission in various countries have become institutions of patronage. Some countries do not even have limited institutions even like the University Grants Commission. It is the task of the U.G.C. or an equivalent institutions to help the youth to search for a new set of operational paradigms and to help them to telescope the process of discovery and innovation and attain modernity and acquire new and contemporary knowledge.

One consequence of this situation is that educational institutions are not relevant and flexible institutions educating for work and life. Universities have become degree granting bodies. It is common knowledge that the graduates have much less grasp of realities.

In a traditional society, struggling to change from tradition to modernity emphasis needs to be put on 'creativity and the innate giftedness. This is necessary for breaking the stagnation and inertia inherent in the traditional mode of thinking. Since an infinitesimally small percentage of people participating in the benefits of education is called upon to provide leadership in thought and action, it would result in this class guarding their positions of privilege.

It is the imperative task of education to change this; to talk of dynamics and changing educational instructional strategies in a society which is basically static and backward-looking is futile.

Changing educational strategies assume either outmoded past practice or shifting academic objectives

in the best of emergent social realities in the context of change.

No professional mechanism exists in many countries to define the goals of higher education particularly University education. In The state secretariat in many countries where the state officers are considered omniscient, fundamental thinking in this regard cannot be expected. Similar results obtain from multiplicity of controls and agencies within the government bureaucracy and from the heads of institutions with their less than perfect credentials for academic leadership.

The Universities should add to the wide-angled vision for the education of tomorrow.

S A F A R I

April 26 – May 1

By Alkardi Mugana

April 26,

The idea of a two months' holiday appeals me, the idea of being away, but I must need it when I cannot get myself to walk round the estate, and when I do not visit a section of it for days. Yet, perhaps, there was never a more opportune moment. The cattle and dairy section are at last running smoothly; the milk supply is going up, heavens knows why, but it is probably better feed, more grass because of the rains. Repairing fences is getting under way, not that it was not done before. We were doing it earlier consequent to trimming the fences. Just now we are trimming fences as a preliminary to showing them up. All the estate has to be slash-weeded to get rid of a weed that springs up after the rains following a drought. Wherever the ground has been closed—cropped to a brown that shows no grass. This weed smothers grass and stops it from coming up. Our subsidiary crop programme has been ambitious for the number of hands this estate can afford to carry. It demands all the rest of the estate of workers, yet, the spirit in the estate is better and the estate exudes a calm, and a more homely atmosphere. So, come along, holiday.

April 27,

This was a day that was neither eventful nor boring, it was a perfect day in retrospect. In the morning I fell into deep sleep, something that I do not do at night, although I sleep well. My sleep was so sound, I dreamed dreams intimately related with the day, the dreams version of events, events in which I was a prisoner, a prisoner of my sleep, from which I could not wake up. It was a sort of nightmare without nightmarist elements. I was not a prisoner in the dream but a prisoner of the dream, so that when I did really and truly wake up, and I think it was for lunch, I realized how soundly I had slept, so that even my apparent waking moments, when I had tried hard to rouse myself into full consciousness, were but a part of the dream itself. Anyway, I had had a rest, So I made a very full, or complete, inspection of our part of the estate, and then involved myself in a little manual work where the men were making a good and a thorough job of repairing one of the fences, so leaving myself only a little time to make a cursory inspection of a part of the estate, which showed me how much there was yet to be done. We have a fine spirit here right now.

April 28,

Those last words had hardly been written, when there was a spanner thrown well and truly into the works, causing me to raise my voice and proclaim the iniquity of people who cannot let matters be. It had come in a form of a letter putting us right back where we were about two months before, in a state of nervous tension, wondering how we were going to pay certain essential workers whom the authorities of the estate were not prepared to shoulder responsibility for. In addition to this, steps were going to be taken which would literally split the estates into two, which as far as I could make out was going to be done through sheer spite. There had been a death and deaths cost money, deaths of persons.

As I knew that money for expenditure on the estate had reached a certain high point, beyond which it was not expedient to go, I had refrained from asking that this money be replaced. Now, to bring the matter home, I asked it be replaced, little believing that

it would. The money would have been like a fly in the ointment, a lost ring on the sea shore, barely enough to carry us for long. Anyway, I made a friend, a man who said I was straight, but who had hitherto been antagonistic towards me. Meanwhile, the money came in as it always does, no matter from where.

April 29,

A good sleep, and I am back at this. Last night's safari was written standing at Colombo's major bus stand, the major terminus. The bus left at about midnight, and I had to stand most of the way from Colombo to Kala Oya, which is between Puttalam and Anuradhapura. Where and when I got off, I went straight to the place where I write this tonight. Then I went to Anatory Bukoba's old *shamba* or farm, where the two families there seem to be doing well. They are making their way in the world by honest work, but they have been discouraged from further cultivation by the efforts of their neighbour, a family, to dislodge them, efforts aided and abetted, as I was told, by officialdom. These efforts had succeeded in driving away a third family that had joined them. It was no secret that the efforts at dislodging them are aimed at giving the neighbouring family a house by the road. I had a good sleep there, ten minutes of rest, prolonged by sheer exhaustion until lunch time. Then it was washing my clothes, and finishing off reading a book while they dried.

April 30,

A Kaffir friend told me about his people. He said they came from Madagascar of all places, the old French colony, in the time of Governor Barnes, as soldiers, the Kaffirs forming one regiment and Jains, from India I presume, another. He seemed to think there were Sinhalese kings at the time, surely not in the time of Barnes, and that after landing at Galle, the Kaffirs were scattered in units along the coast, at such places as Chilaw and Puttalam. As no women-folk came over the men had to take Sinhalese as wives, and so it is obvious that all the first generation Kaffirs born in Ceylon were half Kaffir and half Sinhalese. The African stock may have been strengthened later by marrying back into the Kaffir strain that had come

over. The Sinhalese strain caused many of the following generations to lose their fuzzy-wuzzy or crinkled hair, while they kept their African features, physique and pigmentation. It seems obvious to me that the Kaffir troops must have come from several tribes, which was why they retained only their *lingua franca*, Portuguese, but why Portuguese from a French colony? A Portuguese speaking Italian prisoner-of-war in Ceylon in world war II found their Portuguese tongue quite pure.

May 1,

Along the Anuradhapura—Puttalam road during the hours preceding dawn, and till shortly after, *Operation Colombo* was on, if I may give that kind of name, so popular during the war, to the business of transporting the male, I did not see any women, population of the North Central Province, around the provincial capital I presume, to Colombo for the May day processions. Last year I had seen this along the Kandy road, and I had also flitted from one party procession to another, in Colombo, and I had marvelled at the organization that had gone into the smooth functioning of May day. In comparison a modern British monarch's silver jubilee of accession must be small fry, and if it is ever our privilege to mount an invasion of Africa, to save the Africans from themselves of course, I would unhesitatingly entrust the business to a SLFP-Ceylon Government complex, or, perhaps, I should say, to a SLFP-CTB-Sri Lanka Police complex. Well done. All CTB stands were denuded of buses, but we still got around, those of us not in Colombo.

• •

LETTERS

• G. G. P.

Sir,

The death of Mr. G. G. Ponnambalam removes from the political scene one of the most colourful and controversial personalities Ceylon has ever had.

His captivating personality, his searching eyes, and his complete

command of the English Language had a mesmeric effect on the Tamil masses for more than a quarter century. The personality cult that was built around him will remain a force to be reckoned with for ever after his death.

Donoughmore means "Tamils No More" was the anguished cry of Sir Ponnambalam Ramanathan before his death. The gap that was created by his demise was ably filled by Mr. G. G. Ponnambalam who came to the forefront with the cry Soulbury has come to bury the soul of the Tamils. His historic speech against the Soulbury Commission will be remembered by the coming generations as a masterpiece of oration and its contents will ever be cherished for its prophetic vision. Lord Soulbury who violently disagreed with the views and fears expressed by Mr. G. G. Ponnambalam paid the highest tribute for the oratorical outburst Mr. Ponnambalam displayed. And this very Lord Soulbury later expressed his regrets for not having formulated adequate safeguards for the minorities in the Constitution in his forward to Mr. B. H. Farmer's book "Ceylon a Divided Nation."

Recording history in its proper perspective, it must be said, that Mr. Ponnambalam's political vision in the middle period of his career was coloured by various factors but it must be said to his everlasting credit that he regained his earlier vision and was certain as to what was in store for the Tamils and what political solution would be a permanent answer to the continued existence of the Tamils in this country as a separate entity. His address at the Trial-at-Bar revealed in unmistakable terms his legal acumen, clarity of thought and his political vision.

In the death of Mr. G. G. Ponnambalam we have lost an able co-President of the T.U.L.F. a legal luminary, an outstanding orator the type of which we may never see, a politician who held sway for more than a quarter century. The T.U.L.F. Colombo Branch mourns his death and conveys its deep felt condolence to his bereaved family.

M. K. Eelaventhan
President T.U.L.F.
Colombo.

13.2.77

• Sinhala-Tamil

Sir,

Not long ago the Government controlled press had reported that our Communist Minister for Housing and Construction, had said, while addressing a meeting in Jaffna, that under no circumstances "the country will be divided." He may have said so while doing a bit of Communist propaganda to win support of our Northern brethren to the Communist principles and policies, contrary to the so-called Bandaranaike Policies and Principles of his Cabinet colleagues. Nevertheless we have no words to endorse this with sufficient emphasis. While we fully agree with Minister Keuneman's assertion, we are disappointed that he did not offer or even suggest an alternative to bring the two communities together politically so that they can work together with common objectives—to build a Sri Lanka where both Tamils and Sinhalese can live and work together in perfect harmony.

This kind of assertion by the members of the Government, we suspect, are motivated by the impending elections, and not with any desire to solve a problem that has dogged every political party, not even the U.N.P. which stands for unity of the country. Not that the issue is without a solution. It is just the lethargy of the major community and their elected representatives who are frightened to work out a solution acceptable to both the communities, lest a rival Political Party may cash in on this issue to come into power. Also they are aware that they can carry on without the support of the minorities.

The Party that brought the language issue to the political arena was the SLFP in their determination to come into power at any cost and having got it, they have just let the issue slip by except for the Chelvanayagam - Bandaranaike pact—a compromise to stop blood letting. The SLFP has had several spells of running the country but no attempt has been made so far to get the two communities together. Our conviction is they will not

do as long as they have a chance to be in power by setting one community against the other. THE UNITED NATIONAL PARTY did get beaten in the 1956 elections in their attempt to bargain with the Tamils to get into power, since then, they also have been lying low. Meanwhile the gap is growing wider and wider with the minorities breathing fire and brimstone against the major community who, they think, are holding them at bay.

Elections in 1977 is a certainty unless the unexpected happens like a coup—Marcos fashion. Nonetheless all the signs and the guessing of the "secret agents" of the UNP which is spearheading to force an election, are sure that they will romp home with a working majority. If this is a reachable reality, then the UNP must work from now on to work out a solution both at an inter-community and political level.

The Tamil community must also realise that Separation, Federation or any other kind of schism is not practical politics, and they on their part should abandon the paths of the Federalists etc. and offer to join one of the two major political groups and work within the Party to achieve their aspirations as a community, or nationally and politically. If the current view is that the U.N.P. has a sure chance of winning the elections, then why not the UNP invite the Tamil community to join them and work with the Principles and Policies of their Party—after all their main

objective is to create a united nation, so it is for its leadership to build that unity with the other communities and with this goal as their rational objective the UNP should field candidates from among the Tamil community who accept the main policies of the UNP to Contest all the Seats in the Northern and Eastern Provinces where normally these seats are contested by the FP, TC, or TUF as opposing political parties to the SLFP and UNP.

It is easier for the Tamils to work within a majority political party to find a solution to their problems rather than from outside in small groups of various political shades. Such an approach will always result in a confrontation. This has been so in the past which has led us to the present deadlock. As long as the Tamils demand their, what some people call minority rights, from outside the political parties of the major community, they will not gain anything, nor will they be in a bargaining position to lend support conditionally or otherwise to a party to form a Government.

This kind of strategy has resulted in unstable Governments which only widened the political and economic difference between the two communities. There are better chances of building up good understanding and unity if the discussions take place as members of a single Political party rather than negotiate as two opposing parties. In our way of thinking, then it will not be an opposing party that

SOVIET VARIETY SHOW

It was a delightful evening's entertainment at the variety show by Soviet artistes. Their performance was faultless, as is to be expected from artistes of that calibre. The programme appealed to most people as there were items to interest people of diverse tastes.

The trio who played the typical Russian musical instruments kept everyone's feet a-tapping and were attired in traditional dress. All the singers had very powerful voices, and one of the lady singers who sang a Sinhalese song with hardly a trace of an accent certainly appealed to all and especially to the Sri Lankians in the audience. The dances by the Georgian dancing group were most entertaining, more so because they had a very eastern rhythm about them. The dance with sabres was most impressive and required a great deal of expertise and the dance 'Holiday' was performed with much agility and speed. The three short ballet items were dissimilar, short and sweet. The way in which the dancers whirled round and round made one dizzy just watching, but the dancers seemed totally unaffected by it, as they bowed at the close of it. All in all, the programme was very enjoyable and a refreshing change from the virtual cultural desert in which we live in this country today.

—VINODINI

will be championing the minority cause but a party to which the minorities belong that will be working towards communal harmony and understanding. There will have to be a give and take policy on both sides. What is important is not how much is given and how much is taken, but the end result of cementing the two communities together to work as a united group towards the common good of the country.

The Political Party that can do this is the United National Party as the party that worked from the very beginning to create a united Ceylon. Even though a major section of the Tamil speaking people still feel that it was the UNP that let them down after independence was "thrust on Sri Lanka, by the Britishers." There may be some truth in this, but it does not mean that a wound cannot be healed. Subsequent splits in the UNP and growth of rival political parties did more damage to the cause than the early acts of omission of the UNP. May that be so, but it must be said that the UNP always tried to work with the Tamil speaking people in the past.

So in keeping with that past record the first step towards this goal is to field UNP supporting candidates in the two provinces with the consent and support of the Tamil speaking community of the two provinces. The UNP leadership must give serious thought to this if they have not done so far. Still we have in both the communities people who are genuinely and sincerely anxious to see a united Sri Lanka as it was before Independence and after that till 1956. To weld the Sinhala and Tamil speaking people is a challenge to our political leaders and now the UNP leadership has the chance to take up that challenge and lead the country as one people, one nation.

R. Kahawita

Colombo 3.
December 2, 1976

• Non-Fee-Levying School

Sir,

When Grant-in-aid schools were taken over by the State in 1960, certain Denominational Schools opted to be run as Non-Fee-Levying

Schools, in order to cater to the children of their Denomination. But what we see in practice today is a complete negation of that principle. Students are admitted to these schools if they are prepared to pay fat donations! Because of this iniquitous system students for whom the school was originally meant are of necessity shut out.

According to the 1971 census report, the percentage of Protestant Christians in Sri Lanka is 0.8 percent; hence it is little wonder that in a certain christian school, Protestant christians constitute less than 5% of Grade I Admissions! The balance 95% are non-christians.

The teaching of religion is compulsory in all State schools. What then is the justification for the continue existence of such schools? For whose benefit?

The state should be fair by all sections of the Community both rich and poor and take over all schools where the percentage of children of such Denomination has dropped below 33%—if the management does not voluntarily hand over such schools. Such schools should be converted into all-island schools.

Manel Fernando

Galle Road,
Colombo 3.
17.12.76

Sir,

Under the Assisted Schools & Training College (Special Provisions) Act No. 5 of 1960, the Proprietors of about 55 schools opted to run their schools as Non-Fee Levying Private Schools, overtly for two reasons—for the teaching of the religion of the Proprietor to children who professed that Faith, and the admission of children who belong to the same religion as that of the Proprietor. With the compulsory introduction of the teaching of all religions in State schools the first reason (Religion) no longer holds good. Hence about 15 Schools have in their wisdom, seen the folly of opting to remain out, and now are State schools. We congratulate them.

The parents and Old Boys of a particular Non-Fee levying Christian School in Colombo are greatly perturbed over the fact that while Private Fee Levying Schools like

Trinity and St. Thoma's, and State Schools like Ananda, Richmond, and Nalanda, have made much headway, their school is lagging far behind, and their children are denied several facilities, for lack of funds mainly. Less than 2% of the country are Protestant Christians. Hence admissions have necessarily to be made from a disproportionate number of Non Christians. In fact more than 90% of admissions to this school are from among Non-Christians. At admission time, what is euphemistically known as 'Voluntary Donations' are offered by prospective parents, ranging from Rs. 1000—Rs 3000, where the highest bidden succeeds very much like at an "Auction Sale". If the butcher does that, he will be prosecuted, so will a Landlord.

This particular Non-Fee Levying School could be easily recognized by the dilapidated condition of its buildings; inadequate accommodation, a library which stocks books of the "Coffee era"; inadequate laboratory equipment, inadequate sports facilities; the employment of several 'retired' teachers etc. This school is obliged to collect more than 4 lakhs an year, merely to pay the staff; what a waste of good money. When the State is prepared to do it, in a better way. Are there any vested interests which prevent saner counsel from prevailing? There are none so blind as those who do not want to see

Old Boy and Parent

Mount Mary,
Colombo 9
15.12.76

• Housing

Sir,

We have been in continuous occupation for the past 24 years of a surplus house at Wellawatte, which the owner willfully failed to declare. Since of late the landlady has discontinued the practice of issuing receipts: we sent a written complaint to the Rent Board. The matter is still pending. In the meantime the owner of the premises, resenting the steps taken by us to rectify matters, filed action in a Court of Law for ejection. The case too is pending.

Since then the owner has been resorting to various types of harass-

ment such as Trespass, Robbery, Indecent Conduct and Thuggery to force us out of the house. On one such occasion the owner went to the extent of removing the garage doors, thus depriving us the use of the garage and impairing the security of the house. We have made several complaints to the Police and also reported the matter to the Protection of Tenants Branch and Ceiling on Housing Property Branch, Dept. of National Housing. An application to purchase the house was made by us. The police gave a lame excuse that it was a matter for the Department of National Housing. Likewise the Department of National Housing said that it was a matter for the Police. With the result that we had to file a private criminal plaint in a Court of Law in defence of our rights and peaceful occupation. This case too is pending. All these have been taking place since March 1976, almost for an year.

Finally we had to bring the matter to the notice of the Hon. Minister of Housing and Construction and the Commissioner of Police seeking their intervention in the matter, but to no purpose.

The Authorities concerned have been adopting a here to-day and gone tomorrow, why bother attitude. We regret to state that the owner still continues to harass us daily. We therefore trust that this letter to the Press will open the eyes of the Authorities concerned and Law and Order will be maintained.

S. Yogarathnam

Wellawatte.
8.2.77

Inania of this, that and
the other

Human Rights

"...in prison and you
visited me..."

By INNA

It was a prayer-Group evening. The religious women and devotees got together as their chaplain said, to 'pray together' for the needs of the world. In fact one could see no opium of the people but only

the incense rising upwards like a dream. Then came the litany-like *prarthana* and all answered as the chaplain said the words:

"Dr. Kovalyov, a 43 year-old biologist was arrested in Moscow last December and had been detained awaiting trial, for almost a year".

All said: "I was in prison and you visited Me."

Jaya Prakash Narayan, the Gandhian leader was released on parole from Chandigarh State hospital on 12 November, due to his poor state of health, for he suffered a mild heart attack.

All: "I was in prison and you visited Me."

Brazilian prisoners go on third hunger strike in Pernambuco as they served out terms of 703 years among 23 prisoners.

"I was in prison and you visited Me."

Jalil and Abdur Rab, two leaders of the Bangladesh opposition party were rearrested on 26 November and accused of subversive activities.

"I was in prison and you visited Me."

President Jospeh Broz Tito of Yugoslavia pardoned 535 prisoners on 29 November, Republic day, said *Tanjug*, Yugoslav news agency: 87 released, 448 reduced sentences, but how many political prisoners, we don't know, Lord.

"I was in prison and you visited Me."

UN General Assembly adopts Declaration on Torture on 9th December to elaborate measures to ensure protection of all detained persons, but some big UN nations offer Torture chambers for some detenus of some Third World Countries, Lord, forgive our hypocrisy.

"I was in prison and you visited Me."

We deplore the death-under-torture of Vladimir Herzog on Oct. 25th '75 and of 55 deaths under torture in Brazil; and of the almost 300 prisoners who have died under torture since the military coup in 1964.

"I was in prison and did you visit Me?"

For the tragic news report issued by 35 political prisoners of Brazil 'from the simple prison guard to the high-ranking officers in charge of the repressive agencies, they are all invested with the power to arrest,

torture and kill without being held responsible by anyone else for their acts" and all this entails, Lord we pray.

"I was in prison and do you still even think of Me?"

For Liu Ch'en Tan arrested in 1971 with other Taiwanese, accused of involvement in Thaiwan independence, Lord we pray; for the brutality in the Bulgarian prison camp; for the Amnesty International newsletter of Jan. 1976, vol. vi no. 1 and for the editors and redactors and workers who are doing Your work, Lord we pray.

"I was in prison...I still am, in many parts of the world. Hope you will have courage if you get there. Fear not."

It was a dream. I woke up to hear the waves lapping the shore!



MARGINALIA

Detente In Sri Lanka

By Bryan de Kretser

NATION IN TRAVAIL. Who can doubt that this somewhat melodramatic phrase serves to describe our people right now. We have reached the position it would appear when no dialogue is possible between folks. *Detente* is a fact of life in Europe which only forty years ago was locked in bloody combat, yet we in Sri Lanka, though we talk loud of non-alignment actually seem on the abyss of despair and hate. I plead with our national leaders to appreciate the nature of our crisis. No amount of accusation and counter-accusation, no platitudinous repetition of empty catch phrases, will serve to deliver us from the perils we face.

We need brave men, humble, men, to match the tasks ahead. We need folks at the helm who will appreciate their need of each other, the other man who now stands condemned as traitor, fascist, and the like. These are often empty words which do not describe true humans or true human situations. We often use them to escape from the demanding tasks of actual face-to-face encounter and conversation. And, the more we use them the more misunderstanding grows and division mounts and suspicion

Detente?

spreads. And the more our people stumble along to a future, bleak and uncertain.

To put it simply, why dont our leaders instead of talking to us, get together and talk among themselves how best to help our peoples work together and stay together to build our land, culturally and economically. Certainly it will require courage to do this, to be ready to hear from the other side, and learn too. Most of all it will require the courage of humility, the readiness to say "I dont have all the answers, I have made mistakes, forgive me, come over and help us."

I do not believe that vast gulfs of political ideology separate our leaders. They have inherited a political system, or rather a political tradition, which has fathered on us all this play acting of Party politics. Let our leaders refuse to be bound by this empty convention of our colonial past. Let them be united and through their unity firmness will flow and certainty. They will speak with a clear voice and our peoples will rise again to united effort.

The hosts of darkness speak—with loud voice at this dread hour—let the voice of reason and fair-play speak, in a still small voice. It must prevail.

THE GROWTH IN TANHA. By defining the goals of this nation almost exclusively in terms of the GNP ideology, we have successfully from within defeated the explicit aims of our Constitution in regard to Buddhism. Buddhism warns against the desire for things. Yet we have made the search and the acquisition of things central to our existence. Let a Tourist pause to light his cigarette and us natives side up and whisper "Got a ball-point to spare?"

The present crisis stems from this mad desire for more and more, and it has been fanned by our national goals always expressed in crassly materialistic terms. We pay lip-service to the teachings of the Buddha, we worship near fanatically the idols of our technological civilization. And we worship at an hour when the clear signs are that this technological civilization itself is in deepest travail. Our leaders need to reach down through meditation and quiet thought to the well-springs of their

own cultural heritage, in the Buddha-Asoka past, and hammer out a new ideology for this people.

ETHIOPIA

On The Road To Stabilisation?

By Momcilo Solaja

Addis Ababa, Feb. 13,

On Sunday, January 29, in the Revolution Square, a big rally was held. Representatives of Ethiopian mass organizations and the President of the Revolutionary Military Council, Brigadier-General Teferi Bante, who was later killed, spoke at the rally. Claims are that many in the Revolution Council, among whom the Council's first Vice-President, Lieutenant Colonel Mengistu Haile Mariam did not approve of the content of Bante's speech and that is why they did not attend the rally. It was noted that Bante did not address any criticism to Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party (EPRP) otherwise exclusively blamed for terrorism in Addis Ababa and other places. At the same time, Bante implicitly urged a dialogue between the EDRP and the Military Council. It is considered that by taking this stand Bante signed his own death sentence which was, in fact carried out only four days later.

After the denouncement in the Ethiopian top, the temporary Revolutionary Military Council exposed facts on the wave of error and confusion in the capital shortly preceding the dramatic events. The communique states that student Medane Alem was killed on Wednesday, the Day preceding the shooting in the Presidential palace, only because he publically supported the Revolutionary line in the council. On the same day, in the "Maconen" school persons described as counter-revolutionaries threw "progressive pupils" out of the school windows down in the yard and at the same time they fired at the other's wounding five of them. Also, in broad daylight on the same Wednesday, four of the leaders of local communities were killed, to be followed by the killing of the State Secre-

tary for Culture, Youth and Sports, Tsegaye Cebalke, the same evening. All this was assessed as an open conspiracy and a preparatory stage for a coup. Terrorist activities were ascribed to the EDRP which was at that moment demanding the removal of the Army from the Ethiopian political scene. This stand was interpreted here as "extremely reactionary" and as an "open treason of Ethiopian national interests."

It has also been revealed that since the establishment of Kebeles, local communities, 13 of their leaders have been killed in Addis Ababa. Also in this period 23 prominent local community activists were beaten up or injured, nowhere those responsible for these crimes remained, in most cases, unknown. Causes for this—it is pointed out here—should be sought in the fact that Someone close to the Ethiopian top, informed criminals on government measures, so that they managed to hide in time.

In the last four days since the events in the Military Council seat there have been neither news for rumours on new assassinations. It is estimated that the coming days and weeks will bring many more disturbances in this country.

Official Ethiopian factors state conviction that the United Military Council and a more determined policy towards the creation of a Labor Party will eliminate many problems and open the road to bigger security and stability of the country both in politics and economy.

—Tanjug.



NEXT WEEK

- MORE ON KOVOOR
—In His Support
- HISTORICAL FLASHBACK
—The Communist Party
- THE CONSTITUTION
—Redone Or Refashioned?
- WORLD POPULATION
—Problems Of Control

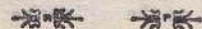
Confidentially

• Political Trends

IS IT NOT A FACT that the story about the Communist Party (CP) withdrawing from the Government to become an independent unit in the Opposition was talked about for over a fortnight before it was officially released in a statement issued on February 19? That the *Daily Mirror* and the *Sunday Times* had for over a fortnight been hinting that the CP was likely to strike out on its own? That *Observer's* Manik de Silva on Wednesday, February 16, had a front-page lead which more or less outlined the main political thrust of the CP statement? That this was only a new re-hash of what the *Times* group's papers had published? (That it is now accepted by all that for political news one had to read the *Times'* publications? That the *Times'* papers have established this commanding position from the time of the December strikes? That *Lake House* papers nowadays not only lag behind in the news but have also tried to mislead its readers with slanted stories? That the only *Lake House* publication which has occasionally carried news and political stories—by Manik de Silva in particular—of some significance and without a slant is the *Observer*?) That, as many had anticipated, the CP statement was issued on Saturday, February 19, in order, no doubt, to obtain the maximum benefit from the coverage afforded by the Sunday weekend papers? That the *Sunday Times* published the CP statement in full (as it and the *Daily Mirror* have recently published the statements of all political parties and groups)? That the *Sunday Observer* only published a truncated version of the CP statement and which did not contain the main logic underlying the decision of the CP to go-it-alone? That the CP's contention is that it was compelled to stay out of the Government group (and also far away from the official Opposition led by the UNP) in order to initiate and fashion a new "progressive" alliance or electoral front to secure the defeat of the UNP and all reactionaries in the forthcoming General Election? The CP statement sets out the reasons why it was

compelled to take this action of breaking away from the SLFP and the Government? That the CP statement is confirmation that the acts of commission and omission of the SLFP-dominated government had begun to overwhelm the radical and "progressive" measures introduced by the United Front government? That although the CP glosses over the fact that many of the radical and "progressive" measures of the UF had proved to be self-defeating and also inimical to productive development of the economy (mainly because of the total absence of proper plans for utilisation of resources and also because many workable plans never got off the ground), it has pointed out some of the most glaring weaknesses of the SLFP-led United Front that need immediate correction if the "progressive" movement was to go forward? That the CP statement further provided confirmation for what many (constructive) critics of the Government (like the *Tribune*) have said for many years now? That the CP statement also provided confirmation for much of what the UNP and other Opposition parties have said? That though the CP idiom and slant may sound "proletarian" there is, basically, no difference between what the CP has now set out and what many critics have pointed out for a long time? That the CP is only quitting the United Front (and the Government) when it feels that the weaknesses and misdeeds of the Government have begun to overwhelm the "progressive" aspects of the Government? That one very important feature of the CP statement is the clever, cautious and subtle language used in all references to the SLFP and its leading lights? That there is no touch or hint of any personal animosity in the parting? That the CP has not made any personal attacks on the Prime Minister or other Ministers of the SLFP? That the CP has therefore left the door open for continuing negotiations with the SLFP for an electoral arrangement or even a new "progressive" alliance? That in this the CP stands out in sharp contrast to the manner in which the LSSP had quit the United Front and had broken with the SLFP? That the LSSP had launched the most bitter attacks on the PM in personal terms? That the LSSP had also sharply criticised the CP (though in milder terms than those used in respect of the SLFP)? That the LSSP has laid down condi-

tions precedent for any new progressive alliance? That it has also made it clear that it was not willing to even consider any electoral arrangement of even an *ad hoc* nature with the SLFP as long Mrs. Bandaranaike was its leader? That the LSSP has even made it known in political circles that it would not mind having negotiations with the SLFP if the PM was pushed upstairs to the Presidency and a senior Minister like Maithripala Senanayake or Hector Kobbekaduwa took over as the leader of the SLFP? That in the last thirty years and more the LSSP has often laid down such conditions precedent and it has also indulged in even harsher personal attacks—but all of which were forgotten when it came to negotiating an electoral no-contest pact or even forming a coalition? That in the meantime, the PM has made it known that defections would not worry her and that she would go-it-alone with the SLFP and those who were still willing to play ball with it? That she has emphasised that the SLFP breakaways would not weaken the party in the way that enemies of the Party thought they would? That in the past such breakaways had come to a sorry end and she predicted a similar end to the present breakaways? That in the meantime, the UNP has stepped up its propaganda campaign against the PM, the Ratwatte-Bandaranaike family bandysim, and generally about the misdeeds (and there are many) of the Government? That whilst the UNP is wooing the "rightwing" in the SLFP, the CP has sought to isolate this "rightwing" from the centre and left elements in the SLFP? That the LSSP however seeks to achieve the same end by throwing brickbats—at the rightwing for being "reactionaries" and at the leftwing for being political cowards, vacillators and weaklings? That the political kettle in Sri Lanka has begun to boil and the steam is likely to rise as the General Election draws nearer? That the ending of the Emergency will, once again, legalise outlawed parties like the JVP? That, in addition a number of new "revolutionary" parties led by those who participated in the 1971 insurgency will seek to enter the parliamentary game? That it is difficult to guess just now the impact these parties will have on the electorate? That they might become a powerful new force?



SUBSCRIPTION RATES

FOREIGN

AIR MAIL

Bangladesh, India, Maldives Island and Pakistan	1 Year	Rs. 140-00
Singapore, Democratic Republic of Vietnam and South Vietnam	1 Year	Rs. 160-00
Australia, China, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, France, G.D.R., West Germany, U.K. Hong Kong, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, New Zealand, Philipines, Poland, Portugal, South Africa, Switzerland, U.S.S.R., Yugoslavia, Zambia and All African Countries	1 Year	Rs. 190-00
Canada, Cuba, West Indies and U.S.A.	1 Year	Rs. 225-00

SEA MAIL

To All Countries	1 Year	Rs. 100-00
------------------	--------	------------

LOCAL

1 Year	Rs. 50-00
3 Years	Rs. 120-00

TRIBUNE,

43, Dawson Street,

Colombo-2.

Telephone: 33172

HANDBOOK
for the

CEYLON TRAVELLER



A Studio Times
Publication

305 Pages
24 Black and White
Photographs
4 full colour plates

This book is not only for foreigners.
It will be a companion
for local people on their travels
through the Island.

Available at

STUDIO TIMES

TIMES BUILDING,

COLOMBO-I

and at all leading bookshops