

TRIBUNE



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a wall calendar for 1978 — 79*

People's Publishing House,
124, Kumaran Ratnam Road, Colombo-2.
Phone: 3 6 1 1 1

Letter From The Editor

SRI LANKA is slowly moving into a new era of exciting politics. It is only when the Budget Speech is made on November 15, that the country will have a blue-print of the new (UNP) economic order. At the moment, the newspapers are full of speculative guess-estimates and prognostications (intelligent anticipations, maybe, or even inspired kite-flying "leaks"). In the NSA, Anura Bandaranaike had thought it fit to cross swords with Minister Premadasa and even threaten to move a resolution to have Premadasa expelled from the House (how this could be done is a mystery!). Premadasa is an old and experienced warrior in this game of countering such attacks and he gave Anura Bandaranaike a well-deserved verbal hammering he will not forget for a long time. Young Anura Bandaranaike does not seem to realise that he lives in a glass house and that the cupboards in his house are transparent with all the skeletons visible to public scrutiny. Premadasa only referred to a few of these skeletons—the common people are familiar with many more—and though some of the references would seem ungracious to the genteel, in the rough and tumble of politics all is fair. In the heyday of the SLFP and the ADA publications, Anura Bandaranaike had trod on many corns and had indulged in character assassination without restraint. The Communist *Aththa*, which had also been attacked in the past by Anura Bandaranaike, recently had some interesting disclosures about his educational qualifications (Premadasa referred to them in the NSA on November 1). The inglorious defeat suffered by the SLFP does not seem to have taught Anura Bandaranaike the lessons he needs to learn if he is to survive in politics. He sought consolation in the 1.8 million (he claims it is 2 million) votes cast for the SLFP, but if Anura should become the sole symbol of the SLFP this 1.8 million will soon wither away. The politics of Anura Bandaranaike is still on a personal ego-centric level and is far removed from the urgent needs of the day which revolve around economic issues. To go from the ridiculous antics of Anura Bandaranaike to the sublime in economic thinking, *Tribune* takes the opportunity to draw attention to a publication entitled *AN AGENDA FOR A JUST SOCIETY* by the well-known economist and extremely successful mercantile entrepreneur N. U. Jayawardena. It is a typed (and cyclostyled) foolscap manuscript of 230 pages and sets out NUJ's "reflections on the economic crisis confronting Sri Lanka." The tract deserves careful reading and merits serious attention. In his preface, he states: "The subject matter of the Tract has been the product of reflection over the past two years. The title itself *AN AGENDA FOR A JUST SOCIETY*, was chosen a year ago. Other preoccupations of what may compendiously be called the "market-place" prevented the completion of the Tract earlier. However, when it became evident that unless the Tract was available opportunely, it would lose much of its topical value as an essay in analysis, prescription and policy on the *ECONOMIC PROBLEM* confronting Sri Lanka, its preparation had to be hastened. Accordingly, the Tract is now presented, not as a polished work, but as a sketch in the form of a series of Notes arranged in some analytical and sectional order. The Notes are, therefore, numbered as paragraphs of each sub-section. The preparation of the Tract began well before the political programme of the various contending parties became available and it was fairly well advanced before the General Election held on 21st July 1977. Scrupulous care has been taken to avoid the developments following the General Election, whether in policy pronouncements by the Government or the communal tensions, from influencing in any way the discussion in the text. For instance, to cite one example, not a word of what had been written on the subject of "Individual Freedom and Minority Interests". Chapter 1, Section (a), Sub-Section 2 has been changed. The recent communal tensions merely confirm the analysis in this Section. To the reader who is pressed for time and wants to gain, at a glance, a summary view of the text, a reference to the Index, which describes in detail the sections, the sub-sections and the sub-headings, will afford him a guide to make his own selection.....Despite its many imperfections, the Tract is presented, in the sketchy form it is, in the hope that it will provoke thought and that the analysis it offers and the prescriptions it recommends will provide an acceptable solution to the economic ills confronting Sri Lanka, even though some of them may pose politically difficult decisions. In any event, it is hoped that the reader will find the argument in the text is comprehensible, even though he may not be in agreement with it, and that the text invites his attention." *Tribune* will have occasion in coming issues to dip into NUJ's compendium for information, instruction and comment. NUJ may anticipate some parts of the new Budget. Many have done so. But, NUJ's "Tract" is an exercise that will provoke thinking and provide a basis for discussion and debate.

TRIBUNE

Founded in 1954

A Journal of Ceylon and

World Affairs

Editor S. P. Amarasingam

Every Saturday

November 12, 1977

Vol. 22 No 21

TRIBUNE

43, DAWSON STREET,

COLOMBO - 2.

Telephone: 33172

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EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

Rohana Wijeweera

ON THE COVER we have a still from a well-known Sinhalese film made some years ago depicting a group of young people "marching" into the freedom of the morning air along the bund of the village tank. It is a symbolic march to freedom.

On Wednesday, November 2, 1977, the government unconditionally freed Rohana Wijeweera and 136 others who were convicted under the Criminal Justice Commission Law including a number convicted under the special Exchange Control Laws. Prime Minister Jayawardene has thus fulfilled one of the most sensitive of the election pledges of the UNP which had not only opposed the CJC Act in the NSA but had campaigned against it ever since it was placed on the Statute Book. JR had declared that the UNP would not only repeal the CJC Act but that it would review the cases of all those who had been convicted under these infamous laws.

The CJC Act and the Special Exchange Control laws were repealed by the NSA without any dissent on October 21, 1977. On November 2, the Cabinet took a decision to grant a free pardon to all persons convicted by the different CJs. The government has also taken the necessary steps to repeal bad laws introduced after 1972, re-enact the good laws that had been discarded and also amend other laws to make the administration of justice more expeditious and equitable. The measures taken by the UNP to re-establish the Rule of Law and the Independence of the Judiciary has been welcomed by all except by the few power-intoxicated persons who hid sinister designs under the slogan of "All (sovereign) Power to the NSA"

Tribune will soon examine the way the last government had manipulated the judicial system not only through the CJC Act but also through Special Emergency Regulations. All these Courts became in fact, "Courts of Confessions" and not courts of law according to high judicial authority—but such views were never permitted to see the light of day. Tribune hopes

to resurrect them soon from the legal catacombs.

In moving the Second Amendment to the Constitution on September 23, Prime Minister Jayawardene had stated: "They talk of insurgency. I am not afraid of insurgents. If there are insurgents in jail we are prepared to release them. I am prepared to release Mr. Rohana Wijeweera. I am going to abolish the Criminal Justice Commission Act. I want the Cabinet to consider why we should not give pardon to all those convicted for the insurgency under the last government. Let them come out and let them take part in democracy, in freedom of speech and meeting, but let them not touch violence. We want to protect you from violence because violence will destroy all freedoms that we have obtained after so many years."

There has been no comment or interest about the pardon to Sir Oliver Goonetilleke and other Exchange Control offenders. But Rohana Wijeweera has hit the headlines. A sick young man of 34, after 7 years in prison, he had, when freed, gone to the headquarters of the CMU, but his lawyer Bala Tampoe was out of the island. There, he had a long press conference (for nearly five hours). The Daily News, the Daily Mirror and Sun of November 3 reported what he had to say at some length. The Daily Mirror report (by Richard de Silva) was longer and more comprehensive than other reports. It stated:

"We of the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna will not resort to any armed struggle in order to usher in socialism". This was said by Mr. Rohana Wijeweera, leader of the JVP. Announcing this major change in the JVP policy he said that the party would continue to function as a legitimate democratic party and they would use Parliament and other institutions under the capitalist structure for their advantage. His party would contest most of the seats at the next general election.

When I asked him whether he was grateful to the Prime Minister and the Government for abolishing the CJC Act and the release of all those convicted under the Act, he said that he and his comrades were grateful mainly to those students in the campuses and the railway workers who staged a general strike in which one of the demands was the release of the members of the JVP from prison. They

were also grateful to all the individuals and organisations which agitated for their release. He said that the Prime Minister had to release him because of such agitation and also because he had promised the youth of the country to review the sentences passed on the JVPers. He said that the Prime Minister had realised that the CJC Act was an inhumane Act introduced by the last government for the sole purpose of using it as a weapon to victimise its political opponents and he was happy about the repeal of that dangerous Act.

He said the Prime Minister had mentioned about the death of Mr. Mukthar under inhumane conditions but how Anura Shanta Lamaheewa was killed in Hammenheil Prison in Jaffna in May 1971, in most brutal and inhumane conditions, should be mentioned by him, said Mr. Wijeweera.

Making a scathing attack on the CP and the LSSP he said that those parties had not opposed the CJC Act in Parliament. He said: "What my party and I have done in the political history of this country the CP and the LSSP had not been able to achieve with 40 years of their existence. Only history will decide on the success, and performance of each party and their leaders." When a pressman commented that he was the most brilliant politician he quoted from Socrates: "I know only one thing—that I know nothing".

When he was asked whether he would accept a high post in government he said he would not even accept the premiership under a capitalist government but if a real socialist government offered him a Peon's job he would accept it and unlike Dr. N. M. Perera who traded the 21 demands for a portfolio he would not sell out his principles for high posts.

He also narrated to the pressmen the bitter and horrible experience he had experienced in various prisons in the country. He said that he was kept in solitary confinement without any clothes during the regime of the last government and that he was not allowed to get any specialist treatment for his heart ailment during that time.

Mr. Wijeweera added that the JVP would not collect arms nor break banks or rob any institution and if any of his party members were to do such things they would be expelled from the party. If there was any repression by the government against his party they would not resort to the use of weapons to meet such repression and as to when the revolution

Will Rohana Make The Grade ?

would come would be decided by the capitalist and not by his party. However, he and his party would not betray the class struggle.

The *Daily News* report read:

"On earlier occasions we had to manufacture bombs because we were suppressed. But now we want to reform the people. If this cannot be achieved then we should spend our whole lives in prison," Mr. Wijeweera said. Action was necessary to eliminate the existing capitalist structure. The first step of the JVP will be to contest the forthcoming local government elections. The present capitalist social framework should change. If the capitalists in this country agree to change the social framework by peaceful means we will agree to that he declared. He denied his party's involvement in bank robberies, collecting arms or hold-ups. Certain elements were attempting to implicate his party he said.

Mr. Wijeweera said his party was for the free use of all three languages (Sinhala, English, Tamil). He was against one language being made the State language as now. Mr. Wijeweera said no problem could be solved under the existing capitalist framework. Such problems could not be solved without socialism. It is not the socialism of JR or Felix that could solve the country's problems, he said. I am ready and willing to work with even the devil's grandmother, if the country could be developed along socialist lines, said Mr. Wijeweera.

Speaking of the Left United Front he said there were no Leftists left nor a front for them to unite. Dr. N. M. Perera had rendered a great service to safeguard the capitalist system of the country and out of all Prime Ministers the most short-sighted were Messrs Kotelawela, D. S. Senanayake and Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike. JR is a wise Prime Minister of the capitalist class he said. Although Mrs. Bandaranaike read a script written by Felix, Mr. J. R. Jayawardene is a person capable of rising to any occasion. It is the Bandaranaike family that stands as the curse against socialism in this country like Huang Hua in China, he added.

The *Sun* reported:

"Answering questions by newsmen at the CMU office, Mr. Wijeweera said: "Experience is the best teacher. And having spent the past seven of my 34 years in prison, I assure you that JVP will not be attempting to come to power by making bombs or

collecting guns or swords again."

The JVP movement he stressed, should be allowed the liberty to hold its meetings and indoctrination classes as it hoped to conduct a struggle not by robbing banks but by democratic means. On the matter of unemployment, he said that neither this government nor any government other than a Marxist government could solve it. If the the JVP came to power it would totally abolish private ownership. Replying another question, Mr. Wijeweera said that should the necessity arise, he was quite willing to meet the Prime Minister not at a secret session but openly. Questioned as to whether he would accept any appointment offered by the Government, Mr. Wijeweera was vehement in his reply that he would rather accept a job as a peon in a socialist state than serve as a Prime Minister in a capitalist one. He said he had been informed of his impending release just before lunch by the Assistant Superintendent of Prisons Mr. E. G. Perera. Having received the assurance that the others imprisoned along with him would be released, he had then accepted Rs. 20 of the Rs. 80.90 due to him for his work during his period of imprisonment, and stepped out to freedom. Mr. Wijeweera denounced the Communist Party saying it had only been the ruin of several generations of youth. He referred to Dr. N. M. Perera as a man who had served a capitalist cause more faithfully than any capitalist.

It is understandable that one who has been confined, illegally at that, should want to let off steam but if Rohana Wijeweera wants to be, within a short time, a political leader of national standing, he has many lessons to learn. Verbosity is not a quality that will help a political leader in this era.

And, Wijeweera does not still seem anxious to give the devil his due. Asked if he was "grateful" to Prime Minister, J. R. Jayawardene, for his release and the release of all political prisoners he resorted to a circumlocutory evasion to answer the question.

He probably thought that it would be considered "unmarxist" and "un-revolutionary" to praise a "capitalist" Prime Minister. He attributed his release to students in the campuses, to striking railway workers and others who agitated for his release and hinted that JR released him because he "had to". Finally, he grudgingly

admitted that he was "grateful" to JR in a limited sort of way and extended a left-handed compliment to JR as being a "wise capitalist Prime Minister."

There is no doubt that Wijeweera's audience might be disturbed if he showed any gratitude to a "capitalist" Prime Minister. He is still full of the same cliches and slogans that had carried the traditional Left into disastrous blind alleys.

We do not know whether Rohana Wijeweera will overcome his sectarian inhibitions against "capitalist" politicians or old "Left" leaders to develop that degree of maturity to reach out to the common masses on a national level. This is something to be seen. Imprisonment and repression inhibits thought and expression, and recent JVP publications and statements suffer from verbosity, agitational sectarianism and cliché-ridden polemics, reminiscent of the political literature of the Left of the thirties.

We do not know whether the JVP or Rohana Wijeweera will have the realism to acknowledge that JR had the courage to do what he has done. *Tribune*, with all its apprehensions about JR in the past, unhesitatingly acknowledges that the only political leader in the country, in this era, capable of repealing the CJC and releasing the persons convicted under these infamous laws, is J. R. Jayawardene. No other leader either from the Left or the Right would have had the inclination, determination or guts to do it.

Tribune is aware of the opposition that die-hard politicians, bureaucrats and policemen had mounted to prevent JR from either repealing the CJC Act (under which it will for ever be Police Raj and a Court of Unending Confessions) or releasing Rohana Wijeweera and other JVP prisoners. Certain newspapers had carried on a campaign for the last two months stressing that "subversion" was on the increase, that the JVP and other "subversive" organisations had started having "cell meetings" and "indoctrination classes" and that the bank robberies and highway hold-ups were the work of such political elements, to pressurise the Government to retain the CJC and proscribe the JVP.

Only J. R. Jayawardene could have withstood and ignored this campaign.

Only after the release of Wijeweera and the other prisoners a police officer had ventured to tell the *Daily Mirror* on 3/11/77 that the robberies, hold-ups and other crimes were not the work of political "subversives".

In J. R. Jayawardene, the country has a Prime Minister it can be proud of.

* * *

BETWEEN THE LINES

BY SERENDIB

● Air Scandal ● Police Intrigues ● 'Phones ● Robberies

***AIR CEYLON.** If one looks through the files of *Tribune* from 1954, it will be found that scandals about Air Ceylon fill a large amount of columns. Air Ceylon was a scandal during the regimes of Sir John Kotelawala, Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike, Mrs. Bandaranaike's first SLFP government, the Dudley Senanayake government and finally Mrs. Bandaranaike's United Front government. Air Ceylon has had a series of foreign partners and collaborators—just to mention a few, Quantas (or Australian National Airways), K.L.M., B.O.A.C. and U.T.A.—but even with the best of them, racketeering had multiplied over the years. There had been many Committees of Inquiry into the affairs of Air Ceylon, but nothing had ever come of them. All Inquiring Committees in the past had been "private" shows and reports had been "private"—except for leakages. It was always argued that publication of reports of scandals in Air Ceylon would do serious damage to the airline and its international business prospects. For this reason, truth had been suppressed, and Air Ceylon rushed from one blunder to another, from one scandal to another scandal.

The "Bunty" Zoysa Commission is a public affair and has brought to light much that had been hid-

den. In the period 1970-77, the opportunities for even papers like *Tribune* to expose the rackets in Air Ceylon had been limited and circumscribed by various Emergency Regulations protecting Ministers and Bureaucrats. *Tribune* had done its best to expose the inner core of corruption in Air Ceylon, but with so many scandals to cope with on a national level, much attention could not be paid to Air Ceylon. Furthermore whatever exposures had appeared from 1970 to 1975 in certain papers which had the "freedom" to indulge in gossip, were slanted from an SLFP angle as against the LSSP which ran Air Ceylon for five years. But the SLFP administration of Air Ceylon from 1975 seems to have given rise to an even greater number of scandals. Nobody had dared to speak about them except in whispers.

But, it must be mentioned that the foundation for these scandals and corruption had been laid from the inception of Air Ceylon. Chairmen, Deputy Chairmen, Managers of various grades and importance had come and gone, but the system of corruption had gone on for ever. It is likely that such malpractices exist in other Airlines, but they at least provide an efficient service. Air Ceylon had become a by-word throughout the flying world for inefficiency, mismanagement and corruption. In Ceylon, the name of its national airline carrier was dirt.

The "Bunty" Zoysa commission is doing an excellent job of work, and the Prime Minister has done well to suspend the international operations of Air Ceylon from December 1. This does not really matter. Air Ceylon "International" was more often on the ground than in the air!

*OLD HABITS DIE HARD.

The *Sun* had a striking headline that **SOME POLICEMEN COME TO SEE HIM WITH M.P.s. WERAPITIYA SAYS HE WON'T BE INFLUENCED.** The report read: "The Deputy Minister of Defence Mr. T. B. Werapitiya, in a talk to CID officers yesterday asserted that he would not be influenced by the action of certain Police Officers who come to see him accompanied by M.P.s. in regard to promotions and transfers. He disclosed that embarrassment had been caused when certain Police Officers seeking interviews with him had

been accompanied by M.P.s while certain others had arrived with letters of introduction from them. Mr. Werapitiya, who stated that he had an opportunity of observing many things in a different light since he had left the service pointed out that Police should keep pace with the progress of the country..."

For many years now, even before 1970, policemen and even other officials were able to "obtain" or "secure" the services of one or more M.P.s or Ministers from the ruling party or caucus to act as patron saints or guardians and had relied on them to help them in their official work and career. With every change of government these policemen and officials had found M.P.s and Ministers from the new Ruling Party to help them along. Some policemen and officials, who had identified themselves with a defeated administration or party a little too closely, had to lie low for a while before finding their feet or new patrons.

But they did. Most policemen are smart and they knew how to survive and even flourish under any set up. They are not merely bi-partisan: they are multi-partisan. They had no inhibitions regarding ideology or party affiliations. They are only concerned with one question: who (and which party) was in power and who (and which party) was likely to come to power in the foreseeable future? All such persons and parties were wooed; pampered and appeased. But at any relevant time, policemen and officials concentrated on the ruling party.

But what made matters worse in the years after 1970 was that a large number of policemen became adjuncts of the ruling SLFP which had developed a belief that it would be in power for all time—at least for a family to establish dynastic power.

Moreover, in each police station, in recent times, there were new and ordinary policemen more powerful than the officers, sub-inspectors, inspectors, ASPs and even the SPs. These were policemen to touch with the "powers that be" in the Palace or in the Administration. It was known that some senior Police chieftains in Colombo relied more on the "tales" and "gossip" of these particular policemen in regard to happenings in the district and even

the work of the senior officers in the area than on the customary reports of the senior officers. Ordinary methods of administration had been cast aside. This kind of parallel administration along a political channel had paralyzed the Police Force. Senior officers—even SPs—were afraid of particular rank and file policemen because of the connections they had with the correct people in the Palace or the Administration.

This was also the system that had grown up in every Kachcheri and in every government department. Slowly, from 1970, each constituent party of the UF had tried to build up its power base and empire in the administration. The SLFP had outstripped the LSSP and the CP. The LSSP had built powerful units in three major influential and powerful Ministries, but the CP had to be content with a fragmentary empire in Housing and Construction. But the Police and Public Administration were SLFP monopolies.

J. R. Jayawardene and the UNP have announced that this system of patronage and toadyism in the administration will be ended: that "tale-carrying" will no longer be the yardstick for administration. But, old habits die hard. Wera-pitiya has done well to bring to light the recurrence of the old malady. Many Ministers and Deputy Ministers have not yet done so. It is already well known that certain Ministers are being "influenced" through "contact men". The future of the J. R. Administration depends on eliminating this system of "patronage administration" and political stoicism.

Can this system be rooted out or will the UNP fall victim to it? There are dangerous snags that an invisible chit system and patronage-peddling have begun to make their presence felt in many quarters.

***BETTER PHONE SERVICE:** The Daily News of 31/10/77 reported that: "The Minister of Posts and Telecommunications, Mr. D. Shelton Jayasinghe, has instructed his officials to recommend immediate steps to provide all necessary facilities to telephone subscribers throughout the island. Mr. Jayasinghe has pointed out that it is not proper for a country like Sri Lanka having a modern telecommunications network to keep prospective subscribers on a wait-

ing list for years without providing them their needs immediately."

Mr. Jayasinghe seems to be worried that new applicants have to wait for a long time for 'phone connections. But he does not seem to realise that the complaints of old subscribers are many and real. In many cases, telephones are "out of order" for more than 200 to 250 days every year, but the annual rental for 365 days is payable in advance. In some cases, the Department threatens to "cut" a telephone for non-payment of dues even when the phone has been out of order for days and weeks together.

Frantic calls from other telephones (at 25 cts. a call) to FAULTS produce little or no result. More often than not, dialling FAULTS only produces a permanently engaged tone or there is nobody to pick up the telephone at the other end. Once in every seven times—this has been the experience of subscribers—FAULT answers and in one out of five complaints registered some action is taken. At least, a linesman calls to see what is wrong—nothing more.

One way to get something done is to telephone a "big boss" and make the complaint. Then there is prompt action with the repairmen a little sore that a "big shot" had been persuaded to give the

orders. However, the surest way of keeping one's telephone in order is to keep the repairmen and linesmen in the area well-oiled—for them it is Christmas and New Year every day—and if this is done, all is well. Not everyone feels inclined or can afford to pay this additional levy to the local staff of the Telephone Department.

It is time telephone subscribers launch a campaign to refuse to pay rentals for the days on which the phones do not work. Such action will compel the Department to sit up. This cannot be done individually. But if five thousand subscribers refuse to pay for the days on which their phones were out of order and invite the government to file suit, a very interesting situation would be created. Or should the law be amended to enable subscribers to sue the Department for a refund of dues paid for days on which the phones did not work. Serious maladies need drastic remedies, and the state of our telephone service needs some tough measures to set matters right.

***MORE AND MORE ROBBERIES.** In spite of all the press propaganda that crack police teams had been set up to combat crime and subversion, banks and multi-purpose co-operatives are being regularly robbed by armed youth

REMEMBERED

SEELA GOPALLAWE

We aren't so very young any longer; do be careful, I cautioned. She beamed as she fetched me by my upper arms and gave vent to the bell-like trill of her laughter. Near eight months back it was in Dalada Veediya we were seeing each other after, for us, a longish interval of time. She had run out of her car and a sari-fold had caught at her toe and there had been a half-stumble to cause concern.

I well remember Seela Gopallawe on the day of her marriage, slight and chic, wearing what some seemed to regard as an air of hateur but was in fact a maiden's natural shyness overlaid by what I would term the reserves and constraints of a manicured upbringing. It did not take long for the full efflorescence of her more real personality, gentle and unenvious, good-humoured and tolerant, expansive in friendship, a devoted wife and mother, the generous mistress of a responsible household.

The mate for the man, they throve on each other's accomplishments and were chastened by one another's shortcomings. Mistakes she made, as who of us would not, but the same never twice; and there was ready penitence for what went wrong. The shades in the limelight she preferred to its glare, and so gave to station and status durable respectability and the glow of modest involvement. And she has left: with duty done in the tradition of her kind, well born and better bred, fulfilling and fulfilled.

To such as her Nibbana comes sooner, easier.

Kandy.

Kumari Thammita.

and gangs. The accent and emphasis has so far been on fighting "subversion", meaning political radicalism. The Police and some sections of the Administration seemed to be convinced that political "subversives" were mainly responsible for these crimes.

Tribune has always taken the position that criminal elements were and are responsible for these robberies and that these elements had successfully raised a political smokescreen to mislead the police and the authorities.

Whilst there is need to keep political subversives under control, there is even greater need to know who the real criminals are. The whole nation must be alerted to the unprecedented growth of crime. And, the Police have done little about crime. The attempt by the Policeto raise political bogeys has only given greater cover for the criminals. This also make influential sections of the public suspicious of the intentions of the Police.

It is too late in the day for the Police to take refuge in McCarthyism or anti-Red or anti-Terrorist bogeys. It is time they catch the criminals or the bank robberies—or take such action as to prevent these anti-social elements from successfully robbing two or three rural banks every week. If the Police cannot do this, then the Rural Banks should be closed down, temporarily at least.

* * *

NEIGHBOURS

The Subcontinent

by The Recorder

IN INDIA, whilst hurricanes, cyclones and floods continue to ravage Tamil Nadu, a political storm of even greater magnitude arose with the DMK staging violent demonstrations to disturb the peace and cause civil disturbance all under the pretext of protesting against the visit of Mrs. Indira Gandhi. In Madurai, Tiruchi and Madras, DMK mobs ran amok, and the police had to resort to firing. It may be that ex-Chief Minister Karunanidhi, who personally led the demonstrations had thought he would secure two advantages by staging these violent demonstrations: one to win the sympathy

of the Central Janata Party Government by denigrating the image of Indira in Tamil Nadu and second to de-stabilise the MGR Government. In regard to both matters, Karunanidhi's hopes have misfired badly.

He has now been arrested and remanded to judicial custody with several others. They have been charged with criminal conspiracy, rioting armed with deadly weapons, attempt to murder, causing grievous hurt, mischief by fire, intimidation and unlawful assembly.

According to *Samachar* Mrs. Gandhi on her return to Delhi had "alleged that it had been planned to attack her while she was on a tour of Tamil Nadu in the last few days. She said about 300 armed people were aboard a train in which she was to travel from Trichur. She had got down from the train as she was taken to address a meeting which she thought had been cancelled. The second train which she boarded was stoned and it was taken on its journey with all the windows shut. Mrs. Gandhi who was addressing a meeting here to celebrate the birth anniversary of Sardar Patel, said that in Madurai she was hit by a lathi and the wife of a friend, who had accompanied her from Delhi, was hit on the forehead while she was sitting in the car. There was no breakdown of law and order in Madurai but a section of the people, who waved black flags, was determined to attack her."

BANGLADESH, according to all reports, has won a "victory" in the agreement on the Farakka Dam. Under the agreement, India will draw during the leanest ten-day period from 21 to 30 April just half of the 40,000 cusecs of water required to flush the Calcutta port. Experts had fixed the requirement of the port at this level. All the parties in West Bengal had opposed any agreement which would limit India's withdrawal of water at Farakka below this level at any time of the year. The conclusion of the agreement marks the culmination of protracted negotiations between India and Pakistan and later India and Bangladesh for the last 15 years. The agreement provides for withdrawal by India and Bangladesh during the leanest period from 21st April to 30th April—at the rate of 20,800 cusecs and 34,700 cusecs, working out to 37.5 percent and

62.5 per cent respectively, of the minimum flow of the Ganga at Farakka in the lean season of 55,500 cusecs. After the leanest ten-day period, India's share will increase at a much faster rate to get as close to 40,000 cusecs as quickly as possible within the lean season. The rate of withdrawal by India during these periods will increase roughly from two to two point five per cent. Another important feature of the short-term solution is that India will be able to draw small quantities of water for local use below Farakka too. The agreement also provides for the setting up of a joint committee of experts of both sides for implementing the short-term proposals. On long-term solution, the two governments commit themselves to augment the flow of the Ganga. The Joint Rivers Commission, which was set up in 1972, will examine proposals made by either side whether they are economic and feasible. These recommendations are to be submitted to the two Governments for their consideration within a time frame—believed to have been fixed at five years.

The report of Farakka accord between India and Bangladesh started off a storm of protest from all sections in West Bengal. Chief Minister Jyoti Basu recorded his protest while talking to newsmen today; Legislators demanded a full debate in the Assembly; and leaders of political parties issued statements protesting against this "sellout by the Government of India. Janata Party member of the Lok Sabha, Samar Guna, said, "Calcutta port cannot be allowed to be killed to satisfy the political demand of the military regime in Bangladesh". He would take up the matter on the floor of Parliament and discuss it with the Prime Minister so that the future of Calcutta port was not in danger. "Calcutta port is vital for the economy not only of eastern India, but also of the whole country," he added.

West Bengal Pradesh Congress President Purabi Mukherjee blamed Mr. Jyoti Basu for having failed to build up an all party movement in the State to ensure equitable sharing of the Ganga waters between India and Bangladesh. The Chief Minister said that the agreement would surely cause harm to Calcutta port. All the reports

Elections In Pak-Occupied Kashmir

and studies by experts, he knew, were of the common opinion, that 35,000 cusecs of water were the absolute minimum for the safety of the port during the lean months. He did not know if any contrary opinion was available with the Centre.

CPI leader Biswanath Mukherjee said that the agreement would simply ruin the Calcutta port. Reduced flow of 27,000 cusecs from Farakka had already done much harm to the Hooghly and now this agreement would reduce the flow further. The whole thing "is wrong, ill-conceived, disastrous", he added. RSP general secretary Tridib Choudhury said, "it is a total betrayal of the interests of Calcutta and Haldia ports, of West Bengal and the eastern region of India." Forward Bloc leader Ashok Ghosh said, "we shall raise the issue at the Left Front's meeting and decide our future course of action."

The *Indian Express* in an editorial indicated that India had to pay a heavy price to secure this agreement: "The short-term accord on Farakka ends a long-standing and acrimonious dispute between India and Bangladesh which has been the cause of severe strains in good neighbourly relations. The accord is a credit to the political leadership on both sides who have demonstrated a spirit of give and take on a problem which is essentially of an economic and technical nature. The earlier approach of seeking a larger political settlement was allowed unnecessarily to colour the negotiations on Farakka. India does not get all the water it needs for Calcutta port under this agreement. The expert opinion is that at least 40,000 cusecs of water are needed from the Farakka barrage to wash away the accumulating silt in the port. But during ten days of the leanest flow of water in the Ganga, India will draw only 20,800 cusecs with its share in the rest of the lean period ranging between this low figure and the required 40,000 cusecs. India has been keen on harnessing the vast amount of water in the rivers of the eastern part of the sub-continent which at present flow wastefully into the sea and, during the turbulent monsoon season, cause widespread damage by floods to both India and Bangladesh. The agreement on Farakka now arrived at pro-

vides for this, at least in principle, but with somewhat of a limited perspective of augmenting water flows in the Ganga only. The Joint Rivers Commission set up in 1972 to find a long-term solution of the requirements of India and Bangladesh during the lean period is proposed to be activated. But it appears that Bangladesh has not been persuaded of the urgency of the task and the agreement provides for a five year period during which the Joint Commission will make its recommendations on the feasibility of the various proposals which have been made by both sides in this connection. The projected time span is rather long and does not invert the task with due urgency. There has to be a further step forward also. This is to work on a series of project proposals, starting from augmenting supplies to the Ganga to the training and exploitation of the gigantic water resource of the Brahmaputra river. There are indications that the World Bank can be drawn into providing assistance—technical and financial—for such a grand project, to be executed necessarily in phases. Initiative in this direction will be of immense economic value both for Bangladesh and India."

IN PAKISTAN "Elections" in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir scheduled for 27 October have also been postponed, according to the Associated Press of Pakistan, reports *Samachar*. "The chief election commissioner" of POK has, in a press note claimed that the "elections" have been postponed only for a few days or weeks and not for an indefinite period. However AFP reported that the postponement is consequent upon the banning of political activities in Pakistan. There are about 300,000 Kashmiri refugees living in different parts of Pakistan. They are allocated 12 of the occupied Kashmir assembly's 42 seats. The "assembly" was dissolved on 10 August—after about two years of "general elections" in occupied Kashmir." Pakistan has made the mildest reference on record to the Kashmir question in the social and humanitarian committee and so Indian delegate, Sumitra Kulkarni, MP, chose to ignore it and did not reply to it in her speech. Further the Indian position that Jammu and Kashmir is an integral part of India has been repeatedly stated in UN forums. Mrs. Kulkarni, in her speech be-

fore the committee on Tuesday, however, stressed the inter-relationship between the right of self-determination and other equally fundamental principles such as the principle of sovereign equality of States, non-interference in one another's internal affairs and respect for the territorial integrity of states. Pakistan delegate N. Mendi had earlier said that the Pakistan Government "continues to support the right of self-determination of the people of Jammu and Kashmir in accordance with the relevant UN resolutions." The humanitarian committee is currently discussing the question of universal relation of the right of self-determination. Most of the speakers focussed attention on the remnant colonial pockets in southern Africa and urged that the people of Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa should be enabled to exercise their fundamental rights urgently.

* * *

FROM THE FOREIGN PRESS

Can MGR Survive?

This article appeared in the *Delhi daily, Patriot*, on October 2, almost a month before the recent events in Tamil Nadu.

CAN MGR RETAIN the Midas touch in politics too? Will he enjoy the phenomenal run of success he has had in the film world in the shifting sands of politics? These million dollar questions have been posed by his countless admirers as well as detractors since he took over as Tamilnadu Chief Minister some three months ago. If the performance of his Ministry in this brief span is any indication, the answer would seem to be an emphatic yes, says IPA.

Some political pundits have been arguing MGR's lack of administrative experience and political grasp would bring him to grief in the discharge of his arduous duties as the State's Chief Minister. Some cynics have been speaking of his Ministry proving no more than the proverbial nine days wonder. However, for all these prognostications, the prophets of doom have been proved wrong. Within

the past three months MGR has proved that he can conduct the affairs of the Government well. He has not had a respite in the 3-month period even for a moment. There have been a number of crises too. But the AIADMK chief has met them with the aplomb and cool assurance which would be the envy of many a seasoned political veteran.

Immediately, after MGR's assumption of power, leader of the Opposition K. Karunanidhi came out with the announcement that he would wait for six months before launching the "operation topple". But when the events in Sri Lanka involving the Sri Lanka Tamils took place, Mr. Karunanidhi conveniently forgot his promise. True, he was able to organise a massive demonstration in Madras to protest against the travails of the Tamils in Sri Lanka. It was a calculated move to extract as much political mileage as possible out of the unfortunate episode by whipping up Tamil sympathies. But MGR was not to be outsmarted.

Even before the DMK organised the demonstration, a resolution was passed in the Tamil Nadu Assembly and a copy was sent to Prime Minister Morarji Desai. The resolution requested the Prime Minister to use the Centre's influence with the Sri Lanka Government to undo the injustice to the Sri Lanka Tamils. This move not only took the wind out of Mr. Karunanidhi's sails but also took the sting out of his criticism that MGR was indifferent to the plight of Sri Lanka Tamils.

Thus, the first round saw Mr. Karunanidhi down, but not out. He is nothing if not a fighter. His next chance for a major assault on the Government came when the workers of the state-owned Pallavan Road Transport Corporation went on strike. The former Chief Minister grasped the chance with undisguised glee. As a matter of fact trouble had been brewing among the transport workers even earlier. The master tactician that he is, Mr. Karunanidhi had little difficulty in wresting the initiative from the INTUC and CITU. The strike saw the CPI and DMK, former enemies, ranged on the same side. The trade union affiliated to the AIADMK kept out of the strike.

Earlier, the Tamil Nadu Government made some important gestures to the transport workers. It an-

nounced on its own a minimum bonus and other concessions. Emboldened by this and the all round support to the strike, the workers pitched their demands a trifle too high. They wanted interim relief at the rate of Rs. 100 per month. The strike was no doubt a success with the road transport system coming to a near standstill. Here also the State Government handled the situation with remarkable tact. All schools and colleges were closed. Private buses were requisitioned to run a skeleton service while negotiations with the workers were kept going. Ultimately a settlement was arrived at by which the workers got an interim relief of Rs. 27. Once again the DMK chief's attempts to put the Government on the mat fell through.

And now, for want of a better issue to fight, the Opposition leader has threatened to launch an agitation on his demand for installing a statue of "Anna", on the Anna Salai, the city's main thoroughfare. The Government has firmly rejected the demand. But all the same, it is ready to consider installing a statue for the departed leader at an alternative site. It is a measure of Mr. Karunanidhi's desperation that he has had to fall back on such a trivial issue to harass the Government.

But then, the reason for Mr. Karunanidhi's anxiety to topple the MGR Ministry is not far to seek. The new Chief Minister has set himself firmly against corruption. The Central theme of his speeches has been that the corrupt will not go scot free. Those who have helped themselves to huge sums of money at the cost of the common man will be meted out their just deserts, declared MGR.

This unequivocal announcement plus the Prime Minister's statement that the Sarkaria Commission would continue its work has struck terror in the DMK camp. Moreover, MGR has not confined himself to mere statements. He has already taken into custody some of the DMK big shots for alleged corrupt practices. The talk of the town is that the net is fast closing in on Mr. Karunanidhi himself. Hence his desperation bordering on utter panic.

Another major development in the State has been the merger of the Makkal DMK led by former

DMK general secretary, Mr. Nedunchezian, with the AIADMK. Mr. Nedunchezian left the DMK along with his colleagues Mr. Rajaram and Mr. S. Mahadevan on the eve of the poll, protesting against the "dictatorial" attitude of the party chief Mr. Karunanidhi. He first formed a party called Makkal DMK. Later on the decision to merge with AIADMK was taken at the party's general council meeting. And Mr. Nedunchezian has been appointed chairman of the AIADMK. There is speculation here of a possible cabinet expansion to accommodate Mr. Nedunchezian and a few other AIADMK stalwarts. While Mr. Nedunchezian has a somewhat clean image, the same cannot be said about his colleagues Rajaram and Madhavan. Many in the AIADMK feel that the entry of these "discredited politicians" would do more harm than good to the party.

The State Janata Party unit is in poor shape. The party has not yet recovered from the trauma of its electoral debacle in the Assembly poll. Besides, it is finding it hard to live down its "North-Indian" image. The excessive enthusiasm of some Central Ministers for Hindi has not helped matters either. For instance, Mr. Raj Narain's derogatory reference to Tamil as being a "dasi" of English has added insult to injury. The Tamils have not taken kindly to the remark. A new set-up with Mr. S. V. Lakshmanan as the president has been knocked together. But nursing the party back to its normal health is no easy task.

—Patriot

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Better Times For China

AFTER TWO YEARS' stagnation, China's economy is regaining momentum according to the chairman of the State Planning Committee. In a major policy speech on Sunday before the standing committee of the fourth National People's Congress, Vice-Premier Yu Chiu-Li also gave one of the most detailed accounts of the economic policies of the new regime since the overthrow of the "Gang of Four." Mr. Yu said that industrial production had risen 12 per cent. in value in the first nine months of this year compared with the corresponding period in 1976. This is well above the 8 per cent

growth rate Western experts had anticipated for the year as a whole. Mr. Yu was quoted as saying: "The tide is now turning on the economic front, which is of vital significance, and a new leap forward is taking shape in the economy."

He gave, however, a far less glowing account of progress in agriculture saying that "fairly good harvests were gathered in many regions and the yield for cotton and vegetable oil crops is better than last year." His omission of any reference to grain cultivation suggests that this year's harvest may have fallen short of the 290m. tons gathered in 1976 which itself marked only a 1.2 per cent. growth on the previous year. Mr. Yu blamed the disruptions in industry last year on the "Gang of Four" but candidly pointed to specific cases of trouble such as dislocation at the Anshan steelplant—the country's largest.

He declared that China had many arduous problems ahead if it was to become a great power by the end of the century. The growth of agriculture and light industry was falling short of demand, he said, and the development of the fuel and power industries, and the primary goods industry was not keeping pace with the growth of the economy as a whole. He said six major tasks lay ahead. Among those on which he placed emphasis were the need for proper planning and management of the economy which had been developing in a "semi-anarchical" fashion. Application of proper planning procedures and managerial skills had only just begun.

He added: "No significant improvement has yet been made as regards the poor quality of products, the big consumption of materials, low productivity and the tying up of too much funds. In a direct reference to improving workers' incentives he indicated that there should be more pay for increased work and less pay for less work.

He disclosed officially that wages were being increased from October 1 for about 46 per cent. of workers and staff—mostly those with long experience. A further 10 per cent. of workers are to get small increases. These are the first official pay rises in China for more than 10 years.

—Financial Times.

China Wants Western Arms

ITS WAR MATERIAL 20 years old, China needs military aid from friendly countries to modernise its army and bring weapon systems up to date. This was the thrust of a message given recently to French Prime Minister Raymond Barre by Gen Yang Cheng Wu, deputy chief of staff of the People's Liberation Army. Gen. Yang who had been visiting French military installations reportedly told Mr. Barre that China in many ways was still a developing country and needed "co-operation from its friends" notably to build up a viable defence. It was the first time that a ranking Chinese officer spelled out his country's military needs, but the statement came as no surprise to defence experts. French specialists, notably those linked with the unofficial review "defence nationale" had been abreast of the situation for some time.

Last July, the review carried a long report saying that although China already had nuclear "credibility", it would be in no position to dissuade the Soviet Union from any attack until the end of the decade. China's conventional weapons, the review said, were "outmoded" meaning outclassed by the Soviet Union's. It cited China's 8,000 Soviet-built tanks, 400 planes and 1,000 warships.

China has already purchased 15 French 'alouette 3' helicopters—assembled in China—plus the same number of heavy "super frelon" helicopters. Rumours, later denied, had it that China was also weighing the purchase of 200 advanced Mirage fighter jets.

During their week-long visit to France, the delegation showed special interest in the portable 'milan' anti-tank missile. Light-weight and easy to handle, the "milan" was presented along with the new "clairon" rifle and several tanks after a mock offensive at the Maitly Camp outside of Paris.

The "milan" is wire-guided and can be easily transported to the battlefield by helicopter or jeep and ready to fire in a minute. Range is 400 to 900 metres. A second anti-tank missile dubbed the "hot" and mounted on "gazelle" helicopters capable of hitting tar-

gets from 400 to 4,000 metres, was demonstrated on Tuesday. At the Eaux air force base, the Chinese looked on at flight demonstrations of the "mirage fi", 'jaguar' 'transall' and alpha jet'. More recently a West German military delegation headed by the Chairman of the Bundestag Defence Commission, Manfred Werner, was in China on an official visit. The delegation, it is said, was shown military equipment, methods of military training, secret underground installations, target shooting etc. Chinese military experts had underlined the big changes that had taken place in the concept of military training of Chinese army personnel. These changes were a straight outcome of the new Chinese military doctrine, according to which, battle actions and defeat of the enemy should take place on enemy territory. This has prompted the Chinese military command to insist on providing their troops with proper technical equipment, setting up a powerful military industry and well developed infrastructure, and also improving their logistic services.

It is interesting to note, however, that on October 23, 1977 the Japan Times carried a report about a meeting of the Foreign Committee of the Japanese Parliament. During the meeting the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Hatoyama, was asked by an MP of the Liberal Democratic Party, Mr. Akira Hatano, to comment on Teng Hsiao-ping's recent statement about China's readiness to import arms for the modernisation of its military forces. Mr. Hatoyama is reported to have said that he was himself worried about China's intentions to build up strength of its military which might lead to increased tensions in Asia.

—AFP

Cholera In Mideast

The cholera epidemic now raging through the Mideast is about to explode around the pilgrimage of three million Moslems to Mecca, creating a momentum which could inundate southern Europe and the rest of Africa. Simultaneously, World Bank administered austerity conditions in the Far East have allowed cholera to break out in Bangladesh, threatening the 600 million people of neighbouring India.

Latest reports from the Middle East officially count over 3000 cases in Syria and 400 in Jordan, but these are less than one-tenth of the actual number of cases, according to informed sources. The Turkish health minister has said that without \$32 million in foreign currency Turkey will run out of medical supplies to combat the epidemic in one month, according to the Turkish daily *Cumhuriyet* of Sept. 19. Turkey reports another five deaths over previous totals; Iran another 15.

Moving southward to Ethiopia: a prison camp maintained by Eritrean separatists has had five deaths and others sick in the last week from a disease which "presented all the symptoms of cholera". Most frightening is the report of 17 cases only 500 kilometers (about 300 miles) north of Mecca. Mecca was a nodal point of a spread of cholera from Southeast Asia which eventually hit southern Europe in 1973-74, affecting thousands in Italy, Spain and Portugal, and seeding cases in all the major European countries as well as Brazil.

In the Far East, Bangladesh has reported an "unusually heavy" epidemic of cholera, with 111 reported dead. Since, on average, 75,000 die of cholera annually in Bangladesh, the actual current mortality must be far higher, numbering in the hundreds of thousands.

From Bangladesh the disease has spread to Nepal, with eight deaths and 30 more cases reported on the Nepal-India border. Jakarta reports 35 deaths in Indonesia from "cholera-like disease," and the Gilbert Islands, near New Zealand, have had 352 cases in the past ten days.

Britain, West Germany, Italy and Holland have been seeded with cases from the Middle East. The latest incident is a Greek sailor who returned carrying the disease. The Italian newspaper *Corriere della Sera* of Sept. 18 quotes the Italian Health Ministry as calling for "prophylactic measures" against a possible cholera epidemic in Italy. An official of the US Public Health Service today derided the usual "prophylactic measures" such as vaccines and quarantine. "What these areas need is good water supplies, sewerage systems, and adequate food. But some people think that's too expensive."

North Yemen

The assassination of the President of the Arab Republic of Yemen (North), Colonel Ibrahim al-Hamidi, by what the *Sansa* radio called "criminal hands", is the first short fired by imperialist powers to destabilize South Arabia, in a bid to control the Red Sea. With the Diego Garcia base in the Indian Ocean it is strategically important for the United States and her allies to make Red Sea 'safe' for the onflow of the arms to that base.

Since the battle for the capture of the Horn of Africa is not going well for the imperialists, the need for setting a naval base in the Red Sea has assumed urgency. The French have already based a garrison in Djibouti under an agreement with the newly independent republic. The US has already secured bases in Morocco and some islands in the Mediterranean Ocean. To complete the chain, the US needs the ports of Hodeida in North Yemen and Aden in South Yemen.

North Yemen, which has been a stronghold of the traditionalist and conservative forces, is a client state of Saudi Arabia. Politically

the country has stability, but behind it is a constant palace intrigue. The country is under perpetual nightly curfew. The economic situation in North Yemen is bleak. It is one of the poorest Arab countries and its standard of living of the people is appallingly low. There are three principal products: coffee, cotton and qat, the herb which is widely chewed for its narcotic qualities. The country lacks industrial raw material, and the only industrial activity is confined to the processing of agriculture goods.

With generous foreign aid mainly from Saudi Arabia, the situation is gradually changing. The Soviets have built a cement factory near Bajil, which uses the locally available limestone deposits. The Chinese have built a textile mill in *Sansa*, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and UAE have given foreign aid on a generous scale. The Americans have built the road the major part of Hodeida.

But the major interest of the foreign powers in North Yemen is in the hope of finding oil. At present a number of foreign concerns are prospecting for off-shore oil in the Red Sea.

TRIBUTE

C. T. FERNANDO

C. T. Fernando died last week at the general hospital Colombo at the age of 56. With his demise the world of Sinhalese music lost one of the most accomplished and most ablest artists. He came to the music world about thirty years ago. C. T. Fernando's career as a musician was not always lined up with success. He had several unsuccessful songs but he tried to introduce a new theme in every one of his songs.

C. T. was not only a radio artiste. He was a playback singer of Sinhalese films as well as theatre. The actual flowering of C. T. as a modern singer came during the last decades. Neither was he a pop singer nor a classic but his very style of singing was loved by all music lovers young and old. He received the praise of critics as well as audiences not only for his voice but also for the theme and wordings he brings to the hearts of people such as *Vana Bamaru*, *Bilinda Nelave Ukule*, *Suwanda Rosa Mal*.

C. T. will be most remembered for his songs like *Lo Ada Ninde*, *Gilee Male Taruwa* and *Mariya Mawu Kuse* which were popular among the song lovers of this country. Few years ago he went abroad for a music tour. Gifted with a fine sense of humour a rapier sharp tongue his immortal voice commanded audiences and held their rapt attention.

C. T. was a good friend among friends, best singer among singers, a talented artist among them. As a citizen he was a Democratic minded honest gentleman.

Any way we lost C. T. His songs recorded remain immortal. May he rest in peace.

Mirando Obeysekera

Nuwara Eliya.
25.10.77

—NS/PS

North Yemen, Gulf

After the seven year revolution (1962-69) that overthrew the despotic royalist regime, Yemen has begun to emerge from her middle ages and has taken a tentative step towards parliamentary government. But Yemen remains a difficult country to govern because tribal loyalties are stronger than national consciousness.

In the early sixties, Nasser sent 40,000 of his troops to North Yemen to aid the Republicans who were fighting the Royalists backed by Saudi Arabia. The Republicans won, and the Imam (ruler) had to flee the country. However, after Egypt's debacle in the 1967 war against Israel, Nasser withdrew the troops under an agreement with Saudi Arabia, under which the latter promised to withdraw her support to the Royalists. By 1969, the republicans were in full control of the country. But the Republicans were torn by internal dissent.

Since the neighbouring South Yemen (officially, the people's Democratic Republic of Yemen) is a progressive and a revolutionary regime, the imperialists used North Yemen, as a base for mounting attacks on South Yemen. There was heavy border fighting, but in October 1972, North and South Yemen signed a peace agreement aimed at joining the two countries into a single nation, with one Capital (Sana'a) and a unified legislature.

The prospect of a unified Yemen coming into being was a great set-back to the imperialists who had hoped to exploit the division of the country for furthering their ends. The imperialists instigated trouble at the borders, and thus delayed the process of unification.

Al-Hamidi, the assassinated president was a known protagonist of the unification move. He was to have been the first North Yemen president to visit Aden on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of South Yemen's independence. The visit would have been a landmark in the hitherto uneasy relations between the two countries.

In order to forestall this move, the imperialists who have control over several tribes, instigated them to murder Col. Al-Hamidi. The murder is political, aimed at stalling the emergence of a unified progressive Yemen. The imperia-

lists want to retain the control of North Yemen and put up a base at Hodeide, the major North Yemen port in the Red Sea. Whether the murder of al-Hamidi will lead to the destabilization of North Yemen, and thereby also endanger the South Yemen republic is yet to be seen.

—New Wave

Invasion Of The Gulf?

The National Security Council recently produced a confidential policy statement for the White House, known as Presidential Memorandum 10 (PRM-10). According to the *Washington Post*, the memo contains a recommendation that the Pentagon be prepared for a possible, military move into the Persian Gulf. Washington sources indicate that the memo was written by the Council's director, Zbigniew Brzezinski, and a staff member, Samuel Huntington. A potential US Military move into the oil-rich Persian Gulf is not new. US Energy Chief James Schlesinger first went public with the provocative plan after the 1973

Mideast war. The present re-urfacing of the scheme, however, is directly associated with an international power play to get direct access to Persian Gulf oil and petro-dollars.

It is an international investment banking group associated with Lazard Freres and its powerful "Jewish Lobby" in the United States which has most adamantly been promoting a Gulf invasion scenario which uses a surrogate Israeli preemptive strike to prepare for a US military occupation of the Gulf. Both the CIA and certain Congressional circles have added to the propagandistic build up for such a nightmare. Earlier this year Senator Jackson (D-Wash) released a report entitled "the Geopolitics of Oil", which warned of the potential showdown between the Soviet Union and the US over Gulf oil in an attempt to corner worldwide oil supplies.

More recently CIA director Stansfield Turner has authorized a report on Soviet future demands for oil which erroneously characterizes the Soviets as being in need of more imports of crude after 1980. Similarly the House International Committee released a report through the Library of

BADR SHAKIR AL-SAYYAB 1926 — 1964

The Iraqi poet al-Sayyab has been widely regarded as the finest modern Arab poet. Born in the south of Iraq, he was educated in Basra and later in Baghdad, he worked mostly in the civil service and in journalism. In the last three years of his life he suffered from a disease of the nervous system which led to his untimely death.

Al-Sayyab is regarded as one of the principal founders of the "free verse" movement—which broke away from the traditional monotony of Arabic metres. One of his most famous poems is "The Song of the Rain."

*Your eyes are two palm-trees at the hour of dawn
Or two balconies from which the moon recedes.
When your eyes smile, the vines come into leaf
And lights dance like moons in a river
Shaken by oars at the hour of dawn
As if, in their depths, the stars trembled
Like the sea when evening spreads out its hands
They are drowned in clouds of transparent grief
Rain
Rain
Rain
Evening yawns, and the clouds
Pour down their heavy tears
The rain is without end
Like bloodshed,
Like hunger and love.....*

(adapted from a translation by Issa Boullota).

Congress discussing the behaviour of the Soviet Union toward the Persian Gulf as the USSR's demand exceeds its domestic oil production. In point of fact such reports are grievously in error regarding the Soviet's future oil outputs as has been pointed out by numerous honest and authoritative sources. Instead, such misinformation creates the environment for an international crisis in the Mideast and the usurpation of the oil fields.

A military occupation of the Gulf, as a recent statement by *Pravda* pointed out, is part of a larger deployment to militarize the region from the eastern Mediterranean to the Indian Ocean. In this connection, the views of Samuel Huntington, who during President Carter's election campaign proposed that Israel join NATO, closely mirror those of Israeli Defence Minister, Moshe Dayan, who was

proposed the installation of a base for the Sixth Fleet at Haifa in Israel. Dayan, who is closely associated with Lazard Freres and the Jewish Lobby, works with a group of generals in Israel who have repeatedly called for an Israeli preemptive strike into the Gulf against the Saudi Arabian oilfields.

Israeli Parliament member General Meir Amit, who covertly aided Dayan in triggering the 1967 Mideast war has stated that an Israeli preemptive strike should "destroy not only the enemy Arab armies but should inflict heavy strategic damage on targets such as the Arab oilfields."

The *Baltimore Sun*, Sept 26, reports that Israeli strategists are debating the merits of a "preemptive strike" against Israel's Arab enemies as part of an overall Israeli military apparatus. Such develop-

ments come into the context of Israeli Defence Ministry plans for new "war aims" according to the *Jerusalem Post*. Highly placed sources have indicated that Israel has aimed its nuclear warheads on Saudi oilfields.

In the last month, the Soviet Union has four times warned against such deadly adventurism in the strategic Persian Gulf; leaving little doubt that such a manoeuvre would push the Soviet military command to the button. Furthermore, the Persian Gulf Foreign Ministers from the eight Arab states and Iran have called a meeting during the present United Nations General Assembly Session to discuss Gulf security. Both Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates have urged such a meeting to be prepared for a possible "western invasion" of the Gulf.

—NSIPS

SRI LANKA CHRONICLE

Oct. 24 — Oct. 31

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—Dinamina;
LD—Lankadipa; VK—Virakesari; ATH—Aththa;
SM—Silumina; SLD—Sri Lankadipa; JD—Janadina;
DP—Dinapathi; SU—Sun; DW—Dawasa; CM—Chinthamani;
WK—Weekend; RR—Rivirasa; EN—Eelanaadu;
IDPR—Information Department Press Release

MONDAY, OCTOBER 24: About 30 persons are feared dead in an earthslip in Sinhapitiya Estate in the Gampola area; the tragedy occurred on Saturday night when part of a mountain collapsed on nine line rooms; about 150 people are working round the clock to recover the bodies despite the continuing rain. A massive low pressure belt stretching from the southern tip covering the entire country and the Indian sub-continent to a large portion of the Maldivian islands is causing concern to Meteorological Department officials. The American President, while congratulating Sri Lanka on preserving the democratic system of government had indicated that he would be visiting this country shortly, said the Minister of Foreign Affairs when he returned to the island today. The Minister of Irrigation etc, speaking at a seminar said one should shed all doctrinaire approaches and 'isms' in the effort to discover technology—CDN. The consensus of opinion expressed by the SHS's and OIC's of specialised campaigns at their annual conference last week was that the health services would be crippled if immediate steps were not taken to provide adequate transport for all medical institutions and specialised campaigns. A press release

issued by the Ministry of Local Government, Housing and Construction states that investigations made by the Ministry reveals that the allocation of houses belonging to the department of National Housing after the dissolution of the NSA after June 6, '77 do not conform to any approved policy or procedure. Gold prices in the local market are dropping due to the drop in the sale of gold in the producing countries; the current price is around Rs. 650; earlier it was Rs. 900—CDM. A Code of Conduct for government MP's, approved by the government last week, debars them from interfering in the administrative affairs of government offices and corporations in matters that may lead to the negation of principles of fair play and Justice or result in the obstruction of work. Two months stocks of rice, flour and sugar are now being held in the country's main food stores, according to officials of the Ministry of Food and Co-operatives. The Kelani river has risen to just four inches below the minor flood level—SU. The Gampola police were today pessimistic about any more survivors being dug out of the landslide that flattened a row of nine line rooms at Sinhapitiya Estate Gampola on Saturday night. Prices of dried chillies have tumbled, hitting rock bottom levels at just six to eight rupees per pound—CO.

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 25: Free import of industrial raw materials and machinery and relaxed exchange control regulations for travel abroad are likely to be announced by the government when the Minister of Finance presents his first budget in mid-November. The police yesterday decided to call off the search to recover the dead bodies of the plantation workers who were victims of the recent earthslip in Gampola. The low pressure belt which moved over the island is now reported to be drifting away and the heavy spell of rains will decrease, according to Meteorological department sources. The staff working in the 22 Kachcheries in the country are to be provided with better amenities, more spacious buildings and better facilities following an inspection tour by the Minister of Public Administration and Home Affairs. CTB em-

ployees who keep off work without obtaining leave will in future be treated as having vacated their posts; the board has taken this decision following the discovery that absenteeism has seriously affected the bus services—CDN. The Civil Procedure Code which was repealed by the last government shall for all purposes be deemed to be and to have been in operation as if it had not been repealed and shall continue to be the law governing the procedure and practice in all civil courts said the Minister of Justice yesterday. Residents in Colombo and the suburbs may get restricted water on tap for several days as three of the four main tunnels supplying water from the Labugama and Kalatuwewa reservoirs have burst; this is due to gemming operations carried out in the vicinity—CDM. The PM has approved the blueprint for Sri Lanka's first Free Trade Zone—the extent of 2,000 acres in the South and North of the BIA at Katunayake. The PM announced yesterday that the government had decided to relax foreign exchange restrictions and hoped by various other means to make the rupee the most valuable currency in the world. The rapidly rising Kelani river has reached minor flood level; all the low lying areas in the city have been inundated and many roads in the island have become impassable. Mr. Raju Coomaraswamy has been appointed Advisor to the PM and to the Cabinet on International Economic Affairs. Four armed youths are reported to have robbed a taxi at midnight on Sunday in the heart of Jaffna town—SU. The steady decline in the area of rubber plantation replanted in Sri Lanka in recent years is gravely endangering the country's environment, a UN expert's report now being studied in the Planning Ministry reveals. Over 18,000 people have been rendered homeless within the Colombo Municipal limits alone, following the heavy rains in the last few days—CO. Around 3 lakhs have applied for the three thousand teaching posts advertised by the Ministry of Education—DM.

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 26: Two new laws carrying heavy jail sentences instead of fines for drug abuse and the sale of contaminated and unhygienic food will be tabled in the NSA by the Health Minister shortly. The government food drive will be launched amidst thousands of oil lamps in Sri Lanka's most ancient city of Panduwasnuwara tonight. Special homicide and Gang Robbery squads will be set up at all Police divisional headquarters as an additional measure to combat crime. A two day seminar for AGA's to discuss their co-ordinating role in the districts will be held on November 11 and 12. The Ministry of Transport will shortly set up a provincial workshop to repair railway wagons and coaches hitherto neglected. A group of 14 teachers and educators from 4 Nordic countries have been in Sri Lanka in the last three weeks engaged in an in-depth study in order to gather authentic material for multi-media educational programs to be used in Nordic schools. Following representations made by the chillie growers to the Acting Minister of Agriculture, the department will purchase a pound of dried chillies at the increased rate of Rs. 8—CDN. The Minister of Labour has put off a decisions on a large number of applications for registration as firms for exporting local labour to the Middle East, pending a review of government policy on the matter. Representations have been made to the PM by the JVP and others calling for the release of the JVP leader, Rohana Wijeweera, because of his failing health. The Peoples Bank will

open its central office with all modern banking facilities at its newly built multi million rupee headquarters on November 5. Over 5,000 shanties and houses in the low-lying areas of the city are inundated. A massive flood protection scheme for tanks and irrigation canals was undertaken by the Territorial Civil Engineering Organisation on the orders of the Minister of Irrigation etc. The Deputy Minister of Defence revealed that of the 32,000 IRC's, a tab had been kept only on 10,000; the whereabouts of the others were not known and they were probably behind all the criminal operations reported. Better promotional prospects and absorption to the special branches of the Police force would be afforded to constables who show special attitude in crime detection in the future—CDM. Chairmen and Directors of statutory boards and corporations will be made personally liable for the acts of omission or commission in the institutions; this is one of a series of measures taken by the government to streamline the country's corporation sector. The government is to set up a 'higher school' to provide sophisticated training for police personnel. The government has decided to pay gratuity to workers, both citizens and non citizens who were, victims of violence during the recent disturbances; they will be paid upto a maximum of Rs. 800 each under the workmen's compensation Act; this will apply to workers in the private sector. Sri Lanka's fertiliser supply position is alarmingly low due to inadequate imports and failure to anticipate the demand, it has been officially disclosed. The Water Supply and Drainage Board has placed an order for the import for 110,000 water meters which will be installed in the city of Colombo and its suburbs. The government has decided to give a new look to our Embassies and High Commission abroad, and re-model their activities—SU. The President of the Student's Union of the Jaffna Campus have advised students who were thinking of going to Jaffna Campus as a result of the difficulties suffered during the recent disturbances, not to come there as the Jaffna campus was behind other campuses in many respects—DP. The Minister of Agriculture has said that under a new insurance scheme, 5600 agents will be appointed in all the districts to take care of all agricultural matters—DM.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 27: The Finance Minister confirming yesterday that the government would liberalise the import of industrial raw materials and plant machinery and allow free foreign travel said that this was possible because donor countries, convinced of political stability here and the government's clear cut policies were, pledging enhanced aid. A Central Bank economist has pointed out that there is a clear need both in terms of national interest and the individual investor to slow down the rate of investment in the tourist industry until the room capacity of tourist hotels could be utilised more intensively. The Building Materials Corporation will import Rs. 125 million worth of high quality building requisites before the end of December. A strong police contingent will be on duty at the Dehiwala by-election to the NSA scheduled for November 11—CDN. The Ceylon Teachers Union yesterday alleged that following an order 'from above' the NCGE examination would not be held in December resulting in some 300,000 students setting stranded. Amendments to the State Gem Corporation Act of 1971 has been recommended by the head of the one man commission who inquired into the working

of the corporation. The recent rains have resulted in the prices of most vegetables shooting up—CDM. The Cabinet, at its weekly meeting yesterday, gave the greenlight for the establishment of a Postal and National Services Insurance Corporation. The CTB paid more than 15 million rupees during the seven years from 1970 to the end of 1976, as compensation for accidents. An international postgraduate university is to be established here—to provide higher studies in medicine, engineering and science for students from all over the world. Sri Lanka has sought the assistance of the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation in setting up the Free Trade Zone—SU. About 285 teachers, who were affected by the disturbances in the country recently, have been transferred to Jaffna—EN. The PM said this morning in Panduwasnuwara that his government would lead the country towards self sufficiency in the coming six years; in this massive national effort the people had to co-operate sinking all differences. A Norwegian government approved social services organisation has offered to set up two model villages for re-settling Tamil refugees affected by the recent disturbances. The Revolutionary Marxist Party has called for the immediate release of all political prisoners jailed under provisions of the Criminal Justice Commission Act. The Marketing Department will this year operate a total of sixty collecting centres and open eleven more retail sales points throughout the country in a bid to capture as much as possible of the private sector's fruit and vegetable business—CO. Nurses who completed their training under the Ministry of Health over three years ago have not yet received their appointments—LD.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 28: The PM, addressing the nation from a paddy field at Divulwewa in Panduwasnuwara at the Vap Magul ceremony held yesterday to inaugurate the national food drive exhorted the people to put their hands to the plough and help the government to achieve self sufficiency in food. Sri Lanka and China today signed their sixth Five-Year Trade and Payments agreement and an annual protocol covering two-way trade worth about 160 million US dollars for the 1978 calendar year. The Ministry of Defence is seriously considering the introduction of coast guard patrols in the areas of the western coast from early next year in order to prevent smuggling. The Ministry of Transport is contemplating introducing several far-reaching changes to the motor traffic act; one of the main things will be the introduction of spot fines for minor traffic offences—CDN. The Minister of Public administration and Home Affairs expressed surprise when it was brought to his notice yesterday that his ministry had 'surreptitiously' recommended for promotion 21 officers of the SLAS who had sat the 1973 examination—CDM. A foreign investment authority will be established at the highest level to give effect to the government's proposal to set up a Free Trade Zone, it was officially announced yesterday. The TULF has decided that none of its MP's will sit on the Parliamentary Select Committee that is to be appointed to revise the Republican Constitution. The Defence Secretary will preside at the toplevel conference in Jaffna today to review the present situation in the area—SU. The Minister of Finance addressing Bank Heads and Corporation Chairmen coming under his purview said that 1978 should be observed as a year of production and employment generation; he asked them to devote the coming six months to reorganisation so that the

effects of the chaotic legacy left behind by the last government could be overcome. The government has decided to liberalise the grant of exchange to people going abroad on pilgrimages; Buddhists, Hindus, Christians and Muslims will benefit by this decision—CO. The government of Mexico has decided with the concurrence of the Government of Sri Lanka to appoint Mr. Jose Antonio Lara Villarreal as Ambassador of Mexico to Sri Lanka with residence in New Delhi—IDPR no. 205/77.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 29: The Appropriation Bill for the year 1978 has been gazetted on the orders of the Finance Minister; it will be tabled in the NSA by him shortly. The CTB is making arrangements to deploy a fleet of about 800 school buses at the beginning of the next school sessions in January next year. The airstrip in Palavi in Puttalam used during World War II and abandoned in the late 1940's was re-opened by the Air Force Commander at a special ceremony yesterday. The National Paper Corporation has decided to increase the price of a 40-page exercise book by five cents; accordingly each additional 40 pages will cost an additional 5 cents—CDN. The IMF has agreed to finance the foreign exchange budget deficit next year; the IMF team led by Mr. Douglas Scott left last Tuesday after negotiations with the PM, Minister of Finance and other ministers and officials. The government will offer Rs. 680 to each family rendered homeless as a result of the recent communal violence, to repair or rebuild their homes; each family will also be paid an allowance of Rs. 50 to purchase kitchen utensils. The Ministry of Education yesterday assured that all children seeking admission to grade one next year would get a suitable school—CDM. The Ministry of Justice has ordered an immediate halt to the recruitment procedures followed by the Justice Ministry since 1975 to fill posts of State Council. Speculation is rife as to whether a local firearms manufacturing 'factory' in a secluded spot off a rubber estate in Gonapola, is turning out revolvers and cartridges and channelling them to a subversive movement. The government has decided to close down all refugee camps set up during the recent disturbances—SU. At a conference of merchants and traders held in Jaffna, the Sinhalese traders asked all Tamil Traders who left their establishments and rushed North recently due to the troubles to return to the South.—VK. The President and the Secretary of the Tamil Students Union of the Jaffna Campus have taken strong objection to some who claim that the Jaffna Campus is in any way inferior to other campuses, and in a statement they have condemned the propaganda of those who have done so—EN. The PM has said that they would use mostly man power to complete the Mahaveli Project and also make use of the army—DW. Some high-ups in the last government have obtained through the telephone, loans from banks for two and three lakhs of rupees, the Finance Minister has revealed—LD. Rubber goods, which have so far been imported, will soon be produced locally and exported; a factory for this purpose will shortly be opened in a rubber producing area with foreign aid, said the Chairman of the State Rubber Products Corporation—DW. The crime rate in the island has reached an all time high; murder, assault etc stand at 145%, while robbery, looting etc are at 197%—DM.

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 30: The State Film Corporation has been given the go-ahead to import better, more entertaining films from Western sources from early next year; the PM has agreed to release a substantial additional amount of money for these imports. The world's big news agencies are taking a keen interest in a UNESCO-sponsored meeting of national news agencies of South and South East Asian countries that open in Colombo in early January—SO. Family courts with powers to dispose of divorce, maintenance and child care cases will be set up shortly; the Minister of Justice said yesterday that these courts would have the powers of District Courts to deal with all cases of domestic family disputes. The leader of the Opposition told the BBC's India correspondent who recently visited Jaffna that an 'interim solution' to the problem of the Tamil community is acceptable to the TULF—ST. Sri Lanka's mini polls next year—elections to local authorities—will be on a completely new basis; the government has decided on a series of far-reaching changes which include the introduction of the system of proportionate representation in local bodies. The government has clamped down a complete ban on the capture of wild elephants in the Yala and Wilpattu sanctuaries and other forests in the country. The Ministry of Defence is now conducting a full probe into the recent discovery of eight foreign made rifles among a variety of contraband detected on the shores of Wattala early this month. A top level committee appointed by the government has expressed serious concern over the inadequacy of the preparations in the Police force to combat subversive activities or insurgency. Moves are afoot to form a joint stock company with foreign and local collaboration for the manufacture of corrugated cardboard cartons to replace the tea chests. A government scheme to rehabilitate destitute veddahs is in the offing; this will benefit about 75 Veddah families in the Bintenna area who are virtually cut off from civilisation and live in deprivations and suffering. The government has decided not to allow departments, corporations and statutory boards to construct new buildings for additional accommodation in the city or the suburbs—WK. The first budget of the UNP government will in all likelihood remove the ration system for rice and sugar for those drawing over Rs. 900—VK. The three months advance in salary paid to victims of the recent communal disturbances has been obtained by 60% of Tamils employees, whereas only 20% have actually been affected and are eligible to obtain it—DP. The government has decided to appoint a secret force to keep an eye on the work of the services, corporations and government departments—RR.

MONDAY, OCTOBER 31: The government is studying proposals recommending the abolition of the Convertible Rupee Account Scheme and the re-introduction of the Open General Licence Scheme for imports; it is also likely that the Business Acquisition Act will be reviewed and reconstituted in a manner by which the law will only be used when there is a threat to the country's security. Several internationally recognised firms from industrial countries are interested in investing in Sri Lanka's proposed Free Trade Zone and in entering into joint ventures with local capital. Over 20,000 Rural Development Societies will be set up in various parts of the island by the Ministry of Public Administration and Home Affairs. A number of foreign airlines have warned the Ministry of Shipping

and Aviation that unless there is an immediate improvement in the conditions, particularly those concerning the safety of aircraft, they will be forced to cease operating through the BIA. The Ministry of Defence has launched a top level probe into the whole question of the legislation of firearms in this country—CDN. Packages of low quality tea offered at the Colombo tea auctions will be removed from the catalogue, according to a directive issued to the Tea Board by the Minister of Plantation Industries. Sri Lanka will require about Rs. 12,000 million in foreign exchange to liberalise imports, ease foreign travel and to foot import bills based on the vagaries of the world market prices. The Ceylon Workers Congress has appealed to the Minister of Plantation Industries to survey line rooms in dangerous places and if necessary shift them to comparatively safe places. Thirteen trawlers given to Sri Lanka under the Asian Development Aid Program were idling in the Galle Fisheries Harbour for one year; this was one of the shocking discoveries made by the Minister of Fisheries when he toured the South last Saturday. The Cabinet has decided that the Minister of Education and the Minister of Justice should work on the establishment of the campus of the University of Sri Lanka in Batticaloa. Two people were killed and 40 injured during a two hour battle in Madras on Sunday between Police and a large crowd demonstrating against the former PM, Indira Gandhi—CDM. Some of the ventures taken over under the Business Acquisition Act are likely to be converted into public corporations, boards, companies or co-operative societies. The Finance Minister has been successful in negotiating aid to the tune of 630 million US dollars. Two committees comprising university teachers and lectures will this week embark on a study of the feasibility of setting up two university campus in the Batticaloa and Matara districts. Shopping hours are to be extended till 10 in the night, in a move aimed at creating 100,000 new jobs and making shopping easier for people all over the country. The MP for Bandarawela has complained to the Minister of Posts and Telecommunications that over half the telegrams received for transmission at the Bandarawela P.O. between January and July 1977 have been delivered by post—SU. The fourth Regional Conference of Ministers of Education and those responsible for Economic Planning in Asia and Oceania will be held in Sri Lanka next year—IDPR no. 91.

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NEXT WEEK

- ① BUDGET—1978—Preliminary Analysis
- ① BACKGROUND TO BUDGET—Surrender To IMF
- ① FROM WEEKLIES AND PERIODICALS—Extracts
- ① QUIDNUNCS—Spicy Items
- ① BETWEEN THE LINES—Men And Matters
- ① FR. BALASURIYA—Reply

ECONOMIC

On Planning

— Past, Present And
Future —

by A. P. de S.

REPORTS have been circulating for sometime now that the Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs would be abolished. On November 1, the *Daily Mirror* had a front-page box item which among other items stated: "The Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs would be wound up from Friday and its functions will be distributed among the Ministry of Plan Implementation and the Ministry of Finance which will then be known as Ministry of Finance and Planning....."

The Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs set up by the SLFP to act as a "watchdog" with a power veto over the LSSP-run Ministry of Finance will now be finally closed down. This Ministry had been an SLFP "parallel" to the LSSP "Finance" Ministry.

It is interesting to read what the columnist *Brahma* in his Colombo Diary in the SLFP's *The Nation* of October 29, 1977 has to say about this Ministry: "The Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs, *de facto* under H. A. de S. Gunasekera, *primus inter pares* in his grade or so he fancied himself, was by no means popular with other Ministries of the previous Government. For it had a mean habit of either 'executing' plans and proposals of these other Ministries, or, at any rate, dragging its academic feet until the plans and proposals became dusty and irrelevant. I was once told by the President of a big foreign company that he would like to erect a statue in his country in honour of one of H. A. de S. deputies. Why, because the man had filibustered long enough for the company to realise, and the fuel crisis to confirm his second thoughts, that a proposed joint venture with a local corporation was going to be a dead loss, and to withdraw for the commitment before the deal was ratified by the Government. If many things went wrong during the last regime, its bureaucratic boss who was able fortuitously

to set himself up as an economic dictator, has a lot to answer for. Considering its seven year record, there really is no need to shed any tears at the imminent dismemberment of the Planning apparatus although one perhaps ought to feel sorry for the consequential exit of its bureaucratic overlord who, I gather is now eating humble pie and living on borrowed time. Is the decision to dissolve the Ministry a polite and merciful way of putting its top dog out of his present misery, I wonder! Which reminds me of the folk tale in which a certain King's faithful body-guard in order to exterminate a present fly, sitting on the King's nose, struck it with a sword: the fly escaped and it was the king that died."

THERE ARE OTHER REASONS also why the Ministry is being wound up. The philosophy now motivating the UNP government has no use for the kind of "planning" adopted by many "developing" countries under the influence of Marxist, or Fabian or even Social Democratic political thinking. Though no formal pronouncement has been made on the future of planning in Sri Lanka, there are good reasons to think that the J. R. Jayawardena government has, like the Morarji Desai government in India, abandoned the kind of the planning both countries had adopted from the fifties—from Nehru's days in India and Bandaranaike's in Ceylon.

The Morarji Desai government has terminated the Fifth Five-year plan one year ahead of time and substituted a methodology known as the "ROLLING PLAN". This has evoked sharp criticism not only from the official Congress but also the Left. In fact, the Left has been even more articulate. In an editorial, the *Delhi daily Patriot* stated:

"The suggestions to terminate the fifth five-year plan ahead of schedule, on the totally untenable plea of readjustment of priorities, indicate that the detractors of planning continue to persist in their design without any let up. The innovation of rolling plans, dovetailed into a five-year-perspective, was mooted during the tenure of the previous Commission in the wake of global inflation and energy crisis which had upset many assumption of the draft Fifth plan. This was done to save the

instrument of national planning and not to undermine it. But now the rolling-plan idea is being revived in order to cover the sinister moves to dismantle the concept of five-year-plans on the ground of wide gap between targets and performance. If the World Bank and other credit-giving agencies of the West are allowed to determine India's development priorities, multinational corporations entrusted with the 'responsibility' of our industrial development through manipulation of the 'core sector' and, reliance is placed on rich farmers for agricultural growth, planning will be reduced merely to budgetary allocations for infra-structure expansion and some welfare schemes of marginal significance."

"Planning, as it was conceived by our first planners led by Jawaharlal Nehru, was a national exercise in mobilizing human and material resources for achieving and asserting the nation's economic independence. It still should be. India, with its vast natural wealth and indigenous capacities already created in the field of industry, specially in the public sector, and the significant strides made in science and technology, is poised to make a major break-through towards self-reliance. This is bound to spur other newly-liberated countries also to aspire to break away from the bondage of international capitalist machinations and encourage them to strive for economic independence. Attempts to weaken the tools of national planning in India are encouraged by international monetarists and neocolonialists precisely to prevent such a development. All discussions on outlays and targets will be of no avail unless the Government unambiguously rejects all suggestions to weaken the planning process and declares categorically that national planning will continue to be the principal tool of mobilization and allocation of resources with a view to pursue the objectives of improving the quality of life of the most downtrodden sections of the Indian people. Self-reliance and eradication of poverty are inseparably connected and form the foundation of planning. Planning will become meaningless if any of these objectives are tinkered with."

Now, what is the "Rolling Plan"?

In Sri Lanka, the term has not yet been used no doubt because "planning" had not advanced to the extent it had in India. For some time now a few Indian "experts" had sought to bring greater flexibility into the rigidities of the Plan by "rolling" some priorities. An official report had explained: "The first year of the new rolling plan system, will be 1978-79. Under the new system, though a five-year plan would be formulated as before, it would be reviewed and extended year by year."

The Planning Commission, according to reports presented at a top level meeting, conceded the plea that the system would ensure greater flexibility and realism while the 'past plans had not adequately provided for inevitable fluctuations in agricultural output and had proved to be vulnerable to changes in domestic and international economies.'

The innovations in the planning technique which the Planning Commission has now worked out will in future subject our economic growth to the needs and pressures of the capitalist world. This is precisely what the World Bank and the IMF—the two key financial levers of the American monopolists—have been advocating all these years.

A critical analysis of the Rolling Plan stated: "The concept of the rolling plan was first introduced in the Defence plans in the wake of the Chinese aggression in 1962 with a view to strengthen the defence of the country. Now, the concept has been extended to the five year plan. Such year by year *ad-hocism* in planning would divorce the entire planning process of accelerating the growth-rate, reducing disparities, determining the content of output and above all the objective of raising the standard of living of the people. The Planning Commission decision assures added importance because Industries Minister George Fernandes has already stated that the Industrial Resolution of 1956 is being rewritten, which obviously will have clear bias in favour of the large-scale industries and multinationals. Thus, in the industrial sector, an open door policy for the Indian and foreign monopolists will be followed. The much publicised 'shift' of emphasis in

favour of rural and the cottage industries will remain more of a populist gimmick than anything concrete."

Presiding over the same meeting Prime Minister Desai had emphasised the need for comprehensive planning and control of all outlays by State and Central Governments, whether of a developmental nature or otherwise. He said that future investment plans should be based on a realistic assessment of the savings in the economy, and that the effectiveness of planning should be judged not in terms of the size of the Plan as measured in money but the results achieved by way of increased employment and income generation.

These explanations did not seem to satisfy thinking sections of the Indian public. With criticisms against the Rolling Plan system mounting on a nationwide basis (even among MPs of the Janata Party who developed serious doubts about the validity of the Rolling Plan), Prime Minister Morarji Desai on October 5 stated:

"The government's intention was to have a realistic and effective plan." This was in the course of a speech at the first meeting of the Parliamentary Consultative Committee for the Planning Ministry and the Prime Minister said planning under the rolling plan meant more intensive and detailed planning. No proper progress was possible without planning. Mr. Desai pointed out that without comprehensive and effective planning, the scarce resources for development could not be properly utilised. India's resources were at most limitless but the resources available for immediate development were limited. Hence planning was imperative. Prime Minister, Morarji Desai said that in the past decades planning had not failed but it was not perfect. The plans had not been successful insofar as a significant reduction in the extent of unemployment and poverty was concerned. It was, therefore, necessary to formulate the goals of development clearly in terms of the major objectives of creating employment opportunities and alleviating poverty. Priorities had to be determined in the light of these needs, he said.

Mr. Desai also stressed that the emphasis in future plans would be

on the development of rural and tribal areas and avoidance of the drift of population to urban slums. This would not mean the stoppage of fresh investment in industry. The needs of agriculture, power, transport and other in infrastructural facilities would have to be met from industrial products. In view of the new priorities Mr. Desai said, it had been decided to start a new medium term plan from next April to cover the period 1978-83. It would be extended by one year at a time so that there would be a constant planning horizon of five years for all important projects and programmes. There would also in addition be a perspective plan for a longer time frame, possibly 15 years.

With the introduction of the rolling plan concept, he added, the medium term plans would become more realistic, flexible and efficient. The objectives of planning, the Prime Minister said, were national objectives and all parties, whether in the government or in the opposition, should put their heads together in the national endeavour of planned development. Replying to doubts voiced by some members about the Rolling Plan concept, Mr. Desai said flexibility would not mean that the targets included in the medium term plan would be easily altered at the time of the annual review or that implementing agencies would not be held accountable for the failures to achieve the accepted targets.

At this same meeting, after several officials had tried to explain the virtues of the Rolling Plan, it was reported that:

"Several MPs who took part in the discussion were of the view that planning should be done from the grassroots level and efforts should be made to decentralise administration. In spite of the clarification given by the Prime Minister and the Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission all the doubts in the minds of the members about the rolling plan concept were not cleared. Some of them suggested that the concept needed to be explained further for better appreciation. One of the suggestions was that to reduce regional disparities, different yardsticks should be applied for backward and tribal areas. Construction of rural roads should receive prio-

city. The members expressed their views on reformulation of plan objectives, the planning strategy, changes in the planning system and the concept of area planning. They drew attention to the urgency of providing some basic needs immediately such as drinking water in all villages."

In Sri Lanka, no doubt because of the storm into which the announcement about a Rolling Plan had run into in India, there has been no formal proclamation of the abandonment of "socialist planning." Everything has been done to dismantle the edifice and infrastructure of the "socialist" economy of the SLFP-UF government but no new philosophy has been announced. Furthermore, in Sri Lanka, planning had never been a success so far as implementation was concerned. In India it was different. And, for this reason there will be no spontaneous upsurge of criticism in Sri Lanka against the abandonment of the rigid planning priorities which socialist and even pseudo-socialist planning systems demand.

But if and when, the radical Left in Sri Lanka finds its voice again it will argue on the same lines as the Patriot? "Howsoever serious the Union Government and the Planning Commission be, the name 'Rolling Plan' cannot but suggest something out of the Alice in Wonderland department. This very original conceptual breakthrough fits in very well with the rest of our new rulers' ideas about what can or should happen to our economy generally. All they will bear with is that immediately perhaps we should stand still for a while quietly—abandoning Jawaharlal Nehru's Industrial Policy laid down in 1956, importing technology as freely as we will be permitted by the 'inventing' countries, importing heavy electrical goods, not because our engineers and technicians are not good enough, and using all our foreign reserves in the sacred cause of import without whose expansion we may perish. This is certainly the end of the road for Indian planners. Indian economists who try to inject ideology into what should be merely an exercise in opportunism and publicity and generally all those who have hitherto expressed their belief even though they may not have been able to do anything for advancement along the road they

had marked out. After the pause when Mr. Desai, Mr. H. M. Patel and some unhappy and many very happy Ministers and their right-wing economic inspirers can hopefully turn their faces to that disgraceful "objective" socialism and gallop back to good old theories of petit bourgeois production, of a competitive market and harmonious progress towards sub-limitation in the neo-colonial world structure to which the World Bank, the knights of the great multinationals and others have been beckoning us. It will be time then to stop talking of Rolling Plans and forget the whole concept of planning. Planning is a Socialist state's prerogative. It is not a Mantra or a superstition. Planning will refuse to be wished off from the face of the earth because a pusillanimous government here or there discovers that it does not have the moral courage or the economic understanding to draw the interest of all the people—not this or that sector—towards the plan and make it the only obvious way for the nation. Till we acknowledge this truth we will be rolling our Plans without quite knowing where finally they will roll into. So down with the Five Year fixation and awful "rigidity" and up with a continuing roll without end."

Compared to India, Sri Lanka's planning machinery was amateurish. No plan was ever fulfilled. It was rolled over many times. There were long-term plans (ten year, six year and five year) and short-term plans (three year and one year). The United Front government had rushed headlong without adequate planning, into "ultra-radical," unrealistic and impractical Land Reform, into hasty Nationalisation and many utopian measures which had a "socialist" flavour.

But the United Front had also implemented measures which had brought into existence a dangerously greedy class of neo-entrepreneurs and mudalalis.

The economic policies of J. R. Jayawardena are totally different from those pursued by the United Front. There will be "planning" but will be of a different order. It would be more appropriate to discuss this after the Budget Speech on November 15.

STOP PRESS

Will A Devalued Sri Lanka Rupee Float—After The Budget?

A report from Washington dated October 17, has just reached **Tribune**. It details in concise terms the measures the IMF had "imposed" on Peru in a package deal to bail out that country from virtual "bankruptcy" in the sense understood by capitalists.

"The Peruvian government announced Oct. 10 that the Peruvian sol would be allowed to float on the 'free exchange market', ending seven years of exchange controls which authorities said 'made it more difficult to reestablish financial stability and created obstacles to normal access to foreign credit.' The sol float is an effective devaluation of the currency by 20 to 25 percent and is the first concession to a package of International Monetary Fund austerity measures accepted by Peru after months of intense negotiations to avoid a total default on its \$ 5 billion foreign debt.

"The economic 'stabilization' agreement worked out between Peru and the IMF last month dictates, according to Washington sources, another \$ 35 million 'cut in government spending in 1977 and a much larger reduction in 1978. According to the plan, all government subsidies for basic food and fuel will be phased out, combined with severe import cut backs and a wage freeze. The federal budget cuts are said to include layoffs of government personnel, abandonment of agricultural and state development projects which do not produce short term export payoffs. The IMF package further includes strict limitations on Peru's international borrowing.

"The IMF deal forced on Peru under threat of a total credit cut-off which would bring its trade to a grinding halt. The IMF, according to the New York Journal of Commerce and State Department sources, will disburse Peru's promised standby credit of \$ 100 million over the period of two years—a paltry \$ 4 million per month.

"If the expected new measures are implemented, they will take the bread out of the mouths of the already close-to-starving population. There are virtually no 'non-essential' imports remaining, nor can presently imported goods be produced locally without massive investments. The impact of the devaluation will be felt in higher cost of imports of food, fuel, and inputs to industry. Subsequent increase in prices of these products will mean a skyrocketing, rate of inflation above the current 40 percent level, mass layoffs, and starvation among the poorer layers of the population."

—NSIPS

Will the IMF package for Sri Lanka be on similar lines? It may be that the IMF will be less harsh to Sri Lanka because the IMF wants to create a better image for itself in this part of the world at a time when the western world is anxious to make Sri Lanka, one of leading nonaligned nations, a model of capitalist development for a background country buried deep in economic stagnation.

WITH THE BUDGET WILL THE SRI LANKA FLOAT AS A FREE CURRENCY, IN THE SAME WAY AS THE PERUVIAN SOL, AT A DEVALUED RATE? WILL THIS BE ONE OF THE PACKAGE ITEMS IN THE NEW BUDGET? THERE ARE VARIOUS ESTIMATES AS TO THE REALISTIC VALUE OF THE SRI LANKA RUPEE. TRIBUNE'S GUESS IS THAT THE DEVALUATION WILL BE NEARER 100% THAN OTHERWISE. INDONESIA TOO HAD BEEN MADE TO FLOAT HER RUPIAH IN 1966-67 IN THE BID TO RESURRECT HER ECONOMY? WILL SRI LANKA TREAD THE SAME IMF PATH?

A. P. de S.

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POINT OF VIEW

Rev. Fr. Tissa Balasuriya And Eelam

by Rev. Fr. J. Joseph Mary S. J.
Jesuit Residence, Batticaloa.

In the concluding part of the article 'Tamil Mandate for Eelam'—Fact or Fiction? of October 1 1977, Rev. Fr. Tissa Balasuriya has quite correctly stated, "One can say that the TULF has failed to obtain the support of the Moors

for their proposal for a separate state for the Tamil speaking people of Sri Lanka. Not a single elected MP for TULF is a Moor."

In the course of the same article he states, "a more detailed analysis is being published with more detailed notes...for the record and also to substantiate our argument."

He analyses the election results of the Northern Province under two heads, viz. (a) The Jaffna Peninsula (b) The rest of the Northern Province which include Killinochchi, Mullaitivu, Vavuniya and Mannar.

Quoting the voting figures of these four electorates in (b) above, he has concluded statistically, "in the rest of the Northern Province in the main land the position is less clear though the TULF won Killinochchi, Mannar, Vavuniya and Mullaitivu."

One wonders how far statistics, confined solely to the election results alone, is a sufficient thermometer to the temperature and the tempo of the people's aspirations to live their lives with self-respect and in peace.

"In Killinochchi", asserts Fr. Balasuriya "the TULF obtained 15,607 votes as against 4006 for the SLFP and 1499 for the UNP." Election-result-wise he is indeed quite correct regarding the figures. But is this the complete picture statistics-wise? Shouldn't statistics, scientific statistics too, take into consideration under what pressure, favours, favouritisms and promises SLFP, for example, was able to get the 4006 votes in Killinochchi? Further, a cabinet minister was contesting that seat on SLFP ticket. Are these votes therefore, necessarily anti-TULF votes? UNP scored 1499 votes in the same electorate. Well, how many of these votes are also Sinhalese votes?

For that matter, the statistics which Fr. Balasuriya has quoted, precisely because it was "for the record and also to substantiate our argument", should have stated how many Sinhalese voters are there in these electorates in Killinochchi, Mullaitivu, Mannar and Vavuniya. And one cannot expect them to subscribe to the separate state demand.

On the contrary, removed from the pulse of the people, with just the election results for one's guide and on the strength of these alone, to draw conclusions, is, to say the least, a wishful thinking if not totally misleading.

To come back to the "rest of the Northern Province, in the main land", I wonder if the "position is less clear" as all that as is stated by Fr. Balasuriya with his incomplete statistics.

I had the good fortune of mingling and moving with the people in all these electorates during the election days. It was campaign time. In two of the electorates outside the Jaffna peninsula and, for that matter, even in certain of the electorates in the Jaffna peninsula, the Independent candidates publicly avowed that they too were for the separate state and the Independent candidate of Kayts drew a good chunk of the votes because he went a step further on the TULF demand and wanted the winning candidates to form themselves into a Constituent Assembly of the Separate Tamil Eelam.

Let us confine ourselves to the argument of Fr. Balasuriya. On the face of the election results alone, he concludes, "in Mullaitivu TULF received 10,261 votes while the Independent candidates together polled 9335. The difference is 926 out of a poll of 19,596 and an electorate of 24,698." How far is this a valid conclusion? In this particular electorate the Independent candidate who came second said in public and, as far as I am aware, issued even had bills to the effect that "I am also a TULF candidate". I am also aware that he drew many TULF votes for the personal reason the voters had against the TULF candidate. Hence, the votes of the many Independent candidates are votes for the TULF rather than against it.

Thus, I feel, that Fr. Balasuriya, sticking only to the election figures, and not going beyond them into all the facts of the matter, has failed to give the reader a complete picture which would have been a more objective analysis. Hence Fr. Balasuriya's conclusion regarding Mullaitivu that "here too the case for separation is not unambiguous. It is actively supported by a little over 41% of the electorate" does not stand.

As for Vavuniya, it is vital to the statistics to state how many are Sinhalese voters, who in any case, would have voted against the TULF. And what percentage of the Tamils voted for the UNP? Against this background, that the TULF to

have polled only 48.6% is indeed a tremendous 'YES' for the Tamil Eelam—a fact and not a Fiction.

Speaking for the Eastern Province, one would have appreciated if Fr. Balasuriya had analysed the electorates as he had done for the Northern Province.

Commenting on the results of the Batticaloa seat, he had excluded "in term of votes" 11,221 from the TULF. He considers them as FP votes. But any person at Batticaloa knows that there was no FP candidate for Batticaloa in the elections. They were both TULF nominees. Because the election laws forbid it, one of them was given the FP symbol. Hence the 11,221 votes are very much TULF votes indeed.

Speaking about the Paddiruppu seat, Fr. Balasuriya makes a sweeping statement. He says "The TULF would have lost Paddiruppu if not for the division of votes amongst the LSSP, SLFP and UNP which together got 16,412 votes as against 15,877 for the TULF." Well the fact (and not a fiction) is that this was the other UNP Tamil seat together with Kalkudah that the UNP won in the previous elections. Of course, that the winner later jumped on the wagon is history. An FP stalwart lost this seat to the UNP. This time the TULF won the seat not only with a new comer, but with a majority unheard of in the previous elections for this constituency—a tremendous over a 10,000 lead.

However, mutatis mutandis, Fr. Balasuriya's statement regarding Paddiruppu holds good for the Kalkudah seat indeed. There the UNP is a Tamil. In fact the only Tamil who won a seat for the UNP. With a majority of a paltry 545. In this electorate we have a good concentration of Moors and Sinhalese. Both of them combined surely make up more than a mere 545, assuming that many Tamils, if not most of them, voted UNP. Again, the TULF candidate who contested this seat is a new comer to the hustings. He was pitched against a senior man, ranking fourth in the UNP Hierarchy, assured to be a minister if elected, and that bait thrown out by no less a person than the UNP leader himself during the campaign.

In fact it is the only platform where JR publicly announced a minister candidate. Voting-figure-wise indeed UNP has won the seat. But given the majority of 545,

policy-wise and going beyond the figure, TULF's is an unquestionable moral victory for a separate state.

Speaking about statistics, I don't pretend that mine is a perfect analysis either. I stand to correction. Only I wanted to complete where Fr. Balasuriya left off and "for the record."

A friend of mine tells me, that he has a book "How to cheat with statistics." I think we all would do well to get hold of it so that we will be better armed to sift and see through the so-called statistics. They are indeed a gauge, but only to a certain limit and no more.

Finally, regarding Tamil Eelam—be it fact or fiction—it is vital to ask not HOW MANY have voted for it but WHY people have voted for it.

TOPICAL

The Second Amendment

— its implications —

by B. H. C. Mendis

Both the SLFP and the LSSP fear that this will herald in a dictatorship. May I ask them, was it not a dictatorship that ensued under the UF Government from 1973 to 1975. During this period the UF Government was backed by only 49% of the voters. The opposition was treated with scant respect and laws passed with the steam roller two thirds majority. The then Prime Minister was a Fascist dictator who flouted the fundamental rights of the people. The national press was muzzled with the take over of the Associated Newspapers and the closing down of the Independent Newspapers Ltd. because it was highly critical of governmental policy. The people were even afraid to speak as they were marked down for the perpetration of injustices as taking over their property and homes merely because they did not toe the line. All legitimate demonstration as Satyagraha, holding protest meetings were frowned upon and government powers misused by the illegal use of the police and the army at Attanagalla and the pronouncement of the wonderfully democratic Attanagalla Doc-

trine. There was rank nepotism and family bandyism. When these democratic forces were being eroded, did the LSSP utter one word of protest at the dictatorial manner the Prime Minister ruled?

In passing, I may state that Bhutto is being charged in Pakistan for crimes of this nature and the present Dharmista government will be failing in its duty if the perpetrators of these political crimes are not arraigned before a court and punished severely with confiscation of property. The corrupt UF government cannot quail as they passed draconian legislation prescribing as punishment jail sentences and confiscation of property even if a person uttered one word against the validity of the Constitution by suggesting that the extension granted to the UF Government by the members of the UF itself, was wrong. The Constitution of 1972 concentrated all power in the National Assembly and prevented by law the aggrieved party going to the courts for redress even if the minister acted mala fide.

To come back to the point, it is apparent that you do not need a President with full powers as in the Second Amendment but even without it the Prime Minister can be a dictator. For after all a constitution is but a piece of paper and whether the constitution is democratic or dictatorial depends upon the personnel working it.

As a matter of fact any democratic constitution gives room for dictatorship. A prime minister can rule treating the ministers as puppets and do as he wants resorting to family bandyism, nepotism, declaring and Emergency for trivial reasons or no reason at all, enforcing a curfew when in a difficulty as when the UNP desired to hold 100 protest meeting simultaneously in the length and breadth of Sri Lanka protesting against the misdeeds of the government. The only safeguard is for the government members to pass a motion of no confidence on the Prime Minister and the government. This will rarely happen as they will then lose their seats and eventually go to the political wilderness as such dissentients will not be nominated by the party. So with the second amendment or not, a dictatorial government is a possibility and what Comrade Col-

vin fears can happen and happened under his own constitution.

Let us now examine the advantages of the new system. What is the use of having a puppet President controlled by the Prime Minister? Why pay him a huge salary with a large retinue of staff, cars, police escort and other perquisites costing the taxpayer a tidy sum.

The Republican Constitution has placed all power in the National Assembly which really means in the Cabinet and ultimately on the Prime Minister. There were no checks or balances to these powers as an independent Judiciary and Executive. The best constitution is that which spreads wide the sovereignty so that no one body can have exclusive control. Under the amendment power is to be shared by the President, Prime Minister and Cabinet.

Isn't the position in all socialist countries this? A president with full powers and a Prime Minister etc. Formerly in Russia the most powerful man was the Secretary of the Communist Party and then the Premier. It too had a figure head as President. This they have changed by combining the posts of Secretary of the Communist Party and President into the President and Head of State with totalitarian powers.

To only exception to this is the Monarchy of England, where the King or Queen is the Head of the State and has to act on the advice of the Prime Minister. England, the Mother of Parliaments is a unique case. It has conventions and traditions coming down for over 500 years. Also the Royal Family is held in high respect and endearment by the people. The institution of the Monarchy in the United Kingdom is unique.

So we should welcome this amendment. The Republican Constitution is a single chamber having discarded the second chamber—a very desirable body. If there was a second chamber, Sri Lanka would not have suffered so much during the last seven years. Over 50% of the population were slaves manhandled and trampled by the stooges of the government. With this amendment the President can act as the second Chamber. The President may also create a convention that he will act on the advice of the Prime Minister and advice him.

He should use his full powers only if the National Assembly runs riot with scatter brain schemes and their policy is detrimental to the people and the country.

The present Prime Minister (J.R.J.) is a champion of the independence of the Judiciary. Hence the people have nothing to fear. Also he has said that in important national questions he will give referendums. He is also for the complete freedom of the Press.

The President is elected by the voters of the whole of Sri Lanka. Hence the person elected will be a suitable person with high intellect, much political experience and above all one of high integrity coupled with a high sense of social justice. So there is no fear of his doing anything against the interest of Sri Lanka but on the other hand he can veto any wild hair brained scheme of the National State Assembly. He can protect the interests of the minorities and see that the legislature is fair and free from corruption.

Moreover his period of office is only six years and he can not only be turned out but impeached after his period of office if he had misused his powers.

I have always felt that Sri Lanka has played with democracy donning on its accoutrements but the true spirit of democracy was lacking. In a recent issue of the magazine 'Encounter', there is an article that shows how democracy can be perverted and a country can practise only its distortions.

It is refreshing to note that after King Asoka later called Dharma-soka, we have a Prime Minister, who values and gives a high place to spiritual values and desires to establish a Dharmista Raj. This is the only way a country can progress. The Bible says, "Seek ye first after righteousness and all other things will be added into you." This is not only true for the individual but for a country. Mahatma Gandhi echoed this same thing, when he said that there is a law of Spirit and Truth prevailing the Universe.

* * *

SHORT STORY

Devotion—2

by Vinodini

Pari and I had practically grown up together. Her parents lived next door to mine, so we were constantly in each other's houses or on the beach. She was a minx even when she was a kid, and very pretty she was too. As the years passed she grew into a beauty, so much so that all the young men in the vicinity were falling over themselves trying to marry her. But she had eyes only for me. She rejected all the other suitors for we had sworn to marry each other. But we had to await awhile for I wanted to make some money and buy a boat so that we would not have to pinch and scrape when we got married. We were in no hurry to marry for there was that much understanding between us. Her father was a gem of a man, and he approved of our friendship, but her mother was a veritable virago who was always shouting at us and was determined that her daughter should not marry me. The daughter was equally determined to defy the mother. So the battle raged between them but it didn't really bother us, for we knew come what may we would marry one another.

It was about this time that I had a very good one—an offer that would enable me to realise a dream. A dry fish merchant from Mannar offered me a job for half the year, for the other half I would be free, and he promised to help me get a boat which he said I could pay for by working for him. It seemed too good an opportunity to miss. I accepted it, and within a short while my dream was fulfilled—a beautiful motor boat all my own! I came back triumphantly, to find that Pari's father had died and some of my joy diminished. I found that she wasn't the same lively person, but I attributed it to the loss of her father. Had I been a little less pleased with myself I may have noticed that there was more to it than hit the eye. I thought she would get over it in time. After staying awhile, I decided to go on a long fishing trip in my brand new boat and it was almost another year before I got back. All this while only one thing had been driving

me—my love for Everything I did. everything I wanted to achieve was for her and the knowledge that she loved me.

But I was soon to learn that each one's conception of love is different. When I got back with the means to make her my wife, I found that she was no longer there. Her mother was quick to inform me that she had married someone else. It is difficult to describe by feelings then—a combination of hurt, disbelief, disillusionment, humiliation, grief and sheer raving rage. I felt wounded to the soul. If I had found her I would have finished her there and then, but I couldn't. Nobody seemed to know whom she had married and the old women wouldn't tell me a thing. So I went back to my job a broken man. My ideals were shattered, castles demolished and I was made to face life in the raw. I realised that I had been living in a world of dreams—reality was different—cold, hard and cruel. We expect life to take a certain course, we plan we build, only to find that even before the building can come up properly it collapses. Yet, I managed to survive trying hard not to let others guess that anything was amiss. I am a proud man as you know, and did not want others pity or scorn. Besides none of them would have understood my feelings anyway.

A few years after this, I met some of my old friends, and one of them who had known us both from childhood told me that he had seen Pari when he chanced to go to the Indian coast, on a fishing trip. This news was enough for me. Without thinking a second time, I jumped into my boat with my friend and made for the place where he had seen her. Don't look so shocked, I had been to the Indian coast many times before, even of an evening to see the latest film. It was late at night when I got there and no one seemed to be about, so we waited till morning to make enquiries. I located her at long last. Her husband seemed to be well off, from the way they lived. He was certainly more than a mere fisherman. I wondered what he did. She was shocked to see me, but recovering quickly, gave me long winded explanations about how her mother had forced her to marry this man and how she still cared for me. So I asked her to come away with

me if this was true. She told me it would be difficult as she had a child as well. I told her to bring it along. So we arranged a time that I would come for her, when she could get away without too much difficulty.

It all went well and we got to the boat easily enough, but the weather was none too good. Nevertheless, we set off. When we were on the high seas, the storm broke with such fury that the boat almost capsized. Everything was bleak, black and cold. The sky was black, the sea was black and churning, the rain was coming down in sheets and the boat was tossed around like a leaf in the wind. While we were being lashed about by the storm, I became aware of another boat a little way off. It gradually grew nearer and when Pari saw the boat she became greatly agitated. It was a much bigger boat than mine and it was obvious that they were smugglers from the load that was in it. Apparently the storm had prevented them from unloading their goods. Soon, it drew alongside and the men shouted out to us. They had powerful torches which enabled them to see pretty well in that inky darkness. When they saw who was in the boat, a voice thundered "What in the name of hell are YOU doing there?" It was her husband. She became so terrified, do you know what that double-crossing woman did? She shouted back saying that I was taking her away forcibly. When they heard this two or three men jumped into my boat and started attacking me. You can imagine how nightmarish it was! With the storm raging on one side and two or three men setting upon me in a boat which was staying afloat with the greatest difficulty. I am a strong man and I struggled hard, but they were more than a match for me. I felt a thundering blow land on my head and knew no more.

When I came to, my head was throbbing and I felt an excruciating pain in my right leg. I tried to get up, but it was impossible as my leg was pinioned beneath the anchor and wedged between the floorboards. The child was sitting there staring at me with wide open eyes. It must have been about two years old then. I realised that the boat was no longer moving. It had obviously been washed ashore.

Dawn was not very far away. Within a short while, I could hear activity and then loud exclamations at discovering the boat. We had been carried somewhere very near this place. The people were extremely kind. They took me to hospital and looked after the child. My leg had to be amputated and when I came out of hospital I took over the child and settled here and she has been here ever since. It is well nigh ten years. I love her as my own now."

In retrospect, he told me, he could put things in a better perspective but at that time he was moved by forces stronger than himself. He was not able to conquer his emotions which he was better able to do now. He was loth to blame her and kept finding excuses to justify her actions, which is a common enough trait in men. For it is difficult to believe, even after illusions are shattered that something one idealised or treasured was really not what we thought it would be. I marvelled at this man. Without an education, he had qualities which many a learned man lacked. He was cultured without having come into contact with cultivated people. He had done something that few others would have. Looking after somebody else's child, especially in these circumstances displayed such largeness of heart. Though bitter about the woman at times, which was only natural, he had such tolerance and understanding that he went up many rungs in my estimation. And amongst people who did not value qualities like love overmuch (not to the extent of sacrificing themselves at its altar at any rate) he was a rarity.

"Man's love is of man's life a thing apart, 'tis woman's whole existence." These words of Byron had been deeply rooted in my mind for a long time, but now, I had to see them in a new light for it seemed just the reverse in this man's case. I went back to my book, much the wiser and more philosophical. Since I left that place, I haven't gone back, but I hope to some day, to see what has become of that fisherman whose story has just been told.

Concluded.

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LETTERS

On Tribune

Sir,

I have witnessed in silence for the past few months, as the slow but gradual slide of your journal towards Tamil communalism. I do not blame you for, as Editor, you have the right to do whatever you please. I can well understand your position following the holocaust that occurred in the country recently. Although an attempt has been made out to make it appear to be politically motivated I believe that this is a foretaste of what is to come between the "haves" and "have nots". I would, however, blame both the Sinhalese and the Tamils for this unfortunate event in the history of our country. Yet sniping at the Buddhists or at the Sinhalese will only aggravate rather than soothe already volatile tempers.

I certainly do not mind the anti-Sinhala editorials and other articles that have appeared in *Tribune*, from time to time. After all, it is only a point of view and there are many readers of your journal that do not entirely subscribe to what has been published. Yet, I think, it is my duty to clarify what standardisation of GCE 'A' level marks mean. Apparently the views expressed so far in the *Tribune* makes one to believe that standardisation was a sort of "rigging" device to help Sinhala students at the expense of Tamil students. Your recent editorials certainly seem to imply this. Abolition of standardisation was contemplated even during the Sirimavo Bandaranaike Government by Mr. B. Mohamed and a small coterie of his bureaucrats. At that time I submitted an article for publication in *The Buddhist* entitled *An Argument For Standardisation and District Quota System for Entry Into The University of Sri Lanka*. —I am herewith, sending you a reprint of that article. I would be most grateful if you would read this very carefully and tear my arguments apart in any future issue of the *Tribune*. I believe, and so have many others, that my arguments are based on sound scientific and educational accepted principles. I am however, subject to correction by those who know better. If on the other hand you

cannot find flaws in my arguments, I shall be most grateful to you in terms of what I believe is honest journalism, to publish extracts or support my views in your future issues. I am also sending you an additional copy to be posted to a gentlemen by the name of Mr. R. Kahawita who writes regularly to the *Tribune* and whose ideas, in my opinion, would have been considered as "progressive" in 1817 rather than in 1977.

Prof. A. D. P. Jayatilaka
Head, Dept. of Anatomy
Peradeniya

47/17, Louis Periris Mawatha,
Kandy.
25th October 1977

S.L.B.C. And Poya Days

Both during the previous regime, and so far under this Government, it has been a practice of the SLBC on Poya days to replace its normal sponsored musical programmes on Channel 2 of its English Service with instrumental music of its own choice. The reason has never been explained. As things stand, though, both the practice and, the choice of music are very odd.

Instead of the usual sponsored programmes, which consist largely of vocal 'pop' music, one has instrumental versions of pop music, traditional swing and dance-band music, modern jazz, ballet music and other light classical items. Why?

Is it that, for whatever reason, sponsored programmes are not permissible on those days? Or, is it that the 'devotional' nature of the day, for practising Buddhists, is sought to be matched by the SLBC's musical programmes? If the latter, is it considered truly Buddhist to force a devotional mood upon others also on such days? From another stand-point, what merit is gained by Buddhists who are artificially aided in their devotion? In either case, why is vocal pop music less desirable on those days than its instrumental version?

If there is a rational explanation, the SLBC owes it to its listeners.

If it is merely continuation of a meaningless practice, so characteristic of the previous regime, the SLBC is at odds with the present Government's expressed desire to have a rational and equitable use of radio.

The SLBC is today headed by one who, for the past 7 years, was one of the most senior and influential officials of the previous regime. He owes clarification both to the listening public and to the new Government.

L. G. Wickremasinghe

Charles Place,
Colombo 3.
28 October, 1977

Communal

Sir,

After nearly twenty one years the Bandaranaike policies are beginning to bear fruit—the unpalatable fruits of racism. An educational system which has segregated the two racial groups virtually from the cradle to the grave and who meet only in combat as witnessed during the past few weeks, is worthy of earth-shaking changes for the sake of the future generations in this country.

The remarks of the Minister of Finance, Mr. Ronnie de Mel, during the debate on the throne speech which he addressed to the Leader of the opposition were possible only because they lived and learned together, and today respect each other. What a disgraceful and despicable behaviour it was on the part of some Sinhalese doctors and lady doctors boycotting and harassing their own colleagues because they belong to a different race. These rabble rousers should be stripped off their stethoscopes and sent to live with the "hoi polloi", where they really belong—GMOA take note of your "sick" membership.

George L. De Silva

231, Puttalam Road,
Kurunegala.
7.10.77

Confidentially

• Land Allocations • EL's Shoes • CGR

IS IT NOT TRUE that the scandal-a-week formula *vis a vis* the SLFP is being followed with rare determination? That there seems to be a belief in some quarters that a scandal-a-week will keep the SLFP away? That more important than flogging the SLFP horse is the need to ensure that the UNP does not slip into the same kind of scandals it wants to exorcise? That, nevertheless, one of the latest "scandals" disclosed in the NSA concerns ex-Minister Maithripala Senanayake? That the *Daily News* report of what took place in the NSA on November 1 read: "The Leader of the House Mr. R. Premadasa answering a question by Mr. Yasapala Herath (UNP-Anuradhapura East) for oral answer said several lots of land were allocated to the People's Bank within the controlled area of the now defunct Anuradhapura Preservation Board. Up to December 31, 1970 the bank had paid Rs. 25,688.16 as taxes and rates to the Board. After 1970 this alienation was cancelled and an allocation was made to Mr. Maithripala Senanayake on 99-year lease. A sum of Rs. 5967.36 was paid by the People's Bank up to Sept 7, 1971 in respect of lots 234 and 235 and although the re-allocation was made in favour of Mr. Senanayake, no steps had been taken to refund the monies paid by the Bank. Mr. Maithripala Senanayake (SLFP-Medawachchiya): I received the land in lieu of the land I had owned before the board was set up. This has not been stated. Mr. Herath: "The point I am making is that it was incorrect for you as a Minister of a Government, to have the land allocated to you and also not to refund the taxes paid by the Bank?" That whilst this allocation of land in Anuradhapura to ex-Minister Maithripala Senanayake has a savoury flavour, it would be more exciting to know the allocations made along the Mahaveli Diversion Channels (in a large number of areas) to mem-

bers of the last NSA, to Ministers of the last Government and their relations? That three or four years before the water was diverted, the allocations had been made? That people in the areas did not know the direction of the channels? That what was allotted seemed to be thick jungle in a world of no return? That when the channels were built, the significance of the allocations became apparent? That, in addition to such allocations, there were more ambitious grants along the small rivers and rivulets through which Mahaveli water would be diverted? That an investigator would do well to make a start at Dambulla and work backwards and forwards?

IS IT NOT CORRECT that one of the spiciest stories going the rounds is that the Minister of Govi Affairs, E. L. Senanayake, had participated in the Vap Magula ceremony in a pair of tennis shoes? That the tradition in Sri Lanka in the entirety of its 2500 years (and even before) is that nobody stepped into paddy fields or even a cultivated piece of garden land with his feet wearing shoes, or slippers or sandals? That *Tribune* had refused to believe that E. L. Senanayake would have been guilty of such a *faux pas* as walking into a paddy field for a vap magula ceremony with his feet encased in a pair of tennis shoes? That photographs were produced to *Tribune* with E.L. in tennis shoes "marching in to plough"? That it is not known whether he took the shoes off when he took control of the buffaloes and the plough? That if he did not do so, this tennis-shoes clad vap magula will become the joke of the century? That if E.L.'s feet are too sensitive to walk on soft mother earth—and that in a paddy field—he should transfer himself to some other ministerial function and not tread on the corns of the goviyas with his tennis shoes? That if, in fact, he had removed his tennis shoes, before he entered the paddy field, *Tribune* will give publicity to it.

IS IT NOT A FACT that the quip, which all long-distance railway commuters, who are compelled to travel in the "Romanian" coaches, indulge in, is that the only thing "upright" in the CGR is the straight-backed "upright" seat in the "Romanian" coaches? That *Tribune* has for a long time exposed the

horrors of the "Romanian" coaches which the LSSP railway administration had inflicted on this country? That at least two generations of train travellers are condemned to suffer torture untold by being forced to use these carriages? That it is one thing to travel short distances in them but it is a totally different kettle of fish to go long distances? That if Minister Mohamed can "do something" about these carriages he will earn the gratitude of the millions who use the CGR every year? That many things can be done to improve matters but no one in the Railway administration seems willing to "bell the Romanian cat"? That whilst *Tribune* has been hard on Minister Mohamed's performance, the *Congress News*, the organ of the CWC, paid a glorious tribute to him in an editorial in its issue of 15/10/77? That this is what it said: "To the people of Sri Lanka, who have been treated to a surfeit of words from governments with hardly any action, the deeds of the Minister of Transport, Mr. M. H. Mohamed, shorn completely of words or fanfare comes as a refreshing change. The Minister, within a few weeks of his assuming office had got down to brass tacks and has set out to identify the maladies that so beset our transport set-up. He in the company of the MP for Nuwara Eliya, Mr. S. Thondaman, visited the upcountry railway stations and bus depots to ascertain for himself the causes that tend to make travel a travail for the commuters there. Mr. Thondaman had pointed out to him the various shortcomings in the transport service—both road and rail—and the Minister had assured to eliminate them in the quickest possible time. Meanwhile the Minister acted with alacrity on another suggestion that the restriction placed on Ceylonese travelling to India by rail and ferry be lifted. This was a constant source of irritation to many passengers to India, who had valid reasons to visit India as pilgrims Hindus, Buddhists and Muslims who had to travel to India. Many of them were forced to expend large sums of money in air travel as rail travel was allowed only if the Exchange Control Authorities sanctioned it, which was very rare indeed. There is no doubt that the Minister's move will be welcomed by every one...." Amen!

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