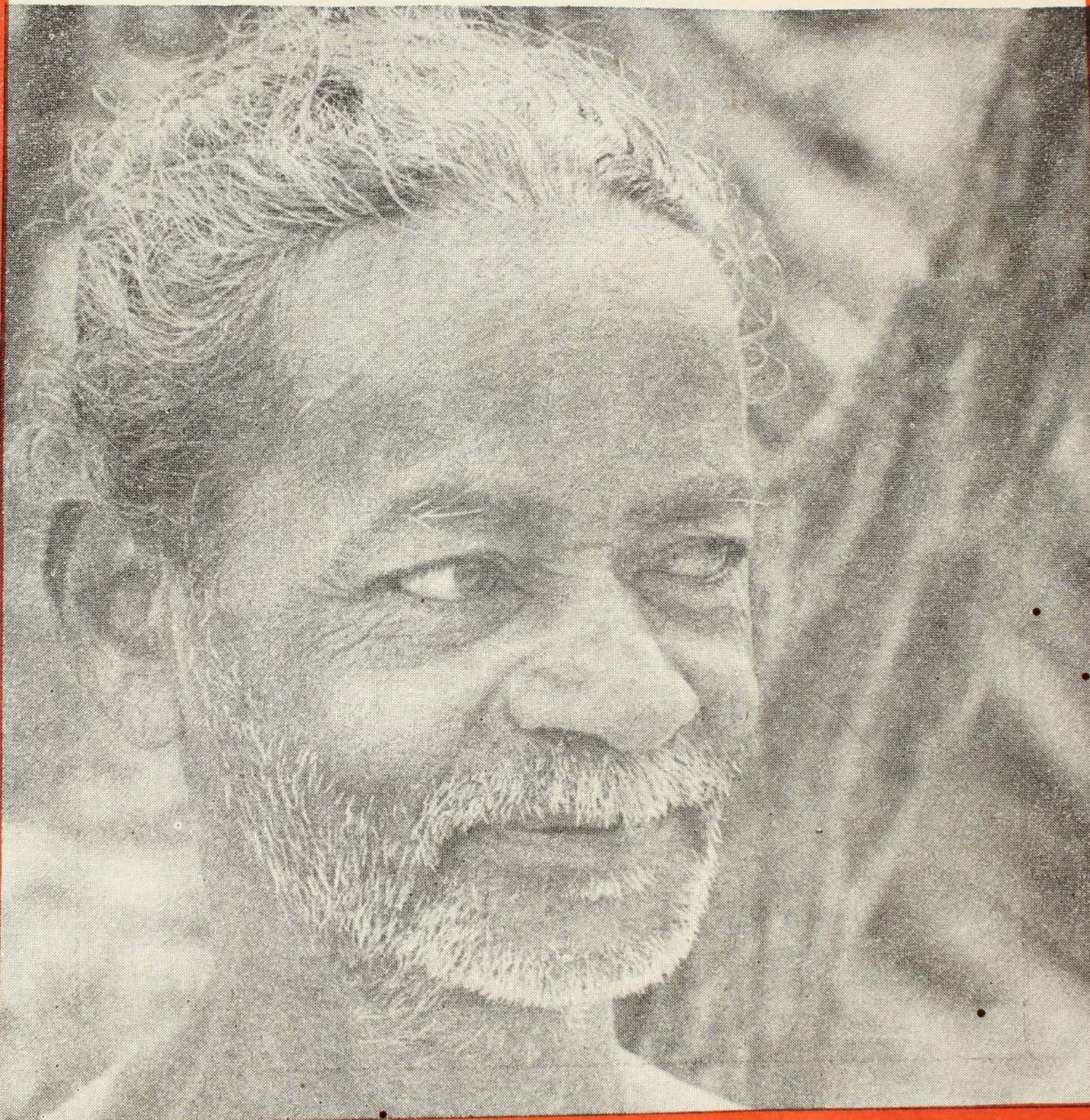


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Letter From The Editor

THE GENTLEMAN ON THE COVER this week does not know the meaning of the word "holiday". He works in his fields every day of the year. He will work with a smile until he drops dead. Twice, in his life, he has joined a pilgrim party—and on each occasion he was out for a week. He has never heard of casual or medical leave. But there are privileged persons in this country who work only about 187 of the 365 days for which they are paid. And even then they do not do an eight hour's worth of work. Over the years, *Tribune* has pointed out that the number of holidays are far too many in Sri Lanka and unless the number was cut down the country will continue to wallow in the mire of stagnation. No Minister or MP of the last government had the guts to say that holidays should be cut drastically and that people should work harder. It is, therefore, most refreshing, to find President Jayawardene and Prime Minister Premadasa calling on people to work harder—if any advance is to be registered on the economic front. In the course of his address to the Central Advisory Council of the Community Centre Movement on June 30, Mr. Premadasa stated: "We must have leisure and holidays, it is true, but in Sri Lanka we work virtually only every other day. Look at China although calling itself a socialist country, they have only seven holidays a year..... Everyone should have the right to employment, but once employed the output must be eight hours' work for eight hours' pay.....". He also drew attention to the need to safeguard public property from wanton damage and misuse. "If this country is to make any appreciable advance, towards prosperity, salvation lay in popular participation in the government and administration....." (*Daily Mirror*, 1/7/78). The *Daily News* report, 1/7/78 stated: "Whatever opposition we may encounter politically, a concerted effort must be made to change the existing holiday system of our country. As it is, out of the 365 days of the year every other day is a holiday. Our public officers, when entrusted with some work, the first thing they worry about is whether it is a holiday, not how best they could accomplish the work. We should be ashamed of ourselves at the waste of finances and resources brought about by our own negligence of national duty towards our country.....our people still tended to think in terms of bondage and slavery. It was thirty years since our country achieved full independence and a change in thinking is now very necessary. The people still thought that the government is a separate institution and there is nothing for them to do other than elect a new government into power and reject an existing one. They were just onlookers. People should participate in government not only in the interest of others, but also in their own interests. That could be achieved not by just preaching, but by practising what was preached....." Repeatedly in more than one speech, President Jayawardene, too, has stressed the need for hard work. It is not enough for the President and the Prime Minister to make speeches about holidays and work—at least it is a good beginning—but they must see that work is done. Today, no work is done in any government from Friday to Monday. It is a three day week of only three hours work each day. In many public sector corporations it is a permanent go-slow. Excuses are many—the most popular being "political interference" and lack of "job satisfaction"—but these excuses must be eliminated in the same way that unnecessary holidays are done away with. As a first step, the country should revert to the six-day week. Many religious holidays could, in the first instance, be made applicable only to the denominations concerned. It may be wise to touch the Poya Day holidays last but when people get into a mood for work—they will not mind the total elimination of all but a few holidays. **As we go to press we learn that the President has called upon the Ministers to reduce the number of holidays and have at least 250 working days a year. This can be only a beginning—we must have at least 280 to 285 working days.**

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EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

One Year After—1

IN A WEEK FROM TODAY, the Dharmista Government of J. R. Jayewardene will be one year old. As there is so much to write about the government—and some of its acts of commission and omission—we begin our analytical and interpretative review of this year from this issue, and we will carry it over for a few more issues.

The keynote guideline from the Government's point of view was set out by the President in his address to the Parliamentary Group on Tuesday, July 4, 1978. The *Daily News* and the *Daily Mirror* on July 5 published reports of what the President had told the Group. The *Sun* did not carry any report, probably because reporters are not officially allowed to attend these meetings—in the past, the Chief Government Whip issued a communique if the matters discussed were considered important enough for such an official news release. On this occasion, the *Daily News* had a front-page eight column banner headline **PLANNING IS OVER. NOW FOR ACTION; PRESIDENT... 'WE SHOULD ALL WORK WITH A WILL AND DEVOTION TO DUTY.' WORLD SUPPORT FOR DEVELOPMENT ASSURED.**

"The foundation has been laid for a bright future for the people of Sri Lanka. We should all now work with a will and greater devotion in the coming year, President J. R. Jayewardene told the Government Parliamentary Group which met at President's House yesterday. During the past 12 months the Government prepared its plans for the country's development. The Government was

able to receive considerable aid from other countries, as never before because of its commendable, blueprint for reconstruction. The President said the lack of machinery and equipment was a handicap to development. A survey of equipment and machinery available for the Maduru Oya Scheme had revealed that only a few old tractors, and two buli dozers, brought by the previous government were at hand for use. The country's ports and airports designed about 15 to 20 years ago did not cater any more to the needs of the present day. The Japanese Government had promised to give us aid to the value of Rs. 500 million to develop the Colombo Port and the Canadian Government had agreed to improve the Katunayake airport. When this Government decided to accelerate the Mahaveli Project and complete it in 6 years ahead of its originally estimated period of 30 years, some expressed concern. But, because of the Government's enthusiasm, devotion and honest effort, the World Bank and other monetary institutions agreed to grant aid without any hesitation. If we are to speak in terms of lakhs, this aid amounts to 120,000 lakhs, he said.

'All planning relating to the Mahaveli Scheme had been concluded and steps had now been taken towards the successful completion of the scheme, within the next five years. Under this scheme, Maduru Oya, Kothmale, Victoria and Madurugala reservoir projects could also be inaugurated, with the Maduru Oya project next month. There would be a complete revolution in the economy of Sri Lanka once the Free Trade Zone, the Mahaveli Development Scheme the Greater Colombo Economic Commission, and the scheme to develop towns on the outskirts of Colombo get going. The government would

then be able to fulfil all its election pledges given to the people by providing them employment, and by bringing down the cost of living. The President said working the Free Trade Zone would commence within a few days, and before the end of the year two new fully equipped factories would be set up. He was happy that initial requirements for a colossal project like the FTZ such as the supply of electricity, water, communication and other amenities could have been met within the short spell of seven months. The President stressed the need to maintain a high standard of discipline in the country if the nation was to be led along a moral path. He was fully aware of the high cost of living in the country. This could perhaps be due to the various measures adopted by the government in developing the country's economy. Despite the fact that the government spent Rs. 25,000 lakhs annually to import essential items of food such as rice and flour, the consumer had to spend a higher price for these items because of unsatisfactory transport and distribution.

"Referring to the land policy of the government the President said that with the takeover of the administration of all State land by the Ministry of Lands, Janawasa and Usawasama would no longer be in existence. The President said that in order to improve the conditions of hospitals in Colombo, Dr. Ranjith Atapattu had been appointed a Minister outside the Cabinet of Ministers to be in charge of the Colombo hospitals. He had to take this step to improve the conditions of hospitals which had deteriorated to such an extent that instances of patients stealing pillow cases and bed-sheets had been reported to him. Restriction of the number of visitors to hospitals would also have to be imposed as the wards were so con-

fested with visitors that doctors could not attend on patients.."

This important statement of the President was followed by two significant pronouncements by the Minister of Finance, Ronnie de Mel on the question of the money being assured for development. He had also stated that this was Sri Lanka's last chance to make good. The *Daily Mirror* of July 5 reported: 'This is Sri Lanka's last chance for rapid progress which will ensure a better tomorrow while maintaining Parliamentary democracy. We will not get another chance. So said the Minister of Finance and Planning, Mr. Ronnie de Mel when he addressed the Institute of Supply and Materials Management at their annual dinner held at Hotel Taprobane on Monday (3/7/78) night. Mr. de Mel said: 'In 1947, when we attained political independence, Sri Lanka was considered one of the best in Asia. We had complete peace and stability when every country around us was in turbulence. India and Pakistan were torn asunder and millions of people were killed in communal disturbances. Singapore was in ashes. Hong Kong and the Philippines were devastated. Sri Lanka was an oasis of peace and stability in this part of Asia. Despite the high level of literacy rate of its people and the best of administrators Sri Lanka did not develop during the past thirty years while all our neighbours developed their economies rapidly. The chief reasons for the failure to develop the country was economic mismanagement. For this, both the private and public sectors are to be blamed'. Mr. de Mel added this government has already taken steps to put the country on the right course to economic recovery speedily with a view to increase economic growth and thus solve unemployment. We are now moving away from consumption expenditure and subsidies to large-

scale investment and growth with a view to generating more employment. All these years we have been living on too much of hand-outs and give-aways. Now we are revitalising the economy. The Minister said that Sri Lanka required Rs. 6,000 million annually to maintain the transport service, the plantation sector and the health services and run the private and public industrial sectors etc. Apart from this another Rs. 20,000 million would be required for the Mahaweli scheme. This was the biggest project of the country and required 200 times the capital needed for the Gal Oya scheme. Three new development schemes—the Investment Promotion Zone, Greater Colombo Economic Commission and the Housing Schemes—would generate over 1.5 million jobs for young men and women. Referring to the foreign cost of the Mahaweli project the Minister said that the country needed Rs. 12,000 million in foreign exchange for the completion of the project. The balance was in rupees and this sum should be mobilized locally. Mr. de Mel said in order to mobilize local resources, he had to resort to financial strategy and if as the Finance Minister he increased the taxes or interest rates he did not want them to squeal. Development brought in its wake many other problems. The Government was faced with many problems and dilemmas. How are we to maintain social justice? Where are we going to find funds? How are we going to create an era of rapid development and growth without money? If we find money, how are we going to solve the problem without inflation? Problems within problems. Dilemmas within Dilemmas. When we pump so much money into the economy, then the inflationary pressure will build up. He had to guard against inflationary pressures."

The *Daily News* of July 6 had a six column banner headline THE CHOICE IS JOBS OR SUBSIDIES: REMOVAL OF FOOD SUBSIDIES MEANS EMPLOYMENT FOR 100,000 MORE and the report read: "Finance Minister Mr. Ronnie de Mel said yesterday that the time had come for the people of Sri Lanka to take the hard decision as to whether they should continue to receive food subsidies or whether the more urgent problems of unemployment should be resolved. Assessing the magnitude of the issue, Mr. de Mel said the removal of the food subsidy of Rs. 2,500 million would mean providing employment to at least a 100,000 persons. Mr. de Mel was speaking at the Moor's Islamic Cultural Home on 'Our strategy for development'. The finding of a solution to the country's economic problems had been given the highest priority by the Government. The unemployment problem was the prime concern of us all. The main projects proposed for solving the problem were the accelerated Mahaweli Project, the Free Trade Zone and the Greater Colombo Economic Commission. The Minister said the problem before the government was to revive and resuscitate the economy which had been brought to a state of collapse by the previous government after seven years of family rule. When Sri Lanka gained independence in 1948 she had all the ingredients for economic growth and economic stability and Sri Lanka was an oasis. But what followed was a sorry tale and Sri Lanka was lagging behind except in one sphere namely social justice and social welfare. The present government came into power at a crucial time in the history of the country. We were at that time in the midst of turmoil and instability politically and economically. Tea, rubber and coconut were in the doldrums and trans-

port services were in shambles. Quick decisions had to be taken. During the past six months a fair amount of work had been done and for the first time the country had one of the most successful paddy harvests on record. The government was negotiating to export 100,000 tons of rice. The country continues to import American flour at Rs. 2 per pound and sell it at 80 cents. The tragedy, he said was that we had 500,000 tons of rice on our hands and did not know what to do with it. Sri Lanka produced and sold rice at Rs. 2 less than the world market price. The foundation for the new economy had been launched with various projects such as the Greater Colombo Development Scheme, the Free Trade Zone and so on being established. Already aid to the tune of Rs. 6000 million had been received for development projects and the government had embarked on a two pronged attack. We should see that too much money was not pumped into the economy since this would give rise to inflationary pressure. That was the dilemma of the Finance Minister. Donor countries did not like giving aid for consumption. Their argument was that aid was given for development not consumption. We have received Rs. 12000 million aid in all. We cannot depend on aid alone. We have to learn to rely on our own efforts and resources. The obtaining of aid hurts our national character. The stupendous task ahead is to pull the country up by its bootstraps and set it on the path of economic growth and development."

The President in many of his recent speeches had stressed that prices were high and that they were rising because of steps the Government had taken to resuscitate the economy. He said that inflation could be contained and the situation improv

onlyed by fuller employment and greater production which would make it possible to pay higher wages. Until this happy situation was reached, the President had only a few palliatives—a basket of still hard-to-get items like canned fish, tinned milk, condiments like coriander etc. on a household card. This basket of goods was poor consolation—for not everybody in the lower income brackets could afford the Rs. 37 odd for the 3 tins of Plaza fish, 2 tins of Milk, part of a packet of foreign imported safety matches and a few ounces of different condiments. To those who have money to invest in this basket of goods, it is certainly worthwhile—on the open (black) market they will cost considerably more. In fact, this scheme will feed the blackmarket but it cannot be helpful.

But fish, meat, fowl and eggs have become prohibitively expensive if one can get them at all. Once again, the palliative of imported meat—ranging from Rs. 11/- to 15/- per pound—is being held out as a sop. In fact, the vigilance on the part of the government to keep prices down was stressed when it was mentioned that CWE was importing 500 tons (or is it 300 tons?) of broiler chicken from China to be sold around Rs. 8/- a lb. to induce the importers of American Chicken to bring their prices down.

Such futile exercises on the part of the CWE is not likely to improve the ways of the capitalists nor will imports by private importers from the USA or the CWE help to develop the local broiler industry. It is clear from the import policy now being pursued that some of our economic pundits want to equate local products with the

best internationally available in quality and price—and the only outcome will be that local prices will be artificially pushed up for the benefit of the retailer and the middlemen and not the producer. All the ministerial talk of protecting the local producer is only poppycock.

All this shadow boxing to implement the IMF/IBRD/ADB sponsored economic plans will soon fade into the darkness of the galloping inflation that has already begun to submerge this country. To keep its pledges with the Trilateral-inspired IMF, Sri Lanka has by this month to effect drastic cuts in the subsidies—Tribune has written about this often. The IMF had insisted that apart from food subsidies, the Sri Lanka government must cut down the subsidies on (a) Transport—especially the CTB; (b) the Milk Board, (c) the Petroleum Corporation and (d) the Fertiliser Corporation.

Bus fares have already been "standardised" at a higher level. "Luxury" train travel is costlier for those who pay cash—the value of the warrants of the privileged public servants seems to go up with each increase of the levies on the cash paying passenger. The price of fertiliser will be up another 25%, but there is another 50% of the subsidies to go. Many of the products handled by the Milk Board cost more—all except Lakspray for infants on a special card. The Petroleum Corporation has not been touched so far as petrol, kerosene and diesel are concerned, but the prices of lubricants, agro-chemicals and the like have been moved up slowly.

Not all the stealthy increases of prices have gone unnoticed. Take the case of cement: 10 kgs. or 22.5 lbs. were reduced from each bag (formerly 50 kgs. or 112 lbs.) whilst the price was kept the same. There

was a justifiable furor in the NSA on July 6, and the governmental answers were neither convincing nor valid. It was a case of being caught with the pants down.

The prices of practically all commodities have gone up—bread, flour, matches, canned fish etc. etc. The only commodity where there has been a reduction in price in the open market is rice. For some months now, the open market price was around Rs. 3.25 to 3.50 a measure in most areas for the non-exotic varieties. (The Co-op. price—usually poor quality country rice—was and is Rs. 2.90 a measure). In the last two weeks the price of country rice has dropped to about Rs. 2.80 to 2.85 a measure and the trend is downward. This is certainly clear proof that more paddy has been grown during the last Maha and the current Yala.

It is difficult to say what the impact of the contemplated export of 100,000 tons of rice (probably imported under the China Pact) and the current and further increase in the price of flour and bread will have on the price of rice in the coming weeks. Many Ministers have urged that people should switch from wheat to rice. The production of paddy has to increase still further if this is to be achieved.

Whilst the Government can take comfort in the fact that it has all this money to play about with, there are distressing symptoms of social discontent that the governmental bigwigs do not seem to have noticed.

Ordinary people, (common working people in town and country), middle class and upper class people (with static incomes)—and

these constitute the overwhelmingly vast majority in the country—are plain “fed-up.” They now eat less and less of nutritious protein-rich food. Fruits have become a luxury they cannot afford. The list of their complaints are enough to fill several issues of *Tribune*.

To make matters worse the vulgar and obscene affluence displayed by a few thousands of a new rich has begun to corrode public confidence in the government. Whilst the government is asking people to work harder (they have already tightened their belts because of the high prices of food), the roads are chock-a-block with thousands and thousands of new luxury and showy cars in which mod-dressed youthful and middle-aged males and females (it is now difficult to distinguish sex by dress or hair style) rush around aimlessly. Obviously the new car-owning gentry come from a *nouveau riche* leisured class who live on invisible incomes, foreign based and mainly under-the-counter locally. Their habitat revolves around five-star hotels, whilst their environment is dominated by beach hotels and motels where permissive sex is the order of the day. Most informed and knowledgeable people are convinced that the vulgar affluence of the majority of this class is based on smuggling (import and export) narcotics, gems, gold and sex.

Nobody will object to the way of life of this despicable jet-set coterie—they will make no impact on history or the country—if their existence at this time did not generate (as it in fact does) indignation and resentment in millions of Sri Lankans who face a blank wall of high prices, shrinking real incomes and a growing debt burden. There is a volcano building up and the Government seems totally oblivious of it.

In a week's time from now, the official media and the SLBC will

shout “hosanna..glory hallelujah” about the first anniversary in special supplements—well padded with lucrative multi-national advertisements—to recount the miracles achieved by this government. There will be cheerleaders, camp followers, and plain and simple racketeers who will join in the fun. These rich folk and their paid retainers, who have begun to insulate the governmental leaders in a way that the latter seem to have lost grassroots touch with the thinking of ordinary people of the town and country, have deluded themselves and others into the belief that the Rs. 50 dole to a section of unemployed youth and other palliatives will prevent anything untoward happening. But what they do not know is that they will not be able to help the government or the UNP to survive the crises and dilemmas that will soon beset this country.

Finance Minister Ronnie de Mel talks confidently that the era of crisis, dilemma and instability in Sri Lanka has been left behind because he (and the government) had succeeded in accumulating promises of Rs. 1 to 2 billion in aid grants and loans to be used during the next three years—but this, only if we behave ourselves and cut the subsidies: and, generally, to do what the IMF wants us to do. Ronnie de Mel does not seem to realise that the money he has begged from the rich industrial countries can bring ruin and destruction to the government and the ruling party if the *genii* of borrowed capital is not handled properly. In addition to coping with the activities of this *genii*, brought into being not by rubbing Aladdin's Lamp but by paying *pooja* to the Gods of the Trilateral IMF, the government is faced with a whole boxful of evils that have come out of a Pandora's Box broken open by standby IMF credits to import consumer items.

As the government completes its first year, there is no doubt that it has much to be proud of—the removal of oppressive laws, the formulation of a new Constitution and many other achievements etc. etc.—but, it does not seem to be aware a socio-political blow-up building up on the economic front among the ordinary masses. It is time for government leaders to cut themselves away from flatterers from everywhere, the rich pro-consuls of the multinationals, the disguised agents of the smugglers and dope peddlars, the slick power brokers who want to fix jobs for their clients and last but not least the bungling bureaucrats who know how to sugar coat their lies in order to fool Ministers and MPs, and develop contact with the real people who work and live in our towns and villages.

Unless the leaders of the UNP—it is one thing to have the common touch and know the thinking of ordinary people while being in the opposition and a totally different thing to do so as members of a powerful government party—realise soon enough the deep under-currents of thinking among ordinary people they are doomed. In a country where the ballot box has become sacred, governments are turned out by the voters at will. And neither proportional representation nor the IMF can help a government to keep itself in power. The IMF cannot foist a military dictatorship in Sri Lanka to collect the interest and prin-

cipal of monies rich IMF members have lent the country.

Proportional representation may rule out Electoral No-contest Agreements, or United Fronts, but the power of the people will assert itself. Even those who have benefited by United Front and No-Contest Pacts from 1956 must realise that such "united fronts", "coalitions" and "no-contest agreements" have been responsible for debasing marxist and left politics. In the opportunist attempts to introduce a centrally planned and controlled socialist economy and society by utilising Westminster type parliamentary politics, the Left is no longer Left. After thirty years of parliamentarianism, marxists are no longer marxists, revolutionaries are no longer revolutionaries and realistic leaders of the masses are no more than manipulative operators of constitutional conspiracies to usher in socialism.

Dark and difficult days are ahead—in spite of the millions (may be billions) ready to flow into our Exchequer. The bungling bureaucrat, the businessmen in contact with gem-smuggling and narcotic operators, the power-brokers and the flashy pro-consuls of the multinationals, cannot help the UNP to sustain its July 1977 popularity. But, the government can (and must) overcome the pitfalls and dangers already staring everybody (who can see or hear) in the face. And this it can do if it will (and only which gets out of the ivory towers in if it many Ministers and MPs have locked themselves in.

But before delving into the intricate question of whether the UNP and the government can save itself from the dangers that have begun to loom large, it is necessary to examine our Begging Bowl and see what exactly we have got.

THE POLITICS OF THE WEEK BY NARADA

- Excellent Precedent
- Draft Constitution & The CP

***ACTION ON FINDINGS OF TWO LOCAL GOVT. COMMISSIONS:** Newspapers on Saturday July 8, proclaimed that 32 persons found guilty by two Commissions would be punished under a special law for that purpose. The Ceylon Daily News stated: "Legislation has been gazetted by the government to impose civic disabilities on 32 persons against whom findings have been made by the G. P. A. Silva Commission on the malpractices in Municipalities and the S. W. Goonewardene Commission on the malpractices in Urban and Town Councils. Mr. Felix R. Dias Bandaranaike former Minister of Public Administration, Local Government and Home Affairs, his ex-Deputy Minister Mr. Neal de Alwis and Mr. A. H. M. Fowzie, former Mayor of Colombo are among those against whom findings have been made. Prime Minister Mr. R. Premadasa will present this legislation in Parliament on July 14. The legislation styled **The Local Authorities (Imposition of Civic Disabilities) Bill** seeks to 'impose civic disabilities on persons against whom findings have been made by two Commissions of Inquiry.' It will disqualify every person found guilty by the two Commissions from being registered as a voter or from voting or from contesting in any local government election for seven years. The legislation also provides for the recovery of losses caused by the persons found guilty by the Commission. The Auditor-General,

is empowered by this legislation to assess and recover such losses from the persons concerned and credit same to the accounts of the respective local bodies. If anyone fails to pay such moneys, action could be filed against them in the Magistrate's Court. Every person who is disqualified under the law and who applies to be registered as a voter in any electoral list in respect of any local authority or votes or contests any election of local bodies or sits and votes as a member of any local authority would be committing an offence carrying with it a maximum fine of one thousand rupees or an imprisonment for a term not exceeding 3 months or both such fine and imprisonment. The G. P. A. Silva Commission and the Goonewardene Commission found 32 persons guilty of abuse of power, contravention of local authority regulations and of corruption.....".

All honest and thinking people will welcome this measure to punish those found "guilty" of the abuse of power by responsible Commissions of Inquiry. This is a precedent that must be followed in the future as well. And Ministers and MPs of the present government who abuse power or are guilty of corrupt acts should realise that they could very easily meet with a similar fate.

It is an arguable point, however, whether the provisions of this Bill will be ultra vires of the Fundamental Rights in the New Constitution—especially section 13 (4).

*CPSL AND THE DRAFT CONSTITUTION: In its first issue after its recent resurrection, the English periodical FORWARD—it will be fortnightly for the time being—sets out, unofficially the CPSL position in regard to the new Draft Constitution which it chooses to call the Third Amendment.

This is what it says: "The third amendment that the UNP has proposed to the 1972 Constitution is yet another reactionary blow against the democratic rights and vital interests of the people of Sri Lanka. In fact, it is not an amendment at all. It is the third instalment of a pre-planned strategy of the UNP to scuttle the Republican Constitution of 1972 and replace it with a Constitution of its own. The 1972 Constitution was not a perfect one. Its principal shortcomings stem from the fact that the SLFP dominated the United Front Government of the day, and were able to superimpose its ideas and interests over those of the Left parties.

"This was seen most clearly in the First Amendment, when the SLFP leaders, fearful that the provisions of the original Constitution of 1972 in regard to the demarcation of constituencies would rob the bourgeois parties of the built-in advantages they had enjoyed earlier, brought back the arrangements to give special weightage to certain areas where they have traditionally predominated. It was also seen in the fact that fundamental rights are suggested rather than guaranteed and the guiding aims of state policy are still in the realm of principles. Nevertheless, the 1972 Constitution was an important step forward. It completed the fight for political independence, restored sovereignty to the people of Sri Lanka, widened democratic rights, and reflected the wish of the people to advance in a socialist-oriented direction. While there is room to strengthen the 1972 Constitution by removing confusions and compromises from it, the UNP Government has chosen to do just the opposite.....

"Its real aim is to destroy the 1972 Constitution, step by step using the pretence of 'amendments' to it. This is seen clearly in the

majority recommendations of the Select Committee just tabled in the National State Assembly. The 'Second Amendment' which the UNP forced by through some months ago, struck at the sovereignty of the people. It devalued Parliament by removing many of its powers and handing them over to the 'Executive President'. This was the UNP's first major step towards authoritarian rule. The provisions for creating 'non-Cabinet Ministers' and 'District Ministers' also enlarged the UNP's possibilities for distributing political patronage, making possible horse deals to win over shaky opponents and doling out 'jobs for the boys'. So far this has led to a special 'Tiger' Minister and now a 'Minister' for the Colombo Group of Hospitals. Soon we may have 'Ministers' for separate government departments or parts thereof, and the only non-Ministers in Parliament will be Members of the Opposition.

"The draft UNP Constitution takes the process further backwards. To camouflage this, Sri Lanka is to be given a new name—"The Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka"—although both democracy and socialism are transparently absent from the UNP's draft proposals. The main feature of the new amendment is the change in the electoral system. This is aimed at seeking to perpetuate the rule of the UNP or, if this fails, to arrange for a 'two party' system on the British model, where one party dedicated to capitalist development is only replaced by another, without fundamentally endangering capitalism. The new 'list' system that the UNP proposes makes it impossible for political parties to contest general elections in a 'united front'. Thus the UNP in one stroke, removes one of the spectres that haunt it. It can never forget that such 'united

front' arrangements led to its defeats in 1956, 1960 and 1970.

"In addition, the insistence that a political party should obtain at least 8 per cent of the total poll to obtain any representation at all is clearly designed to keep out parties other than the 'Big Two' or to give them, at best, only the possibility of nominal representation. The proposal to operate the 'list' system on a district basis is also seen as a concession to the SLFP and the TULF in the hope of winning support from wavering elements within these parties. Thus even the positive benefits that could have flowed from the adoption of a 'list' system have been negated by the UNP proposals.

"The SLFP and Mr. S. Thondaman, who also took part in the Select Committee, have submitted dissents. But the question arises why the SLFP took part in the Select Committee at all. It looks as though some of them hoped that a deal could be done with the UNP—only to be disappointed. The FP was wise to boycott the Select Committee, thus giving them freedom to act on the result. But by its participation, the SLFP leaders have only helped to lull the opposition of their members and supporters to the UNP's manoeuvres. However, the fact that, even in the last moment, the SLFP has decided to differentiate itself from the draft Constitution helps to make it clear that it is UNP, and the UNP alone, that seeks to force these retrograde changes through. There is no element of national, or even partial, consensus in that is being done. This can, and should, be a basis for the widest opposition to the UNP's latest move towards authoritarianism."

What is the CPSL argument?

It says that the Second and Third Amendments—now part of a new Draft Constitution—are

part of "a reactionary blow against the democratic rights and vital interests of the people." Rightly, the *Forward* says the Third Amendment was 'pre-planned strategy to scuttle the Republican Constitution of 1972 and replace it with a Constitution of its own.' But the UNP in its Election Manifesto had openly proclaimed that it would replace the 1972 Constitution with Presidential system of Executive power and based on the Separation of Powers. In presenting the Draft Constitution the UNP is only fulfilling an election pledge.

The *Forward* grudgingly concedes that the 1972 Constitution was not a "perfect" one and weakly refers to a few of its shortcomings and places the blame for this on the SLFP. If the *Forward* will only read what the *Tribune* said of the Republican Constitution of 1972 itself, it will see how correct we were in our evaluation and assessment. A Constitution that makes a farce of fundamental rights and treats racial, religious and linguistic minorities as second class citizens is no democratic Constitution at all. Many were surprised that the CPSL and the LSSP continued in the government after the Constitution was adopted in which there were so many shortcomings especially the denial of fundamental rights to national minorities. The CPSL had doubts and reservations about the CJC Act but it was bludgeoned into subservience to the Horagolla caucus supported by the strident aggressiveness of the LSSP.

But the main burden of the CPSL's lament is that proportional representation on a list system will perpetuate UNP rule by eliminating the chances of the left and radical forces winning parliamentary positions of strength through no-contest pacts and united fronts. Realists will agree that in 1972,

the United Front did its best to create a Constitution which will keep the UNP out of power for all time and with this "carrot" dangling before them, the Left Parties were induced to accept what was a totally undemocratic Constitution as the best that could be fashioned at that juncture in the interests of democracy. The second carrot was the word "socialism". It must be clear, at least now that the SLFP was no more "socialist" than the UNP, in theory or practice.

But apart from this, it will be recalled from 1935 to 1955, Left Parties wanted the introduction of proportional representation. But after the parliamentary success achieved by the Left Parties as a result of the no-contest Pact with SWRD's SLFP and other anti-UNP parties, the Marxism of the Left Movement in Sri Lanka virtually politics in the manipulative complexities of parliamentary democracy. Elsewhere in this issue, reference has been made to the fact that parliamentarism brought a major set back to the Marxism of the two established Left Parties.

History cannot be written with "ifs", but it is permissible to speculate on a few 'ifs'. If the Left Parties in Ceylon had not been drawn into the game of a parliamentary power politics through no-contest pacts and united fronts, this country may today have a united left movement as a national force on its own. Parliamentarism turned marxists into tailists, opportunists and worse. It was the hold that parliamentarism had got on the two established Left Parties that led to the youth protest movement in the JVP and the various other splinter left parties.

Though there will be a temporary set-back in the number of seats, the multitude of divided

and splintered Left Parties can win initially under proportional representation, there is no doubt that such voting will give a new fillip to marxist unity. And a leftism that will no longer make tailism behind bourgeois parties like the SLFP an article of faith.

No Constitution is perfect. But bourgeois Constitutions—the 1972 Republican Constitution is as bourgeois as the present UNP's Draft Constitution—must have certain fundamentals to make it valid; e.g. separation of powers, rule of law, the independence of judiciary, safeguards for minorities etc. In this respect the 1978 Constitution is far in advance of the 1972 Constitution. There are controversial points in the 1978 Constitution—Presidential Power etc. etc—but even here there is an attempt to provide checks and balances to prevent the abuse of power.

A Constitution grows with time. There must be amendments and changes. The 1978 Constitution provides ample scope for further changes.

But when one moves from bourgeois politics to proletarian power, the whole concept of Constitution-making changes. The 1972 Constitution, according to many, was only a stupid and amateurish attempt to change from bourgeois power to proletarian power through the device of an NSA saddled with a Constitution that could not work.

What the 1978 Constitution will turn out to be is hard to say, but even many persons normally called progressives and radicals see in it a possible instrument for healthier political developments in the island than before.

Tribune has been one of the most persistent and consistent of the critics of the 1972 Constitution. It was a hotch-potch which enabled the Horagolla Caucus to impose a

dictatorship which nobody could question in the Courts or even in the Press. Tribune will examine the present Draft Constitution very carefully and critically in coming issues.

BETWEEN THE LINES

BY SERENDIB

End Of The Road For The IMF

EMS WILL BE BIGGER THAN EVEN IMF

Bremen, July 9,

Common Market leaders yesterday agreed to work out by December an European Monetary System (EMS) which would be backed by reserves of more than 50 billion dollars. Common Market Commission President Roy Jenkins said this was bigger than the International Monetary Fund and "on a scale far greater than any other scheme ever discussed." West German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt, who chaired the two-day Common Market summit here, said the EMS was intended to create a zone of monetary stability in Western Europe.

All nine leaders agreed it was "a highly desirable objective" the Chancellor told a news conferences. But British Prime Minister, James Callaghan said "the scheme obviously is not satisfactory in the form it is published today because it only deals with monetary techniques. "We must see how it works out between now and December." when the next Common Market summit will be held in Brussels—PTC Reuter.

Newspapers in Sri Lanka and the SLBC newscasts on Saturday July 8 had a short item of news from Bremen in West Germany: "Eight Common Market leaders today agreed to work for a Monetary System tying their currencies closer together to ensure West European monetary stability, But British Prime Minister, James Callaghan, who may face an election in October, would not commit himself to the Scheme until more details were known. However he was ready to examine it. Details of the system, which would pool reserves estimated at 29 billion dollars, are to be worked out by the end of the year..."

Although this report does not mention it, other commentators have said that the contemplated monetary system was Europe's (mainly French, German and Swiss) answer to the Anglo-American

dominated IMF. It is also known that Chancellor Schmidt had drawn up the plans for the EMS (European Monetary System) with President Giscard after he signed far-reaching agreements in May with Soviet President Leonid Brezhnev.

In international financial and economic circles it was known that there was a growing confrontation between the US-UK faction in the IMF, on the one hand, and the West German, Japan and Swiss "bloc" on the other. A commentator in the *Hindu* on June 19, has set out the position very succinctly: "Is the Western world heading for fresh monetary hiccups? Could the problems of aiding-economic growth and cutting unemployment be resolved without the ravages of inflation and its disastrous consequences on world trade—particularly the way it affects the fortunes of Third World deve-

loping countries. These are the imponderables the Western leaders will consider and discuss at their next month's summit meeting in Bonn. Right now the prospects of reaching early agreement on plans or stabilisation of European currencies look increasingly remote following the latest talks between the Central Bank Governors attending the annual meeting in Switzerland of the Bank for International Settlement (BIS). They have reservations about the chances of agreeing on a concerted EEC stance in the series of international meetings due in the next few days before the seven-nation world economic summit in Bonn in mid July."

As early as June 10, it was reported in a leftwing periodical that: "Italian, French and West German leaders have opened a campaign to shut down the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the British oligarchy's chief tool of financial warfare. Stopping the IMF from 'toppling government's as a US State Department official put it, is a precondition for peace in Africa, the Mideast, and other danger points. Italy's Treasury Minister Filippo Pandolfi took the unprecedented step of demanding that Italy refuse to pay debts it owes to the IMF and to the European Community, the organisation of the nine Western European governments. Defying IMF demands for an intolerable austerity program in return for fresh credits from the IMF, Pandolfi insisted that Italy should simply postpone payment. No nation has ever done this, because the IMF, as the world's financial policeman, has threatened to shut off all credit to any country that crosses it.

"Italy's courage in standing up to the IMF derives, in large measure, from strong West German government backing, including the promise of direct financial sup-

port. West Germany's Chancellor Schmidt is determined to break London's seige against West Germany and its trading partners. Eliminating the IMF is the first, urgently required task before Schmidt's Grand Design for international development can proceed. Broadcasting the West German government view, Germany's most respected banker the Deutsche Bank's chairman emeritus Hermann Abs, issued a policy directive on the debt problems of developing countries geared to maximum growth of world trade. Abs' statement, printed in the May issue of the West German banking magazine, breaks the ground that Western financial circles have avoided until now.

National sovereignty over domestic political conditions is not possible without undiminished access to new international credits, the West German banker said. 'The principle of national sovereignty must guide all foreign debt negotiations.' Whenever developing countries run into repayment problems, Abs wrote, debt must be rescheduled to permit the most rapid economic growth. The creditors must issue new development credits 'to reintegrate the country into the framework of international trade.' Abs' clarion policy statement stands in direct opposition to the IMF's gear-up for financial threat-cutting internationally. Leading IMF implementation plans is London's psy-

VETERINARY

A reader has sent us a copy of a letter which a planter and the owner of a dairy herd sent the Veterinary Surgeon of his area.

"I write to complain about the very poor veterinary services that are being extended by your office. My milkman had visited your office to obtain your services regarding a difficult calving that had occurred on my farm and was told by you that he should come before 3.30 in the evening for any treatment. Though this was referred to you nearly two weeks ago, till to-date you have not visited this Farm to treat this animal.

"A.I. Services--I have depended solely on your services for my Farm and regret to inform you that none of the insemination done by you have come right. For the last six months you have inseminated five cows; altogether nine inseminations have been done on these animals, none of which have been successful. You would agree that this is going to cost me a considerable lot as I have missed as much as six heat periods in certain animals. When my dairy man visited your office on the 20th June 1978, you have refused to come saying that you would attend to it during the next heat period. You have also advised my man that if your services are needed, he should come to the office by 8.00 a.m. every morning.

"With my limited knowledge of dairying, I have failed to get my cows to come on heat or have their calving during office hours. I would be thankful if I could have your advice as to how I could get my cows do this, so that my dairy man can be in your office to obtain your services during office hours."

The letter speaks for itself. A large number of instances have been brought to our notice about the ways of the Veterinary Department.

chotic proposal to bring Chinese troops in Africa for a head-on showdown with non-existent conquering Cuban legions in bankrupt Zaire. A Chinese 'economic team' has already arrived for a visit in Zaire's capital city Kinshasa."

Commenting further, the article stated: "The brunt of the IMF strategy for Europe—what the British press hails as its own 'Grand Design'—is to break the weaker European sectors through austerity programs, and force the West Germans to act as a 'mini IMF', in the words of the *London Financial Times*, issuing loans in return for deflationary economic programs. Helmut Schmidt has knocked this one into a cocked hat, leaving the British in hysterics....."

A further article on June 17 stated: "A combination of political operations has brought Great Britain to the brink of bankruptcy. The refusal of US and continental European investment firms to purchase any part of 1 billion pounds in government debt paper, offered by the British Exchequer at a desperate 10 per cent interest-earning rate on June 15 ushers in the possibility that a major collapse of British financial institutions will occur in short order. West German Chancellor Schmidt and French President Giscard's Grand Design offensive, which is laying the ground work for capital investment into Africa and the developing nations, has produced, as a by-product, a virtual boycott against the British paper."

"In an extraordinary article by Malcolm Rutherford, published June 16, the *London Financial Times* admitted that the close Franco-German alliance has nearly stripped Britain of its world political influence. As a direct result of this international power play, on June 14, a vote of no-confidence was held in the British Parliament

against the government of Prime Minister Callaghan. The chief issue which provoked the vote was the fight in British ruling circles over their failure to manipulate the People's Republic of China to force a US-Soviet showdown. Faced with the collapse of their 'china option' and on the losing end of the escalating international financial warfare, the City of London is emitting other noises of panic as well.

"On June 16, British Foreign Secretary David Owen backed off from the government's confrontationalist policy toward Africa in a clear attempt to preserve Britain's waning influence on the continent. Owen told a press conference that the West had 'over-reacted' on the issue of Cuban involvement in last month's rebel invasion of Zaire's Shaba province, and that the problem of Zaire's security can be solved only by negotiations among Zaire, Angola and Zambia."

To go back to the *Hindu* report: "The bankers have identified four problems which must be immediately resolved. First is the problem of inflation, but trade recession, persistent imbalances in world trade flows, and the continuing instability of leading western currencies—sum up the economic ailment of the Western world. It is of course, realised that the world recession which began in 1973, did not after all, bring down the western world and its highly successful post-war system of trade and payments altogether.

"But it has managed to split the rich countries into two groups. West Germany, Japan and Switzerland have beaten inflation and each enjoy a strong currency which in turn makes it easier to keep inflation under control. The rest of the world has failed to beat inflation, and suffers from currency depreciations (ranging between 20 to 50 per cent) which

makes inflation harder to control. Exchange rate changes are no longer self-correcting, and major currencies appreciate or depreciate far more than it is justified. All this makes international economic management even more difficult. Obviously, it is once again tempting to harp on the monotonous theme that the stronger economies such as West Germany and Japan, would have to give a bigger stimulus to their economies than the so-called "convalescent" countries like the UK, France and Italy to achieve the OECD's new growth target of 4.5 per cent by the middle of next year. According to the OECD Secretariat's latest predictions, the US current account deficit is expected to grow by \$ 6,000 millions to a record \$ 24,000 millions by 1978 while Japan's surplus will rise from \$11,000 millions in 1977 to \$ 15,000 millions in current year. The West German surplus will jump from \$ 3,500 million to \$ 5,000 millions."

What finally drove West Germany to take the lead in this campaign against the IMF was that Anglo-US (Trilateral) oligarchy which dominates the IMF wanted to exercise greater control and surveillance over the exchange rate and economic policies of all IMF members. A US official had stated on May 25, "We want greater surveillance of the economic policies of Japan, Germany, and Switzerland. We have to get the IMF right in there especially in Germany to see they are playing their part in world stability. The role of the IMF makes it necessary to surveil everything, especially things like Germany's large and disruptive trade surplus. The IMF should tell Germany how to contribute to monetary stability by stimulating their domestic economy and thus reducing their surplus."

Unless something very dramatic happens, the IMF the world has known since the early fifties is on the way out. Not many will have regrets if it fades away or merges into something else. According to a commentator: "The time-bomb that is ticking away is an entrenched world depression, a snowballing rate of negative economic growth that has already made much of the developing sector ungovernable and now also threatens the industrialized sector. In more cases than not, the enforcer for this destruction of living standards and productive capital is not the country's nominal government, but the bureaucrats at the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. Who tells the international banks whether a developing country is credit worthy or not? The IMF. Who reviews the budgets of the Third World and Europe to weed out "extravagant" capital investment? The IMF.

"Blithely ignoring protests from countries with a clear plan for industrial development like Mexico and Jamaica, the IMF and its director Robert McNamara proceed to balance the world's budgets through amassing a stragging body count of governmental leaders and their populations. In the name of 'fiscal responsibility' they are carrying out genocide—fully confident that the world's industrial powers, Japan, West Germany and the United States, for whom they are supposed to speak, will give them tacit, if not explicit support. There could be no clearer examples of how continued subservience to the IMF who deliver world holocaust than those of the country of Zaire and New York City. IMF rule for New York, like IMF rule in Zaire or Egypt, does not mean localized destruction. The economic and

social dislocation that it will cause will detonate riots and political upheaval throughout the United States. National peace and stability cannot be maintained within the rubble of the US economy any more than it can be in the Third World or besieged nations like Italy.

"Economic development is the key to ending every area of tension and instability today—southern Africa, the subcontinent, the United States, even China. The concrete proposals to be implemented are well known: the Schmidt-Brezhnev accords; the French-Saudi development fund; regional development plans for southern Africa and the Middle East based on nuclear power; the expansion of the United States Export-Import Bank to co-operate with other nations on longterm development projects for the developing nations.

"The realisation of these plans, however, requires a political decision first: overthrow the IMF. The IMF is incompatible with every aspiration for science and industrialisation. It is a scourge for those who truly believe in human rights.

The IMF and its genocidal policies are the main impediment to world peace and prosperity today. How far will you let the devastation go before you insist the US go through the open door to economic development—over the IMF's dead, bankrupt body"

The *Asiaweek* in its column *Frontline* speculated whether July 16-17 Summit of seven nations in Bonn would create a special Marshall Aid plan for third world countries. The *Asiaweek*, for some reason has glossed over the bitter quarrel inside the IMF and the proposals for a "new IMF" which will avoid all the pitfalls of the

Bretton Wood's agencies. This new development is bound to cast its shadows on the Bonn summit.

The question is whether the point of no return has come for the IMF as the sole voice of the capitalist and rich industrialised world? It looks very much like it has. Will there be two IMF-type organisations—at least for a time until the old and weaker IMF fades out? Or will the older IMF also adopt the policies for regional and global development adumbrated by Schmidt and Giscard and which are popularly referred to as The Grand Design.

As Sri Lanka is now very much in the hands (or clutches) of the IMF (now under attack by the richest and economically strongest capitalist nations), it would be useful for people to know more about the problems that have beset the IBRD/IMF complex headed by McNamara. This column will endeavour to furnish as much information as possible on this matter.



SNIPPETS

If a man does not make new acquaintances as he advances through life, he will soon find himself alone. A man, Sir, should keep his friendship in constant repair—

Samuel Johnson.

Life is too short to do anything for oneself that one can pay others to do for one—Somerset Maugham.

The sublime and the ridiculous are often so nearly related that it is difficult to class them separately. One step above the sublime makes the ridiculous; and one step above the ridiculous makes the sublime—

Thomas Paine.

TRIBUNE EXCLUSIVE

Letter From Havana And Washington

A. W. Singham

A. W. Singham is currently Professor of Political Science at Howard University in Washington, D.C. He is the editor of a book which has just appeared entitled *The Non-Aligned Movement in World Politics*, published by Lawrence Hill & Co. Prof. Singham is presently a visiting fellow at the U.N. undertaking a study on the Non-Aligned Movement and was in Havana attending the meeting of the Bureau of the Non-Aligned Nations (May 1978) in connection with his study. He will also be at Belgrade this month and will cover the meeting for Tribune.

IT IS BECOMING INCREASINGLY CLEAR that the United States is taking a very hostile attitude towards the non-aligned movement. President Carter on two separate but very important occasions made it clear that he is opposed to Cuba's membership in the non-aligned movement. In an unsigned article in the *New York Times* of June 11th 1978, it was reported that the eighty-five member movement of the non-aligned nations is undergoing serious strain—some members even speak of an open split—as a result of the efforts by Cuba and others to press for the adoption of pro-Soviet positions. The same article continues that “these disputes came into the open three weeks ago at a meeting in the movement's twenty-five member co-ordinating bureau.” On a separate occasion, namely in the famous Annapolis speech on the state of relations between the United States and the Soviet Union, the President again used the occasion to attack Cuba's presence in the non-aligned movement. But the most important aspect of the *New York Times* dispatch was that it had pointed out that US government envoys in the non-aligned capital had been informed that this indeed was the official US view regarding the movement.

What is remarkable about this article is that it discusses in a very casual manner a matter of great importance namely the expulsion of an original movement member of the movement, Cuba, an act that has never been undertaken in the nineteen year history of the movement. The article also goes on to point out that indeed the veteran Yugoslavia had similar views about the nature of the movement. It is indeed very hard to believe that a veteran non-aligned nation like Yugoslavia, with years of experience in world politics, would proceed to destroy a movement that it so painfully helped to build during the period of the Cold War. In another article appearing in the *Washington Post*, it was becoming clear that the US had planned to consult with the moderate nations of the non-aligned, namely, India, Sri Lanka, Nigeria hoping they would join ranks with the United States and call for the expulsion of Cuba. Again; it reveals a tragic misunderstanding on the part of the United States as to the meaning and purpose of non-alignment in world politics.

In an action that can best be described as one being blatantly arrogant the American administration has proposed to develop

a criteria as to who should and should not be a member of the non-aligned movement. In a similar vein, its West German partner, especially the Chancellor Helmut Schmidt, with incredible arrogance proceeds to say that Cuba's membership in the non-aligned movement is a bad joke. What is important about these outbursts at this time is that both the United States and Germany are attempting to introduce a new criteria for membership in the non-aligned movement. The movement, as it is well known, has never adopted an ideological criteria for membership. Indeed, many of the more conservative members of the movement are getting disturbed by the US attitude in that if this particular criteria is followed to its logical extreme, a number of the nations who are pro-capitalist and pro-American also stand the possibility of being expelled from the movement. It is important, however, to remember that this is not the first time that the West has responded with such rancor and anger at the non-aligned movement.

EVERY AMERICAN ADMINISTRATION since World War II has been openly hostile to the Non-Aligned Movement in world politics, which consists this year of over eighty-seven nations and nearly a billion people. This movement emerged originally as a direct result of the Cold War and the dismantling of the European Empires in Asia and Africa. The newly independent nations of Asia and Africa met for the first time in Bandung in 1954. The movement, as it is known to us today, however, did not become a more formalized organization until the 1961 meeting in Belgrade. It is important to point out that the movement has always resisted institutionalization in that, to this day, it has no formal organization other than the meeting of the Bureau and that

of the Foreign Ministers. The major leaders of the movement in its early stages were Nehru, Tito, Nasser, and Sukharno.

In essence, the non-aligned nations represent a broad social movement which comes together on a number of global issues from time to time. From its very inception, the movement has stood out as the spokesman for international peace: the title of 'non-aligned' indicates its original desire of attempting to counter the big power position with one capable of being instrumental in procuring world peace. The movement has never striven for ideological 'purity' or conformity: with a sophistication unequalled in almost all other international movements, the nations of the non-aligned have realized the absolute necessity of co-existence between the forces of capitalism and socialism. The major criteria for membership was, and still remains, that a nation should not be a member of the existing world military pacts. This criteria for membership was introduced at a time when the nations of the world were gradually being coerced into becoming members of broader military alliance systems such as NATO, CENTO, and SEATO. However, as the Cold War began to abate, the nations of the non-aligned movement began to turn their attention to global economic issues primarily because they tended to be poor nations themselves. Indeed, the Western press has often depicted the Summit meetings of these nations as being the meeting of the beggars of the world.

THE TRUMAN ADMINISTRATION laid the foundation of US foreign policy towards the new nations of Africa and Asia. This policy has not changed over the years in any substantive way in that the major goal of the United States still appears to be one of

saving the so-called non-aligned world from communism. The policy of anti-communism was continued by the Eisenhower-Dulles administration, the Kennedy-Ross-Johnson administration, the Nixon-Kissinger administration, and now seems to have become the dominant theme of the Carter-Brezinski administration.

Interestingly enough, every American administration has singled out for attack the leaders of the non-aligned peoples not because these nations were necessarily communist, but rather because they made moral claims at being either outside of or above the conflict between capitalism and communism. President Carter recently in an interview with Hispanic reporters, and then later in his speech at Annapolis, seriously questioned the right of certain countries, i.e. Cuba, to claim to be non-aligned. However, the attack on the non-aligned status of certain nations by US administrations is nothing new. John Foster Dulles made it quite clear that nations who remained non-aligned in a moral war against the atheistic communism of the East were indeed acting in an immoral way in world politics. In the early '50's Nehru, and particularly India, was the subject of a massive attack by the Dulles-Eisenhower administration. The news analysis of the day seriously questioned India's non-aligned status. Dulles was particularly incensed at Nehru's attitude towards Communist China. It was Nehru who engineered China's entrance into the family of nations by inviting Chou-en-lai to the Bandung Conference, and it was at Bandung that the blockade against China was broken. American policy makers were never able to forgive those Afro-Asian countries for their attitude towards China. Especially under suspicion at that time was India's spokesman at the UN, Krishna Menon, who

many saw as nothing but a Soviet puppet. Every leader of the Non-Aligned Movement has, at one stage or another, been accused by various American administrations for being either pro-communist or pro-Soviet. Nasser of Egypt, Sukarno of Indonesia, Bandaranaike of Sri Lanka, Nkrumah of Ghana, and now Castro of Cuba, have all in turn been accused of being betrayers of the concept of non-alignment.

IT IS FOR THESE HISTORICAL REASONS that the Bureau of Non-Aligned Nations, which met last month in Havana, noted with considerable moderation the outburst of the United States against one of its members who was to become the next Chairman of the movement, namely, Cuba. The Bureau noted the concerns of Somalia, which, for obvious reasons, violently objected to Cuba's presence in the non-aligned movement. At the Havana meeting, I asked a number of delegates for their reaction to the US statement about Cuba's membership in the movement. One African delegate pointed out that Cuba after all was a founding member of the non-aligned movement having joined it in 1961, and that to ask Cuba to leave was like asking an African country to leave the Organization of African States. The well-respected Nigerian Ambassador, to the United Nations, Leslie Harri-man, was quite precise about Cuba's role not only in the non-aligned movement but in Africa itself. At a press conference held in Havana he said that had it not been for Cuba South Africa would now be occupying all of Angola. A moderate Asian delegate pointed out that the non-aligned movement is not a rigid body but merely a coalition of nations who come together on issues and, strangely enough, he insisted that the strength of the movement lies precisely in its diversity. However, one delegate from a New World country took a somewhat Catholic view of the

movement, and said that the movement not only should include Cuba but one day it should include both the United States and the USSR for, according to him, the ultimate aim of the non-aligned movement was to become a universal movement. Since many of the delegates at the Havana meeting were normally stationed in New York at the United Nations they tended to see US foreign policy statements in the context of American domestic politics. Quite a few of them pointed out the connection between the falling popularity of the new administration and its growing belligerence in international politics. One delegate noted that the Americans, 'are just like us at home; when we have difficulties with our domestic opponents we then become quite belligerent in our speeches at the United Nations.'

MOST OF THE DELEGATES, however, were very anxious to see how Cuba would handle itself as Chairman of the Bureau meeting. Cuba agreed to hold the Bureau meeting on ten days notice once it was discovered that Afghanistan could not have the meeting due to the change in the government there. It was also interesting that the first major international gathering attended by the new Afghan government was at the Bureau meeting in Havana. As is custom, Cuba was elected Chairman of the Bureau since she was hosting the meeting. As the meeting progressed, it was becoming clear to most delegates that Cuba was beginning to make a conscious decision between its role as Chairman and its delegation in the floor. The Cuban Chairman, on one occasion, for example, ruled in favour of a conservative Arab government speaker over a more radical Arab government on certain constitutional points. It was also becoming clear to most of the delegates that-

Cuba was providing to be a very efficient administrator of the Conference. It should be remembered that Cuba has had considerable experience at Non-Aligned Conferences. Cuba has attended every Summit meeting and has indeed attended a majority of the meetings of both the Bureau and the Foreign Ministers. While the major figures of the movement have ceased to play dominant roles at these conferences, the actual work of the movement is often unders taken by the same senior Foreign service officers and ambassadors who have been attending these conferences over an eighteen year period. Cuba in particular has developed a strong loyalty to the non-aligned movement which gave her an opportunity to participate in international politics. The non-aligned movement has had a historical tradition of recognizing liberation governments long before they assume formal state power. In addition, Cuba has built up a reputation in a number of these meetings for coming up with some concrete proposals that affect the non-aligned movement. Amongst the projects that Cuba has strongly supported are functional projects like the creation of specific institutions to deal with questions of the New International Economic Order. Furthermore, Cuban diplomats have been very active in the UN, especially with Third World countries, over broad issues such as racism, and disarmament.

While many of the non-aligned nations do not necessarily agree with Cuba's specific foreign policy, many of them see Cuba as a small and poor Third World country that is trying to transform its economy with Soviet assistance. One delegate told me that it was easy to say that Cuba gets money from the Russians, but, he continued, "so do we—we get from all over the world,

and indeed, we have been receiving aid from Europe for nearly three hundred years. It is not who you get the money from, but what you do with it, and the Cubans seem to have used this money well in that they have attempted to provide food, clothing, and shelter for their people." There is another factor that is often overlooked about Cuba's role in the non-aligned movement. Cuba, it must be remembered, is, in the final analysis, a Caribbean nation. The Caribbean was the first modern society established in the New World. It was created with fragments from Europe, Asia, and most importantly, Africa. In a sociological sense, it could be argued that the Caribbean was the first international society in the New World. This sociological characteristic gives nations like Cuba and Jamaica a distinct advantage in world politics. It is therefore no accident that in many international gatherings, Caribbean countries often assume leadership positions primarily because they seem to be comfortable with the whole range of the world's cultures which they are quite accustomed to in their own societies. As countries like Cuba, Jamaica, and Guyana, continue to participate in world politics one must begin to understand them not merely as satellites of the existing world system but as individual nations trying to work out their destinies in the labyrinth of world politics.

Indeed, it is this very aspects of world political development that seems to have constantly confused US foreign policy makers, namely, their incapacity to understand that nations and peoples do develop autonomous views of the world and that even those who are a subject people are capable of being independent. It could thus be argued that US foreign policy is often based on two dangerous and erroneous assumptions. The first assumption is that the late

entrance of the nations of Asia, Africa, and Latin America, into the political world means that they do not have the experience to deal with the complexities of world politics. Such an assumption fails to recognize the fact that many of the peoples of the Third World have had a long and prolonged dealing with the nations of Europe and the world system generally. As a result of the struggle against colonialism, many of these peoples have developed a very sophisticated understanding of world politics. They thus view the United States' attempt to lecture them on world politics as an act of arrogance: such an arrogance they deem illgrounded for they conceive of the United States itself as being a very new nation in the realm of world politics. They also resent the fact that the Western nations have often assumed that just because a nation is poor it is incapable of being accepted into the family of nations as an equal unit. Many of these countries have objected that just because they are "economically backward" does not make them sociologically, racially, and intellectually inferior. For the non-aligned peoples, the attitude of the West, and particularly of the United States, towards them appears to be blatantly racist. It is precisely for these reasons that a normally moderate leader like Julius Nyerere should become outraged at the suggestion of Western nations as to how Africans should handle the issue of foreign domination. As one African delegate said in Havana at the Bureau meeting, "we do not tell the Americans who should belong to NATO and hence, they should do us the favour of allowing us to decide who should or should not be a member of our grouping."

SRI LANKA AT HAVANA

Both the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* saw Sri Lanka

as one of those moderate nations that was likely to follow US leadership, especially since there had been a recent change of government. Therefore, at the Havana meeting the delegates of the non-aligned nations were extremely interested in observing what the policy and attitude of the new government's delegates would be. Foreign Minister Hameed and his delegation indeed accredited themselves well. Sri Lanka proceeded to behave like a senior member of the non-aligned movement and won the respect of all the delegations. This, after all, was the first time that the new government, and especially its Foreign Minister, would participate in a Bureau meeting. There was a great fear that since non-alignment was so closely identified with the Bandaranaike government the new government, out of spite, would play a very negative role in the movement. Foreign Minister Hameed allayed many of these fears, for, in an act of statesmanship, he gave credit to the previous government for its role, especially in the hosting of the Summit in Sri Lanka, but also quietly noted that it was, after all, his party, the UNP, and its President, who were at Bandung, and that Sri Lanka would continue its policy of non-alignment, a policy which he felt was, irrespective of party differences, the bi-partisan policy of the government.

If there were any differences between the two governments most of the delegates concluded that it was one of style rather than content. The new Foreign Minister seems to emphasize "quiet diplomacy". Behind the scenes, Sri Lanka seems to have played a quiet but constructive role in preparing for the coming Foreign Minister's meeting. It was also becoming clear

that as the meeting proceeded Sri Lanka was making sure that there would be a smooth transfer of office from its role as Chairman to the new Chairman, Cuba.

Sri Lanka also came to the meeting with some very concrete proposals that were taken with great seriousness by the Bureau. The President's proposal for a world disarmament authority was first announced at the Bureau meeting in Havana, which meant that the new Sri Lanka government was continuing the past policy of using the non-aligned movement to initiate major foreign policy proposals. However, this proposal calling for a disarmament authority was not taken seriously by the West at the United Nations disarmament conference. The United States had made it clear it was not going to allow itself to be pressured by the "tyranny or the majority"—to use Patrick Moynihan's phrase—into accepting any proposals that would tie its hands. In fact, many of the delegates who left Havana and came to the world disarmament conference became convinced that the very fact that the initiative for a world disarmament authority and a world disarmament special session came from the non-aligned was enough reason for the West not to take it seriously. In spite of the cold reception that the disarmament special session gave to the President's proposal, the proposal itself merits serious attention. A number of nations had hoped that Sri Lanka would develop this proposal further and that concrete action could be taken upon it at a later date.

Sri Lanka also made an exceptionally important proposal which will prove to be of enormous importance to the movement as a whole, namely that of creating a documents center. Again, Foreign Minister Hameed pointed out in an

interview that Sri Lanka's view of non-alignment was that it should emphasize regional co-operation at all levels. Therefore, Sri Lanka was anxious to create a center which at first could be of great use not only to the peoples of Sri Lanka but also to those in the region. A documentation center will be of great importance, especially at this stage in the history of the movement. Indeed, it is outrageous that most of the documentation about the character and nature of the movement is now to be found in Western universities and libraries rather than in the non-aligned countries themselves. It is exceptionally important that the non-aligned countries retain proper records of the movement primarily because it is becoming apparent that a number of nations are attempting to destabilize the movement. Destabilization, as we all know, takes place by the distortion of facts and history. But it is hoped that a documentation center will not be a mere collection of documents, but that it will be an avenue by which reliable and quick information about recent developments in the movement can be made available to the policy makers themselves. My own study of the movement reveals that it is much easier to find out about political, economic, and social development within the non-aligned movements in the West rather than in the non-aligned countries themselves. It is hoped that if such a center is created, it would also result in the publication of a journal which will communicate with all the non-aligned nations the nature of the holdings and the kinds of information that is required for a smooth functioning of the non-aligned movement.

There are many who feel that the time has come for the non-aligned movement to begin to develop a centralized bureau where much of this kind of work can be

carried out. There are others, however, who are equally convinced that once you institutionalize a movement like this it may result in considerable political bickering as to the geographic location of the headquarters, and thus destroy the informal character of the movement. It should be noted, however, that as the movement grows and as its undertakings increase, there will be a greater need for some kind of co-ordinating body. It is certainly to be hoped that the non-aligned movement will not create another international bureaucracy.

In spite of the efforts of many to destroy the movement, it is going to be very difficult for the enemies of the movement to destroy it. After every Summit, Western analysts have always predicted that the "union of beggars" are bound to devour each other. On every occasion, the reality of world politics, namely facing war and hunger, has given strength to the movement. It may be that the wretched and poor will inherit the earth, for they have nothing to loose except to recover their bodies from the effects of napalm bombs and malnutrition.

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IS IT POSSIBLE?

A Military Coup In India

by Major General
S. N. Antia (Retd.)

IS THE PREVAILING POLITICAL SITUATION IN INDIA TODAY SO MURKY THAT EVEN A SEASONED AND EXPERIENCED SENIOR POLITICIAN LIKE E. M. S. NAMBOODIRIPAD IN A RECENT STATEMENT IN CALCUTTA PROPHESED THE POSSI-

BILITY OF AN ARMY COUP IN INDIA IN AN UNSTABLE SITUATION CAUSED BY THE CONFUSION IN THE JANATA PARTY?

Perhaps Namboodiripad's statement is based on the hypothesis that in a deteriorating political situation there may come a time when normal political processes would cease to function or exist and the dangers of a military intervention by the armed forces may therefore be inherent in such a situation. It is perhaps correct to state that the Janata Governments both at the Centre and the States have shown their incapability to provide firm, enlightened and effective leadership, the desired political stability and a clear-cut direction in economic and social fields. There seems to be a pervasive sense of cynicism amongst the masses which in turn affects the lowering of national morale.

It must, however, be appreciated that we tend somehow to accentuate our shortcomings while ignoring some positive gains of the Janata governments in restoring to us within a short period of one year the liberty and freedom curtailed during the dark days of Emergency.

Yet, Namboodiripad is perfectly correct when he asserts in amplification of his statement on military takeover that the political forces in India are not interested in army rule. This is how it should be in a democratic system. For that matter neither have the Armed Forces of India, who have shown their steadfast patriotism and loyalty in ample measure throughout free India's post-independence period, given any shred of evidence either by word or deed or the remotest indi-

cation of interfering with the country's established political system in any manner, least of all a military takeover under the prevailing political, economic and social environment in the country. The Armed Forces believe as much as the political parties do that any change of government must be according to the provisions of the Constitution.

Since this is the first time that a senior politician of the country who is also a ranking functionary of a political party at national level has publicly made a statement hypothetical or otherwise, of the possibility of a military coup in India, perhaps it would be in the public interest if we were to honestly and frankly analyse the possibility of a military takeover in this country under the prevailing conditions and to what extent it can succeed. This is more so since a disgruntled section of the population in this country erroneously believes that perhaps this is the only remedy for India when confronted with hard and unpopular political, economic or social policy decisions, or some form of breakdown in the law and order situation, industrial unrest, student agitations etc., without realising the full implications of the loss of liberty and freedom under the crunch of military backfoot or the shadow of bayonet.

There are many facets which may engender a military takeover. Firstly, the armed forces and particularly its erudite cadre of senior, junior officers or a combination of both have been politically indoctrinated, have political ambitions, are too close to a particular political party and its ideology, or else derive their inspiration from foreign sources.

Secondly, there must exist in the country some practical manifesta-

tion of such malfunctioning of the government at the Centre and the States which make conditions so oppressive and unbearable both in domestic and external affairs as to bring the nation into ridicule and disrepute and where foreign elements are eager or only too willing to step in to instal a puppet government or a military junta amenable to their political or dictatorial philosophy or designs.

Thirdly, conditions are such in the nation in which the three organs of our democratic system, namely, the executive, legislature and judiciary are at such loggerheads as to make the effective and smooth functioning of the Constitution or constitutional provisions almost impossible. In this state of near-anarchy and consequent breakdown of the administrative machinery and law and order problem the armed forces may deem fit to step in the breach.

Fourthly, there is widespread dissatisfaction amongst the armed forces themselves for the failure of the government to safeguard their own interests or the territorial integrity of the country, its mode of functioning and non-implementation of major policies which will embolden them through open or surreptitious support of political parties not in power or parties whose philosophy and loyalty is extra-territorial, to take over the reins of government or else be instrumental in installing a government of their choice and rule the country behind its facade.

It must, however, be appreciated that in a vast country like India, with its diversity, regional and parochial trends, economic and social disparities, sensitiveness to regional languages etc., there will always be an interplay of these types of disruptive tendencies. Yet as in the past, these issues manifest themselves singly and periodically

in one region or another and will not constitute conditions extreme enough to offer any valid and legitimate excuse for the armed forces to interfere even though these causes also have its effect on the rank and file in the Services and their kith and kin in civil life.

Taking the above broad factors into consideration which may germinate the seeds of a military takeover, are we to assume that one or more or a combination of the above factors are prevalent today in the country to tempt the armed forces to stage a coup? An objective and dispassionate analysis of the prevailing condition in the country will prove to the contrary.

In March 1977 the nation accomplished its second liberation through free elections in a peaceful manner thus enhancing the prestige and dignity of the country in the comity of nations. This is the greatest tribute to the people of India, its political system and the nation's resolve and desire to uphold the Constitution through democratic processes. The election results both for the Parliament and the State legislatures proved beyond a shadow of doubt that there is no place in India for an authoritarian rule or the type of dictatorship in guise imposed on the people without their mandate. The same constitutional processes continue even today culminating in peaceful elections held under the law of the land in the strife-torn state of Mizoram.

All this is solid proof enough of the political maturity and sagacity of the nation and its people. The Government has restored to us the freedoms which were curtailed or eliminated during the dark days of Emergency and the three major elements of our democratic system restored to their original status, by and large, the political system con-

tinues to work effectively irrespective of the fact that there are many political parties which have come into power in the States and Union Territories different from the party in power at the Centre.

Our domestic and external policies have been generally accepted and welcomed by the people and there is no doubt that the governments both at the Centre and the States are determined to fulfil the pledges to the people. However, this is not to state that all our national or state policies are sound or their implementation without blemish—yet this is only to highlight the fact that none of the main causes which may entail a military takeover are overwhelmingly present so as to change the entire complexion of our national polity or democratic system to be substituted by a bunch of leather necks.

In highlighting the internal stability in India, the record of our armed forces stands out like a shining beacon. Had the armed forces and its leadership so desired during the dark days of Emergency when great was the temptation and bait thrown at them they could have easily succumbed to pressure, yet it must be stated with full pride and credit that true to their time-honoured traditions they kept themselves scrupulously aloof and were to reassert their patriotism and loyalty not to Indira Gandhi as such but to the Government in power as is required of them.

In all the political upheaval and turmoil they have, not even by implication, given the slightest cause or doubt about their loyalty to the nation. The triumph of the democratic system in this country ever since Independence is no less a triumph for the armed forces for remaining apolitical

Perhaps the trauma of the Emergency period has been the testing time for the armed forces as apart from its constitutional and political aspects they have remained steadfast in their resolve to maintain and uphold the integrity of the nation in the gravest crisis it has faced internally in spite of the fact that their kith and kin in civil life were subjected to all the rigours, hardships, humiliations and unsavoury aspects imposed during this dark period.

Where are then the symptoms of a military takeover? Does Nambudiripad consider the political differences within the Janata Party, the interplay of constitutional or political confrontations including that of his own party, causes enough for the armed forces to interfere with the democratic processes, or, does he feel that the present levels of law and order situation, the economic and social environment, industrial and labour unrest, student agitations for one cause or another, atrocities on Harijans, and so on, offers an appropriate moment for the armed forces to step in? Conditions in the country which we are experiencing today are no better or worse in volume or intensity than they were since independence.

On the contrary, it could be stated that the country has gone through more traumatic experiences during the last three decades which were most explosive such as the armed rebellion in Telengana, the riots, destruction and strong public reaction to the reorganisation of States on linguistic basis, the language issue, the Maharashtra-Mysore border problem, the status of Chandigarh; we had industrial and labour disputes and unrest before and the student agitations have also been with us in the past; there have been law and order problems and the minorities are no better or worse than before.

Yet we have gone through all these experiences, explosive and emotional as these may have appeared when first originated, but we have, time and again, defused the situation in most cases through democratic means, discussions and negotiations in appropriate forums. Here too, the armed forces as of now have rendered yeoman service in aid to civil power in a most efficient but humane manner whenever called upon to discharge this distasteful task. All credit, therefore, is due to them as they have time and again demonstrated that they are a cementing force in the country's varied and chequered life and that their actions have always been guided by the best traditions of the Services and the sacrifices they have made even at the cost of many lives as in Nagaland and Mizoram.

It can therefore be seen that even under the present circumstances and notwithstanding certain disruptive trends in some parts of this vast country the stability and integrity of the country is intact and it will only be an illusion to hope that the political system will be superseded by another system, least of all from the defence services.

A military takeover in India will be extremely difficult to plan and equally difficult to execute. Unlike traditional military operations a coup has its limitations from the very inception of such an idea. As constituted, the three wings of the Armed Forces have their separate identity, their own military philosophy and traditions, and each Service is headed by its own professional head. Even the mooted idea of a military coup can be a non-starter and cause great embarrassment to the initiator if the idea is rejected—

as it is certainly bound to be—since this course of action would be an anathema to their long and cherished service traditions.

India is a vast country with long distances; some of our states are bigger than many nations of Europe. To be successful, a coup must be planned on an all-India level—mere military takeover of the nations' capital city or takeover in one or two neighbouring States will not serve the purpose. In a military takeover, it is most essential that greatest amount of secrecy, both of intent and timing, is maintained; it must entail the capture or elimination of political leaders and others whose presence may be found to be inconvenient. It will entail physical takeover of Parliament and State Legislatures, the Presidential palace, airfields and other vital rail and road communication centres, mass media apparatus like the radio and television, putting a clamp on the press and imposition of censorship, control of essential services like power and water-supply installations, to name only a few essential ones. The effect of all this not only in the nation's Capital but throughout the length and breadth of India will have to be appreciated in terms of the effort and time, the quantum of troops required, their movement and deployment with all the paraphernalia like tanks etc., and the resistance they may encounter.

The bulk of our Armed Forces and particularly the Army troops are deployed in the forward areas and only a small percentage is to be found in peacetime cantonments. A coup on all-India level will therefore necessitate using all the troops thus leaving the frontiers vulnerable; if this were to happen then it will be against the doctrine of military coups wherein the frontiers must be secure against any

outside interference or aggression across the borders at a most vulnerable period. Through sheer necessity therefore the quantum of troops available to a coup leader in India will be totally insufficient to meet the minimum requirements of a military takeover throughout the country.

Any piecemeal takeover will be a hazardous operation and will encounter resistance from paramilitary and armed and other police forces loyal to the government, backed up by resistance from the population and which in turn may result in a bloody civil war. In a vast country with an open and free society, secrecy will be difficult to maintain as large-scale concentration and movement of troops all over the country in peace time will alter the government's internal surveillance agencies.

The Services themselves must be fully aware they would not have the necessary training or expertise to run a government of a country like India with all its attendant problems and the examples of some of our neighbours where military rule prevails must surely give them second thoughts as to their own role and capability in a coup situation.

In sum, the above brief analysis would indicate that under the prevailing conditions there are no acute symptoms which can cause a military takeover. Secondly, in a large country like India its planning and execution will be extremely difficult and fraught with dangers both internally and across the borders. Thirdly, the Armed Forces have proved beyond the shadow of doubt their unfailing loyalty, patriotism and devotion to their profession as well as remaining apolitical. With their background and record they have proved to be a unifying and stabilising force in maintaining the democratic character of our poli-

tical system. Finally, neither have they harboured any idea of a military takeover in the past nor are they likely to do so in the future.

When all around us in the sub-continent as well as in South-east and West Asia and amongst the newly emerging nations in Africa and elsewhere, military dictatorships of one hue or the other have snuffed out democracy, the image of free, independent and sovereign democratic India shines like a force of liberty. In upholding this torch of liberty the share of our Armed Forces is no less as by their loyalty and devotion, they have remained steadfast in the primary task of ensuring the security of the country against external aggression, as well as by their impartial behaviour, as a cementing and unifying force internally. Any other implied motive would only be churlish and demeaning to a valiant band of servicemen who have given their utmost, both in peace and war in the service of the nation.

Let us not in our ignorance and impatience cry coup too often. The Armed Forces of India are unlikely to succumb to any such rash temptation.

—Mainstream, July 1, 1978

CARAVAN FAMILY—14

Discovering Delft

by Inna Trimmer

Mummie was quite perky after a nap and at 4 o'clock Soosaimuttu conducted them along the shore back to the jetty where a cart awaited them with a pair of bulis, large white creatures with long curving horns. They were tossing their heads impatient to be off.

"I had the hood taken off Dorai so that everyone can see better."

They clambered in. First the children who stood inside, then

Mummie and Daddy who sat at the backs and hung their legs. Soosaimuttu took his seat by the driver. Off they rattled in fine style, watched by surely everyone in Delft.

With shouts the bulis were urged forward.

"Daddy," said Ranjit, "They have a different way of driving bulls. Why don't they say *jok, muck, pitta* like at home?"

"Because nothing is the same. The north and south of Ceylon are poles apart. We are now in another world."

At a rollicking pace the cart rumbled over the hard, white, limestone road.

"I.I.I.I." stuttered Mummie.

Daddy looked at her in amazement but when he tried to speak he did the same.

"Wa-wa-wa-what's wrong?"

Mummie shrieked with laughter; so did the children.

"S.S.S. serves you right. It's the j..j..jolting."

"J.J.I. jolting it was indeed. They all shook and shivered like jellies as the great wheels of the cart ground the powdery limestone like a metal crusher.

"Look on your left", shouted Daddy. He could hardly be heard in the noise made by the cart. "Did you ever see such a strange sight?"

Strange indeed it was. There stood a palmyrah palm completely surrounded by an enormous banyan tree. They were both growing together, not side by side, but the palm looked as if it had grown out of the banyan tree.

"Which came first the chicken or the egg" asked Mummie.

"What d'you mean? Ah yes! I understand. The palmyrah grew first. Then when it was half grown a bird dropped a banyan seed which took root amongst its bran-

ches. So the two grew together, the palmyrah straight and tall and the banyan which had flung its tentacle-like roots down to the ground and having got a foothold there, encircling the palm in its embrace.

It's sometimes known as the marriage of the banyan and the palm. Eventually the palm dies, killed by the banyan tree, strangled to death by the thing that it had nurtured."

"Soosai," called Daddy. "Don't forget to stop at the old Dutch Stables."

"Ay! Ay Dorai! Here we are at the very spot."

They jumped off glad to be out of the cart. Soosaimuttu led the way to the ruins of the famous old Dutch Stables, a colony of buildings composed of rooms like compartments where the horses were stabled in the days of long ago. Not a single room was left out the cora stone walls still stood as strong as ever, blackened with age and the elements.

"They bred horses here and sent them across to the mainland from where they were distributed all over Ceylon.

"I remember my grandfather had a Delft pony which he used to drive a log-cart, a sturdy little brute but weak in the knees. They are all supposed to be weak in their knees, due, I believe, to malnutrition. These stables have housed well over a hundred in the good old days. They were hardy animals but small."

"Are there any now in Delft?" asked Mummie.

"Oh yes! But the numbers have dwindled so much that no one worries about them. I mean they are not cared for. They just run wild and live as they can on grass of which there's little in this island. I believe they'd eat even paper in their hunger, sometimes. The

horse age is past and man now has no further use for them."

"Daddy I want a horse" cried Nila.

"I also", said Ranjit excitedly.

"But we haven't even seen one yet," Varuni was sceptical about the horses.

"Be patient" was Daddy's reply. "With luck we should see a few. They don't roam all over Delft. They are only found on the Horse plains, a vast track of flat land in the south of this island. We are going there later but not today."

"Villa, what are you doing?"

Mummie was bending down and busily scraping away at the thin covering of grass and moss on the ground.

"Look Richard, there's hardly any soil here. It's only white coral. We are standing on coral, not earth. How does anything grow in this place?"

"Well, they get a foothold somehow, and many are surface feeders. You'll be amazed when you see the trees that eke out life on this coral mountain top, Delft is just that, a huge out-cropping of coral from the depths of the sea."

"Daddy, come and see these wells", shouted Ranjit.

They peered into a shaft of coral that seemed to strike deep into the island's very foundations.

"I can see a glint of water," said Mummie.

"Look! another well, and another, and another."

"There are about sixty, all connected by a maze of complicated channels, to bring water to hundreds of horses. Horse breeding was a lucrative business then. Let's get on, we have more to see."

They packed themselves into the cart again and with a clatter of wheels dashed off.

"Daddy, some more palms and banyans have got married," called Ranjit.

ACID BOMB EXPLOSION—5

Chapter Five In A Government Office

by James Goonewardene

The Story So Far

Deva, an England-returned artist, failed to get a response from the art world of Sri Lanka. He found himself a job as an Art Master in a Maha Vidyalaya in a remote area by the sea. The Principal, Piyaratne, is a figure from the old world of Sri Lanka's educational system, while Ariya, the manager of the local resthouse with whom Deva has struck up a friendship was sensitive to the disturbing realities, even the underground trends, swelling up in the country at this time. In a discussion, after Deva's appointment, Ariya reveals that he was perturbed about many strange things that had happened in the neighbourhood recently. Deva gives up his rooms in Colombo and asks his brother, a highly successful money-spinning architect to look after his collection of unsold sculptures. The brother, aghast at the thought that Deva should waste his talents in a rural village school, offers him money to enable him to go back to London to resume his career as a sculptor and regain his former popularity, wealth and success. Deva refuses because he has no desire to escape to London and what the world regards as fame.....

He stood at the bus halt the following morning and watched the buses roll by, crowded—people clinging to the overhead pole like shabby clothes in a forgotten

Palmyrahs engulfed in the strangling hold of spreading banyans were indeed a common sight in Delft. "Thugs of the vegetable world, these banyans," said Daddy. "Stop! stop!" he shouted.

The two bulls nearly had their heads off with the force of the sudden brakes put on them.

"A Baobab tree. Come on. We mustn't miss it."

"Why?" asked Mummie.

"Because it's a rarity in Ceylon. Except for this one there are a few in Mannar. No more, as far as I know."

Out they tumbled to walk a few yards to the strange monstrosity that had grown in alien surroundings.

"No one knows how these baobab trees found their way to Ceylon. They are not indigenous nor have they adapted themselves to conditions here and spread as other imported trees have done. A few isolated ones are still growing probably where they were planted by those who introduced them, but who brought them from the west coast of Africa is still a mystery.

"Some think it's the Portuguese but their age refutes this conjecture. They are far older than the Portuguese era. Ancient mariners from a far off land, in long forgotten years are probably responsible. The baobab is one of the most long lived in the vegetable kingdom. Some attain the venerable age of even 5,000 years.

"It's also known as the Judas tree because it bears a seed pod in the shape of a bag which contains exactly 30 coin shaped seeds, the thirty pieces of silver, a traitor's price. And it is said he hanged himself from a baobab tree.

They walked in and out of all that was left of the large old two-storeyed building, vanguard of the many fortifications at the entrance to the north of Ceylon, and gazed in horror at the little square dungeon below ground level.

"Daddy, there's no door, only that tiny window. How did the prisoners go in?"

"They were pushed through that little opening Ranjit. Poor devils. There was no mercy in those days. We must go back now. I can't leave Delft without a visit to my old friend the Maniyagar."

"What's a Maniyagar?"

"He's the chief here, putha. He represents the government as a Government Agent does in a province."

So they called at the Residency, a fine old Dutch house, a perfect specimen of the architecture of that time with wide verandahs and huge pillars, meant for gracious living, a building essentially for coolness, strength and comfort.

While Daddy and Mummie chatted to the Maniyagar, Soosaimuttu took the children to see the ancient pigeon cot. They came running back in a few minutes.

"Daddy, Mummie, come and see! A Dutch pigeon cot. Hundreds and thousands of pigeons can live in it."

The Maniyagar smiled kindly at Ranjit.

"I think he is almost right. Certainly several hundreds can be accommodated. It's of solid coral. The base is eight feet square, and its thirty feet high, with five storeys, but for some reason not a pigeon will stay there."

They returned in time for a sea bath in the gentle waters of the harbour, before an early dinner.

wardrobe, swaying and bumping against each other, squeezed tightly together. He had to get on to one of these, he thought, but how. He did, eventually. He got a foothold on one and pushed himself in. The bus had already started to move. He avoided looking at people's faces as he continued to squeeze himself through, using his elbows and feet as he continued to wriggle forward. At last he was in. He felt hot. He started to scan the faces round him, the gaunt, strained sun-blackened faces. They seemed used to their discomfort, the brown faces, the grey faces—a people who had multiplied themselves along with their problems which neither ahimsa, maithri nor karuna could do anything to alleviate.

An old woman started to reach up for the pole overhead and failing to reach it she lost her balance, and suddenly she dropped a pile of ration cards. The feet had already begun to tread on them. She was immediately bent double, groping for them with her wizened hand, her precious ration cards that gave her and her family the right to a few measures of rice, a few ounces of dried fish and coriander and maldivian fish or anything else that had to be rationed at any one moment. There she was with her arthritic back bent and crying for help, her cries smothered by the wheeze and clang of the battered old double decker. Deva suddenly thrust his way in, pushing ferociously forward in an attempt to help retrieve her cards. He heard the curses and groans, and felt the jabs in his back.

"Why don't you leave them down there; the old woman should know to look after her ration cards. Why doesn't she stay at home and get someone younger to get the ration for her." "That's right—these old women, crowding the buses and preventing people from getting to work."

"It's all right for you, you heartless man," protested a voice. "You must be getting your rice in the black-market."

"Yes, the poor woman, its enough standing in queues to also get abused by fools like you," said a woman's voice.

"That's right—people only think of themselves—bad enough to have ration cards—what would she be without them—stateless like a kal-lathoni." said another woman.

Deva found the cards and pushing his hand through the crowd he gave the cards to her.

"There are only five here," groaned the woman, "there's one missing." Deva dived into the crowd again. Someone had found the missing card. After the brief adventure Deva had, once more, to find a spot to stand in, and once more, to elbow his way through. Already he was learning how to do it, how to be indifferent to other people's comfort. It was the new life-style in the city, and his mind started to reach out to the silence and quiet of the backwash he had found a job in. Better the thing he did than this struggle, better the anonymity and peace than this perpetual state of irritation and anger and frustration.

The bus reached the Fort. He got off and started to walk, his clothes crumpled and sweat ridden. He made inquiries and, at last, came to the office he was looking for. The official he was looking for had been a friend of his in the past. It was some months earlier he had last heard from him, a brief note to say he would like to meet him and have a chat about old times, over a meal, perhaps. No date was fixed and no invitation came. A sudden silence followed it.

He had two reasons for going to see him now. He was going to tell him about his decision to

move out to this provincial township, and also to try to get his help in a little official matter that had been bothering him. He started to climb the creaking staircase. His friend was one of the few officials he had met in his life who had imagination. In some whimsical moment he had decided to join the administrative service and had dedicated himself to it with the same devotion he would have given to any other undertaking.

He took the steps slowly while he cast his eyes round the old colonial building, its large, heavy pillars, wide stone verandahs. The first individual he met was the peon. There have always been peons in government departments whose function was to carry and fetch and perform other minor tasks or sit mutely in some corner until needed. It was menial and had no compensation of any kind. The man grew old in his job and was cast off like an unserviceable typewriter. His education and training didn't fit him for anything better. The peon, understood his limitations and grew wise. This, sometimes, made him indispensable; people began to depend on him for advice. His departure, when all this was over, became an act of personal sorrow to those who had been associated with him. One couldn't escape the fact that some had to carry and fetch.

The individual he met now was different. Yet his tasks were still the same. He fetched and carried or sat in a chair mutely, but his chair was now placed in such a position as to give him a view of everything that took place inside an office. His training and education was what it had been earlier. He was, in these respects, every bit like his earlier counterpart, but he had altered. The knowledge he had of the weaknesses and strengths of clerks and officers and of the various files and their loca-

tions, and of the different subterfuges adopted by his superiors to escape responsibility or for self-advancement he had developed skills in using. He had learned how to exert pressures in the right places. Having no usefulness, no real usefulness he had come to recognise the usefulness of the little bits of knowledge he had gathered and suddenly, with the political changes that had come into being he found his own influence and authority had grown. He had suddenly become a political symbol of importance, but being conscious of a lack of skills he turned himself into an objectionable being. Replies to simple questions became an occasion for displaying boorishness. He found others like himself and formed groups and through this his power to obstruct was extended.

There was such a peon, it seemed, in this particular office Deva happened now to come to. Deva came to the landing of the floor which he believed his friend was on and there seated in a chair, in an upright chair, dressed in a long white khamisey and sarong was the peon. Deva had come now to dread any contact with a peon. He had not yet met a polite and well mannered peon, not since his return. Unknown to him his nervousness had suddenly increased. Contact with a peon had always become now an encounter, a confrontation. The peon's reaction was one of instant hate and dislike; it had no visible cause. It came from within the man's own mind. His dislike had become an act of office, and this act of office, in view of the recent political alignments, was to obstruct anyone who, by some remote chance could be a member of that class of society they were going to oust from earlier held positions. At his union meetings he had been told that this was his function, and that function was to usher in a society

for working people and to him that meant himself and his friends and everyone else who thought like him, and there was this peon now, a thin, dark, hawk faced man with a square, angular jaw seated there swinging his knees rapidly in an inward and outward movement as if he had an accordion between his legs. Deva wondered whether he could get past him without being seen, but the man was put there precisely for that purpose, to prevent anyone sneaking in, and here at last, was something to do, some victim to put on the rack, to bully.

"Uhn" he grunted. "What do you want?" he had a sharp grating voice which snapped like pincers.

Deva was jerked to a halt. The man didn't move from his chair. He had his eyes fixed on Deva as he continued to swing his legs.

"I want to see the Director," said Deva finding his voice, at last.

"The Director?" snapped the pincers.

"Yes, the Director."

The man had a smile on his face now. It was feline like a cat that knew it had cornered a rat. A long moment went by during which the man continued to swing his legs, the accordion still between his legs.

"Uhn", he grunted and waited. "Angkuary clark—there," the pincers snapping. Then he turned his head and forgot Deva. Deva waited a moment as if he feared the man would suddenly fling a fire cracker at him for better effect, but nothing happened. There he was swinging his legs, sunk in the tortured world of his private dreams where he saw himself picking his way through the complications of lower-rung power politics. Deva decided he'll take the risk of slipping past him to the "Inquiry Clerk" as directed. He got to the clerk and put his question to him. He mentioned

the name of his friend. The clerk took no notice of him for several seconds. He was a youngish, clean shaven man, dressed in shirt and longs. They took pains in selecting the men for these jobs. The clerk glanced up at him. Deva repeated his question. The initial look of disbelief was followed by one of amusement.

"He's yhar frang, huh?" asked the Clerk in English. His question would have been in Sinhala, but seeing Deva he decided he'll take the tone of mockery. He spoke his broken English deliberately.

He did it mockingly.

"Yes", said Deva replying in Sinhala.

The clerk gave him an appraising glance.

"He note here," he said. He accompanied the comment with a gesture he made with his hands that suggested he had exploded like a balloon.

"Will someone here know where he is now?"

The clerk decided now he'll play cat and mouse with Deva. There was a pause in which he seemed to plan how to do it.

"No one know here. He fins. He pack up things and go. New Director goat now."

"New Director," said Deva.

"Yes, new Director—in the rhume there. He tale you. Yhar frang, he reactionary, no?"

He glanced at a colleague and winked at him.

"Can I see the new Director?"

The clerk was bored with the game now. He suddenly turned to a booklet he was reading.

"I want to see the Director—Can I see him, please?"

"I tole you, yhar frang note here—his account book close."

"But the new Director—he would know, you said."

The clerk wearily lifted up his eyes at Deva and stared at him as if he were a pest he would like

to stamp on, but then, the next moment, his eyes suddenly brightened. He turned to the telephone and started to dial a number.

"His rhume daun dha corydoe—you go to rhume—right!"

Deva thought he heard a faint chuckle behind him as he turned, but deciding to ignore it he went on. He went down the corridor, a wide, gloomy passage. People loitered about here. Others moved freely inside a large room full of desks and chairs and people. Noise and laughter issued from it with quite unreal loudness and abandon. It was unbelievable that this was a place of government business, but there it was, a visible reality as unassailable as the post one knocks one's head against. He had heard much about all this, about what had begun to happen since they started to recruit people under a system of political patronage, and here he was having his first real experience of such an office, an office in which such a system was operating, where men of little skill and competence were permitted to control, punish and reward men more intelligent and skilled than themselves purely for political reasons, a system under which only the ignorant and the cunning could progress and advance to positions of power and influence.

He came to the room and knocked. He waited and knocked again. There was still no response. A moment went by and there suddenly appeared a peon, a stocky, thick-necked man who had this rather sardonic grin on his face. Deva explained to him what it was about, and the peon glanced down the corridor at the clerk who was now standing in the doorway of his room looking down the passage. "The mahataya—he told you he telephone, did he?" the peon asked. "Yes, he did," replied Deva, and then as a curious

suspicion dawned on him he quickly corrected himself; "At least, he said so." The look of amusement on the peon's face was undeniable now. They had played a practical joke. They had only pretended to telephone.

Deva suddenly pushed past him and into the office of the Director. Deva's rude entrance startled the man behind the large desk. Deva told him what had happened. There was no reaction. He had his hands together, the finger tips touching in front of his nose, over which he gazed at Deva as if through the sights of a rifle. Then he stirred, put his hands on the desk. How was a dumpy little man in glasses, with a soft, plump face that was deceptively babyish. Ignoring Deva's complaint he asked in an icy tone of voice, "What is it you want?" Deva told him and this inquiry for his friend was met with an odd smile that seemed to emerge slowly from some deep, dark region inside him. He sat there behind the large, polished desk, saying nothing, just smiling, and clasping and unclasping his hands and studying the visitor. Finally he lifted his head as if he were going to speak, but he said nothing. He continued to study Deva's face. It irritated Deva.

"The clerk out there said he was no longer in service, is this, true?" he said.

The man behind the desk continued his scrutiny of Deva's face. He seemed so diminutive within that large, beautifully furnished room, but one felt he wielded power.

"Yes," he said, at length. "There is a clean up of the public service"

"Clean up of the public service?" repeated Deva. "What's he done?"

"To create a socialist society its necessary to begin with fresh blood. You can't have reactionary public officers obstructing the pro-

cess of change." No one gave you direct answers anymore, thought Deva. They spun rings round you, verbal rings.

"The government can't wait for people to reorientate themselves. It was, perhaps, difficult for people like your friend to change overnight. So they are being eased out to make room for fresh thinking." Deva felt an odd sensation in the centre of his stomach. The meaning had become clear. What was his friend's crime? Where did he fail these people? It was obvious they had sacked him, but no one seemed willing to tell this to you directly. They talked in riddles. The clerk outside spoke of an account book being closed, and his director spoke of socialism and fresh thinking. The best he could do was to get out of the building as fast as he could. It was no longer he who was in need of help, but his friend whose past efficiency was being identified with the government that had been scrapped.

Deva wandered down to the bus stop feeling quite stunned. He didn't know how far they would go to eliminate people they didn't like—how tempted they would be to extend their instruments of power. His friend was no longer in a position to help him in the least fashion. He felt it would be foolish to concern himself with the response why they had got rid of him, if that was what they had done. They had sacrificed efficiency for an ideology which seemed at the moment to be a brooding, dark thing full of menace and irrationality.

Riding back on the bus the first thing he saw were the queues in front of co-operatives, the result of socialisation and the gradual extension of bureaucratic control over the smallest details of a man's life. He had seen queues everywhere. How had it come into being and what had caused

it and what was going to be the result of it. His thoughts, by process of association went now to the rice ration card. He had not yet obtained one for himself. Like the old woman in the bus he had to obtain a rice ration card so that they could give him a number and an identity, something with which, probably went the right of the bureaucrat to extend his power and influence into your private bedroom. What was going to be the end result of this? This was the interesting question—how would a society, used to a doctrine of ahimsa and maithri and karuna react to this process of brainwashing. How would it end”.

NEXT WEEK

NEW LODGINGS

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LETTER FROM ABROAD

Citrus Growing

Sir,

In far away Canada the *Tribune* copy of 3rd June, 1978 was on my breakfast table at 8.30 a.m. on the 6th June. Good postal service efficiency.

Glancing through the *Tribune*, my eyes caught Mr. George L. de Silva's letter of 9.5.78 on "Citrus Growing". All what he has said is correct, but for record purposes I wish to elaborate more on the subject to show how incapable and, may I say stupid we are in developing our economy, so that you and I and everybody else have a square meal a day, and not cry saying that there are seven million of our brothers and sisters starving.

Citrus—what the villagers and the ayurvedic doctor says *Pani Dodang* is indigenous to Ceylon. The traditional areas of growing citrus were: Vavuniya Bibile,

Moneragala, Mulegama, Naththandiya and Dodangduwa. As time went on Vavuniya, Bibile, Moneragala and Mulegama were recognised by the Department of Agriculture as citrus growing lands and established "Citrus Research Stations". What research they did no one knows but they were able to select a few strains and labelled them, Vavuniya Seedless, Bibile, Sweet, and Mulegama High Yielding quality strains. This was during the colonial era and what good work the Department did then came to an end around 1956. Apart from "better political conception of what the country should be" feeding the ever increasing population and providing gainful employment to the people became the nightmare of the Politician, planner and official. Since that year up to date—1978—those two problems have increased in such proportions, that we do not know where to start and where to end. A start has been made by "the present government's four-pronged development strategy of the Investment Promotion Zone, Mahaweli Development Scheme, the Colombo Master Plan Project, and the Kotte Development Scheme. While these are being tailored for a grand take off, the problems are increasing and the people are becoming restive.

Like all other multi-purpose projects (in Mahaweli too) great hopes are held out to the people; millions of rupees to be spent, million tons of food to be produced, full employment to all and so forth. And in anticipation of the "Bumper Harvests", grain silos are purchased, Agricultural implements are imported, foreign experts are invited to put our economy right, factories are erected for Agro-based industries and the spending spree goes on long before an inch of land is put under crops. The latest movements in this symphony is growing of Beet Sugar instead of Sugar

Cane! Why? because the whole Agricultural project of growing cane has been mismanaged for the last thirty years and has failed miserably. So we are thinking of a new crop for sugar. For this, of course, we must have foreign experts. And, probably, the experts of the Agriculture Department who advised Minister Senanayake to switch on to Beet Sugar have never seen a beet growing field or have never stepped into a Beet sugar factory. But the purchase of new machinery and factories, globe-trotting to inspect and purchase them and so on offer inducements for such activities. This is the main pre-occupation: and not growing of Beet? In the meantime what would happen to the country and its politics? The balance five years of our stewardship would have run out without anything being achieved—except plans, more plans and many more experts. This was the position in 1956, in 1960, in 1965, in 1970 and in 1977 and it will be so in 1983 if we go the way we are going now.

In this back ground of our political and development activities what chance is there for the "Citrus growing scheme" of Mr. George L. de Silva?

Citrus can be grown in Ceylon; there is a local market, as well as an overseas market. Even at twenty cents a fruit it is profitable. We cannot expect to get what India is getting for her mangoes to the "Gulf Countries", Rs. 160/- per dozen FOB Bombay. This is what I saw five days ago. Let us be content with Rs. 0.20 per orange. But we must grow this even before we hope to earn twenty cents. Growing is the problem.

Now let me get back to the problem of growing oranges in Sri Lanka. In 1965 I got involved in the Development of two major multi-purpose projects. With the object of diversification of crops

and the utilization of highland under the two projects we decided to set up citrus orchards where this tree crop was traditional in certain regions of the area of Authority. First step was to set up trial areas with suitable planting materials. When we approached the experimental stations of the Dept. of Agriculture to produce good planting stock, they were able to offer us a couple of hundreds of plants of "doubtful character". Rather than be defeated in the venture, we were able to get a practical, down to earth citrus orchard man through the good and generous help of Charge-de-Affairs of Israel Embassy in Ceylon, at a bargain price. Within months, necessary areas were selected, mother trees selected to collect nursery seeds for the arrangements made to mature the mother trees, keep record of production, harvesting transport, selecting the fruit for seed extraction etc. Our target was a million seedlings in the base nursery. This created a problem. What to do with the juice extracted during the seed collecting operation? Will we set up a fresh orange juice bottling plant and the first bottled orange juice was on the shelves under the brand name—"Ganga" Why? It was a product of the RVDB. The production of juice went on during the season—March to April and I know of "one disabled individual" who earned Rs. 20,000/- from an orchard of 105 trees, about thirty years old, at twenty cents a fruit on the tree. In view of his disability ours was a mission of mercy. We paid the same price to others also and there was no shortage of oranges for bottling. Within six months of our plans to grow citrus we had a million seedlings from which to select 400,000 seedlings to establish the orchards. While the seedlings were growing in the nurseries, land preparation to establish model orchards were undertaken at Gal

Oya and Udawalawe—200 acres under the former and three hundred acres under the latter. To expand the citrus areas, 30,000 acres in the Bibile region and 1000 acres north of Puttalam were investigated for suitability of soil, water supply, rainfall patterns etc. This work was completed by 1968 and a complete project report was placed in the hands of the Minister to be taken up at cabinet level etc. It never went beyond.

Already we had planted up to three hundred acres under the two schemes. The soil expert brought in new technology in planting which cost the Board Rs. 1/10 per plant in the orchard against Rs. 5/30 per plant if we adopted the technique given by the Agricultural Dept. Up to 1969 there were no problems, and the orchards were doing very well, at no cost to the Board, except for maintenance. And this thanks to our Israeli advisor.

Proof of the putting is in the eating. So while I was pushing ahead to set up citrus orchards with other's money, I too started a five acre block using the Board's plants at -/60 a plant. Within three years I had an orchard of 500 orange trees coming into bearing in the 4th year. I did not, nor could I have spent much. Nevertheless it was a model private orchard until the Land Reforms came in and took over the farm in 1974. That was the end of my orchard. So were the orchards at Gal Oya and Uda Walawe after Sirimavo Government started playing ducks and drakes with our economy.

My orchard I saw it in March 1978; to the credit of the LRC they were successful in destroying every one of the 500 trees I established so carefully. Nothing is left, except the advancing jungle tide. This is the story of Growing Citrus in Sri Lanka. I hope Mr. George L. de Silva will see this letter and be corrected as to what

we could do and should do! and why he has to pay Rs. 2/- per fruit, any time, anywhere in the Republic of Sri Lanka for a fruit which can be produced and sold at twenty cents a piece and still make an unconscionable profit. Unless we change our attitudes, we will be for ever a begging nation.

R. Kahawita

Montreal.

8.6.78

LETTERS

On Fish

Sir,

Your efforts to show the tragedy of fish and our fishing grounds are not in vain. I am not surprised that most of our people are now suffering from protein deficiency. The problem is not only in Sri Lanka but all over Asia or at least South and South East Asia.

In the ACFOD, Asian Action (n. 12) March-April issue of 1978, I read the following with great uneasiness:

"The countries of S.E. Asia have been witnessing the sure and rapid death of their fisheries resource. A Petition drawn by thousands of Samar fishermen and presented to President Marcos reads thus: the harm has been gigantic, too horrible to even think about. Why, besides these trawl operations, fleets of deep sea purse-seiners invade and deplete the supply of fish. What more would be left for us?"

Some years ago there was a hue and cry about Japanese coming in and helping us "selflessly" to fill our ponds with Guramis and all kinds of fish, and even to go on making ponds here, there and everywhere. Why should we, living in an island, build inland "ports" and fishing centres and

allow our best protein-fish to feed other countries so that they can use their brains to exploit us still more, for fish helps the brain-function, we are told.

What of the small-scale fisherman? No. Ten of the Ten-commandment presidential pledge read thus:

"In every act of mine, I will consider how it benefits the humblest and the poorest and endeavour to help them first." (Daily New, June 1st 1978)

Lakshman Ranasinghe

14, Senanayake Mawatha,
Bandarawela.
24.6.78

C.T.B. Staffing

Sir,

Apropos your comments "For the Record" on CTB reorganisation, may I draw the attention of your readers to extracts from two journals:

"The number of passenger journeys has risen from 456 million in 1958 to 1500 million today. The number of buses operated has increased from 3400 to 7200. The number of employees has risen from 15,200 to nearly 60,000"

The Minister of Transport in the NSA on 5th May, 1978, and reported in Tribune of 3rd June, 1978 on page 8.

"...the 1976 figures of staff employed per bus operated (by London Transport) should read as follows:

	per bus
Drivers & Conductors	3.00
Traffic Control & Support	0.68
Engineering	0.93
Administrative	0.13
	4.74

• Comparable figures (generally for 1976) are:

	Employed per bus
South Yorkshire *PTE	4.33
Greater Manchester PTE	4.13
Tyne & Wear PTE	4.62
West Midlands PTE	3.58
London Transport Executive	4.74

*Passenger Transport Executive"
The Rt. Hon. Kenneth Robinson, Chairman, London Transport Executive, in a letter to the Chartered Institute of Transport, published on page 90 of the January issue of the CIT Journal.

Comment is superfluous.

"Fare Payer"

Colombo.
24.6.78

Beggars

Sir,

In the Sun of 24th June 78, it was reported that "One hundred and forty beggars were rounded up", some of whom would be "sent to the beggars' colony at Ridyagama for confinement" (Sun 24.6.78 p.1).

May I suggest that you send one of your staff to visit the colony to see how these people are treated?

J. N. Coatman

Eastern Technical Institute,
Batticaloa.
25th June 1978

On Justice And Fairplay

Sir,

Your account in the Editor's Note Book of the issue May 6, 1978 correctly portrayed the true feelings of the Masses of the Government of To-day. There is a growing sense of pessimism and despondency that no Party in Sri Lanka will solve the problem of the Country. This bitterness and desolation in the minds of the Masses should not go unnoticed as this could have a catastrophic

effect in the Country. People are disgruntled, disillusioned and just SICK of the political set up in Sri Lanka. The stooge Press and the SLBC are adding to the nausea and the headache, the People are already experiencing by crowing about the Government's innumerable promises and unfulfilled pledges.

Majority of the Sri Lankans do not have any strong Party affiliations. They are absolutely disinterested in Party Politics. All that they yearn for is a Government with honest hardworking leaders and Bureaucrats who would at all times have the Nation's welfare foremost in their minds and act with a strict sense of Justice and Fair Play. So that the rest of the public will automatically emulate them, put in their stint unflinchingly and push the country to Sound Economic footing which is the crying need of the moment.

Talking about Justice, I think it is pertinent to relate an incident that occurred in London a few weeks ago when Prince Phillip was hauled into courts having been charged for speeding. Despite the fact he was fined there was a public outcry that the fine was less than what it should have been and it resulted in a Majistrate Resigning in Protest. Can we even in our wildest dreams imagine the Kith & Kin of our President, Prime Minister or for that matter even the MP's being produced in Courts for a Petty Traffic Offence.

Our Leaders may shout themselves hoarse denouncing the British and condemning Colonialism, but it will do well for us to take a Lesson from their Leaders and Emulate their sense of Justice and Fairplay.

M. M. Mahendran

No. 6, Fairline Road,
Dehiwala.
May 19, 1978

Dharmista?

Sir,

How could this country progress when its Head says one thing and his hand-picked Ministers act contrariwise, creating in the minds of the public the inevitable impression that he (the President) must be aware all the time of what is happening, but cannot (or is disinclined to) prevent it?

In his Convocation address recently, Mr. J. R. Jayewardene pledged, *inter alia*, that he will treat every citizen of Sri Lanka alike and give him or her equal opportunity to progress. Noble and laudable sentiments indeed! But, everyone knows what has happened ever since the UNP came to power. The Government's blessings and benedictions had been and are being, freely bestowed only on its Party supporters, both present and future, and others have been shut out of appointments (which they deserve to get) and blatantly discriminated against, as in the case of the seniormost DIG (Mr. Rudra Rajasingham). Is this the President's concept of DHARMISTA? Isn't such action against the Buddha's teaching, which the President and most of his Ministers profess to follow? And the irony of it is that this sort of thing is happening even today with the Kapilavastu Relics being taken all over the country. What a mockery of religion it is! Why cannot the President (if his sincerity is not to be doubted) insist on the strict adherence by all his Ministers to Dharmista principles in the matter of selection of applicants for posts in the Public Sector?

What is equally alarming is the fact that the private Sector too, comprising as it does business establishments headed by die-hard UNPers who are ever ready to tow the Party line, is affected in the same way. What is the country

heading for? Another Insurgency, worse perhaps than in 1971?

Incidentally, many of the Ministers do not appear to be taking the President's directives, admonitions and exhortations seriously. For instance, the President had decreed that only one Minister for a month was at liberty to attend a Cocktail party. But practically the entire Cabinet is said to have been present at the outgoing India's High Commissioner's farewell Cocktail party recently, as if the Ministers could not have bid the Sardar adieu individually. Could it be said that our Ministers are setting a good example worthy of emulation by Secretaries to Ministers, Heads of Departments and Chairman of State Corporations and Boards when they act thus? It would appear that public opinion means nothing to them. A time will soon come when they will rue it. They would do well never to forget the bitter lesson the public taught their predecessors less than a year ago!

C. E. J. Alles

113, Anagarika Dharmapala Mawatha, Dehiwala.

11.6.78

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SRI LANKA CHRONICLE

June 23 — 25

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; CM—Chintamani; WK—Weekend; RR—Riviresa; EN—Eelanadu; IDPR—Information Dept. Press Release; DK—Dinakara; DW—Dawasa.

FRIDAY, JUNE 23: The 'Wishes of the People' as an instrument for further recognition of their sovereignty and provision to consult them directly in a variety of situations of basic importance including an amendment to the constitution which had failed to secure a two thirds majority are some of the revolutionary changes incorporated in the Draft Constitution which the PM tabled in the NSA yesterday among with a report of the 10-member Parliamentary Select Committee appointed to revise the constitution. The report of the select committee appointed to revise the constitution says the draft constitution preserves unchanged the pre-eminent position accorded to Buddhism in the 1972 constitution. The visiting Chinese PM held official discussions yesterday morning with Sri Lanka's Foreign Minister; the discussions were devoted to international affairs and covered a wide range of issues including non-alignment, the situation in the Middle East, recent development in Africa and South-east Asia. The PM said in the NSA that Mr. Anura Bandaranaike present 2nd MP for Nuwara Eliya-Maskeliya did 15 trips abroad during the regime of the previous government; government funds had been released for six of these—CDN. The government has decided that District Ministers to be appointed shortly will be from members of parliament of the Government Parliamentary group. The Draft Constitution provides that the official language of Sri Lanka shall be Sinhala and that the National languages of Sri Lanka shall be Sinhala and Tamil. Minister Hameed while talking to visiting Chinese Vice Premier said that to establish greater economic co-operation among Asian countries, an Asian Economic Group should be formed—CDM. An advanced system of communication among all airports in Sri Lanka that would aid

in aircraft landing as well as provide for 'emergency security' measures is to be established in Sri Lanka with assistance from the UN Development Programme. The visiting Chinese Vice Premier said that China was eagerly looking forward to the day when President Jayawardene and PM Premadasa would visit China. Luxury travel in the CGR will cost more from July 1—SU. The distinction between being citizens of Sri Lanka by 'descent' and 'registration' will be done away with in the new constitution and everyone will simply be citizens of Sri Lanka—VK. The Ministries of Food and Cooperatives, Trade, Agriculture and Lands have set up a joint programme under which five pounds of powdered milk at Rs. 4.50 a pound will be given to children under five years of age every month—DW. Promotions given by the CTB to its workers during the last few weeks may be temporarily suspended until further investigation into allegations of favouritism etc are completed—DW. The government has decided to hand over the Govt-owned commercial company and the Wellawatte Spinning and Weaving Mills to two Joint Companies between the government and the previous owners of these companies—ATH. Separatist forces are battling Ethiopian troops on three fronts along the Eritrean border as Ethiopia's government continues building up for a major offensive to recapture the red sea province of Eritrea guerilla sources said yesterday—CDN. The US State Dept said that Israel had not fully responded to the US question of the future of the occupied west bank of Jordan and the Gaza strip. Two Jewish activists, one of them a member of the dissident 'Helsinki' group were sentenced in Moscow to internal exile on charges of malicious hooliganism—CDM. Apparently confident that the recent coup in Afghanistan has strength-

ened its hand the Soviet Union is putting pressure on Pakistan to drop its pro-western stance. The SWAPO said its guerilla fighters urgently needed modern weapons, rockets to protect their camps against South African raids—ISU.

SATURDAY, JUNE 24: The GCEC has announced a wide range of investments suitable for the Investment Promotion Zone which is now taking shape in a 500-acre area north of Colombo; among the industries are; light engineering, small metal articles, photographic equipment, tea, rubber and coconut based products, food processing, precious stones etc. The new 'Open University' will come into being with a student population of 43,000 while the traditional universities can only boast of a student population of 15,000 said Professor Stanley Kalpage yesterday. The tremendous responsibility that rests on an ambassador was stressed by the Foreign Minister when he briefed the ambassador-designates yesterday—CDN. A minimum of students from each district are guaranteed entry to the university even if no student qualifies for entry from that district after the abolition of standardisation said the Secretary to the Ministry of Higher Education. The Auditor General passed several strictures on the management of Salusala in his report of the working of Salu Sala for 1976 which was tabled in the NSA yesterday. Income tax assessors will not be able to make arbitrary and easy assessments out of proportion to the facts under the Finance Bill said the Minister of Finance in the NSA yesterday when he explained the Provisions of the bill. The Minister of Plantation Industries has obtained government approval to set apart Rs. 80 million for houses for estate workers—CDM. The existing task force on the Mahaweli Diversion Scheme will shortly be

regularised into a single statutory body; this new body will comprise representatives of the departments and statutory bodies whose activities are related directly with the Mahaweli Project. The Chinese Vice Premier and his party went to Kandy yesterday. The President has told all new Ambassadors and High Commissioners who will go to various countries shortly to follow the policy of non alignment and not to see the power blocks from different lenses; he further told them that their mission is to inform the government on what is likely to happen and not what has happened. The government has taken steps to provide vehicles for government doctors from government stores or give them permits to import cars said the deputy minister of Health—SU. The 21 Tamil youths who were kept under detention will be released today and permitted to return home—VK. Construction work on the new hospital at the Peradeniya Campus with Japanese aid is to be suspended as a large number of gems have been unearthed at the construction site and because the Minister of Agriculture has pointed out that it is not suitable to build a hospital at the entrance to the historic and beautiful city of Kandy. The Minister of Posts and Telecommunications has said that the government has decided to increase the pay of all workers of government corporations and private enterprises—DM. The Flour Milling Corporation is taking steps to produce flour from raw rice and it is making every effort to find out the best method to stock rice flour without its perishing. The Minister of Finance has said that the 1½ lakhs in the last ten months—LD. Home Minister Charan Singh, the number two man in the Indian government said a top level decision taken yesterday had sounded the death knell of India's ruling

Janata Party; he was reacting to the decision of the Janata Parliamentary Board which has demanded an explanation from Health Minister Raj Narain for 'carrying on a tirade against the Party President and questioning the legitimacy of the party executive. India's ruling Janata Party yesterday officially acknowledged that growing indiscipline within the party has damaged its image. China yesterday attacked the Soviet Union and the US for making space a sphere for fierce contention—CDN. The Carter administration yesterday proposed an emergency petrol rationing and warned that credibility could be hurt at next month's Bonn economic summit if congress does not pass an emergency programme.—CDM. The Soviet bloc in a surprise policy shift reported yesterday has agreed that West Germany can boost army strength on a small scale even if force levels in Central Europe are frozen—SU.

SUNDAY, JUNE 25: 'Our government is concentrating on the development of our resources which will mean employment for our youths, men and women; I have often stated that the biggest problem is employment for our youth men and women; I have often stated that the biggest problem we have to face today is that a million and a half unemployed will have to be found opportunities for using their brains and their hands; I place among our priorities employment first, employment second and employment third said the President yesterday when he inaugurated the Lunugamwehera Project. The proposals by the Minister of Finance and Planning incorporating the new tax proposals passed by the NSA contain extensive incentives to boost Sri Lanka's development effort. The customs yesterday cracked open a multi million rupee racket where-

pore purportedly to be transhipped to the Maldives via the Port of Colombo are being systematically smuggled into the island. Classless and faster trains with the utmost comfort will shortly be introduced on long distance runs by the CGR said the Minister of Transport. Millions of yards of locally-made textiles—both synthetic and cotton—are piling up at the stores of the Department of Textile Industries and the Wellawatte Spinning and Weaving mills due to the slow movement of locally made textiles—ST. Action to set up a 'State Services Employment Reserve' to absorb redundant, incompetent and inefficient public servants is now being finalised by the Ministry of Public Administration and Home Affairs. Job opportunities for skilled workers are rising substantially in the private sector a survey commissioned by the Ministry of Plan Implementation reveals. The Chinese Vice Premier gifted a sum of Rs. 4000 to the Maligawa temple when he visited Kandy yesterday—SO. On the recommendations of the Appropriate Technology Group of Sri Lanka, the President has approved wide scale cultivation of indigenous herbs in selected rural regions. The Foreign Office in Colombo is to recall the Sri Lankan diplomats in Nairobi, Kenya shortly. In the course of his address at Lunugamwehera the Minister of Irrigation said that politics should kept out of the classroom and the children should leave school with a free mind—WK. The Minister of Finance has stated that these who for the first time involve themselves in small industries, fishing, cattle rearing, growing of subsidiary food crops and fruit growing will be entitled to a five year tax holiday—VK. The first MP for Batticaloa, Mr. S. Rajadurai went to participate in the TULF General Committee meeting amidst great jubilation among all party

members; this was the first time after the general elections that he has attended a general committee meeting—CM. A snake farm with poisonous snakes from here and abroad is to be set up shortly to research and produce cures for snake bite—RR. More than six hundred workers of the former PM Indira Gandhi's Congress Party who had promised to donate blood equal to her weight today gave nearly 372 pounds, three times more than Mrs. Gandhi's weight to the Red Cross Society. The Rhodesian authorities said today black nationalist guerillas had killed thirteen white missionaries, women and children near the Mozambique border—the worst such slaughter in the bloody five year war. The 11th Yugoslav CP Congress ended today with a resolution naming President Josip Broz Tito party leader for life—WK. Red brigade leader Renato Curcio and 28 other members of the guerilla group which murdered former PM Aldo Moro were yesterday sentenced to jail terms totalling almost 200 years: Curcio, brigades chief ideologist and Pietro Basi received 15 year terms each—ST. President Carter said he would not let the Soviet Union push the US around while he was trying to improve detente and research a new agreement on limiting strategic arms—SO.

NEXT WEEK

- * ONE YEAR AFTER—2
—Our Begging Bowl
 - * BETWEEN THE LINES
—IMF, EMS And The Grand Design
 - * POLITICS OF THE WEEK
—Parties And The Press
 - * INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS
—Whither Detente?
-

Confidentially

Dharmista Tid-Bits

IS IT TRUE that on July 3, 1978 at 11.30 pm a political VIP had turned up in his jeep (the number is purposely withheld at this stage) at the Customs Dock Gate in the company of a lady and a naval officer? That it is alleged that they were the worse for liquor? That, as was to be expected, there was trouble with the Customs, Police and the Port Commission's officers? That the trouble had started when the Political VIP had refused to let the officers examine three bags under the jeep? That at first the VIP had refused to disclose his identity but had done so ultimately? That the incident could not be hushed up and inquiries are said to be progressing?

IS IT NOT A FACT that in a premier Corporation of the Government there is a great deal of heart-burning (on obviously legitimate grounds) about certain appointments which savour of the horrible old days of the seven bad years and not the Dharmista days of the Jayawardene era? That in this Corporation, shortly after the UNP came to power, a person from electorate "X" was appointed to a post with the high-sounding title of Personnel Officer (PO)? That shortly after that, the post of the Deputy General Manager (Personnel and Administration) fell vacant because the person who held that post had allegedly misused state vehicles (this, we are told, is a fact and that he had also been guilty of other misdemeanours)? That before anyone could say 'Jack Robinson' the new PO got himself pushed into this post not on a resolution adopted by the Board of Directors but by vir-

tue of a fiat from somewhere on high? That this new DGM (P & A), no sooner he got into the saddle, started misusing official vehicles? That often, it is said, he took the vehicles home during the weekends? That many high-ups in the Corporation had expressed disapproval about the misuse of vehicles by this parachuter from electorate "X"? That he was too powerful for anyone in the Corporation? That there are now whispers that the Audit had raised queries about five thousand (5,000) odd unauthorised miles covered by this person but the queries had vanished like mist before the morning sun when the super-power had intervened? That it must be said to the credit of the Dharmista component in the government that after this encounter with the audit, this mini-VIP from electorate "X" now uses the public transport for most of his travelling? That there were sighs of thankful relief that the PO promoted DGM (P & A) has been compelled to use public transport? That it is said that another person also from electorate X has been made a Supplies Officer or Manager at the highest point of the salary scale? That this person has the eminent qualification of not having stepped into any Supplies Section before? That all this will not matter but for the gossip that this "raw" Supplies Manager (with a fresh and open mind on all matters of Supplies) from electorate X will soon be made a Working Director? That in anticipation of this he has been given an official car (make and number withheld) taken from a pool in another department in the same Ministry? That this has stirred up a hornet's nest with questions as to how a car belonging to one statutory body could be handed over to an individual holding a comparatively insignificant job for private-cum-official purposes? That others from electorate X have

also parachuted and leap-frogged into high positions? That overnight an unknown becomes Secretary of the Board and then in next to no time leap frogs to grab the post of Chief Administrative Officer? That the President, Prime Minister and other leaders of the UNP will do well to check this abuse of power in appointments in public Corporations? That a Presidential Commission is now beginning its inquiries into the abuse of power of the last regime? That unless the UNP High Command puts a stop to this galloping rot, history will repeat itself when the abuse of power by the present administration will come under scrutiny of a strict, ruthless and youthful government?

IS IT ALSO TRUE that the funny business of corruption is not confined to the lower echelons of power? That a reader has asked us to investigate a story that has begun to gain currency in knowledgeable circles? That a Minister is now alleged to be busy getting himself a new super-duper office in a building where one of the departments in his Ministry is housed? That the building is being redone on a lavish scale? That the new floor, new wall-tilling, panelling etc. etc. would cost a fortune? That at the end of the "renovation" the place would be a good enough for a palace for the princes of Saudi Arabia or even the Shah of Iran? That questions are being asked as to whether this kind of wasteful expenditure to uphold arrogance and abuse of power is necessary to house a Dharmista Minister? That the fate of Ministers in the last Government who spent money in getting Don Carolis to do up their offices must be recalled? That they were wiped at the last elections? That expenditure in "renovating" their ministerial offices started them on their downward path to defeat?

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