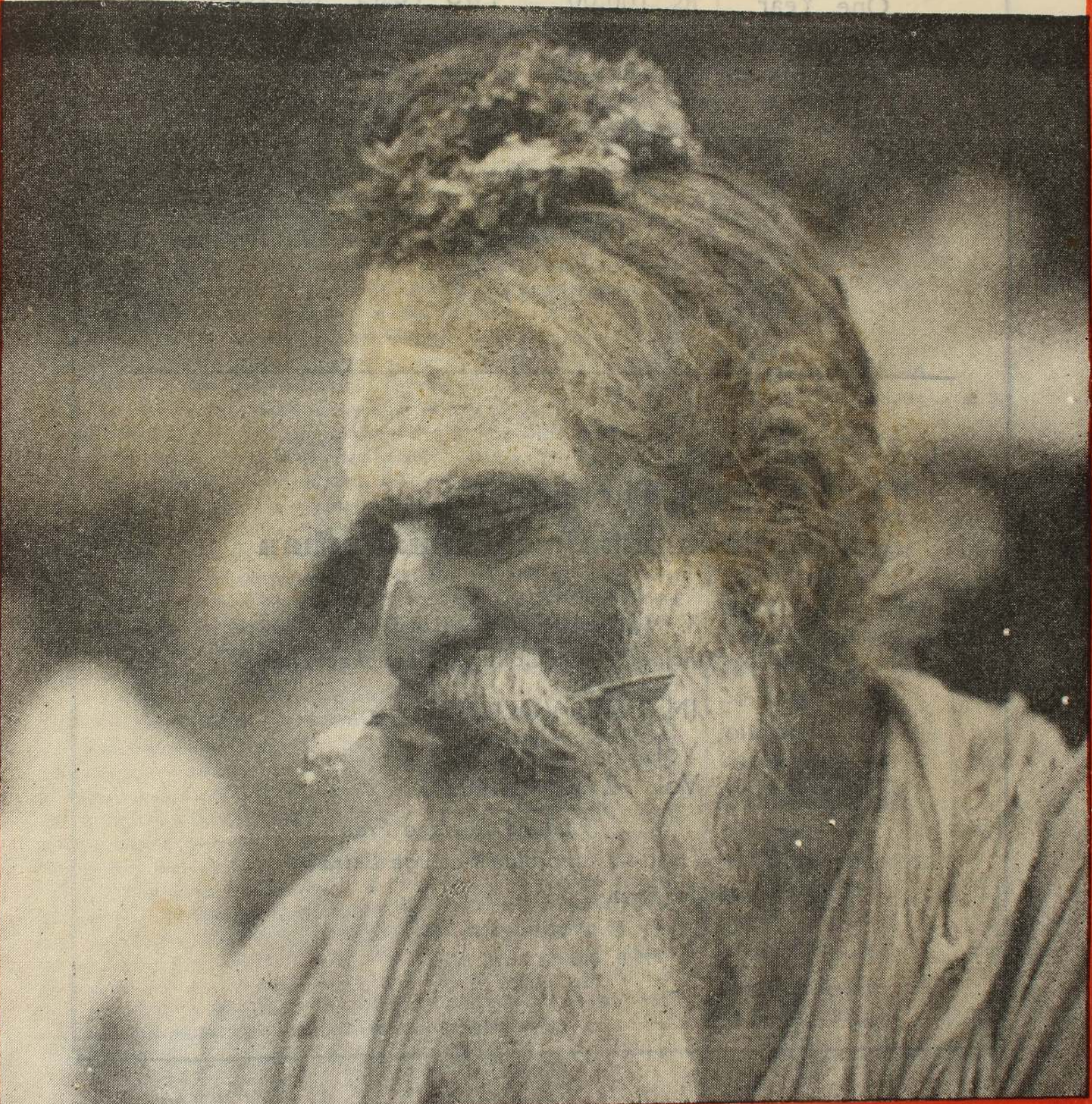


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Letter From The Editor

THERE ARE SOME who torture themselves seasonally to atone for what they believe are sins they think they committed in a past or even the present birth. We do not propose to go into the metaphysics of such beliefs or practices, but we have focussed attention on our Cover this week on a holy-ash smeared Hindu who has thought fit of inflicting a little punishment on himself—only to remind ourselves that all of us must torture ourselves, some a little others more, to cut out the cackle and get down to doing a real job of work to develop this country and to produce more to fulfil at least the minima of the economic targets Government wants to achieve in the next two or three years. Work will not come easily to many of us. Too many of us have become lotus-eaters in a land of subsidies sustained by foreign loans and clarity, unwilling to forgo even a small part of 180 odd days of holidays a year and reluctant to do an eight hour stint every working day. Unless we, all of us who can work, torture ourselves into working more, this country has no future. The best plans of this Government, or of any Government for that matter, will be of no avail. How people, especially young people, are to be induced to work is one of the most difficult challenges before this Government. Thirteen months of Dharmista Government, interspersed with fervent appeals, at frequent intervals more recently, for increased work and production do not seem to have the desired results, and a new Ministry of Youth Affairs and Employment has been set up not only to channel youth to the new avenues of employment the Government hopes its economic plans will generate but also to infuse the necessary catalytic enthusiasm to promote greater production and productivity. Even a scheme of para-military regimentation may be considered necessary to make a start and set an example. The youngest Minister ever has been entrusted with this job and if he succeeds in mobilising Sri Lanka's youth to reach out to substantial productive work, Ranil Wickremasinghe will assure himself of a great political future. But, immediately, he is up against what appears to be a blank wall. One question that must be sorted out without delay is the actual number of unemployed persons. According to the Ministry of Plan Implementation that of an estimated figure 1.2 million unemployed, only 350,000 or approximately a third, have applied for Income Support. And this has cast serious doubts about the number of unemployed in the island. It may be that many employed and under-employed persons have registered themselves hoping for better jobs. The Income Support Scheme, really a Dole, makes provision to pay Rs. 50 every month for every person who is without any form of gainful employment. The Ministry of Plan Implementation has been entrusted with the task of putting the scheme into operation, and of the 1,000,000 forms issued, the number returned claiming Income Support, from chief householders and heads of families from all 22 districts is only 355,799. Of those who have applied about 10 to 20 percent are disqualified, while a similar number will qualify for in respect of two beneficiaries and will receive Rs. 100 a month. The Ministry estimated that about 315,000 people will be eligible for Income Support and the amount required to pay the beneficiaries between July and December 1978 would be around Rs. 105 million. The Dole is a necessary concomitant of capitalist private enterprise, and the brave talk about Sri Lanka being "socialist" is only an empty catchword. The Dole will stay with us as long as we go along the capitalist road. Neither pundits nor politicians can decide whether it is better to have private enterprise with the dole or public enterprise with subsidies. A little bit of both will not do, professors say. It must be one or the other.

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EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

Current Developments In Sri Lanka

PRESIDENT JAYEWARDENE is expected to go to India on October 27 for talks with Prime Minister Morarji Desai and other Indian leaders. The details of his programme, have not yet been worked out, but official sources indicate that among the places Mr. Jayewardene will visit are centres of Buddhist pilgrimage. It is admitted that there are no major problems between the two countries and the talks are expected to focus attention on economic co-operation. With the granting of fundamental rights for ten years to the stateless and other residents of Indian origin in Sri Lanka, many of the worrisome human problems that have baffled politicians and administrators from both countries for decades have been smoothed over until human solutions emerge in an atmosphere of goodwill.

It is a happy augury for Indo-Sri Lanka relations that President Jayewardene should have decided to go to our nearest, largest and most important neighbour first. There have been speculations whether he will go to Japan or China before he went to India. Japan is one of Sri Lanka's biggest investors and loan and aid givers. The Japanese have also been playing the Buddhist card in a big way and it was known that pressure was being applied to persuade the President to go to Japan first. Similar pressure, it is said, had come from other quarters to induce President Jayewardene to visit China first— for, apart from the new role China has assumed in the current geopolitical convulsions, she is Sri Lanka's largest trading partner for exports as well as imports.

There are, however, good reasons why the Sri Lanka President should visit India first and thereafter the other countries in the region like Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal and Burma before venturing further afield. Ethnic, religious, cultural and philological ties from the beginning of time bind India and Sri Lanka. And, today, political, geo-political and economic considerations make it essential for India, Sri Lanka and the other countries in the region to work closely together.

The Jayewardene Government has taken many steps to increase economic co-operation with our neighbour and India has responded in no uncertain way. To mention just one, a team of top Indian businessmen visited Sri Lanka recently and it is likely that India will not only buy more from Ceylon (to bridge the persistently large trade gap) but also invest in the FTZ and other sectors. Lines of credit have already been increased to enable Sri Lanka to purchase machinery, buses, etc. etc. from India.

A report from New Delhi in the *Hindu* of August 24, indicated the areas of possible development: "A series of measures, including an investment guarantee agreement have been recommended for increasing industrial and commercial co-operation with Sri Lanka by a delegation of industrialists, sponsored by the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry. The delegation, headed by Mr. H. S. Singhania, Vice-President of FICCI, spent a week in Sri Lanka in July exploring the possibilities for Indian investment in the new free trade zone and other parts of the island country. Mr. Singhania told pressmen after presenting the delegation's

report to the Government that the Katunayake investment promotion zone offered attractive incentives and the island as a whole offered a good market for a variety of Indian goods and services. Among the fields identified in the investment promotion zone were: assembly and manufacture of bicycles, auto parts manufacture, electrical and electronic items, garment manufacturing units, paints and dyes, processing of minerals, rubber products, salt and wood based industries. In other parts of the island, the potential areas were: concrete transmission line poles, diesel engines and marine engines, electrical and electronic appliances and equipment, food processing, housing contracts, mini-sugar plants, paper and pulp based on soft wood, plastic equipment, power tillers, railway sleepers and coaches, rice milling solvent extraction, textile machinery and woolen blankets. Off-shore and deep-sea fishing, growing of spices, flower and fruit cultivation, animal husbandry as also mining development and processing also offered scope for collaboration, according to Mr. Singhania.

"In regard to bilateral trade, the delegation felt that efforts should be made to increase imports from Sri Lanka, as a large trade balance in India's favour was a matter of great concern to the island. Apart from increasing imports of items like graphite, cloves, and cocoa, possibilities could be explored for increasing the intake of items like gems and semi-precious stones, apatite, a kind of rock phosphate, as also some quantities of paper and cement in which Sri Lanka was reported to have export surplus at present. The delegation has pointed out that apart from export credit extended by the government from time to time, the Industrial Development Bank of India could consider offer-

ing commercial credit to finance purchase of machinery and equipment from India for the projects to be set up in Sri Lanka by Indian entrepreneurs as also others. The delegation has suggested that prospective Indian investors should keep in view the raw material availability and scope for either buy-back arrangements or exports to third countries. Locating the right partner is another important issue which requires to be looked into.

"Suggestions made for consideration of Sri Lanka authorities broadly relate to the need for reviewing the pricing policy of land in the investment promotion zone and mitigating the problem of financing the project both inside and outside the zone. The delegation has recommended early conclusion of an investment guarantee agreement to protect Indian investment against expropriation and arbitrary action arising as a result of political turmoil or instability. It was also felt that the double taxation avoidance agreement, concluded in 1957, required review and revision. The new agreement should ensure that Indian entrepreneurs in the island were not to bear a higher burden on account of differential tax rates prevailing in either country. While steps should be taken to activate and strengthen the International Tea Promotion Association, it was felt by the delegation that India and Sri Lanka should forge bilateral joint arrangements for blending, packaging and marketing of tea with a view to deriving greater benefit in international markets."

In addition to this, a scheme is likely to be put into operation whereby tourists from India will be able to encash Indian Rupee Travellers cheques in this country and thereby help to reduce the trade gap.

The Weekend of September 10 had a write-up about this: "Very

soon there will be Indian Rupee Travellers cheques encashable in Sri Lanka on the same lines of the Dollar and the Pound Sterling travellers' cheques. This is one of the significant proposals that is being made by a special team from Indian Federation of Chamber of Commerce that made a feasibility study in Sri Lanka recently. A pointed reference has been made in the special report submitted by the team to the Indian Government to develop tourism between the two countries. The team has suggested that India should promote tourist traffic in Sri Lanka by organising 'package holidays' especially during the off-season and include tourist spots in the island as part of the package tour programmes, which India organises periodically for tourists from Western Europe, USA, Japan and West Asia. If the proposal is acceptable to the Lankan authorities it should be organised on a reciprocal basis, the report has indicated. According to economic circles, the Indian traveller to Lanka is a prospective element in the Lankan tourist industry. He has a good buying power in view of the open door liberalised foreign exchange regulations against the rising foreign currency in the region of five billion US dollars. The Indian tourist will also be in a position to contribute in no small way to purchase new consumer products that will be manufactured in the Free Trade Zone, these sources pointed out. The Indian economic team has proposed further negotiations between the two countries in order to overcome problems arising as result of visa requirements. Besides the possibilities on tourism, the team has proposed that Sri Lanka consider granting facilities to Indian Banks to have their branches with offshore funds similar to facilities that will be granted to other foreign banks. This would

go a long way in lessening the financial problems for possible Indian investment in the Free Trade Zone. India has also expressed that prospects of promoting two way trade are equally promising. The possibilities of exchange of manufactured goods for internal consumption has also been underscored by the terms. India is keen, on greater co-operation in the field of shipping and it has made a serious proposal to have a conference line between the two countries, sources added."

President Jayewardene has also laid the foundations for better relations with India by taking a conciliatory attitude to the Tamil minority offering them far-reaching concessions in the form of fundamental rights and other constitutional guarantees. Many leading Indian newspapers have reacted to this by welcoming these concessions as well as praising the new Constitution. *Lake House* and *Times* group papers now regularly cite editorials from Indian papers like the *Hindu*, *Statesman*, *Times of India* and the *Hindustan Times* commenting favourably on developments in Sri Lanka. These newspapers of India big business naturally welcome the pro-private enterprise and pro-foreign capital economic development plans of the Jayewardene Government.

BUT THE CROWNING COUP in President Jayewardene's strategy was to concede fundamental rights for a ten-year period for the stateless persons of Indian origin and thereafter invite Thondaman of the CWC to be a Minister of full Cabinet rank. The weekly *Independent* (which has recently very realistically come out strongly against the suicidal policies of the TULF) summed up this development in a front-page box in its

issue of September 15, entitled-**JR'S MASTER MOVE:** "Mr. Thondaman's elevation to Ministerial rank and the CWC-UNP tie up are given considerable political significance by political commentators. *Firstly*, it will improve Indo-Sri Lanka relations tremendously. Mr. Thondaman, is the leader of the Indian community though he is a (registered) Ceylonese. He has been accepted as a linkman between the Indians and those of Indian origin here and the Government of India. He has also been their spokesman both here and in India. *Secondly*, by appointing Mr. Thondaman as a Minister, President Jayewardene has effectively spiked DMK support for the TULF. Earlier, the TULF depended heavily on the physical and moral support of the DMK. Equally, the majority community's major fear of the TULF lay in whatever alliance or sympathy they had in South India or Tamil Nadu. Not any longer. With the appointment of a Tamil of Indian origin as a Minister of this Government, Tamil Nadu support for the TULF will definitely be on the wane. 'The President, true to form,' said a government high-up, 'has outfoxed the TULF, won Indian support and allayed Sinhala fears—all in one master move. He has also squashed TULF's trade Union muscle.' To the TULF, Mr. Thondaman's joining the Government, is a severe blow though they parted as friends. The CWC support was a morale booster to the TULF. Now their strength has been sapped. 'As for the CWC taking trade union action against the Government, forget about it,' asserted a CWC spokesman. 'We are with the UNP'.....".

There is also no doubt that the most significant factor in the long-awaited reshuffle is the admission of Thondaman into the Cabinet. The switch-

over of Mr. Ananda Tissa de Alwis from the post of Speaker—a function he had discharged with finesse, acceptance and élan—to the new post of a Minister of State had long been expected. It has been on the cards for a long time. There are today speculations, in knowledgeable circles that when the President goes abroad and Prime Minister Premadasa acts for him, whether it will be Mr. Ananda Tissa de Alwis who will act as Prime Minister in Parliament?

EXCEPT FOR THIS, the Reshuffle exercise has not inspired any new outburst of confidence. Departments have been shunted around among the same old tired faces. The new Ministers—Ranil Wickremasinghe, Thondaman, Harold Herath and Ranjit Atapattu—are still untried dark horses. Much is expected of Mr. Ananda Tissa de Alwis, but will he be able to rise to the occasion with the kind of bureaucracy he will inherit?

The *Lake House* and *Times* being faithful camp-followers of the Establishment, welcome everything done by the President and the Government with servile acceptance. Only the *Sun/Dawasa* group occasionally show traces of independence in analytical comment. (The party dailies, *Aththa*, *Janadina* and *Dinakara* rely on hard words and abuse and whatever interpretative analysis there is in their papers is lost in the rush). Gamini Navaratne, who writes regularly in the *Sun* and *Weekend*, had a hard-hitting piece entitled **CUT OUT THIS CACKLE: SO MUCH IN 13 MONTHS ON SEPTEMBER 11** in his *Power and the People* column.

"President Jawardene once said, 'After a general election, for one year a new Government

celebrates its victory and is settling down; the last two years before the general election are devoted to how to win the election that is to come; the period during which new measures can be adopted and implemented hardly exceeds two years.' He was saying that the five-year period was not enough. That was some time in 1966. I am interested in a different aspect of that statement: that, after a general election, a new government celebrates its victory for one year. I am tempted to ask: isn't this to some extent what has happened under the present Government in its 13 months of office? Scanning the newspapers of this period, one would see that there has been celebration after celebration, tamasha after tamasha. Tamashas mean money; somebody's though not necessarily of the politicians involved... Tamasha also mean speeches, necessarily of the politicians. Some politicians have made so many speeches that by now they seem to have forgotten what they said before, or even immediately after the general election. Cackle, cackle, cackle, it has been, like some hens before they lay their eggs not after. I say, enough is enough, of anything; especially of politicians speeches of the great things they are going to do in the distant future, not the immediate present. I would say, cut the cackle and lay the golden egg of "peace, plenty and prosperity" for all promised during the election. The cackling can come afterwards, which is the proper time for it.

"The reconstituted Cabinet must have come as a disappointment to those who, like me, had expected major changes. Anyway, as President Jayewardene has said on a number of occasions, politics is the art of the possible.

so that we see so many old faces in old places. The only 'young blood' infused into the Cabinet this time is Mr. Ranil Wickremasinghe, son of Mr. Esmond Wickremasinghe. He seems to be a particular favourite of the powers that be. He has been given a very sensitive portfolio—Youth Affairs and Employment. Perhaps, he will have the guidance of his father, who has some definite views about our employment problem, in playing his new role. The only other new Minister is the very old Vana Ena Kana Runa Savumiamoorthy Thondaman. At 65 years, he is older than many of the present Ministers, but in heart, mind and spirit, he is younger to many of them. I hope that the Legislature, renamed Parliament under the new Constitution, would be a different place from the National State Assembly, in the sense that there would be some discussion before bills, resolutions, reports and estimates are passed, even though it might only be a monologue among members of the Government side. Because, then, the public, who foot the bills, would at least know what they are paying for. In recent times, Government business has been transacted so fast that we in the Press Gallery had hardly time to read the order paper before the presiding officer said, 'The ayes have it.' Millions of rupees are passed and important pieces of legislation pushed through without even those members moving them making any explanation. As happened on September 6. For instance, the repeal of the People's Committee Law, a very significant and controversial piece of legislation under the previous regime, took less than one minute. This is not a healthy trend, to say the least."

Every thinking person will endorse every word of Gamini

Navaratne's analytical strictures and forebodings.

THE UNEXPECTED DEATH

of Mr. Shelton Jayasinghe, Minister of Posts and Telecommunications, two days after the inauguration of the new Constitution, has created new problems for the President. In Mr. Shelton Jayasinghe, the President counted one of his staunchest loyalists who had stood by by "JR" through thick and thin for as long as one can remember. He had done well as Minister of Posts & Telecommunications. (Incidentally, he is the second Jaysinghe to die suddenly in the Eighth Parliament—both being Ministers who were doing well. In the case of the first Jaysinghe, S. de S., there was a by-election in the Dehiwala electorate which he represented and his daughter Sunethra Rupasinghe was returned with a comfortable majority as the UNP candidate. But in the new Constitution by-elections, even before the general elections on proportional representation take place, have been abolished.

But the vacancy created by Shelton Jayasinghe's death creates special problems. Manik de Silva of the *Observer* on September 12, 1978 focussed attention on this particular problem: "Political circles were yesterday studying the new Constitution to determine the method by which a successor to Mr. Shelton Jayasinghe is nominated to Parliament. Informed sources said that the nomination would be done under Chapter 21 which lays down the transitional provisions but pointed out that there were two clauses which may become applicable. It is likely that legal opinion will be consulted before the vacancy for Mr. Jayasinghe's Wattala seat is announced. Political sources said that the procedure for nominating a successor to the late Minister could lie under clause 161 (d) (i) read together with sub-paragraph (iii) of the same clause.

"This states: "Where immediately before the commencement of the Constitution there was a vacancy in the National State Assembly or where a vacancy in the membership of the first Parliament occurs otherwise than under paragraph (b) of this Article (this relates to an unseating by election petition), such vacancy shall be filled by sub-paragraph (iii) thereof". This sub-para states inter alia that the Secretary General of Parliament shall "forthwith" inform the Commissioner of Elections of such vacancy and the Commissioner shall thereupon require the political party to which the Member belonged to nominate a member of such party to fill the vacancy. Upon the receipt of such nomination, the Commissioner is required to declare the nominee to be the Member for the electorate where the vacancy occurred. There is no time frame laid down within which the party must make its nominations or the Commissioner the declaration. The Secretary-General of Parliament has to however "forthwith" inform the Commissioner of the existence of the vacancy. The past practice has been for such communication (previously made to the President for purposes of fixing a by-election) be made after the funeral of the member has been completed. Alternatively, political circles said that section d (ii) of article 161 may be used for filling the vacancy. This section is really meant to cover a vacancy arising as a result of a member resigning or being expelled from the party on whose ticket he was elected. This section provides that 'where a member ceases by resignation, expulsion or otherwise to be a member of the recognized political party to which he belonged at the commencement of the Constitution, his seat shall become vacant upon the expiration of one month from the date he ceased to be a member of such party.'

"Some observers believe that this section too could apply as the

member, by his death, had ceased to become a member of his party. If this is applied the vacancy will be considered to have arisen a month after the death. Most observers believe that the former course of action would be followed but the Parliamentary authorities are likely to seek some legal guidance before the vacancy is declared.

Various names have been mentioned as possible UNP choices. One favoured name is that of A.C. (Bunty) de Zoysa. It is pointed out that the Wattala-Jaela (including Ragama) areas had long been a virtual pocket borough of the De Zoysa family and their affiliates dating back to the days of the redoubtable Francis de Zoysa. The Rajapakses and others of the same kin had represented an electorate in the same belt. And now, it is agreed, it is Bunty's turn.

By the time this column appears, the choice will probably have been made. This is the age of surprises and nobody can know what the President has up his sleeve in regard to the Wattala seat.

TOWARDS THE END of this year the system of proportional representation will be used for the first time in a mini-general election (for local government bodies) involving a million voters in 10 Municipal Councils and 33 Urban Councils to start functioning from February 4, 1979.

Two parties which will seek the right to fight the elections might create problems for the Elections Commissioner. One, is the All-Ceylon Tamil Congress, led by Kumar Ponnambalam (G.G.P.Jnr.) and the other the Vasudeva Nanayakkara's LSSP (Vasu insists on calling his outfit also LSSP!)

The local government elections is bound to be another tamasha (a necessary one which cannot and must not be avoided). It is to be hoped that urgent developmental

and productive work is not postponed because of the local government elections. Sri Lanka cannot afford to rush from one tamasha to another, one crisis to another and one election to another.

FURTHERMORE, in the decades after Independence, the country's progress and development had been held up and thwarted by unnecessary strikes. Wildcat strikes, unnecessary strikes and pointless political strikes had added to the man days of work lost to the nation every year. It can be truly said that this country had drifted (sometimes rushed) from tamasha to tamasha, from crisis to crisis and from strike to strike during the entire period after Independence. It is time this is ended.

Though there has been talk about an all-island strike for some months, the announcement was made only a short time ago that a one-day protest strike will be staged on September 28. The Sun of September 8, reported that the CFL CALLS FOR TOKEN STRIKE ON SEPT. 28: "The Ceylon Federation of Labour, together with the other members of the Joint Trade Union Action Committee, has decided to launch a one day's island-wide general strike on September 28, according to a CFL statement. In its statement the CFL accused the UNP Government as having already abandoned most of the pretences and broken most of the promises with which the UNP deceived sufficiently large sections of the people to secure an overwhelming majority in the last elections." The Statement notes that laws have been changed so as to introduce emergency regulations into the normally operative every day legal system, and that the Republican Constitution has been replaced by one that gives to a single person, the President, dictatorial powers. The strike demands include the restoration of rations

of rice, sugar and other foodstuffs, restoration of all suppressed democratic rights and civil liberties, and a reduction in the prices of all essential commodities to reduce the high cost of living. A joint conference of all organisations represented in the Joint Trade Union Action Committee is expected to be held in Colombo shortly to give effect to the token general strike decision".

The Observer of September 13, reported that the JTUAC PREPARES FOR STRIKE: "The Joint Trade Union Action Committee comprising 17 opposition trade union federations has announced a token general strike for September 28. Mr. Alavi Moulana, President of the Sri Lanka Trade Union Federation told the "Observer" that the main demands are an interim allowance of Rs. 150/- for all employees, restoration of the subsidies and the stoppage of political victimisation. According to Mr. Moulana trade unions belonging to the SLFP, LSSP, CP, LSSP (Vasu Group), CMU, Ceylon Bank Employees Union and the Democratic Workers' Congress would participate in the strike. The strike is scheduled to begin at midnight on September 27 and end on the midnight of September 28. Unlike in previous strikes the Joint Committee will not hold a public meeting on the day of the strike Mr. Moulana said. However trade unions of the SLFP have organised a mass meeting on September 27 to commemorate the death anniversary of late Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike."

September 28 was probably chosen because all workers would have collected their pay packets for the month. Workers cannot afford to risk losing their pay even for a month.

THE GOVERNMENT, as expected, reacted very sharply to this strike threat. The Daily News on September 14 had a frontpage banner headline **TOKEN STRIKE**

POLITICALLY MOTIVATED : STATE OR CORP EMPLOYEES WHO PARTICIPATE WILL LOSE THEIR JOBS : "Any employee of the State or Corporations services who participates in the token strike planned by the Joint Trade Union Action Committee for September 28 will be treated as having vacated office. A communique issued by the office of the Cabinet of Ministers states : "The Government has taken note of the decision of the Joint Trade Union Action Committee to stage a token general strike on September 28, 1978. The demands for which the strike is called refer to political matters and are not relevant to any issue arising out of an industrial dispute. The Government has therefore decided to treat any employee of the State or the corporations services who participate in the token strike on September 28, as having vacated office."

The Sun of September 14, stated **GOVT. TAKES TOUGH STAND ON STRIKE :** "The Government has decided to take a tough stand in regard to the proposed token strike scheduled for September 28 by opposition trade unions. A communique issued yesterday by the Office of the Cabinet of Ministers said the Government would treat any employee of the State or the Corporation service, who participates in the token strike as having vacated office. The entire text of the communique is as follows : 'The government has taken note of the decision of the Joint Trade Union Action Committee to stage a token general strike on September 28, 1978. The demands for which the strike is called, refer to political matters and are not relevant to any issues arising out of industrial dispute. The Government has therefore decided to treat any employee of the State or the Corporation services, who participate in the token strike on the 28th of September as having vacated office'".

Present indications are that

the JTUAC plan to go ahead with the September 28 strike. There is no doubt that the SLFP, LSSP and CP want to test their strength through this strike. The government, on the other hand, also wants to test its own strength in the trade union sector.

In the years past, especially in the fifties, sixties and even the seventies, the fortunes of the country had also gone from one strike to another. In the euphoria of being a "radical" and "socialist" state, strikes of every kind became endemic in the country. Only the United Front of the SLFP, LSSP and CP had tried to cry halt to a trend these self-same parties had perpetrated. A LSSP Minister of Finance broke the Bank Clerks Strike in 1972/73 and the last has not been heard of it.

But, this time, the LSSP has not only taken the initiative for the token strike but has assumed its leadership. The SLFP, CP, DWC, and others tied to their apron strings for the moment, seem willing to fall behind the CFL and the LSSP under the umbrella of the JTUAC.

The CWC is opposed to the strike and is with the UNP unions and the government. The TULF according to *Lankapuvath* is opposed to the strike on September 28 : "The TULF trade union leaders, it is learnt, have told the Joint Trade Union Action Committee, which is organising the strike, that they would only join them if they included in their list of demands, their demand for the immediate withdrawal of the government policy of penalising certain categories of workers who failed to attain proficiency in the official language Sinhala, and the demand for the re-employment of all those who had been discontinued from service in the past for failing to attain a minimum qualification in Sinhala."

The General Secretary of the CFL issued a statement on September 15 : "The Ceylon Federation of

Labour (CFL) wishes to point out to its membership that the statement issued by the Government that it would treat employees in the Government and State Corporation sector as having vacated posts in the event of their participation in the one day general strike on the 28th is a threat that cannot legally be carried out. In defence of his threat the Government says that the demands for which the strike is called refer to political matters and that they are not relevant to any issue arising out of an industrial dispute. But what are these demands? The demands concern and specifically refer to wages in a context of the devaluation of the rupee and inflation, the supply of essential and basic consumer commodities at reasonable prices and the threat aimed at democratic freedoms and trade union right. The threat which is the subject of this news release can be cited as an example of the last matter. All these demands directly and pointedly refer to the terms of employment and the conditions of labour of workmen. It is precisely this type of demand that gets included within the definition of 'industrial dispute' in the Industrial Disputes Act. The type gets directly covered by the definition of "trade dispute" in the Trade Union Ordinance too and strike action on this type of demand is a legitimate activity of trade unions. Governments have at various times and in different countries sought for their own convenience, to take such activity as politically motivated or political activity and to resort to methods of repression. But the International Labour Organisation itself has pointed out that this is not a position it can accept without taking exception."

The argument of the CFL is defensive and apologetic quibbling that the September 28th token strike was not political but economic.

—O— —O—

THE WORLD TODAY

IRAN

IRAN: SPREADING REVOLT AGAINST SHAH'S AUTOCRACY

IRAN is in turmoil. Anti-Shah protests are sweeping the country. From the steelmaking centre of Isfahan, the protests have spread to other places. Many demonstrations have been held in Teheran, Tabriz, Ahvaz, Kermanshah, Arak, Qom, Kashan, Khorremabad, Qazvin, Ardebil, Shiraz and a score of smaller cities and towns.

Under popular protest, the Shah regime was compelled to withdraw its tanks from the streets of Isfahan. Martial law, however, remains in force there along with in 11 other cities. Many have been shot down but the intensity of the protest has not diminished. The anti-Shah protest in Isfahan is led by the illegal Isahian Trade Unions. The protest of Iranian workers, interestingly is joined by a significant part of Iran's national bourgeoisie, small and medium business and also by the religious groupings. Students and professionals are also in its midst.

The canard spread by the Shah's propagandists that it is the "fanatical muslims" who are leading the protest thus has no basis. It is an upsurge of forces opposed to the Shah's fascist regime and US imperialism. The latter in the last 20 years has sold to Iran arms worth more than 20,000 million dollars. It is on the strength of that arms supply, the CIA, and its Iranian attendant, Savak, that the Shah hopes to keep his rule going.

The following is a report by IPA on the roots of turbulence in Iran:

Both political and economic factors feed the current discontent in Iran which leads to the present turmoil. At the root of the matter is the Shah's bid to have the cake and eat it—to develop Iran as a modern state and yet not share the affluence and modernity with the people at large. This creates a dualism which erodes the monarchy from within. The contradiction is that the Shah wants to superimpose a modern capitalist ethos, at least its trappings, on an archaic monarchical system. As a result, the monarchy is being isolated all round: from the urban working class and the new intelligentsia, from the middle classes, the rural poor and even the religious leaders. The only exception is the small class of super rich businessmen, contractors and the bureaucracy, all closely related to the monarchy. These are the sections which have become fabulously rich as a result of the recent oil affluence of Iran, while the nation's economy remains in a state of external dependence, its fortunes being tied largely to the multinationals.

The turn of events in the current phase has been spurred by the economy's down slide since 1977 which has now acquired pronounced overtones. Iran has been caught in the throes of economic stagnation at a time when rising prices and cost of living need growing production. There is now a state of recession in Iran's economy coinciding with rising inflation. The demand for higher wages to meet the rising cost of living complete the chain. Iranian establishments, built on the know-how of multi-nationals, already face a top-heavy cost structure and find no way of meeting the present situation. A cut in wages will lead to a big explosion of popular discontent, while lowering of prices through strong anti-

inflationary measures would mean reversing the gear in respect of the economy.

If the militancy of the new turbulence in Iran is largely based on economic factors, the urban working classes being its fountain-head, the elite lend it a political orientation through their demand for a new democratic system and abolition of the monarchy. The irony is that the type of half-way house reforms, political and socio-economic, which the Shah has been inducting, only make the monarchy more isolated. The partial "liberalisation" recently introduced by the Shah is seen by the elite as a bid to save the monarchy rather than as a stepping-stone to full democracy.

Only the end of the monarchy and its replacement by a republican democratic structure will meet the demands of the present movement of students and the elite, now reinforced by the trade union movement as well as the religious leaders. The last, instead of providing the monarchy with support from the conservative strata are up in arms because of Shah's flirtation with a brand of modernism which concerns the life of the affluent sections. Induction of the culture of night clubs and strip-tease in the top layer of society only adds to prevailing discontent by bringing in the social aspect also. The religious leaders feel that the Shah's reforms are meant to erase the traditional religious ethos of Iran for the sake of appeasing American culture and ethos. The result is that even relatively backward sections of Iranian society are being drawn into the turmoil.

The Shah has to face a situation in which there can be no half-way house solution. Not only political but economic reforms will be needed to stem the tide of the popular movement by meeting its

demands more than half way. This is something that the monarchy and the strata allied to it cannot easily contemplate. "Appeasement" of this sort would, in their eyes, amount to connivance at those described as Islamic Marxists, now a term of terror and hatred among the affluent classes.

—New Age, New Delhi,
August 27, 1978.

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IRAN: FIGHTING FOR SURVIVAL —SHAHANSHAH

THE Shahanshah has said the whole country is fighting for national survival. The Monarch's statement came in an interview with the West German magazine *Stern*. Asked if he was now fighting with his back to the wall, the Shahanshah said: "Yes, I believe so. I mean, the whole country is fighting. It is a question of whether it is to remain free and independent."

The Shahanshah said there were less than 1,000 political prisoners in Iran and they were not being tortured. He said he had given strict orders that none of the prisoners should be tortured "and I am sure that my orders are being followed." Asked about the number of political prisoners in Iran, the Shahanshah replied, "What are political prisoners? I presume I know what you mean: Less than 1,000."

The Shahanshah said that the recent riots in Iran had been initiated by forces hostile to the state. "There were always people who could be stirred up easily," he added. The Monarch described as "a dirty lie" opposition claims that the State Security and Intelligence Organisation (Savak) had been behind the recent fire in the Rex Cinema in Abadan in which 377 people burnt alive.

The Shahanshah said he was paving the way for a liberal democratic state. "And I do not see any reason why the country should not have a legal parliamentary opposition if its members were elected in elections scheduled for next year," he said. However, such parties would have to swear an oath to abide by the constitution and to respect the monarchy, he added. Asked whether his liberalisation policy had been due to pressure from US President Jimmy Carter, the Shahanshah said: "Not directly. But our development has been affected by the fact that the human rights question has become more and more important." The Shahanshah said there was no basic obstacle to a settlement with Islamic religious leaders who have opposed some aspects of his government's policy. *Stern* said the Shahanshah defended the government's record over the past 15 years during which, he said, the average per capita income of Iranians had risen from \$ 160 to \$ 2,250.

—Reuter, Hamburg,
September 1, 1978.

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IRAN: NEW CABINET MAJOR CONCESSIONS TO CLERGY, OPPOSITION

PREMIER Jaafar Sharif-Emami named a 22-man government this week to forge national reconciliation and restore calm after the recent unrest in the country. Sharif-Emami made major concessions to the clergy and immediately launched contacts with religious leaders and the most vocal members of the opposition. In what was seen as a move to appease the grievances of the clergy, he announced the new portfolio of a Ministry of Endowments under the aegis of former Mar-

dom Party Secretary-General Ali-naqi Kani. He also reverted to the Islamic solar calendar, closed down all casinos and gambling houses, and was said to have used his good offices with prominent religious leaders to launch an immediate dialogue with them.

The Opposition, including members of the former National Front, were also contacted and showed signs of compromising from what had previously been a very rigid stance, and co-operating with the new government.

Only six members of the cabinet of Jamshid Amouzegar retained their posts. The retention of the ministers was seen by observers as a bid to keep some of the technocrats of the Amouzegar cabinet to ensure the smooth working of government affairs, especially with regard to the economy, social affairs and defence.

In a major surprise, career diplomat Amir Khosrow Afshar was named to replace Abbas Ali Khalatbari as Foreign Minister. It was the first change in the Foreign Affairs portfolio in many years and startled observers, especially as many expected it to be one area of the government that would not be changed with the visits of the Chinese and Japanese leaders so close at hand....

The only major portfolio dropped from the previous cabinet was the Ministry for Women's Affairs.

—*Kayhan International*, Teheran,
September 5, 1978.

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IRAN: NATIONAL FRONT DEMANDS DISSOLUTION OF SAVAK

THE reactivated National Front this week called for the dissolution of the State Intelligence and Security Organisation (Savak) and

demand the immediate release of all political prisoners in the country. In a communique issued by the provisional executive committee of the front, the safe return of all political exiles living abroad was also urged. Calling for the rehabilitation of all those who have been tried by military tribunals, the communique demanded that all such tribunals be abolished. Rejecting compromise with new Premier Jaafar Sharif-Emami's government, the communique said the only government acceptable to the nation would be one whose members have had no part in state policies during the past 25 years.

The National Front and its three affiliated political parties have been banned since 1963. The front declared, along with 11 other parties this week, that it was returning to politics. The move followed the new premier's pledge that free political activity would be allowed. Other points in the communique were: * Freedom of thought, speech, the press and political parties and associations should be restored. * All syndicates and other workers organizations should be allowed to pursue their own objectives and unrepresentative bodies like the Guilds Chamber and Iranian Workers Organisation should be dissolved. * All those responsible for the recent killing of demonstrators in the country, no matter who they might be, should be punished. * The return of all those exiled from their home towns in Iran. * The return of all black-listed Iranian dissidents living abroad. * The republication of folded newspapers and magazines closed down by previous governments.

—*Kayhan International*, Teheran,
September 3, 1978.

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IRAN: NEWSPAPERS ASK FOR END TO BAN

After being banned for 24 years, five newspaper managing directors have written to the Ministry of Information and Tourism asking permission to start their newspapers again. In their joint letter to the ministry, the managers said: "We, the undersigned, managers of newspapers which have been banned for the last 24 years, regardless of the Iranian constitution, hereby ask permission to begin operating our newspapers again. In the years following the banning of our publications we have repeatedly asked permission to start operating again, but our plea has been rejected. Since you have advocated a free political atmosphere and freedom of the press and speech we hope that our requests will finally be met." The letter, was signed by Ahmad Anvari of Parkash (Anger) Sadeq Shafraz of Cerdab (Wirilpool) Amir Soleiman Azima of Apadara, and Abul Faisal Qasemi of Jebbeh Azadi (the Free Front) and Ibrahim Karim Abadi of Asraf.

Another newspaper manager, Senator Kasem Massoudi of Arjang, is also hoping to start his newspaper again. Meanwhile, Minister of State for Executive Affairs Manuchehr Azmoun has claimed there are no banned writers in Iran at the moment. Speaking at a reception given by the Endowment Organisation at the University of Tehran Club, Azmoun said the government will work closely with all journalists and it will maintain its "relationship based on understanding" with the Writers' Syndicate. Referring to the government's sponsorship of Rastakhiz publications, Azmoun said that these will no longer receive any government funds.

—*Kayhan International*, Teheran
September 3, 1978.

IRAN: LOOSENING THE KNOT

On the face of it the timing could hardly have been worse. For months, much of Iran had been racked by political and social disorders, and barely a week earlier arsonists had killed some 470 citizens in a cinema at Abadan. The Arrival of China's Chairman, Hua Kuofang was only days away. Yet when the 13-month-old government of Prime Minister Jamshid Amouzegar wearily sent in its resignation to Shahshah Mojamed Reza Pahlavi last week, the 58-year-old monarch seemed positively relieved. That was hardly surprising, since the Shah himself had decided weeks earlier that nothing less than a new government would halt the quickening descent into nationwide chaos. In smart order, he appointed Senate President Jaafar Shariff-Emami to the prime ministership and gave him sweeping powers to bring the situation back under control.

Shariff-Emami, 68 next week, wasted no time in doing just that. One of his first decisions: the exiling of the deeply resented monarchic calendar introduced by the Shah himself two years earlier. With reversion to the Islamic calendar the year became 1357 instead of 2537; while wags in Teheran remarked that the country had thus been set back more than a thousand years, it was only one of several shrewd moves by the new Administration. Sharif-Emami, who was prime minister from 1960 to 1961, has a reputation for both moderation and determination. His own priorities were revealed in his appeal for national unity "to save our country under the guidance of the Koran, Islam and the Constitution." Despite his plump and somewhat owl-like appearance, he is "very fit" according to one

Iranian diplomat who has known him for fifteen years and met with him as recently as last month. Plainly, Sharif-Emami will need all the stamina he can muster if he is to rein in the sharply conflicting forces under the Shah's regime.

The main opposition comes from the religious leaders of the Shiite Muslim community, which forms 90% of the 34 million population. They have been deeply resentful of the Shah's efforts to "Westernise" the country, and are particularly bitter over moves to emancipate women and introduce land reform schemes that encroach on areas regarded as religious ground. To appease them, Sharif-Emami last week closed down all gambling establishments and announced a crackdown on "immoral" movies. Significantly, the new Cabinet contained no women—there was one previously—and the post of Minister of State for Women's Affairs was dropped. A diplomatic source predicts there will be few women in the Majlis (parliament) after the free elections that the Shah has promised for next June.

The new government also announced major political concessions including freedom of assembly and expression. Several political groups, hitherto no more than informal adjuncts to the one-party system, announced their intention to form separate parties. Opinions differed sharply this week on the new government's chances. A diplomatic source told *Asiaweek*; "If all the demands of the extreme groups aren't allowed to become policy, the chances of reconciliation are good." That is easier said than done. Teheran newspapers called for the dissolution of parliament, immediate elections, the freeing of political prisoners, the authorisation for all parties to exist and hold meetings, total

freedom for the press and permission for all Iranian exiles to come home. In the Shah's book, that would be too much of a good thing. Certain opposition groups regard the government's moves as merely tactical, aimed at defusing domestic tensions and currying favour with Washington. Writer Seid Djavari, author of an Iranian human rights manifesto, glumly predicted that the new government would change nothing. If he is right, the Shah's problems are only just beginning.

—*Asiaweek*, Hongkong.

September 8, 1978.

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IRAN: ARMY OPENS FIRE IN TEHERAN

The Army fired long bursts in Teheran on Saturday following yesterday's bloodshed after the imposition of martial law for six months. The busy bazaar streets were emptied in an instant as people fled at the new outbreak of shooting. Trouble was also reported in other parts of the capital. Several armoured vehicles and a heavy tank were stationed near the bazaar. Soldiers took up positions overlooking the maze of shops as reinforcements were brought in. Yesterday, 58 people were killed as the Army crushed Muslim demonstrations here against the Shah, according to an official figure. Other sources put the death toll at 200. When the first curfew under martial law went into effect last night, this city of nearly five million people fell suddenly silent, except for a few scattered shots. Apparently no major trouble occurred during the curfew in the capital. The army seemed to have met with little difficulty in clamping down martial law elsewhere, although news was lacking from the other 11 cities where a 1950 martial law act was also put into effect.

Police to-day searched the houses of several political opposition leaders including Karim Sanjabi, chairman of the National Front, and Mehdi Bazargan, chairman of the Society for Defence of Human Rights. Both men apparently had fled for fear of possible arrest. Informed sources said their houses were guarded by agents of the Savak security police, and their families were under surveillance. Iran's top Shiite Muslim leader the Ayatollah Shariat Madari, announced a day of national mourning to-day following the deaths of several dozen people shot by troops. He called on the Government to avoid causing "panic and restlessness" among the people.

The Shah has cancelled official visits to Rumania and East Germany scheduled to start on Monday. The Shah told Rumanian and East German diplomats he had taken his decision on account of the internal situation in the country. The Shah was to have visited Rumania from September 11 to 14 and East Germany from September 14 to 17. Meanwhile former Iranian Premier Amir Abbas Hoveida has resigned as personal adviser to the Shah, it was announced to-day. No reasons were given. Mr. Hoveida had been minister to the Imperial Court since August 1977, and before that Prime Minister for 13 years.

—AFP, Teheran, September 9, 1978.

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IRAN: TANKS STILL KEEP VIGIL IN TEHERAN

The Iranian capital was quiet today, two days after the proclamation of martial law in the wake of bloody riots by opponents of the Shah's regime. Work was going ahead to erase traces of street fighting on Friday in which 86 people are officially recorded as having died and more than 200

as having been injured. There was normal traffic in the city this morning after the dusk-to-dawn curfew was lifted. But tanks remained in position at the main crossroads.

Meanwhile, the most powerful Iranian Opposition party, the National Front, appealed to Iranians today to "intensify the struggle against a regime unworthy to govern." A party spokesman also reported that the two leading members of the party, Mr. Karim Sandjabi and Mr. Darioush Forouhar, had gone underground fearing arrest. They felt that following the appeal, the first to call for resistance since the introduction of martial law two days ago, party members would be in "great danger" the spokesman said. According to unconfirmed reports the President of the Society for the Defence of Human Rights, Mr. Mehdi Bazargan, has been arrested. In Parliament, the Shah's Government today introduced his liberalisation programme drafted before the current disturbances. A debate on the Bill is set for Tuesday.

Two Chieftain tanks guarded the entrance to Parliament and the surrounding district was cordoned off. Helicopters showered copies of the martial law proclamation on the capital. The text warned that anyone found guilty of acting against the constitutional monarchy or disrupting peace and security would be shot. The situation was near normal last night at Teheran airport. But incoming passengers were being driven under police escort in special buses from the airport. There were few reports about the situation in the provinces. According to newspapers, which gave no details, the Army opened fire yesterday at Mashad in Eastern Iran where martial law was also imposed on Friday.

In an interview with AFP, the Prime Minister, Mr. Jaafar Sharif

Emani, said martial law would end as soon as normal conditions were restored. His Government of "re-conciliation" would continue with its tasks. He appeared to view the opposition of the Shiite religious hierarchy led by Ayatollah Shariat Madari as more serious than that of political dissidents. He said that if political dissidents wanted to talk to him he would react favourably. "But we are not going to take the initiative ourselves." As far as the religious hierarchy was concerned, "we are still in contact", with them.

In the Majlis (Lower House of Parliament), Opposition members walked out of today's session after accusing the Prime Minister of responsibility in killing "a lot of people." Led by Mr. Mohsen Pezehkpur, Head of the ultra-nationalist Pan Iranist Party, they included three members of his organisation and five others. Another Opposition leader, Mr. Ahmad Bani Ahmad, close to religious circles, did not attend. He was at home on a hunger strike which he began yesterday in protest against the shootings on Friday.

The Prime Minister told Parliament the new programme included continuation of freedoms, and special attention to agriculture, youth and press laws. The present session of Parliament will also have to approve the martial law opposed on Friday for six months. The Minister of Science and Higher Education, Mr. Houshang Nahavandi, said here today the Government was planning "significant steps to root out corruption and restore order in universities. The war on corrupt people would start immediately. The Government would also give autonomy to university campuses.

Pakistan's Martial Law Administrator, Gen. Zia-ul-Haq, had long talks with the Shah last night.

Gen. Zia is thought in diplomatic circles to have discussed the Shah's

recent meeting here with the Chinese leader, Mr. Hua Kuo-feng.

The General left today on a pilgrimage to the Iman Reza mosque in the holy city of Mashad, 700 kilometres east of Teheran. He leaves Iran for Karachi tomorrow.

—Reuter, AFP, Teheran,
September 10, 1978.

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IRAN: SHAH WILL GO AHEAD WITH REFORMS

Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlevi of Iran says he expects that a continuation of the martial law and curfew he imposed last week will frustrate attempts by opponents to take over the country and will drive them to new violence, according to *Time* magazine. "We must expect new acts of sabotage and eventually terror, the Shah said in an interview published yesterday.

The US President, Mr. Jimmy Carter, lent his personal support to-day to the Shah while also calling for more "political liberalisation" in the troubled country. A carefully worded statement was issued by the White House Press Office reaffirming the US commitment to the embattled monarch.

—Reuter, New York,
September 11, 1978.

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IRAN: A BRUTAL MASSACRE THE COLD-BLOODED MAS-

SACRE of hundreds of demonstrators on the streets of Teheran and possibly in other parts of Iran will be condemned in the strongest terms by international public opinion. Significantly, the Shah had, in an interview a few months ago, boasted that he could rely at least on the strength and loyalty of the armed forces, and now the troops have evidently been instructed to open fire without the

slightest compunction on unarmed men and women who dare to come out in open protest. It is not yet clear to what extent or how long the armed forces will stand by the Shah when they are asked to turn their guns on their own brothers and sisters, but the nature of popular feeling in Iran is unmistakable. The dress-rehearsal for the present type and scale of repression was the wave of attacks, involving killing, arrest and torture, on student and youth demonstrators who came out on the streets earlier this year protesting against the autocracy and demanding democratic rights and civil liberties. The atrocity against the common people on Friday, the clamping of blanket curfew in all the major urban centres and the panicky round-up of opposition leaders of all hues—these indeed express the depth of the political crisis the Shah's regime is trapped in. The Shah has managed to offer to the world every kind of explanation for the present situation in Iran except what is perhaps closest to the truth, namely that his regime stands more isolated than ever before from masses of the dissatisfied people, who range across a wide spectrum of occupations, faiths and political affiliations. The Teheran massacre is a cynical confirmation of the course of action the Shah has opted for: a course that pays no heed to the moods, the feelings and the basic requirements of the people, but continually tightens the screws on them and drowns all dissatisfaction and civil protest in rivulets of blood. Such a course is likely to create embarrassment, if not serious problems, for the allies and apologists of the regime abroad—especially those who have taken up the slogan of human rights in international relations. But more important, by intensifying the shakiness and contradictions of the dictatorship and by teach-

ing fresh lessons of life and politics to the uninitiated sections of the people, it might usher in larger changes in this strategic region which are likely to have—in a political, economic and military sense—significant global consequences.

—Editorial, Madras Hindu,
September 11, 1978.

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BETWEEN THE LINES

BY SERENDIB

- On Judicial Restraint
- New Cabinet
- Agricultural Mix-up

PRESIDENTIAL COMMISSION ?

THE President according to the *Daily News* 16.09.78 had declared (under heading NO INTERFERENCE WITH THE JUDICIARY: PRESIDENT—PROBE WILL BE HALTED IF LAW IS BAD... SIRIMA COULD NOT HAVE GONE TO COURT UNDER HER JUDICIAL SYSTEM: "President J. R. Jayewardene said yesterday that if the Courts held that the law in regard to the Special Presidential Commission was bad the Government will abide by the verdict and stop the proceedings. He was speaking at the Prize giving of the Vidyodaya Pirivena, Maligakanda, Maradana. The President said that the Government will not interfere with the judiciary. 'You may be aware that the former Prime Minister has gone to Court against the Special Presidential Commission. I wish to point out that she has gone to Courts under the judicial system of our government. She could not have gone to Courts under the system which prevailed during her time, he said. President Jayewardene said that people should

have the courage to criticize what was wrong. Government has given the people that freedom. 'We will not lock a person in jail, or seize his passport, or cross examine him if he criticised the Government. On the other hand this Government welcomes criticism', he said. President Jayewardene said that it was such a society that they had in Sri Lanka. The people enjoyed the freedom of speech and expression. They could criticize the Government and no harm would come to them as long as they were law-abiding. President Jayewardene reiterated that in no other country in the world did people enjoy the democratic freedom that the people of Sri Lanka enjoyed. Although it was easy to create a free society, the setting up of dharmista society was a difficult task. Such a society could be set up only by example and only the Sangha could help to achieve that. The Government felt it was wrong to allow the sale of liquor to persons under 18 years and the slaughter of animals. Steps would be taken to gradually prohibit such things by law."

This is a reassuring statement. Many blind adherents of the Establishment have begun to deify the three members of the Commission and have even claimed that they were above criticism. The questions that some members of the Commission ask and the comments they sometimes make will sooner or later rouse a storm of protest from fair-minded persons who believe that judicial restraint is the hallmark and essence of true justice. The Shah Commission in India was sharply criticised for making up its mind—as questions asked by Justice Shah had indicated—before he heard the other side. The Weeraratne Commission can fall into the same pitfall if the members do not take care

to see that they are not carried away by an embullient prosecution which is being conducted by flamboyant brilliance.

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ON THE CABINET RESHUFFLE :

A long-standing reader of *Tribune* who wishes to remain unnamed has sent us this interpretative and analytic comment on the Cabinet "re-shuffle" effected on September 7th and 8th. His comments were dated September 10. Much has happened after that and he will probably send us a further comment soon. The writer's style is acidic but his information is penetrating.

It was not unexpected in this Dharmista Raj that there would be no major reshuffle of a Cabinet chosen by the President himself a year ago from the material available to him, taking no doubt into consideration amongst other things, loyalty, seniority, and of course the experience and ability to carry through Cabinet responsibilities entrusted to each.

On this score Minister Gamini Dissanayake the youngest of the front liners must be a very happy man for having the prestigious subject of *Lands* added to his heavy responsibilities with *Irrigation* and *Mahaweli* no doubt in recognition of his abilities and achievements, while his colleague the Agriculture Minister E. L. Senanayake must feel very much a worm borrowing in one of the numerous paddy stacks rotting in the country, for three fifths of his important subjects have been unceremoniously removed. The few other changes don't carry the same significance. Speaker Ananda Tissa de Alwis' field is the "Media" and Tourism, being an advertising man and advertising itself being on the thresh-hold of striking new dimensions, what with

a free economy and T.V. just round the corner.

For Minister D. B. Wijetunge, the most honest and honourable gentlemen from the electorate in the hill country, has been given no mean task. 'Power' is the vital force for the Greater Colombo Development and Economic Free Trade Zones, for urban development, rural electrification and new industrial development elsewhere. "Power" which until last year was thought to be surplus and available for export to India, but ironically an Indian expert from India's Energy Planning Secretariat came here under the auspices of the UN and found that we will be short of power for our Rural Electrification Program by 1980, not to speak of the other huge areas of development.

Our bulging highways spilling over with the rapidly expanding traffic and commuting populations is another formidable task. Shipping and port thugs on the one hand and our "kota uda" national airlines are much beyond the ken of the toughest men in the Cabinet. So it is only fair that our only fair member, Mrs. Wimala Kannangara has been saved further trials and tribulations by being given the subject of Rural Development. When the District Ministers are appointed this subject will become as important as any other. Rural Development will be the criteria for District Development. The alignment of "Trade and Shipping" with Minister Athulathmudali is no doubt once again recognition of the Minister's capabilities and achievements the last year.

Ranil Wickremasinghe's elevation to Ministerial rank puts him amongst the records as the youngest Minister in post independent Sri Lanka. No doubt the President watched him closely during the last year during which he has conducted his Junior Ministerial responsibilities at an international level with youthful

saue and sagacity. Rightly, he therefore gets the most difficult job of "Youth Affairs and Employment."

And finally we have the tenacious, diligent and thorough S. Thondaman's entry into the Government ranks as the representative of possibly 10% of the population although as M.P. he represents only 1/3 of Nuwara Eliya-Maskeliya electorate. Fittingly he has been entrusted with the important subject of "Rural Industrial Development and Livestock Production" although the second part has been kept silent to save embarrassment to the Minister of Agriculture from whom *Lands* and *Livestock* have been removed. The Milk Board, the Livestock Board, the Oils & Fats Corporation and the Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Divisions of the Department of Agriculture with all the farms and staff comprise one massive area of responsibilities. The task is even greater and more forbidding because Minister Thondaman is getting the most run down and neglected subject from 1970 right through 1978, packed with warring factions, sycophants who will dance attendance on the Minister prattle and from behind this facade get their own way, as Mr. Senanayake must now realise. He has also inherited a harak veda thug with VVIP connections who was too formidable for the previous Minister to tackle. He also gets a chief Kobbekaduwa policy maker, the man in charge of Animal Husbandry who removed the Up-country areas from the livestock development field in 1972 in order to deprive the estate labour earning better incomes through dairying. Dairying in the up-country will obviously be one important strategy of the new Minister. Who will tackle this job? Is it again the Kobbekaduwa lieutenant from a Kandyan village with the slick tongue? Or will Minister Thonda-

man find a new man to head Animal Husbandry in Sri Lanka?

The Industrial Development Board is another neglected body, but with great potential. The powers that were in the Ministry of Industries treated the IDB as an unwanted step-child as appropriate intermediate technology and the base for rural development. The Tobacco Small Industries Corporation has been under fire and its valuable cattle farm with imported animals was decimated not long ago. There is big money and huge employment potential in tobacco.

All in all the new Minister's task is an extremely formidable one. Not only has he got the neglected and discarded subjects however important these might be for the future well being of this country but also a host of men who destroyed these sectors during the last Government and others who have misled the present Minister of Agriculture as well. Why was the Secretary, Agriculture, a man who has spent his entire public service with "Lands" moved to this new Ministry with subjects entirely foreign to him? A logical question is whether it is because he fell short of his responsibilities or was it because he was successfully manoeuvred out by designing persons.

Will someone give our readers the inside story?

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE :

Yet another reader, who uses the pseudonym "Agrecon" has sent *Tribune* a comment and clarification on a letter to the Editor that had appeared in the *Tribune* of Sept. 2. This is what he writes :

"Apropos to the letter to the Editor from the "Young Agriculturist" Peradeniya under the above caption in the *Tribune* of 2nd Sep-

tember 1978, we must thank the writer for laying bare the truth of what is wrong with the Department of Agriculture, which surprisingly is no secret, being common knowledge among the 30,000 employees in the department, but remains unknown to the leaders in this country and the authorities in charge of the portfolio of Agriculture. Or is it that in this Dharmista era, the very men who planned and plotted and worked to destroy the UNP and destroyed whole areas of the economy in the process are elevated to higher ranks, mind you with Cabinet approval?

Yes, such a case was indeed the appointment of Bandaranayake (no relation of Bandaranaike) as Director of Agriculture by the present Government last year. The country was shocked by this appointment as with many others in the agricultural sector, a sector considered the most important for this country. One year later one can see today the build-up of ill effects on account of such bad appointments.

It is of course a well known malady in this country that soon after elections, well known dark blues and even various shades of reds all took on various shades of green by the simple process of fawning behind a Minister and finding the right connection to someone in the centre of power. Some Ministers thrive when they have sycophants like flies around them. The warning of Fifth Columnists within the government in the *UNP Journal* of 9th September 1977 went unheeded. Thus virtually all the Kobbekaduwa/Mahinda Silva protagonists who were amongst the most active anti-UNP actionists in the Ministry of Agriculture and the departments and corporations under this Ministry found more secure and higher positions under Mr. E. L. Senanayake.

It is not surprising therefore that only after one year, Mr. E. L. Sena-

nayake has lost half of his portfolio. In any other country under any political 'ism' a state minister found incompetent would resign and so would his Secretary. Not in Sri Lanka. It never happens. See for example Bandaranayake's case referred to in the *Tribune* of the 2nd September 1978. The unique case of a Director of Agriculture reverting to a Deputy Director due to sheer incompetence. If Mr. E. L. Senanayake had been given another portfolio say, Rural Development, it would have been a part of the reshuffle. But to be stripped of vital subjects of "Lands" and Animal Husbandry and still continue as Minister of Agriculture can only happen in Sri Lanka.

One can at random pick out a dozen cases of politicians and top politicians and top bureaucrats who go from strength to strength after their incompetence and even scandalous misdeeds are made public. It is a pity that our new Republican Constitution does not provide for the automatic removal from office of such men. It is a gap which this government may want to rectify one year from now.

One year from now this Government will have only 4 years and 7 agricultural seasons left to lay a firm organisational framework which is the key to self-sustained dynamic agriculture in Sri Lanka. Mr. Mahinda Silva's strategy was this. This Government does not seem to have still understood the basics of agricultural and livestock development. If it did, sound legislation such as the Agricultural Productivity Law of 1972 would not be removed from the statute book. Instead the 20 year and more out-of-date enactments would be revised and the incompetent and self seeking top men and the organisations which safeguard their privileges in the Ministry of Agriculture, in the new Ministry of Industrial (and livestock) Development, in the Department of

Agriculture and in several Corporations in this sector, would be replaced by men who understand the socio-economic and neo-political thesis of the present Government and new dynamic organisations which are the crying need of the day....

THE AVRO AFFAIR:

There are many baffling aspects to this episode that needs careful investigation and comment. It is also necessary to critically scrutinise all that has appeared in the newspapers and to relate them to realities.

A Special Investigator is doing a detailed survey for *Tribune*, and as soon as it is ready, his report will be published.

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FOR THE RECORD

● TULF ● CWC
● SCM

RESOLUTION ADOPTED AT THE T.U.L.F. 2ND NATIONAL CONVENTION HELD AT AVARANGAL ON, JULY 30TH 1978.

Whereas the first National Convention of the Tamil United Liberation Front meeting at Pannakam on the 14th day of May 1978 declared that the Tamils of Ceylon by virtue of their history of independent existence, as a separate state over a distinct territory were a separate Nation distinct from the Sinhalese.

And whereas the same Convention resolved that the restoration and reconstitution of the free, sovereign secular, socialist state of Tamil Eelam based on the rights of self determination inherent to every nation has become inevitable.

And whereas, at the General Elections held on 21st July 1977 the Tamil United Liberation Front sought the mandate of the Tamil Nation to establish an independent, sovereign secular socialist state of Tamil Eelam, that includes all the geographically contiguous areas that has been the traditional homeland of the Tamil speaking people in their country.

And whereas the Tamil Nation, demonstrated unmistakably that it has exercised its right of self determination to establish the state of Tamil Eelam by returning with preponderant majorities 18 of the 23 candidates fielded in Tamil Eelam.

And whereas, after the elections: (a) in August 1977, the armed services of the Government and Sinhalese communal fanatics unleashed planned inhuman violence involving acts of murder, looting, rape, grievous hurt and arson amounting to genocide on the Tamil people.

(b) due to these acts and continuing acts of intimidation, directed against the Tamil people it has become impossible for the Tamil people to live in the Sinhalese areas.

(c) even Tamil people who have lived among the Sinhalese for generations were forced to flee to Tamil Eelam in their thousands as refugees having lost all their belongings.

(d) even after all these events, the Government of Sri Lanka and the Sinhalese leadership have in the draft constitution presented before the National State Assembly, imposed on the country a unitary constitution under which while a few rights are given to the Tamil Language, Sinhalese is enshrined as the official language and pride of place is given to Buddhism, without the slightest recogni-

tion of the need to find a fundamental solution to this situation. (e) The Government has refused to recognise the traditional homeland of Tamil Nation and has rejected their right to sovereignty and self determination. It is established beyond any doubt that there is no way for the two Nations in this Island to live together in one state.

The second National Convention of the Tamil United Liberation Front assembled at Avarangal on this 30th day of July 1978 resolved "to establish the independence of Tamil Eelam by peaceful means or by direct action or struggle" as announced in its election manifesto.

This National Convention further calls all sons of Tamil Eelam, living in this Island and abroad to contribute one percent of their income to finance the rehabilitation of the Tamil people who fled to Tamil Eelam escaping the horrors of the August genocide, for the settlement in Tamil Eelam, of Tamils who are being dislodged by threats and compulsion from their homes in the Sinhalese areas, for the protection of areas of Tamil Eelam, ravaged by attacks by racial extremists as part of their movement for liberation.

This convention further calls upon able bodied Tamil young men and women to realise that the preservation of their homeland is their prime duty and to join in their thousands, as Tamil refugees service volunteers and be prepared to sacrifice everything in the service of Tamil Brothers who have come as refugees to our territory and to safeguard the Tamil Soil.

This convention directs the central working committee, to take immediate action to enlist international support to achieve the freedom of Tamil Eelam, and at the appropriate time to convene a National State Assembly of Tamil

Eelam to draft a Constitution for the state of Tamil Eelam and to bring it into operation.

— *Sutantiran.*

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RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL OF THE CEYLON WORKER'S CONGRESS ON TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 5, 1978.

The Executive Council of the Ceylon Workers' Congress conscious of the fact that the people of Indian origin, bulk of whom are plantation workers, have been effectively denied participation in the mainstream of national life and in all avenues of human development for the past thirty years by their disfranchisement and other acts of discrimination by successive Governments; reiterates that the isolation of and the discrimination both in law and practice against this community should end forthwith thus removing the impediments in the way of this community integrating with the rest of the society.

The Executive Council notes with satisfaction the active participation of the Ceylon Workers Congress Political Wing in the deliberations of the Select Committee for the Revision of the Constitution and the support given to the Bill in the National State Assembly. While acknowledging that the new Constitution has not sufficiently met all hopes and aspirations of the minorities, the Executive Council recognises the fact that as far as the stateless persons are concerned the new constitution is an improvement and a step forward; and for the first time it affords the people of Indian origin the opportunity to come into the mainstream of national life.

In this context the invitation extended by His Excellency J. R.

Jayewardene to the Ceylon Workers' Congress Political Wing to join the Cabinet is a step towards that direction. The Executive Council therefore, resolves to authorise and direct the Political Wing of the Ceylon Workers' Congress to co-operate and meaningfully participate in the Government of His Excellency J. R. Jayewardene and accept the invitation to serve in the Cabinet."

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RESOLUTIONS PASSED AT THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE STUDENT CHRISTIAN MOVEMENT OF SRI LANKA HELD IN SEPTEMBER 1978 ON THE THEME 'HIGHER EDUCATION IN SRI LANKA TODAY'

Higher Education

Resolution I

We of the Student Christian Movement of Sri Lanka call for a speedy settlement to the on going crisis in the field of Higher Education.

We note with anxiety the recent steps taken by the University Authorities in the name of implementing a solution to the University crisis.

The attempts to prevent free discussion, dissemination of ideas through hand bills and holding of meetings within the Campuses have threatened the rights and freedom of the university community and could well reduce the Campuses to the level of Maha Vidyalayas. The withdrawal of these freedoms one by one and the suspension of some students from the University in order to suppress the student community at large is not a solution to the crisis.

We feel that any solution aimed at reorganising/restructuring the field of Higher Education should

arise from a continuous dialogue amongst teachers, students and the broader sections of the community. Therefore we urge the Authorities to publicise the proposed Higher Education Act as a White Paper, giving the public sufficient time for discussion prior to its presentation as a bill in parliament.

We also appeal to all those who are concerned about the present situation in the field of Higher Education to take steps to prevent further deterioration of the conditions on the Campuses and recognise the democratic freedoms of the academic community.

Resolution II

We of the Student Christian Movement of Sri Lanka are disturbed at the hasty decision of the University Authorities to close down certain student hostels. This decision has caused the students severe hardships. We appeal to the authorities to reconsider this decision.

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POLITICS OF THE WEEK

BY NARADA

**Wijeweera
Thondaman
Tamils**

JVP AND THE PRESS

In this column last week, there was a reference to all recent JVP statements on policy matters. Apropos one such press statement which had appeared in the *Daily News* of September 2, the paper published a clarification in its issue of September 13 as follows: "JVP leader Mr. Rohana Wijeweera, referring to a news item in the *Daily News* of September 2, under the

headline "Barbaric acts of Sirima Govt. will be exposed", states: "I refer to the report of the Press Conference held at our office at 14, K. Cyril C. Perera Mawatha, Colombo 13 on Thursday August 31, 1978, which was published in the *Ceylon Daily News* of Saturday, September 2, 1978. I would like to state that this report contains several statements supposed to have been made by me, which are, incorrect.

"1. The statement that I said that "the Republican Constitution drafted by the United Front Government was merely a heap of socialist jargon. In this context, the Constitution of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka drawn up by the present Government was somewhat better", is incorrect. What I said, in fact, was that both Constitutions were bourgeois Constitutions as far as we were concerned, and that therefore one was no better than the other.

"2. The statement that I "agreed with the President" that "the Government should muster all its forces to crush any attempt to disrupt national development activities" is also incorrect. To a question asked as to whether we considered the President's recent remarks about "attempts to disrupt national development activities" to refer to us, my response was that the President had not referred to the JVP by name in this reference, and that, therefore, we would not accept this statement as referring to us."

"3. The statement that I said that the "JVP would soon launch a trade union for workers named the Socialist Labour Union" is also incorrect. What I actually said was that we would organise workers within existing trade unions under the name of the Socialist Labour Union."

IT IS ALSO INTERESTING to place on record what writer, Gamini, has to say in his

columnist *Last Page* in the CP fortnightly *Forward* of 15.07.78 about Wijeweera: "In his travels abroad in the West, JVP Leader, Rohana Wijeweera, chose West Germany to discuss his future hopes and plans with the Press. According to *Weekend* (9/7) Mr. Wijeweera told the newsmen that 'Moscow' which 'threw him out' was about to dish the 'tottering' Communist Party of Sri Lanka and 'recognise' him instead. He spoke of 'important discussions' that he hoped to have in 'Moscow' and 'Cuba'. For what it is worth, he added that when he formed the government he was 'assured' of support from the Soviet Union and Cuba. Such boastfulness and disregard for facts are familiar enough with Mr. Wijeweera, who likes, as Lenin once said to Trotsky 'to dazzle the school boys'.

"But if he knew anything about the international Communist movement, he would not have made such slanderous imputations against the Communist Parties of the Soviet Union or Cuba. To judge from Mr. Wijeweera's remarks, these parties are some sort of international business organisation which appoints and changes its "agents" in other countries. As for Mr. Wijeweera, he will be visiting Cuba at the end of the month as one of the 100 delegates from Sri Lanka, who include UNP, SLFP, TULF, LSSP, CPSL and JVP, youth organisations as well as representatives of various religious, sports and youth organisations, although party leader Mr. Wijeweera had chosen himself as a representative of the JVP youth. Like all other delegates, Mr. Wijeweera has to catch a special plane in Moscow which will fly the Sri Lanka delegation to Havana. Like them, he has applied for, and obtained, a transit visa for this purpose. How all this is blown up by Mr. Wijeweera into "important political discussions" and "recognition", only

he can explain. On his level of argument all the other political parties included in the delegation must also be "recognised".

"One is glad that Mr. Wijeweera who some time ago described the USSR as a "degenerate workers state", a term he obviously picked up from his Trotskyite legal adviser, Bala Tampoe, now sees merit in the USSR (and Cuba) and wishes to improve relations. But bluffers will always have their bluff called, especially when they try to make mountains out of mole-hills."

What has Wijeweera to say to this?

THONDAMAN'S APPOINTMENT:

While the "reshuffle", as such, has been something of disappointment, the appointment of Thondaman is one of the most significant developments in this country. Peri Sundaram had become a Minister (really a Chairman of a Committee) in the first State Council of 1931 owing to the fact that plantation workers at that time enjoyed the franchise and the mechanics of the Donoughmore Constitution made it possible for Peri Sundaram to become a Minister. But in the second State Council of 1936—which survived until 1946/47 (until replaced by the first Parliament under the Soulbury Constitution)—the mathematical genius of Suntharalingam (in permutations and combinations) and the crafty manipulative political machinations of D. S. Senanayake brought a Pan Sinhala Ministry at the apex of the Donoughmore system of Government in 1936.

In the first Soulbury Parliament 1946/47 the estate plantation labour was represented by six or seven Ceylon Indian Congress (CIC) MPs, but the plantation voters had also

helped LSSP and radical Independents to win seats in marginal electorates in the plantation areas. This and other factors led to the disenfranchisement and de-citizenisation of the entire Indian Tamil community through various pieces of legislations between 1948 and 1951. From the 1952 General Elections in 1952 until the 1977 elections, the Indian Tamils were without an elected representative in the legislature—in some parliaments they had one nominated MP by the grace of the ruling party.

The history of the Indian Tamil community in Sri Lanka in the period after Independence is a fascinating subject especially about the way political trends had developed. This is a study which a group of researchers in political science should undertake as a priority because it will reveal the true undercurrents in the entire spectrum of the political history of this island in this period. Thondaman played a central and pivotal role in this entire period, from the first Parliament to the eighth Parliament, from the futile Satyagraha of 1951/52 to equally abortive creation of the TULF in 1972 which ignored the real interests of the Tamils of recent Indian origin in the Hill country, (as the Ceylon Tamils have always done and still do), by resorting to the suicidal rhetoric and slogans of Eelam.

The astute political genius of Thondaman alone continued to keep the CWC within the TULF until it was no longer possible to do this. Even with the transformation of the political scene in this country by the victory of J. R. Jayewardena's UNP in 1977, the TULF (FP & TC) was not able to shed itself of the negative (and often stupidly shortsighted) policies it had adopted in the period 1951-1977. But the CWC under Thondaman was able to charter a new course of positive co-operation with a national party

(though dominated by the Sinhalese) while still being an integral part of the TULF. It is unfortunate that he could not carry the TULF in to participating in the Select Committee for the Reform of the Constitution and thereafter offering at least limited responsive co-operation to the Jayewardena Government. The story might very well have been different if S. J. V. Chelvanakam, G. G. Ponnambalam and M. Tiruchelvam had been alive at this time. This is one of the 'ifs' of history for which nobody can offer an answer.

Thondaman's action in reacting positively and constructively to overtures and concrete gestures by the Jayewardena government is classic example of political realism at a high level of pragmatic politicking. He made it impossible for the TULF to quarrel with him or blame him, but nevertheless he quickly broke away from the TULF (or what is left of it because the TC has also quit the organisation) to follow a new course that marks a new chapter in the political history of the island. The TULF is now back again where it was in 1951 as the FP but without S. J. V. Chelvanakam. Amirthalingam's leadership (with distant echoes from the Tigers) has already proved a disaster for the Ceylon Tamils and if he continues to be the chief factor in the TULF of FP, more disasters are in store for the Ceylon Tamils. Who but an Amirthalingam will go out of the country at a time like this to be deified by expatriate Tamil groups in London and expound his infantile Eelam theories over the BBC.

To come back to Thondaman, in his statement in Parliament on crossing over on September 7 according to the *Ceylon Daily News* of 13.08.78: "Mr. Thondaman said that the event was a happy harbinger to communal harmony and mutual development. He said he was glad he participated in the Select Committee set up to draft the new Con-

stitution. He said he was thus able to convince the Government of the many problems that faced the so-called Stateless persons working in the plantations. 'I was able to make the Government understand these problems and a number of amendments moved by me were accepted, the most important of which was the granting of fundamental rights to Stateless persons', Mr. Thondaman said. He said the CWC had unanimously approved his acceptance of a Cabinet post. The members of the CWC were not lawyers or highly educated persons. They were plantation workers who had made up their minds without any persuasion from anybody that their representative in Parliament should join this Government. This was of historic and economic importance for this country because the membership of the CWC was today the backbone of the economy of this country: He said that up to now the plantation workers had no participation in local government or in any other branch of government activity. This was a tragedy because this sector of the country's population constituted the mainstream of the very life of this country. There were political parties who were sympathetic to the cause of the plantation workers but only this Government had done something positive on behalf of them for the very first time in the political history of this country. Mr. Thondaman said he was therefore glad to associate himself with the Government."

The *Hindu* of September 8 had a despatch from its correspondent in Colombo which spotlighted other aspects of his statement: "Making a statement in the House on the circumstances that led to his organisation accepting the President's invitation, Mr. Thondaman said before independence, people of Indian origin who numbered about a million had seven elected represen-

tatives in the House of 95 and Tamils of Northern and Eastern Provinces also had a similar number of representatives. Since independence, successive governments pursued a policy of discrimination against this people and disenfranchised the entire community and as a result, there was not even one elected representative of Indian community in Parliament until last year when he was elected as the sole representative. For the last 30 years, they had been neglected, ignored discriminated against and everything possible done to prevent his people from joining the mainstream of national life. Today, a new era had dawned and opportunity afforded for his people to integrate with the rest of the population. Mr. Thondaman said as member of the committee on revision of the Constitution he had opportunity to pin-point discriminatory acts of previous regimes. Various amendments he proposed to the Constitution with a view to remove these discriminations against his community were graciously accepted and today even stateless persons have been granted all fundamental rights enjoyed by other sections of the people. His proposal to have voters' lists throughout the island published in Tamil had been given effect to and for the first time after 30 years the plantation workers were given the right to exercise franchise in elections to the local bodies. Taking all these factors into consideration, Mr. Thondaman said, his organisation had unanimously decided to join the government."

And after taking his oaths as Minister, Thondaman respected the prevailing sentiments in the country by calling on the Mahanayake and other Theras in the Malwatte and Asgiriya Chapters in Kandy. The *Daily News*, 13.09.78, reported this and it is reprinted here for the record: "Communal harmony and religious unity are imperative for the development of this country.

Every one, irrespective of religion or race must come forward for the betterment and progress of the country. 'We must not forget that even though we belong to different races and profess various faiths we are children of one mother—one nation. In that context it is commendable that a Tamil had come forward to function as a Minister and unite with the rest of the population. I congratulate him and wish him well', said the Ven. Sirimalwatte Ananda, Mahanayake of Malwatte, conferring his blessings on Mr. S. Thondaman, Minister of Rural Industrial Development when the latter called at the Malwatte temple to pay his respects to the Mahanayake. Mr. Thondaman was received by the chanting of seth pirith by the Mahanayake and other Theras. Mr. Thondaman said he was glad he was able to visit that historic temple and pay his respects to the Mahanayake and receive his blessings. 'The people in the west', Mr. Thondaman said, 'in spite of all their affluence and strength had no peace of mind as they lacked spiritual content. But the teachings of the great servants and masters in the east gave the people in countries like Sri Lanka and India a moral satisfaction. These religious leaders have greatly influenced the lives of the people'. He pledged he would do everything in his power for the country's prosperity. Later Mr. Thondaman visited the Asgiriya Chapter and was received by the Ven. Palipane Chandananda, Mahanayake Thera. Mr. Thondaman offered a tray of jasmine flowers at the shrine at the 'poyage' and monks chanted seth pirith. The Ven. Mahanayake Thera said that the plantation workers were toiling for the country's prosperity. He was happy to greet their selfless leader in the temple. Sri Lanka and India for centuries had cultural and religious ties. The appointment of Mr. Thondaman, the Ven. Maha-

nayake hoped, would further help promote those ties and foster greater unity between the Sinhala and Tamil peoples. It was essential that people in a small country like Sri Lanka lived unitedly. Only then could the country expect progress and prosperity. He blessed Mr. Thondaman and hoped he would be able to fulfil these aspirations. Mr. Thondaman said even though the plantation workers played a major role in the country's economy, they could not do so in the field of politics. That situation had now changed and President Jayewardene had granted that opportunity. Mr. Thondaman pledged he would work for the welfare of all the people irrespective of race or religion and would strive for the prosperity of the country. He hoped that the blessings of the Mahanayakes would help him in that quest. Later Mr. Thondaman visited the Temple of the Tooth and was received by the Minister of Education and Higher Education and Diyawadana Nilame, Dr. Nissanka Wijeyeratne. Mr. Thondaman offered flowers to the sacred shrine."

It is only when the leaders of the FP overcome the inhibitions inculcated in many of them by American Christian influences and learn to co-exist and maintain friendly relations with the Buddhist Mahanayakes that full communal harmony and national unity can be restored. Before the advent of Christianity and Christian missionaries and armies, the Hindus and Tamils had lived amicably with the Buddhists and Sinhalese—except for dynastic quarrels. It is history that a number of Tamil Buddhists had been chief priests at Anuradhapura, and all Buddhist kings had Hindu temples in close proximity to Buddhist shrines.

It is a quirk of fate that Thondaman has opened a new chapter in Sinhala-Tamil relations and not the leaders of the FP (no more the TULF) from

For the down-trodden, disenfranchised and discriminated community of Tamils of recent Indian origin, he has brought a new beginning. The *Hindu* of September 2 summed up some of the benefits that were likely to accrue to the stateless; "For the first time since the coming into force of the Citizenship Act and the Immigration and Emigration Act in 1948, stateless persons of Indian origin are to enjoy the right of visiting India with travel documents issued by the Sri Lanka authorities. They have stayed put in Sri Lanka for the last 30 years. As they did not belong to Sri Lanka or to India, neither country was prepared to issue them any kind of travel document. This prevented their going out of the island. An amendment moved by Mr. S. Thondaman, President of the Ceylon Workers Congress and accepted by the Government to Section 14 of the new Constitution, has altered the situation. Under the amended Section, all legal residents in Sri Lanka, including stateless persons of Indian origin are guaranteed freedom of travel for 10 years. This means the "stateless" will have to be issued some kind of travel documents. This unexpected concession will give them an opportunity to see the conditions in India to which the majority of them will be repatriated ultimately. Among the stateless, there are two categories—those waiting for the disposal of their citizenship applications and those whose application for citizenship of either country has been rejected. Both are categorised as stateless. Yet they are legally resident in Sri Lanka and no power on earth could eject them from Sri Lanka despite any agreement between the two countries. The Sri Lanka government hopes that a final solution would be found to the problem of stateless in the next 10 years. Till then, they will enjoy all the fundamental rights like, as Mr. Thondaman

put it, any other human being."

It is yet too early to say what Thondaman's entry into the Cabinet and all it implies will bring. In the meantime, the FP organ "Suthanthiran" has reverted to the abuse of Thondaman as in the pre-1972 TULF days. The intemperate language of this unofficial organ of the FP and its single-track sectarian logic has done more harm for the cause of Ceylon Tamils than any other single-factor in the last twenty five or thirty years.

The recent developments in Sri Lanka in regard to the Tamil minority and the invitation to Thondaman to join the Cabinet has been welcomed in India. Not all the propaganda of the FP caucus in the TULF will have any influence in India. Even the DMK of Karunanithi will now find it hard to support the negative and militant policies of the TULF and especially the cry for Eelam.

WE ARE TODAY AT THE BEGINNING of the Thondaman era in Tamil politics in Sri Lanka. If Thondaman will only play his cards correctly, he will soon provide even for Ceylon Tamils who have been abandoned to a do-nothing existence by the stupidities and inadequacies of TULF (FP) policies. The throwing of a few handbombs, the burning of new buses, the derailment of oil trains and other acts of terrorism and violence cannot bring the TULF back to the helm of Tamil affairs.

The weekly *Independent* which reflects sane Tamil opinion in an editorial in its issue of September 15 entitled **VIOLENCE** stated: "When the Gods want to pull down a man," muses Vidura in the ancient Hindu epic Mahabharata, "all they do is to remove his intelligence. He then sees everything upside down." Apparently, the Pantheon of Gods presiding over the destinies of the Northern Peninsula and Eastern coast seem

determined to destroy the peoples of those areas, judging from the foolish, senseless and insensate bouts of violence perpetrated in those parts. By their acts of violence, the perpetrators are not only shattering the peace of their limbs of land but the peace of the whole of Sri Lanka. Violence, as history has proved, defeats its own ends. It destroys rather than constructs. It breeds hatred rather than reason. It scuttles its own cause. We refer specifically to the bombing and burning of buses in the North and East by militant youth, where there was ample proof that youth from those areas went on a reckless rampage, heartlessly hurting their own people. If one Sinhalese had been touched in those areas, racialists would have unleashed a squall of savagery on hapless Northerners and Easterners, living in other areas, much worse than the August blood bath, which was caused by a vicious rash of rumour. We must not blind our eyes to reality. The guns of the goondas are ever loaded. Their fingers are on the trigger. If the police indulge in their August complacency the guns will boom quicker and deadlier than we think. It is against this ominous and bleak backdrop that the violent misdemeanours of Northern militant reek of irresponsibility and spill over with shocking stupidity. Engrossed in the safety of their Northern stronghold, these desperadoes, entitled as they are to seek equality with the Sinhalese, are not entitled to set out on senseless sorties of violence. But the fault does not lie in these misguided youth so much as in their leaders who mesmerized them with the mantram of Eelam, as if it was something which government would serve placidly on a platter. Mr. Amirthalingam's absence abroad at perhaps the most critical phase in the history of both Sri Lanka and of his community, is yet another act

of irresponsibility which cannot be winked at or condoned. He was aware of the turbulence of his hot-blooded followers, particularly when a new Constitution was being promulgated. His presence was therefore much more imperative in Jaffna than in Jamaica in Lanka that in London. The TULF must not tempt Providence so capriciously as they are doing now. Nor must they toy and tinker so callously with the lives of millions whether they be South or North of Elephant Pass. In so doing they will be playing right into the hands of under the jackboot of ruthless racialists, backed as they are by the khakied corps."



ACID BOMB EXPLOSION—15

Chapter Fifteen

Gathering Storm

by James Goonewardene

Deva had a terrible foreboding that this particular staff meeting was going to end in disaster. For some unaccountable reason he felt certain of this. He wished the old man would cancel the meeting. No one was in a mood to listen to speeches about talented boys; the boy himself, in this case, had lost interest in the matter, or was under some threat or spell or hoodoo. A mood of distrust and fear was spreading around the town. It was leading up to some catastrophe but how or when it would come no one knew, but the old man stuck to his guts. It was now the lad needed help, he said, and it was now he would get it. No good would come from delaying such help. Deva suspected, however, that this was not the sole reason why he was bent on bringing up the matter now. He had been angling for a confrontation with Hemapala Gurunanse for a long time,

and this was the opportunity, he thought, he had been waiting for. In a moment of shrewdness he had realised that by backing Gunapala against Hemapala he would bring into the open a lurking contradiction in this activity of his opponent, but it was ill-timed—too much was weighted against Piyaratne.

It was the worst possible time for several other reasons as well. Things had been going down hill very rapidly—there was an obvious rot—the classrooms stayed unswept, cobwebs gathered up in the ceilings, dead leaves piled up under the trees, and the students showed defiance and contempt for discipline; even the Principal's peon had changed from the insolent little man he was when Deva first met him into a shifty little underling who seemed prepared to do the meanest task for a bit of private gain. The decline in his case, it seemed, had been swift. It was as if he had known in advance which way the wind was going to blow, and accordingly he had started to trim his sails and gave Hemapala the benefit of his obsequious and shifty smiles, hoping when the time came, to openly change his allegiance.

Deva left his classroom where he had been seated alone, turned into the corridor and came down the flight of steps. He had stayed up there after the last bell. A few stragglers from among the students were still leaving the building when he came to the ground floor landing and was met by his friend Vithaney.

Vithaney, a senior form teacher who instructed in civics and history, had lived an isolated pedagogic existence until Deva's arrival, having no friends, talking only when necessary, keeping clear of the feuds. He was a dark, round faced, serious looking individual who kept to himself. He had been posted to this school almost straight from the University, after brief teaching appointments in two other schools,

and was, therefore, still carrying with him some of the aura of scholarship of the university. He joined Deva at the foot of the staircase. He was dressed, as he always was, in his spotless white shirt and white longs and polished black shoes which made Deva, in his crumpled shirt look like someone who had emerged from a scuffle on the football field. Deva, a lone wolf and a brooder himself, had reluctantly allowed himself to become the young man's solitary companion, sometimes to sit with him in the staff room to talk which he had tried to avoid until then.

They saw a couple of teachers enter the meeting room at the end of the block; they were followed a moment later by Hemapala and his friends. Deva and Vithaney continued to linger at the foot of the staircase.

"Do you expect trouble at this meeting?" asked Vithaney.

"Why do you ask?"

"I don't know. I have a feeling things are not going to go smoothly.

I have heard one or two disturbing things."

Deva glanced at Vithaney.

"Like what?"

"Hemapala has been bragging more openly the last week. He's almost a rival authority in the school. He has been talking about things going to change very shortly."

"Yes, I feel myself that now's not the time to hold staff meetings. Things are in a pretty sorry mess. I tried to talk the old man out of it. But you know him. He's not going to change rules because of threats."

"But in unusual circumstances?"

"The old man has always been fanatical about discipline. He's not going to change now. He believed that discipline should be one of the prime concerns of a school. I remember him saying once that freedom of the wild ass is good for wild asses and not for school boys."

"But these are not boys he's dealing with. These are politically motivated adult teachers."

"Its why he insists that before you discipline boys you must discipline their teachers. You learn discipline or you learn chaos he once told me. He would say things like that all the time. If he really wanted to, I am sure, he could have got a better post somewhere else, but he continued to stay here. I think he got some satisfaction bringing education to the backward areas."

"That's not going to last very much longer."

Deva wondered why he was concerning himself with these matters. Why did he have to get himself involved in other people's problems? Why couldn't he be like Ariya—when difficulties crop up you meet them as Ariya said you must do and then move on.

The old man emerged from his room and came down the corridor, his face drawn. His stride steady as it always was. He glanced briefly at them as he went by. They gave him several minutes and then followed him. The tables and chairs were still being moved around when they entered the room. The peon had arrived with the school labourer only a moment earlier. Piyaratne stood by and watched. There was a time, when just a glance from him could have had these tasks accomplished at the double, but now he was compelled to look on and wait.

At last it was done and he ascended the dais and sat at the desk. Hemapala has slumped into his chair, his long, gangling body stretched out in front of him in a kind of reclining rather than sitting posture, his loose, shabby cloth and banian sagged all over the chair like a bed-sheet draped round a tent pole. The eyes of the rest of the staff shifted in his direction from time to time, as if by some curious instinct they had become aware of the im-

portance of the role he was to play at the meeting. He pulled a dirty pair of feet, with an exaggerated flourish, out of his plastic pumps and planted them on the top of the pumps. He always seemed to be able to get the attention of an audience naturally, like the born comedian or actor. It was as if for moments like this that he had always trained himself.

The Principal cleared his throat and surveyed his staff and began the meeting. He was still the head of the school. His authority seemed to come from his natural capacity to command it. Yet everyone seemed conscious of the presence of a challenger to this.

"There are one or two important items I want to discuss with you today. Before we come to these we'll try to dispose of the less important things first."

Even Hemapala seemed to quieten after this preliminary comment. "Now that I have everyone's attention," he said, pausing to look at Hemapala, "I want to say that I don't like the way the students' reports are being delayed. Some of you have brought your work up to date. I haven't any trouble with them, but some reports are being delayed. This must be remedied."

"Isn't it better you say who these people are instead of making general remarks like that," said Hemapala striking the first discordant note.

"Anyone who has delayed his report is included in this."

"If you are thinking of me," said one of Hemapala's henchmen, "I have been busy with union matters."

"A man has only one pair of hands and a single head," commented another of his friends.

"Some people have two heads," added Hemapala with a chuckle.

"To deal with the affairs of this school one has to have two heads," said the first one.

Piyaratne spent a moment staring at his papers. When the comments came to an end he looked up and gazed at the teacher who had started the diversion, but decided to ignore the incident he went on.

"Its no one but the students who suffer if reports are delayed. I believe we are all interested in the welfare of the students." He paused here and turned his gaze swiftly round at the faces of everyone there. "A delaye I report delays something else, and slowly everything piles up. If anything's interfering with the doing of these reports you should talk to me about it. I'll see what can be done to remedy the situation."

Deva thought how remote all this concern with reports was from the bigger thing that was building up and growing round them, but Piyaratne seemed to have a reason for going on today as if it were the last scene in a tragic play which he had to perform.

"The next item is the visit of the Divisional School Inspector," he said. Hemapala began to fidget and display boredom. A moment later he pretended to stifle a yawn. There was a chuckle from his friends, but the others stayed unimpressed. Deva saw Piyaratne's round potato head flush with anger, but he kept his temper under control and went on.

"The Divisional Inspector's visit is due to take place in the first week of next month," he said, "I shall make my report of the progress of each teacher's work. So it is up to you to have everything brought up to date."

Deva knew that this would not make the slightest difference in the case of Hemapala who had all this power as President of the branch union and also this influence at headquarters. What Hemapala said next revealed the extent of the contempt he had for the old man.

"Avain vedak venney ne," he said "They'll just gather dust at head office." The Principal's retort to this was quick and it brought a brief moment of satisfaction and pleasure to Deva.

"I shall, nevertheless, make my report. This is my duty as it is yours to bring everything up to date. The school and the students should be our chief concern. It is by bothering about what happens at headquarters that we fail in our duty to the students here. This is where our duty begins and ends." He let a moment go by and then went on.

"The first of the things we have to look to are the registers. The attendance average must be marked . . . the exercise books, the reports, the notes of lessons. . . I don't have to tell you about these. One or two of you are behind in your syllabuses. I expect them to be covered in time for the inspection. If there are difficulties I expect you to tell me of them."

There was a brief discussion—only two of the teachers participating; the others remained apathetic and silent, except Hemapala and his two friends—they were enjoying the meeting. The rest of them seemed infected by a feeling of purposelessness and futility. They were like animals in the jungle with their nose to the ground at the beginning of a disastrous drought. Standards had begun to drop everywhere, efficiency was at its lowest. This was the beginning of a change that would gather momentum, and before long sweep the old man out of his position. They felt as the animals would feel at the onset of the drought. This was a time when each began to look to his own safety. Why whip a dead horse? Why should they get caught in the backlash. So they sat there looking bored and indifferent. Each time Piyaratne looked at their faces he saw this boredom, this apathy.

Some of the faces reflected a pity for him. It was a sign that the rot was deeper than his mind was willing to admit. Some other force than he understood had taken over everywhere, and nothing he did could alter the turn of events. Why did they feel pity unless they were sure that he had reached the end of the road. Everytime he came to fight the rot the actuality confronted him and he lost his nerve, and he went back to his drink.

The next item was the exhibition. He glanced briefly at Deva, and he began to talk about it, nervously adjusting his tie as he went on. He talked about Gunapala's exceptional talent and how important it was not merely to the young man but to the school as well to show recognition of such talent. Deva let the eyes of the teachers turn briefly in his direction and he himself glanced at Hemapala and saw a grin of satisfaction spread over his face. It was as if he knew before hand what all this preamble was about. A long silence followed when the old man concluded his remarks. It was finally broken by Hemapala himself when he asked in a good humoured but taunting voice.

"Whose money are you going to spend on this exhibition?" he asked.

"We all like to have exhibitions and such stunts but when it is going to cost money—its a different matter. Can the school afford it—that's what we must first find out."

"The question of money can be discussed when we have accepted the principle of the exhibition, the principle of whether we should show recognition of such talent or not."

"I think it is a big stunt and its all nonsense," said Hemapala.

"I have heard your opinion already. I like to have the opinion of the others present."

Piyaratne's voice had altered—it was hoarse and angry. His face

was flushed; there was a quiver in his speech. A long silence followed. It was like the time between the throwing of a grenade and its explosion. The explosion came a moment later. First there was this timid attempt to defend the idea; it was worse than if no attempt had been made.

"We must help students who have special talents," said one of the teachers weakly. "It will help others to follow the good example." The eyes of those gathered there were suddenly fixed on the lone defender, a middle aged teacher called Punchedeva, a man who had been as ponderous as he had been ineffective. "Gunapala is an intelligent boy", he continued. "I did not know he was also an artist. I agree that we should help when we can. Any student who has talent should be helped. Its a good idea. We should hold this exhibition." His voice grew in intensity towards the end of his speech as some of the teachers began to fidget.

"A good idea—a good idea?" scoffed Hemapala pouncing on his words.

"We repeat words like parrots. This is like what the jackal did—kill the fowl first, hide it in the bush and then start running with a coconut husk in its mouth. This is how these people deceive you. This is how a dying class bring their ideas through the back door. These schools are not here to provide privileges, stooges of the capitalist class. We will oppose this attempt to corrupt the village youth. We are for creating equal opportunity for the poor boys here not to help create pandankarayas. We don't want the culture of the westernised, black Englishman to be smuggled in here through the back door."

Deva realised that he was now being included in the attack, but he didn't take the bait. He put his hands together in front of his face.

and closed his eyes. This was crazy, he thought. Why didn't the old man stop this—throw this thing in—the boy didn't want it—nobody wanted it. They wanted to wallow in the filth of their ignorance—why don't you let them do it. This is as far as the people here can go—you can't do anything else—you want to lift them up on their feet when they want to drag their bellies in the mud—this was what he wanted to be saying here, but he said nothing because it was better that nothing was said, and while his mind whirled the voices droned as if at a great distance away.

"You will oppose it?" said the old man.

"Yes, we will oppose it—" said Hemapala in mock humour, winking at a colleague "the members of the teachers' Union will oppose it. There are more important things to be done here—not holding exhibitions and such silly things'.

The old man waited a moment and looked up, his eyes moist. It was all lost, but he still kept fighting. He looked at the faces of his staff. He knew there were others who supported his idea, but did not speak now. He did not look at Deva who had repeatedly warned him not to go ahead with this thing, and he knew Deva was furious with him for having disregarded his advice, and looking at the faces of his staff he knew Deva was right, but it was Deva who had discovered the talent of the boy, and he wasn't talking. Why wasn't he talking?

Deva was furious with himself for not talking, but he was more furious with the old man. They had spiked him. This was the last scene in a horribly tragic play, and the old man insisted on taking it to the end. He himself looked at the faces of the men ranged round the old man. He knew they too were furious with the old man, but they were furious for a different reason. They were furious with him for

attempting to push them into taking a stand about a matter they had not the least interest in. What did it matter, they thought, if a whole lot of talented youth perished? 'What use some silly fellows' exhibition when there were these terrible things happening round them. They were furious with the old man for also pushing them to get on his side against Hemapala who, they knew was the power behind the scene now. The old man, however, went on like an irate prophet brought to trial before the rabble, certain more than ever now that the truth was on his side, and that, whatever happened now the day would come when his cause would be vindicated.

"Can I put my question differently," he said. "Gunapala is a boy from this village, a poor boy from this village and we want to help him. Do you think it is wrong to do this."

Hemapala knew the question was loaded and he feared the initiative would be taken from him. He jumped into the fray again.

"It is wrong—a bankrupt class trying to cling to old privileges—at the same time trying to infect the youth with its class values," he said. "That's what is wrong—old fools like you trying to push your middle class values along by corrupting boys like Gunapala. This is what agents of the middle class do everywhere. We are planning to stop all that. We'll stop all that by first getting rid of fools like you".

The old man bent his head suddenly as if he had been dealt a blow on his head, and for several moments he sat there thus, motionless. The cards were stacked against him, and there was nothing more to be done. He had finally lost the power to control his staff. He had no hold on its discipline. That was gone and he was finally facing it. He stood up suddenly, and his body seemed to quiver

under the strain he was suffering from. Then he gathered his apers, maintaining his dignity to the end, and he stepped down from the dais and walked away. He had not adjourned the meeting. He had not brought it to a close. He just went away.

Those who were left behind were stunned for a moment or two. No one made a move for several moments. The wind had suddenly dropped and the sails flopped about while the boat drifted; but suddenly like a gale Hemapala began to guffaw loudly, breaking the spell. Deva had expected it. Hemapala had to get control of the situation again. He wouldn't let a thing like that to thwart him.

"Come, let us go—the exhibition is over," he said to his friends, and together they went, chuckling and uttering obscenities. Deva continued to sit where he had been smoking a cigar, until suddenly he discovered that he was not alone. There were just three of the staff left behind, sitting there like lost cattle, saying nothing, doing nothing, just starting at the empty dais.

Lower Uva

Dear Loghead,

Your invitation, (or is it a challenge?) is accepted. I would certainly like to learn about Uva and you will find me a willing learner. However at the moment I am not free as I have been put in charge of a company (I work in an accountancy firm) which needs quite a bit of attention. Once I put this "House" into order I shall inform you. Thanks.

Nimal Perera.

24/1, Mayfield Lane,
Colombo 13.
3.9.78

LEGENDARY BUT HUMAN

Jomo Kenyatta

Jomo Kenyatta was a legendary figure from the forties. He had attracted revolutionary youth the world over in the thrilling days of Mau Mau. He was in prison for 8 years. Then he became a Prime Minister of Independent Kenya: a Conservative who built up a stable third world country with the help of white settlers.

But, like many leaders of the Third World, he too had his feet of clay—the family, nepotism, money-making and corruption. Extracts from *Newsweek* and *Time* make the point—though the Western press has at all times been extremely kind to him because he was one of the very few pro-West leaders in Black Africa today—Ed.

“..When Kenyatta was released from prison in 1961, Kenya was rushing toward independence and he was the obvious choice to lead the new nation. He was named Prime Minister in 1963 and the next year, when Kenya proclaimed itself a republic, he became its first President. His initial step was to reassure jittery white settlers. ‘We must try to trust one another,’ he declared. ‘Stay and co-operate.’ They did, and by now there are more whites in Kenya than there were on independence day. Kenyatta brought his country political stability, a nearly free press and a relatively prosperous mixed economy that encouraged development with the help of private foreign investment white technocrats. But there is only one political party, the Kenya African National Union (KANU). And some bloody incidents have marred Kenya’s peaceful record. In 1969, Luo tribesman Tom Mboya, a brilliant young lawyer who seemed certain to be Kenyatta’s successor, was murdered by a Kikuyu gunman. Three years ago, J. M. Kariuki, a Member of Parliament who had criticized Kenyatta, was killed; a parliamentary report implicated police officials, but no action was taken.”

“A major part of Kenyatta’s

legacy is ‘The Family’, headed by Mama Ngina, one of his three surviving wives. The clan—which includes his daughter, former Nairobi Mayor Margaret Kenyatta, and Vice Foreign Minister Peter Kenyatta, the President’s son—is widely unpopular for the wealth and power it has acquired through unabashed nepotism. Reputedly the wealthiest woman in Kenya, Mama Ngina owns vast estates, and members of her family sit on the boards of most big companies.

“But despite its power, The Family has not produced a strong candidate for the Presidency. That post will be filled in an election this fall—with only one candidate, the KANU nominee. At the moment, Moi appears to have the inside track, and there is reason to hope that the succession will be trouble-free. First, however, Kenya will bury Jomo Kenyatta. The funeral will be held in Nairobi this week, and afterward, Kenyatta’s body will be put on permanent display in a mausoleum not unlike those built for Lenin and Mao. In Kenya, the comparison seems entirely appropriate.

Kenneth Libich with James Pringle

Newsweek, September 4, 1978.

“..But he often turned a blind eye to corruption, particularly among the Kikuyu new elite. His own holdings, and those of his fourth wife Mama Ngina, 48, multiplied enormously. Together they controlled Nairobi’s lucrative gambling casino, plus coffee and sisal plantations, manufacturing concerns, downtown office buildings and coastal resorts. His government’s reputation was further damaged by the political murders of Planning Minister Tom Mboya, once regarded as a possible successor to Kenyatta, and Kikuyu dissident Politician Josiah M. Kariuki. Both men died under circumstances that have never been fully explained.

“Kenyatta could also be brutal in dealing with official misbehaviour—even other people’s corruption, if he thought it excessive. Two years ago, he summoned an assistant minister to his office. ‘Come sit by me, close’, said Kenyatta. ‘Now what is your name?’ The startled minister stated his name. Kenyatta rapped the minister across the ears with his heavy walking stick. ‘Now’, said Kenyatta smiling, ‘what is your name again?’ The minister repeated it. Again the old President struck him hard across the head. ‘And what do they call you in the street?’ the President asked. “Mr. Ten Percent,” muttered the hapless minister, it was a nickname he had earned for his habit of taking kickbacks on government projects. Kenyatta raised his cane and whacked the man twice again. ‘No more’, demanded Mzee. And there was no more.....”

Time, September 4, 1978.



RURAL BUT HUMAN

The High Cost Of Loving

by R. C. Thavarajah

NO—it is NOT a misprint.

The vowel after "L" is "O" and not "I". Had it been the latter, the subject would most certainly be beyond the ken of an Ex-Cop like myself who has not even seen the portals of prestigious Schools of Economics. I have neither the qualifications nor the inclination to launch on a dissertation on a topic that appears to be much discussed these days especially by those who are most adversely affected by it.

I will leave that luxury of arm-chair academic exercise on the cost of living to the most knowledgeable experts who may be able to "figure out tomorrow why the things they predicted yesterday did not happen today." In the so-called "Democratic Socialist regimes we have seen so far, the stark Orwellian prognosis that some have been "More Equal than the others" appears to remain redoubtable. *Probing the cost of living, therefore, does not seem to be a pressing urgent necessity. It may well be a convenient form of bureaucratic "recreation."*

This is a simple story of a man who, like Othello, "loved not wisely but too well."

The scene shifts to a quiet remote village nestling peacefully in the arid dry zone plains somewhere between Bibile and Padiyatalawa. Time—over thirty years ago. The old-fashioned table lamp with the oval chimney burning in the living room did not brighten up the place sufficiently to dispel the dismal atmosphere for the

occupant was in a despondent mood. He was the officer in charge of the Rural Hospital. Outside the bungalow, a thick black mantle of darkness had descended ominously and the entire surroundings were hushed in an eerie silence interrupted intermittently by the chirping of the cricket in the silvan stillness of the night.

He had received orders to proceed on transfer to another Hospital. It was a very unhappy man who completed his packing and had just returned from her house. He had made a last but most plaintive appeal to her to go with him to start life in a new place as if in consonance with the lines of the popular song:—

*"We'll build a sweet little nest
Somewhere out in the West
And let the rest
Of the world go by."*

It was not going to be as easy as all that. There was a snag. She was legally married to another man. It all started in the usual way as in most cases. At first the casual visit, followed by more frequent ones of longer duration and then the catastrophe of a clandestine "affaire-de-coeur". A spark was ignited, the unextinguishable flames leapt forth with devouring fury and then the ultimate conflagration which destroyed the last vestige of prudence and propriety.

Being the only "Dosthera Mahatmaya" in the entire village area, his private practice was most lucrative. A typical trait especially among the villagers in our country is the reluctance to accept free medical attention. However indigent he may be, the poor wretch may even forego a much needed meal or postpone the purchase of an urgent household necessary to pay for the decoction he gets for his sick child or wife. He is foolishly persuaded

by the mistaken belief that free medical treatment is not efficacious. Some beliefs especially in remote rural areas of our Island Paradise die hard. The Lover Boy, who had money to burn, was extremely lavish in bestowing expensive gifts which he laid at her feet to win her heart. Familiarity in this case did not breed contempt. Contrariwise, it most mischievously and recklessly fanned the flames of DESIRE,—the thirst, which according to the Great Cicero, is "never filled or fully satisfied."

The lady had not only a pretty face with rose petal complexion but also a cushy, curvilinear hour-glass figure with a good helping of young luscious flesh in the right places. Her vital statistics compared very favourably with those of the gorgeous, tantalising film actresses especially the Continental type. She was conscious of this and the prodigal Romeo tragically became a mere pellet of clay in her devastatingly dextrous hands. How abrasively true is the dictum that a coquette is a woman without any heart who makes a fool of a man who has not got any head! It is also said that an accomplished coquette "excites the passions of others in proportion as she feeds none herself."

As far as she was concerned, the grand picnic was over—or was it the end of a bathetic burlesque? The parting of the ways had come. To her, it was as casual an occurrence as one of the ships that pass at night. She had refused to join him. Disappointed and most crushingly depressed, he sat in the sombre solitude of his bachelor's room and brooded. His thoughts must have flashed back to the many hedonic hours they spent together tasting uninhibitedly the pleasure of Venus. The lady's husband, an unemployed good for nothing never do well, who lived not by his wits but by those of his wife, would

have been oblivious to all this. Alcoholic torpidity used to render him quite innocuous. He was quite content to help himself liberally to the stuff which was in plentiful supply. The gay Lothario had always seen to that. It was all a convenient arrangement.

There was no gossip. I have always cherished the refreshing realization that the villager in our country is a gentleman. He is too busy with his own work either in the paddy field or plying his humble trade as a carpenter, blacksmith or mason 'far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife' unspoiled by the evil influences of the super class high society, urban malfeasance, the most malicious and time absorbing pastime of "swapping lies"—a highly specialised art among some of the idle rich—the 'beau monde' of the Metropolis and the Towns.

Why had she refused to go with him?—He may not have been proficient in the casuistical subtleties of the Civil Law pertaining to marriage and divorce. He was not a 'legal eagle' to address his mind to the absolute bars to an action for divorce such as Condonation, Collusion and Connivance. In the perplex tangle of his confused thoughts, he tried to fathom the mind of this woman. It must have been a totally futile attempt. He may not have realised the wisdom of the time honoured adage that a "Woman's love is WRIT in water" nor even pondered on what the Irish wit G.B.S. had in mind when he said "woman reduces us all to a common denominator". It is also said that even the Devil does not know what goes on in a woman's mind. Did he, like William Shakespeare's Prince of Denmark deride the false, unpredictable and enigmatic nature of the deadlier of the species with the oft-repeated excerpt from the famous poetic

soliloquy—"FRAILITY—thy name is woman!"

Quite unfortunately, he did not even have a friend who would have administered some down to Earth commonsense with the trite truism that there is more fish in the sea than those that came out of it. What was gnawing into his vitals?—The ego offended, hurt pride, or the malignant canker of LUST which, according to Jeremy Taylor, is a "Captivity of Reason, enraging of the passions, which hinders business, distracts counsel, sins against the body and weakens

the SOUL". The unholy pair had not only made a convenience of him. They had gone further. They had made him a complete fool!

A distraught mind, in the circumstances, often generates in the soul a propensity to ANGER. Rancour burned in his heart. His querulous eyes were fixed on his breech loading gun in the corner of the room. He paced the outer compound several times, ate his dinner and decided to do it. And he DID it. That was how I came into the picture.

(To be continued)

SIRI SANGABO

TOWER HALL

I had seen the natya style drama Sri Sangabo played over 45 years ago. It was then performed among difficult and primitive stage conditions. The show put on at the new Tower Hall on Friday, September 15, is a superbly brilliant performance so far direction, stage effects, costumes and presentation are concerned. But there was one vital difference—audience response and participation. In the old days, the audience was alive to the tradition of the natya dramatic performance and responded actively to what took place on the stage.

It may be that the invitees present on September 15 were elitist and appreciative only of modern drama and that the audiences at subsequent performances would react differently. It may also be that whilst the presentation, costumes, lighting and the other props were excellent, the quality of singing, on which a play like this depended so much for its success, was not good enough to rouse the audience to respond actively.

The new Tower Hall is a marvel. It has one of the finest stages with some of the most modern equipment. The seating is well arranged, but the air conditioning must be improved—one felt warm and "un-air-conditioned" for long spells. Drama producers and fans will have one more theatre for stage plays and then it is to be hoped that the charges should be moderate.

The public must be thankful to Prime Minister Premadasa for having taken the initiative to acquire Tower Hall for the nation and set up a Trust to ensure proper maintenance and care. Special Commissioner B. A. Jayasinghe and all others connected with the Tower Hall project should be congratulated for what the new Tower Hall has to come to be. There is yet much more to be done and many loose ends to be tied—and it is to be hoped that this will be done soon.

S. P. A.

SRI LANKA CHRONICLE

Sept. 7 — Sept. 11

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—Eelanaadu; IDPR—Information Dept. Press Release; DK—Dinakara; DV—Davasa.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 7:

A new chapter in Sri Lanka's political history opened at midnight yesterday when the new constitution became legally effective; there will be mass religious observances, cultural displays and sramadana campaigns to mark the occasion in keeping with a state call to Sri Lankans to make 'dedication to work' the theme of today's celebrations. At the last session of the NSA yesterday Mr. R. G. Samaranayake (SLFP 2nd MP for Beruwala) crossed over to the government and Mr. S. Thondaman made his appearance as a Cabinet Minister in the front benches of the government ranks. UNP MP for Agalawatte said in the NSA yesterday that 95,000 tons of paddy was rotting in 76 MPCS Union stores because the PMB had refused to purchase it—CDN. The sewerage system of Colombo city is now at its bursting point endangering the health of everyone in the city said the PM while presenting the Urban Development Authority Bill in the NSA. Sri Lanka will purchase five consignments of sugar amounting to 50,000 tons from India—CDM. CWC leader Mr. S. Thondaman

who took his oaths yesterday as a Cabinet Minister said that he had now been afforded an opportunity of serving all the people of the country—SU. The TULF and the ULF will carry out their protests against the new constitution as planned—VK. Army personnel will be on duty at all stations as well as on trains in the Jaffna district from today—EN. 3 million school children from all over the island will participate in sramadana campaigns on the day of the promulgation of the new constitution—DM. Israeli PM Menachim Begin and Egyptian President Sadat arrived for historic summit talks with President Carter on the Middle East, apparently both determined to make an all out try for peace. Romanian Interior Minister was abruptly sacked yesterday as a security crackdown following the defection to the US of a high ranking secret agent. Millions of refugees fled or were rescued throughout Northern India from some of the worst floods in Indian history. Black nationalist guerillas massacred 10 European survivors from a Rhodesian airliner which crashed in a war zone near the Zambian border—CDN.

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 8: The President in his first address to the First Parliament of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka after its ceremonial opening yesterday pledged he will endeavour to expand and broaden the freedoms they enjoy can never again be taken away from them. About 700 prisoners will benefit from the general amnesty granted by the President yesterday to mark the occasion of the promulgation of the new constitution—CDN. 25 ministers of the reshuffled cabinet took their oaths before the President yesterday morning—CDM. Air Ceylon's sole AVRO aircraft was irreparably damaged when a bomb explosion ripped out most of the

aircraft while it was at the Ratmalana airport readying for a flight to Male; government security sources said the first bomb might have been planted inside the aircraft cabin by possible anti-government elements. The Ceylon Federation of Labour together with the other members of the Joint Trade Union Action Committee has decided to launch a one day's island wide general strike on Sept 28—SU. A demonstration by the ULF was broken up by the Police; they held a meeting at Hyde Park in protest against the constitution—DP. A number of youths in the North were taken into custody for security reasons—DK. PM Ian Smith speaking of Rhodesia's rage and fury at the massacre of survivors of an air crash promised the nation a tough new course of action—CDN. The death toll of the Indian floods has reached 1200; scores of villages have been swept away and more than 1.5 million people driven from their homes—CDM. The PLO on Wednesday strongly denounced the Camp David West Asia Summit which started yesterday as a new step in the plot against the Arab nation and the Palestinian cause—SU.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 9: In future security checks for firearms and explosives will be carried out on all passengers on Air Ceylon's domestic flights at Ratmalana, Jaffna and Trincomalee airports when the national airline resumes flight operations; this follows Thursday morning's explosion on board the Avro 748 soon after it arrived with a plane-load of passengers from Jaffna. Doubts on the efficiency of the wildlife department in performing its duties have been raised in view of the continued violations of the laws protecting our animals and forests. Police have launched an island wide offensive against illicit timber cutters. The TULF candidate for Batticaloa

at the last general elections, Mr. Kasi Anandan was one of nine persons arrested by the police in connection with the throwing of a handbomb which according to police reports, had exploded in a bus injuring some school children in Batticaloa. Beggar children between the ages of 5 and 16 who have been rounded up from various parts of the country will receive a primary education at the new Rehabilitation Residential School named 'Aloka Newasika Pasala' in the Galle district which is to be opened today—CDN. The police and aviation officials who are conducting investigation into the AVRO blast on Thursday morning are believed to have found certain articles in the wreckage of the plane that may have been parts of a time bomb. The LSSP is faced with a problem in connection with the local government polls to be held shortly; an organisation formed by certain members who had been expelled from the party headed by Mr. Vasudeva Nanayakkara is also calling their organisation the LSSP—CDM. President has ordered the withdrawal of the circular requesting all ministries to make provision in their 1979 estimates for the construction of official residences for Ministers and Secretaries to Ministries; however the proposal to build these residences has not been dropped; they are to be built in close proximity to the proposed parliament building in Kotte to establish Sri Jayawardenepura as state capital. Watchers and security guards employed by security service agencies will receive a minimum daily wage of Rs. 11.80 from this month. Four unknown persons are believed to have set on fire a brand new CTB bus worth Rs. 250,000 attached to the Jaffna depot near the Allaipiddy junction, late on Thursday night—SU. The CID is keenly interested in finding out the identity of the

three passengers who left the Avro aircraft last as they believe that they could have planted the bomb—DP. Two persons have been arrested in connection with setting on fire the bus at Allaipiddy; a revolver and cash have been recovered from them—EN. The government has decided to inaugurate the Rs. 1800 million Randenigala Project early next year—DV. The SLFP has decided to have one union instead of three as at present—DK. TULF MP's who boycotted all constitution day ceremonies held public meetings in their electorates raising the Eelam flags which were attended by a large number of people—DM. The Joint Committee of Teachers' Trade Union which represents 100,000 teachers has called out its membership to join the island wide strike on Sept 28—ATH. The government has asked all courts in the island to conduct their proceedings in English once again—JD. PM James Callaghan amazed Britain by announcing that despite his difficulties in getting legislations through parliament he would not call a general election this autumn. A Rhodesian Minister announced yesterday that a missile had brought down the viscount airliner which crashed on Sunday and he pledged revenge for the people killed—CDN. At least ten demonstrators were killed in clashes with troops in Teheran after the Iranian government clamped the capital under martial law; unconfirmed reports said 250 or more people died in street fighting which flared in several parts of the city after the declaration of martial law—SU.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 10:

An estimated crowd of over one million people of all ages flocked to the Galle Face Green on Friday for ceremonies connected with the promulgation of the new constitution. Mr. D. S. Jayasinghe, 56,

Minister of Posts and Telecommunications passed away yesterday evening at his home after a sudden heart attack—SO. Almost all district and deputy ministers are expected to take their oaths of office in Kandy on Thursday. A large number of motor vehicles are coming into the country daily and over 50% of them are used Japanese cars. Recruitment is on to select about 100 able-bodied men from each electorate to swell the ranks of the Special Police Reserves—ST. Very soon there will be Indian rupee travellers cheques encashable in Sri Lanka on the lines of the dollar and sterling travellers cheques. Two railway patrolmen averted what may have been a major disaster on Thursday night when they stopped the Kalutara bound train because they saw a 45 feet steel rack placed on the rails; sabotage is suspected. Investigators probing the Avro disaster were yesterday trying to find out whether the time bomb used was of foreign origin—WK. Police have got a lead in many of the robberies, in banks, buses and MPCS Unions in the Jaffna district, after they arrested the two persons in connection with the alleged burning of the CTB bus—CM. Zambian President Kenneth Kaunda declaring the belief that Rhodesia was planning to attack his country said he did not rule out calling for foreign support to defend his borders. Half a million inhabitants of India's holy city of Varanasi (Benares) were tonight warned to be ready to evacuate at short notice as flood waters swept over it—SO. President Carter temporarily suspended three day meetings with the leaders of Egypt and Israel and held separate face-to-face talks in a switch of tactics at the Camp David Summit. Pakistan has sent relief goods to India and Afghanistan for flood affected people the gov-

ernment said—ST. Vietnam PM Pham Van Dong in Thailand on a five day official visit held surprise talks with French Foreign Minister Louis de Guiringaud at the military airport in Bangkok—WK.

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 11:

The government will not use its power on or restrict the efforts of any individual; by this the country can look forward to a new era of literary resurgence said the President before he handed over the awards to the country's leading authors and poets at the Sahitya Day celebrations yesterday. The Minister of Youth Affairs attending his first official function said that the National Youth Service Council had now emerged re-vitalised after being allowed to deteriorate for a seven year period; it now encompassed over 60 electorates and it had taken place within one year he said. The entire strength of the CID has now been detailed to track down the two suspects wanted in connection with the destruction of the Avro plane by a time bomb last Thursday—CDN. Government employees will in future be known as 'public officers' signifying that their duty is by the public. The Health Ministry's refusal to permit government medical men to go abroad after completion of their compulsory service period is likely to be challenged in court. 15 passengers who travelled on the Avro plane that was blown up have volunteered to give information to the CID—CDM. The IGP has ordered a crackdown on persons trying to create any sort of communal, caste or religious ill-feeling in the country. The President speaking at the annual Sahitya Day celebrations said that Sri Lanka as a small nation must be open to external influences on its culture. A train disaster was averted at Panadura by the timely discovery by a person of the removal of bolts and nuts

from the rail track; subversion is suspected—SU. Mr. S. Thondaman, when he visited Kandy for the first time after taking oaths as minister paid his respects to the Mahanayake of the Malwatte chapter who blessed him and said that everybody must work for communal harmony as well as progress and good of the people of this country. The CID believe that the blowing up of the Avro aircraft has no connection with the north but that it is the work of anti-government elements in the South—VK. A top ranking police team is now in the North investigating into the blowing up of the Avro plane and the burning of the CTB bus. Three youths in possession of dangerous weapons have been arrested in Meesalai in the Jaffna district—DP. The leader of the TULF stated in an interview with the BBC in London that his party will not co-operate with the government of the DSR of Sri Lanka but will fight to obtain its objective—Tamil Eelam—EN. Mr. A. A. H. Al-Daeri has been appointed as Ambassador of Iraq to Sri Lanka—IDPR No. 171/78. H. E. Nsau Makunga has been appointed as Ambassador of the Republic of Zaire in Sri Lanka with residence in New Delhi—IDPR No. 171/78. The governments of Canada and Sri Lanka signed an agreement providing for a loan of Rs. 271,200,000 (C\$ 20 million) 75,000 youths will be recruited for the Mahaweli Youth army. It is expected that the UNP will name Mr. A. C. (Bunty) de Soysa as the next MP for Wattala—DM. The working committee of 17 trade unions will launch an island wide strike on the 28th to win 5 demands including Rs. 150 pay rise and getting back the rice and sugar ration—JD.PM Ian Smith saying Rhodesians faced the greatest crisis of their lives announced a form of martial law to strengthen the nations' war efforts. Cambodia strongly denied

an accusation by Radio Hanoi that its forces has launched artillery attacks on Vietnamese border towns last week. Pope John Paul made an emotional appeal to the world to join his prayers for success at the Camp David Summit on the Middle East. President Ferdinand Marcos in an act of clemency on his 61st birthday granted pardon to 444 prisoners included six convicted of conspiring to kill him before martial law—CDN. An explosion early yesterday damaged the Cuban UN mission offices according to a police report. One day after the imposition of martial law in Teheran and seven other cities Shah of Iran cancelled two pending state visits to Rumania and East Germany, in an announcement—SU.



LETTER

Towards One Nation

Sir,

After 14 months of hard and honest effort by the present Government to bring about the policy of "One Nation", the TULF still strictly adheres to the cry of Eelam. Being a Just and Free society the TULF should have all the right to stick to their motto. But time has come for all political parties who do not subscribe to the above cry to join hands and put forward an alternative forum, so that thousands of people from North and Eastern provinces of Sri Lanka who do not subscribe to the cry of Eelam can join and work towards ONE NATION and thereby to Social and Economic prosperity of Sri Lanka.

Gamini Edirisinghe.

292, R. A. de Mel Mawatha,
Colombo 7.
8th Sept., 1978.

Confidentially

Sugar—Cane

Cultivation Loans

IS IT NOT A FACT that *Tribune* had raised some weeks ago the question about alleged irregularities in the granting of sugar-cane cultivation loans in the Amparai district? That we had pointed out that a preliminary inquiry had been held on a report from the GA Amparai that there were serious irregularities in giving out loans for sugar cane cultivation for the Yala 1978 in the Amparai district especially in the area of authority of the Amparai MPCS? That the GA's complaint was summed up thus: "(a) loans amounting to rupees 4.7 million have been issued for an extent of over 2000 acres, although the agricultural implementation programme indicates that the total area under sugar cane by private cultivators in the district is 600 acres and the target for new expansion for the area is only 50 acres. It is of interest that despite the reduction in the price of sugar from Rs. 5/- to Rs. 3/- per lb. that such a large volume of loans should be taken to bring new land under sugar cane. (b) over 500 persons have taken these loans, but the bona-fides of a fair number of applicants is in serious doubt; (c) the loans are being issued very liberally, apparently without proper care being exercised as to verification of information given in applications etc? That thereafter on a Presidential directive, a Committee consisting of officials from the Peoples Bank, AICC, Ministry of Plan Implementation, Bank of Ceylon, Central Bank and the Department of Co-operative Development was set

up? That the members of the team conducted a detailed and full investigation on the spot and their report is such an excellent a job that it can serve as a model for all others? That an attempt was made by this team to meet all the sugar-cane cultivation borrowers from the three Rural Credit Banks in the particular area? That the team could meet only 61%, 72% and 63% of the sugar-cane cultivation borrowers from the three banks respectively, viz., Amparai, Madona and Inginiyagala? That only about two-thirds of the borrowers could be contacted and met? That the following reasons have been given why the other borrowers could not be met; (a) they were known in the village by a different name; or (b) they were out at the time of the visit; or (c) they did not reside at the address given, or (d) fictitious names had been used? That it was found that the total amount "granted" out as loans was Rs. 3,898,567 to 518 persons to cultivate 1766 acres? That of the sum, at the time of the investigation, Rs. 3,046,932 had been already released? That out of the 518 persons, 240 were persons employed in occupations other than farming (amount released Rs. 1,506,312), that 224 were farmers (amount released Rs. 1,208,200) and 54 were unemployed who had received Rs. 332,400? That what is interesting is that whilst loans had been granted for the cultivation of 1766 acres, the District Agricultural Implementation Programme provided a planned target for sugar cane in the Amparai district only for 650 acres?

That it was also found that neither the MPCS nor the Banks had taken the trouble to familiarise themselves with "Plan?" That what these institutions did not seem to realise is that the liberalisation of the credit policy did not mean

the doing away with all systems and procedures which hitherto governed such credit disbursements? That the bona fides of farmers had to be established and also the right to cultivate the land in question? That Agro-identity cards must be checked? That a certificate from APC Committee must be produced? That where the names did not appear in the Agricultural Lands Register (ALR) a certificate had to be obtained from a responsible village level officer? That there are also a number of other procedures which must be observed before loans are granted? That a loan is usually finalised after every single application is processed at least at seven levels—(1) Subject Clerk of the MPCS, (2) Secretary of the MPCS, (3) Branch Committee of the MPCS, (4) Credit manager, MPCS, (5) Representative, People Bank, (6) Secretary, Loan Committee, MPCS and (7) Board of Directory of the MPCS? That only after these officials are satisfied is the loan application proceeded with?

That the investigations by the Committee showed that in the Amparai MPCS none of the applications bore endorsements of the Subject Clerk? That it was found that the Secretary of the Branch Committee of the Amparai MPCS had not looked into any of the applications for the simple reason the Branch Loan Committee had stopped functioning a long time ago? That the Credit Manager, Amparai MPCS had not examined every application? That as per a new circular the investigation by a Representative of the Peoples Bank in respect of cultivation loans has been dispensed with? That the requirement that the Secretary, Loan Committee should scrutinise every application and make his recommendations was not complied with?

(To be continued)

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