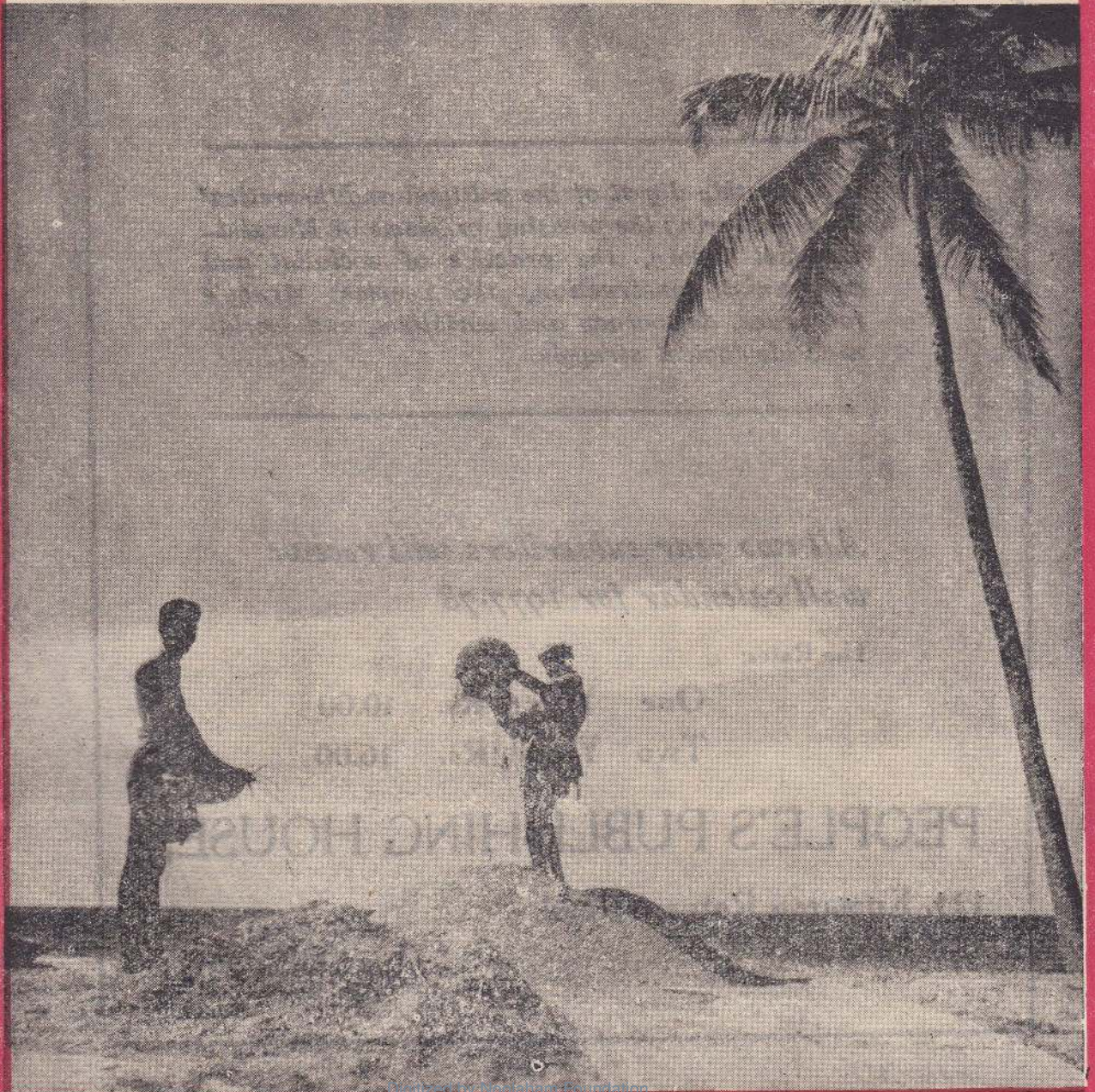


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TRIBUNE



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Letter From The Editor

THE PICTURE on the cover this week depicts the winnowing of paddy on a sea beach. In a sense this is an unusual sight because very few of Sri Lanka's paddy fields are by the sea, but there are some. And the winnowing, in this case, is being done in the strong breeze (or wind) blowing in from the sea. In the old days, before the tractor and artificial fan-winnowing, peasants in the paddy-growing areas in the dry zone in the northern and eastern half of the island, kept the harvested paddy sheaves in stacks (made to stand up to the heaviest rain) until May or June when strong rainless southwesterly winds sweep across the fields to help them winnow. Now, mechanical means are used for threshing and winnowing, but the harvesting is still done manually—there are very few paddy harvester machines in use. The Government is now expecting a record Maha paddy crop, and there is little doubt that the harvest will be much higher than in the recent past. But one must take official statistics with a due sense of caution and scepticism, because the statistics of paddy production furnished by the authorities during the last three or four years have nearly always been inaccurate and misleading. The Ceylon Daily News of February 15, 1977, had a curious headline: **DRIVE TO KEEP RICE PRICE DOWN: RECORD MAHA CROP TO BE MOVED TO NON-PRODUCING AREAS.** The report stated: "A concerted drive to keep price of the rice down in the open market is being made by different government authorities. Part of this scheme is to move an anticipated record Maha crop from producing areas to non-producing areas. This year the country's Maha crop from 1.2 million acres of paddy is expected to be 375,000 tons of rice. Some of the NCP areas have had an abundant supply of water from the Mahaveli diversion and this has been a great contributory factor to anticipations of a good harvest. The PMB hopes to collect 18-20 million bushels, a spokesman said yesterday. He added that in some rice producing areas like Padawiya the yield was not up to expectations. A method of delivery of the rice to distribution centres will be decided at a conference presided over by the Secretary to the Ministry of Food and Co-operatives, Mr. K. B. Dissanayake....." In the first place, if the crop is plentiful the price will come down automatically all over the island. And, in the second place the paddy, in the open market, will move to the deficit areas (where the price will be higher) without the intervention of the authorities. Furthermore, it is to be hoped that this is not another case of counting the chickens before the eggs are hatched. Only in a few areas has the harvesting of the Maha crop started. The bulk of the Maha crop will be harvested in March and the Meda crop will go into April. There is one problem that the authorities do not seem to be aware of as yet: that is a very great shortage of labour for harvesting in all the rice producing areas, and that hundreds of acres of ripened paddy have not yet been harvested because of the lack of labour. A good part of such paddy drops to the ground. Delayed harvesting brings disaster. In the past, seasonal labour from the unemployed and under-employed in the plantation areas and from some parts of the Eastern Province had moved in to cut the paddy, but this year this labour has not been forthcoming. The repatriation of plantation labour under the Shastri-Sirimavo Pact is one reason for this shortage: another is that with a full crop in the Eastern Province, the local labour has been kept fully engaged. Yet another reason is that with the kind of education that has been imparted in our schools during the last twenty five years and more, no new agricultural labour from the youth of the country has become available in the labour market: and finally all available unemployed and under-employed labour in the villages have been given welfare relief work on widening roads, building tank bunds and the like. In addition, work (to a few thousand favoured ones) has been found in Corporations, Co-operatives, and other governmental undertakings unmindful of the excess staff in these organisations). A large number of the so-called "educated" youth have been given jobs as teachers. The result is that there is very great shortage of labour in the entire rice producing areas of the country. The situation has been made worse by the fact that present-day "youth" only want white and blue collar work in healthy urban areas. There are hundreds of thousands of young men waiting in the villages for such jobs which they think a MP's chit would ultimately get them. They are unwilling to do any agricultural work because their families get enough from relief work, known popularly as shramadana, and for which they are paid partly in kind—from gifted stocks of flour, canned fish, margarine and the like—to keep them going. The simple fact is that there is shortage of labour in the paddy producing areas: even persons who have allotments of two to five acres need outside labour—many of them are absent permit-holders whose lands are cultivated by others. Such being the case, is it possible to project any estimates of paddy production?

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EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

Current Political

Perspectives

WITH THE PROROGATION of the National State Assembly on February 10, a new stage has been reached in the contemporary political history of the island. It marks the end of the United Front of the SLFP-LSSP-CP, which had come into being in 1966, and which had won a landslide electoral victory in May 1970, and had thereupon become a powerful Government with a more than two-thirds majority. The United Front Government, led by Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike, had carried everything before it and had transformed Ceylon into a Republic called Sri Lanka. Besides inscribing in the Statute Book a new Republican Constitution, which claimed to pave the way towards socialism, the United Front government succeeded in effecting sweeping and drastic changes in all aspects of life and work in the country: in the land tenure system, in the judicial system, in the economic structure, in the educational system—and in practically everything worth thinking about.

In spite of these far-reaching social, economic and political changes, the Government was not able to solve many basic problems—unemployment, inflation, the spiralling cost of living, the Tamil minority problem and incentives to ensure greater production and productivity. And, it is the failure to resolve these problems that led to the breakup of the United Front: first the LSSP broke away or were thrown out—depending on the way one looked at the split which occurred in September 1974; and now the CP is as good as out of the UF—the timing of the *de jure* exit will depend on many imponderables. The United Front first split into two and has now into three. And the breakup has arisen because of the way in which certain circles within the SLFP—called rightwing by some—wanted to resolve these problems by activating, energising, sustaining and bolstering up the private sector mainly by importing investment capital from abroad—hopes were placed on the new oil rich sheikdoms and also the traditionally affluent

countries from the West. The delays in getting such capital and the resentment it caused among the leftwing of the United Front—which wanted more and more of red-blooded revolutionary socialism (about which there were several disagreements)—a spirit of rancour and rebellion surfaced among the rank and file and thus made the split inevitable.

And now, the split is complete. Everything is over—bar the shouting. The CP may stay in the Government until it is thrown out, or it may time its exit to suit the formation of a Socialist Alliance—may be called the Socialist United Front (SUF) or by some other name acceptable to all parties. A crucial segment of the new Socialist Alliance will be the breakway group from the SLFP, led by Nanda Ellawela, Tennyson Edirisuriya, Ariyaratne, Jinadasa, Jayasuriya and others. These left-inclined SLFPers—there are various guesses as to their numbers—are expected to form a new Centre Party to be called the Nationalist Democratic Party or by some other suitable name. This Centre Party together with the LSSP and the CP revolution-inspired visionaries claim, will make the new Socialist Alliance a power to contend with. Some feel that it may be strong enough to compel an electoral alliance with a weakened SLFP led by Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike or one of the other Ministers—if she decides or agrees to move up as President.

In the meantime, there are rumours that right-inclined SLFPers may drift into a splinter group to ally with the UNP, but this may be only kite-flying at this stage by the UNP to prod the disintegration of the SLFP. There is no doubt that the UNP is the main beneficiary of the breakup of the United Front. If there are three and four cornered contests in even 40 of the 130 odd seats in the Sinhala areas, the UNP will romp home to a comfortable victory. If there are such contests in sixty seats or more, the UNP will be well on the way to a two-thirds majority—and this will enable the UNP to amend the Constitution in regard to certain features of the Constitution which the UNP has always criticised. It must be remembered that if the Socialist Alliance or the SUF is able to forge an electoral agreement with the truncated SLFP,

then there will be a chance of defeating the UNP by a small margin. In any case, the UNP will be a strong force to contend with. And if, the balance between the SLFP (and its allies) and the UNP (and its allies) is narrow, then the Tamil MPs will play a decisive role in the making of the Government.

This is probably the reason why Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike, has finally decided to initiate public and official talks with the Tamils. These talks are scheduled to begin on February 21. This is the first time that Mrs. Bandaranaike has agreed to have a dialogue "officially" and directly with the elected representatives of the Tamils and this is a clear indication that the SLFP is no longer at the apex of its political power.

In 1970, the United Front, mainly under the pressures of the LSSP and CP which did not want the Government to have any truck with the "reactionary and communal" EP and TC leaders, had refused to meet the Tamil leaders. The United Front had tried every propaganda gimmick and every trick in the bag of patronage politics to displace the TUF leaders, and in spite of the fact that they had been able to win over some TC MPs like Arulampalam and Thiagarajah and Independents like Rajan Selvanayagam, it was found that the Tamil problem had become more and more difficult. The dispensers of UF and SLFP patronage to the Tamils, like Kumarasuriar, Durayappah and others have either been liquidated or have come to the conclusion that the kind of bribery (called patronage) they had indulged in is of little avail. What the proposed talks between the Prime Minister and the Tamils will bring is difficult to say, but it looks very much like a little pre-election skirmishing for post-election manoeuvring. There is no doubt that the TULF will win the overwhelming majority of the seats in the Tamil areas, and it is likely that a large number of Muslim seats will also edge towards the TULF.

The UNP issitting pretty and electoral victory may well fall into its lap without any difficulty unless it blunders in the weeks before the polling. At the moment it has nothing to do except to watch the United Front disintegrate—but unless the UNP is watchful

of the attempts to form a new United Front on an agreement between the SLFP and the SUF (or socialist alliance) it is likely to find itself in trouble again.

These are some of the perspectives that have emerged with the current developments on the political scene. The day to day developments and manoeuvring between the different parties and groups will provide much food for thought and study by students of political affairs. The Government or what is left of it, will no doubt do everything in its power to strengthen the SLFP under the hierarchical control of the Bandaranaike and Ratwatte supported by the Maithripala Senanayake, Kobekaduwa and other lesser dynastic leaders. There seem to be plans to flood the country with imports of foodstuffs, textiles and other consumer articles during the next six months in order to win over presently disgruntled and frustrated elements. How far the SLFP will succeed in this well-tried (in many previous elections) gimmickry is not easy to say, but judging from past experience the Sri Lankan electorate is not likely to fall for it.

The prorogation itself had brought sharp rejoinders from the CP and the joint Opposition.

The Sunday Times, 13/2/77, report of the CP statement read as follows: The Communist Party states that the decision to prorogue the NSA was taken without its knowledge. In a statement issued by Mr. K. P. Silva, chief organiser of the Party, it adds that the decision is contrary to solemn assurances given to the NSA. The following is the text of the statement issued to the Press yesterday:—

"The Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Sri Lanka, which met on February 11 1977, considered the decision, which was taken without the knowledge of the Communist Party to prorogue the National State Assembly until May 19 1977. Apart from the fact that such a decision is contrary to solemn assurances given to the National State Assembly the prorogation of the NSA until three days before the date on which the Assembly will be constitutionally dissolved is inimical to the democratic process as it creates the possibility of a period, which can extend up to seven months in which both an administration without the supervisory checks of an elected Parliament and a state

of emergency can exist. As the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Sri Lanka had earlier been summoned to meet on February 16 1977, the Political Bureau resolved to report to this meeting of the Central Committee its recommendations as to the future policy and activities of the Communist Party of Sri Lanka."

This statement made it clear that the CP was clearing its decks to quit the United Front and the Government. The statement is no doubt intended to win support among sections opposed to the current action of the SLFP dominated government.

The Ceylon Daily Mirror of February 16 carried a frontpage report about the meeting of Opposition leaders and the statement they issued:

By proroguing the National State Assembly till May 19, the Prime Minister had freed herself from democratic control of the representatives of the people for 98 days during a critical period. This is stated in a press release by leaders of Opposition parties who met in a committee room of the National State Assembly yesterday. The Opposition urges the people to prepare actively to protect and defend their democratic rights and their sovereignty. Here is the full text of the statement:—

"The leaders of the Opposition parties met today to consider the situation arising from the sudden prorogation of the National State Assembly. By this device, the Prime Minister has no doubt evaded the debate on the no confidence motion which had been fixed for February 17, at the instance of the Government itself. Apparently the Prime Minister had no confidence in her capacity to convince her own members regarding her conduct in relation to the strike. However, the Opposition considers it far more serious that by proroguing the National State Assembly till May 19, the Prime Minister has freed herself from the democratic control of the representatives of the people for a period of 98 days during a critical period.

She will of course have the further lengthy period without the National State Assembly beginning with the dissolution and ending with the General Elections. The Prime Minister has also thus freed herself for further undemocratic manoeuvres and for the organisation of unconstitutional

and illegal adventures aimed at a dictatorship which are freely talked about in the country. We therefore not only condemn the prorogation of the National State Assembly but also call upon the people to prepare actively to protect and defend their democratic rights and their sovereignty. Those present at the meeting were Mr. J. R. Jayewardene and Mr. R. Premadasa of the UNP, Dr. Colvin R. de Silva and Dr. N. M. Perera of the LSSP, Mr. Prins Gunasekera (JVP) Mr. W. Dahanayake (Ind.) and Mr. V. Navaratnam of the FP. The leaders later called on the Speaker of the Assembly."

Very interesting developments in the political arena are expected in the near future. One of the most significant development stemming from the prorogation is that the Emergency which had been declared in March 1971 lapsed on March 16 at midnight. With the ending of the Emergency a whole series of regulations which had been brought into force under the Emergency have lapsed. All detainees have been released. The ban on the Dawasa group of newspapers has also ended. All the proscribed parties, like the JVP, are now free to function. Even the five day week had to go but the Minister by means of a Regulation under the Holidays Act has decreed that the five-day week should continue. There are reasons to believe that the Prime Minister had not bargained for the ending of the Emergency with the prorogation of Parliament. A major part of the administrative and legislative edifice of Mrs. Bandaranaike's government rested on the Emergency. The Communist Party, it is now said, will pull out of the Government sooner than expected and seek to play the special role of a non-government party extending responsive co-operative to the SLFP—supporting what the CP regarded as "progressive measures". The CP does not want to join the official Opposition because of the taint of the UNP. The LSSP does not seem to have such scruples because of its near-psychopathic hatred of the Prime Minister—it is said that the LSSP will not join any coalition or even an electoral alliance with the SLFP having Mrs. Bandaranaike as its leader—the LSSP will not mind if she was promoted upstairs as the President, a honour she is not likely to accept to please the LSSP.

February 16, 1977

Feb. 2 — Feb. 4

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

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

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 2: The Minister of Plantation Industries, yesterday decided to recommend to the government a subsidy scheme for the planting of coconuts and the extension of the coconut rehabilitation scheme to cover the entire coconut lands in the country: this decision was announced by the Minister at a conference at his office with senior members of the coconut cultivation Board, the Coconut Research Board, the Coconut Development Authority and the Distilleries Corporation. The Marketing Department vans have begun selling coconuts in Colombo at 82 and 85 cents a nut: an average of 20,000 nuts would be sold to the public daily in this way: it will be progressively increased according to consumer needs. The PM yesterday tabled at the NSA the Wimalaratne Commission Report on the incidents at the Peradeniya Campus. Sri Lanka will sign a trade agreement with Bangladesh this month. The Government Parliamentary Group yesterday discussed the government's programmes to bring down the cost of living and produce more employment—CDN. The MP's belonging to the CP did not attend yesterday's meeting of the Government Parliamentary Group: the four 'rebel' MP's of the SLFP, who supported the recent railway strike also did not attend this meeting. The Ceylon Petroleum Corporation has created a new record in its earnings of foreign exchange in 1976: the amount earned last year is approximately 502 million: the previous highest earning in one year was Rs. 388 million in 1975. The PM, replying to a question asked by Dr. N. M. Perera at adjournment time said she was not aware of any official of the Soviet Embassy in Sri Lanka being asked to leave the country. He asked if this was in the background of the PM's statement about foreign interference in the recent strikes—CDM. The Wimalaratne Commission report on the Peradeniya Campus shooting has held that Inspector D. N. Gunasinghe and the Police sergeants 6197 Ariyadasa had exceeded the right of private defence and used more force than was warranted—CO. The PM at the Government Parliament Meeting yesterday told the MP's that they should be prepared for the General Elections—VK.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 3: The Communist Party of Sri Lanka does not subscribe to the view that the recent strikes were politically motivated with a view to overthrowing the government although certain opposition parties may have made political capital of the strikes: This is stated in a communique issued by the Party's Central Committee after its deliberations on January 29 and 30: it states that the strikes arose out of the real and substantial economic difficulties of the workers: the Party at no stage had accepted the policy of 'no negotiations with workers on strike' and had urged the government to settle the strike through negotiations: It also states that the Central

Committee will launch a campaign around a programme of demands aimed at easing the burdens of the people: it also calls for a round-table conference in the NSA to settle the problems of the National minorities to give them legal and constitutional guarantees of their rights. The Opposition's motion of 'no confidence' in the government will be debated in the NSA on February 17. When the NSA met yesterday the Private Member's motion by Mr. Prins Gunasekera calling for the repeal of regulations banning the newspapers of the Independent Newspapers of Ceylon (Dawasa Group) was taken up for debate. The CRA premium price which remained stagnant for the past six months began rising again: this is because several CRA holders have placed orders for the imports of both consumer and luxury items: informed sources said that the price which stood at Rs. 115 for 100 earlier had risen to Rs. 140 for 100. Sri Lanka can now export handloom silk and cotton duty free materials to EEC countries: this is a sequel to an agreement between the EEC and the government of Sri Lanka—CDM. Owing to the shortage of textiles in the country mainly as a result of a drop in production at the National Textile Corporation's Mills the government has allocated Rs. 100 million for import of textiles this year: last year the government was hopeful of attaining self sufficiency in textiles and saving foreign exchange for other essential inputs. India has granted a loan of Rs. 70 million to Sri Lanka to purchase capital goods. MP's who have served over five years will be entitled to a monthly minimum pension of Rs. 333.33 and a maximum pension of Rs. 666.63 if they have served 15 years or over—CDN.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 4: Pensioners who receive a commuted pension at the time of their retirement will get their full pension after 10 years instead of waiting for 12½ years under the present rules according to a government decision taken this week: this decision will benefit nearly 90% of pensioners namely those drawing less than Rs. 3600 per year: the decision will not be retrospective and no arrears will be paid. Regular workers engaged in projects managed by the Development Co-operative Societies will be accepted as members of these Co-operatives under the proposed Divisional Development Councils Bill, shortly to be presented in the NSA. The value of industrial exports of Sri Lanka during 1976 registered a significant increase of 1975: it exceeded the target set by the Ministry of Industries and Scientific Affairs by Rs. 110.6 million, according to statistics released by the Export Promotion and Development Division. The University of Sri Lanka which closed over 2½ months ago, following a shooting incident will re-open on February 21. It is impossible for Sri Lanka to reach self-sufficiency in sugar even if the existing two factories at Kanthalai and Hingurakgoda worked at optimum capacity (38,000 tons) because consumption requirements are now 175,000 tons a year according to the Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture and Land. Principals of the branches of the foreign banks to be nationalised shortly have indicated to the government that they would retain their assets in Sri Lanka for investment purposes: senior representatives of the three banks met the Finance Minister. The General Councils of the Sri Lanka Independent Trade Union Federation and the Government Independent Trade Union Federation—the SLFP's strongest union federations in the labour sector—met at noon today to discuss their future programme—CDN. University teachers, students and

employees in a joint memorandum have called for the immediate re-opening of all the campuses: the memorandum is signed by the President, the conference of the Teachers' Associations, the President of the joint front of the Employees Unions. The Public Service Technical Officers Trade Union Federation with 42 unions affiliated to it representing over 9,000 middle grade technical and scientific officers is poised for a strike: the federation has given notice to the Minister of Public Administration, Home Affairs and Trade that it will resort to direct trade union action on March 1 unless its grievances are remedied. The SLFP Youth League (Jaffna district) wants the standardisation of marks and the area quota basis for the admission to the University abandoned. The Customs have taken in for questioning two persons believed to be the kingpins in the illegal importation of luxury goods from the Maldives—CDM. When re-distributing estate lands which were taken over by the state don't use racial discrimination, because that will lead to a migrant population, this is an appeal made by the Ceylon Workers Congress to the Minister of Lands—VK. Only about 23% of the students who sat the NCGE examination have qualified for the tenth grade: this is about the same figure as last year when it was held for the first time, according to the commissioner of Examinations—CO.

INTERNATIONAL DIARY

Jan. 13 – Jan. 17

THURSDAY, JANUARY 13: Chen Mu-hua was referred to in Peking as China's Minister of Economic Relations with Foreign Countries. The Philippine government agreed to hold talks with Moro Reform Liberation Movement which claims to be more representative of Southern Muslims than the Moro National Liberation Front. The continuing poster campaign to restore Teng Hsiao-ping to power in China was accompanied by a call for greater freedom of the people. During a visit to Indonesia, Papua New Guinea PM Michael Somare called for military co-operation between the two countries. Laotian President Prince Souphanouvong held talks in Delhi with PM, Indira Gandhi. Over ten million Hindu pilgrims and others are expected to attend the world's biggest religious fair—the Kumba Mela—held once every 12 years at the confluence of the Ganges and Jamuna and the mythical invisible Saraswathy rivers in North India. The Geneva Conference on Rhodesia which was to be resumed on January 17 will be postponed indefinitely. Battered by a storm of criticism both at home and abroad, the French government today defended the release of Palestinian Commando leader Abou Daoud.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 14: Malaysian troops entered Thailand in a joint operation against 3,000 Malayan Communist Party guerillas. Air Siam suspended operations. Indonesia's President Suharto and Papua New Guinea PM Michael Somare agreed on the necessity of measures to prevent subversive elements from crossing their common border. Taiwan recorded a 490 million US dollar trade surplus last year compared with a 642 million dollar deficit in 1975. President-elect Jimmy Carter conferred with congressional leaders today on

the prospects for new arms agreements with the Soviet Union, peace settlements in the Middle East and a wide variety of other international issues. Egypt and Chad have asked for the resumption of the Geneva Middle East Conference before the end of next March with the participation of the PLO, as the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, said the Joint communique issued in Cairo yesterday on the visit paid by the President of Chad to Egypt.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 15: President Anwar Sadat of Egypt and King Hussein of Jordan began talks here today on future relations between Jordan and the PLO, informed sources said. Kuwait paper *El Siyassa* reported today that Iraq has asked for the convocation of an OPEC emergency meeting by the end of January on experts level to discuss the oil situation in the international markets to be followed by another high level meeting. A ceiling on private land ownership was imposed in Peru. About 40 non-aligned countries meeting in Cairo, representing the non-aligned newspool, adopted a code of conduct.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 16: A Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman said ousted vice-premier Teng Hsiao-ping could resume government activities if he corrected his errors. Singapore PM Lee Kuan Yew began a five day visit to the Philippines. About 4,000 Malaysian and Thai forces continued an operation against communist guerillas in Thailand. The Security Council of the UN today strongly condemned Rhodesia's military activity on the borders of Botswana. Four Czechoslovak dissidents were arrested in Prague, a day after they issued a manifesto calling for the restoration of civil rights in the country. Three of them were later freed. Soviet Communist Party leader, Leonid Brezhnev called for an end to the Arms race, saying it had frittered away money which could be used to combat the world's social problems.

MONDAY, JANUARY 17: The Opposition in Pakistan announced that it would boycott voting in Baluchistan in the forthcoming general election because of the abnormal situation in the province. Sir Murray MacLehose's term as Governor of Hong Kong was extended until November 1978. Vietnam's National Assembly approved a 3,315 million US dollar Budget for this year. A joint team of Government officials and Muslim rebels flew to the Southern Philippines to begin supervision of the ceasefire agreement. Thailand has banned official contacts between Thai experts and scientists and their colleagues in the socialist countries. British negotiator, Ivor Richard is under pressure from Rhodesia's African Nationalists to put his proposals for the territory's future in writing before his Southern African shuttle mission can make progress, nationalist sources said today. Police today stopped Basque Mayors from gathering near Pamplona to discuss regional grievances and broke up a demonstration in Madrid calling for amnesty for all political prisoners. New contracts for credits granted by the special fund of the OPEC for making it easier for the developing countries to balance their balances of payments were signed here during last week.

POINT OF VIEW

On Dr. Abraham Koor—ii

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

—Editor

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

IN THE INTERVIEW, (*Current*, Dec. 18) your reporter asks, "Dr. Koor, you are against godmen and religion. Your life must be in danger. 'Have you ever been threatened'?" And he replies, "No, I have never been threatened, but I always take precautions." For what? If he dies nothing dies because in the first place there was no soul. He was just a coincidence, and accident. If Dr. Koor dies, nothing dies. With God disappears all values, all beauty, all ecstasy, all love, all significance.

When asked "why are you taking precautions, for what?" He replies, "I don't believe in any existence after death." Has he known death? Has he experienced death? Without experiencing death, how can he say that there is no existence after death? This is not very rational. This is very childish. This is very mediocre, not even intelligent. Unless you have passed through death, how can you assert that there is no life after death? You can only say "I don't know." You cannot say, "I know there is no life."

And if there is no life after death, how can life be before death? If there is no life after death, then

there was no life before birth. There is no life before birth, there is no life after death; just suddenly between birth and death life exists?—out of nothing, out of the blue? This is not very rational. For something to exist, there has to be a continuity.

There is no existence coming out of non-existence, and existence cannot go into non-existence. You can ask the physicists. They have not yet been able to destroy a single atom. You cannot destroy anything—and you cannot create anything either. You cannot even destroy a grain of sand.

And he says "I believe there is going to be no life after death." And who is this man who is talking all this nonsense? Matter cannot talk. And who is taking precautions? Life must be interested in protecting itself. Life must have an intrinsic mechanism to protect itself. The seed protects itself; the hard crust that exists around the seed is a protection. It protects itself so that it can grow into a tree. You protect yourself to grow. If there is no growth then why protect? Why not go and jump into the sea? And in Ceylon the sea is very close. For what is he protecting himself and taking precautions?

Even in an atheist like Koor, there is a tremendous desire to live. For what? If the desire exists, there must be a meaning to it. And the meaning is that life in itself is not the end. Life is just a passage. It is just the journey, not the goal.

A rationalist, if he is really a rationalist, has to commit suicide.

He has nothing else to do here. But Koor is not a rationalist. He is an atheist and atheism is the lowest form of religion. Because it is the least productive, least creative.

Down the centuries, the theistic religion has been so productive, so creative—Khajuraho, Ajanta, Ellora, Michelangelo, Mozart, Leonardo da Vinci, the great churches and cathedrals, the great temples of the East, the great statues of Buddha. All paintings, sculpture, music, drama, poetry have come out of the theistic religion.

Atheists have not created anything. That's why I call it the lowest form of philosophy. They have not created anything; they have been the most impotent people. They have not created any book compared to the "Gita," the "Bible" or the "Koran". Is it enough, just to go on declaring there is no God? They have not challenged the intelligence of man.

From Charvak to Dr. Koor, their whole history is the history of impotence. All that is beautiful has come out of the religious people, the theistic people.

There are three hundred religions in the world, so much variety, so many possibilities. Atheism is just monotonous. It does not even have variety. You cannot choose, you don't have anything to choose from. Atheism is just atheism.

And Dr. Koor has not said a single thing that is original. Eighty years of sheer wastage. Whatever Charvak said three thousand years ago, the atheists have been just repeating it. They are parrots. In religion there is tremendous variety. Mahavir, Buddha, Jesus, Mohammed, Moses and Zarathustra, all have something different to say.

Atheism is not creative. It has to be so because there can be no creation out of a negative attitude. The negative attitude is more like death than life. "No" is death; "yes" is life. When you say yes, doors open; when you say no, all doors close. Religion has been very, very productive; and still goes on producing, still is creative, is not exhausted and spent. And atheism?—has never been alive, a dead philosophy, repetitive.

And the beauty or the irony of it is that if atheists disappear, theism can survive because it does not depend on atheists. If there is no atheist, there is no problem for one who believes in God, but if there is no believer in God, atheism will disappear. It is dependent. If all the world drops religious attitudes and everybody says, "Yes we don't believe in God", what will happen to atheism? It will disappear simply without leaving a trace.

CURRENT asked where will he be after death. Kovoor said, "I will not be anywhere...I do not believe that I have a soul."

Who is he to declare "I am not?" Even to declare "I am not," you have to be there. To believe or not to believe is not the point. To declare belief or non-belief, you have to be there.

Ask the rock, "Is there a soul, or not?" and the rock is not going to say, "I don't believe in any soul." The rock will not say anything; there is nobody to deny or affirm. In fact, you cannot deny yourself. It is not possible. You cannot say "I am not". It is self-contradictory.

He says, "I will not be anywhere." It is impossible not to be anywhere. You will be somewhere. You are somewhere, Dr. Kovoor. Your body may dissolve into matter, your mind may dissolve into atmosphere—but everything that is in you will be there. Nothing will be lost.

He has never tried meditation, it seems. A simple technique would be of tremendous help to him. Although he is eighty, but it is never too late. A little technique of just sitting silently and watching will make him aware that the body is there as the outer shell, then thoughts are there as the inner shell, and there is at the very hub just a witnessing, just awareness. That awareness is soul. That awareness will be somewhere, because it is somewhere right now. It cannot disappear; nothing ever disappears. Forms change; the reality remains. But he says, "I do not believe....."

That's what I mean when I say he is not a rationalist. A rationalist

will never talk in terms of belief or non-belief. He will talk in terms of experience. He can only say, "I have not experienced yet, so how can I say without experiencing whether there is a soul or not? And I am not dead yet, so how can I say?"

Socrates was dying, and somebody asked, "Are you not afraid Socrates?" He said, "Why should I be afraid, because I don't know what is going to happen? Maybe, perhaps, atheists are right and I will simply disappear. Then there is nobody left, so why fear? There cannot be any anguish for me, because I will not be there. Or maybe theists are right and I may continue. If I continue, then why fear? I will be there. So I will see what happens, but I have not died yet. Wait, let me die. Only then will I know whether I survive or not."

This is pure rationalism. A rationalist cannot assert such things, that "I don't believe in a soul."

Then the **Current** asked him, "Does Bhagwan Rajneesh have a soul?" It amused me very much. How you can ask somebody else about my soul? And he could not even gather courage to say "How can I know about Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh? He may have, may not have." What he answered is sheer nonsense. He said "I do not know much about Rajneesh." As if by knowing much he will know whether I have a soul or not. Even if you live with me for a hundred years and you know much about me you will not know me. Knowing much "about" will not help. Because there is no way to enter in me, you can watch only my behaviour. You cannot see me; you cannot enter into my innermost recesses to find out about my soul.

Matter has only an outside; it has no inside. You can break matter and you will find the same matter inside that you found on the outside.

But a man has an inside. I say "I love you". You can cut me and try to find out where love is, and you will not find it. Of course Dr. Kovoor talks, says things, asserts, makes statements, but if we cut him, we will not find any thinking inside, no thoughts, not even this thought that "I don't believe in soul". When you cut a man, the

inside disappears. When the man was there in his organic unity the inside was there. The inside is what we mean by soul."

How can you know my inside? Only I can know it. He does not even know his own inside: he has never been there. He is an extrovert; he has never entered his own temple. He has never come to his own innermost shrine. He has not encountered himself.

And he says, "I do not know much about Rajneesh." That's why he cannot say whether Rajneesh has a soul or not. Knowing "about" won't help. Unless you know yourself, it is not going to help. I can say that Dr. Kovoor has a soul because I have come to know my own soul. In that very recognition, I have recognised the soul of everybody. I don't know much about him either, I have only seen his photographs, but I can say he has a soul, because his eyes show fire, sincerity. He is a sincere man—more sincere than your Satya Sai Babas.

But I can say that not because I know much about him. Because I know myself, that's why I say it. He cannot say anything about me because he does not even know himself.

And I say to you the whole of existence is full of soul. That's what we mean when we say "God is." Existence has an inside: it is not just the surface. It has depth, it has meaning.

And then he goes on answering a question—which was not asked. "But the cult spread through him shows the mental derangement of his devotees. It is as bad as the Hare Krishna." Now the question was about me, not about my devotees. A rationalist will stick to the question. He does not know much about me, and I think he does not know anything about my devotees. He may have heard some rumour, but that is not the way of a rationalist. He should come here; he should see my devotees. And seeing from outside won't help much. He should dance with them. It will be a beautiful scene—eighty-year-old Dr. Kovoor dancing, doing Kunda lini Meditation.

And he says that "the cult spread through him shows the mental derangement of his devotees." It shows many things. First, he be-

believes that the mind can be in a derangement. That means he believes there is a certain arrangement of the mind. Arrangement brings soul back; it brings God back. If you say the mind is deranged, you accept some criterion, you say that there is a certain way in which the mind is arranged rightly; otherwise you cannot say it is deranged. If you have some concept how the mind should be, you have brought a value in from the back door. This cannot be allowed to a rationalist.

He is not a rationalist at all, poor fellow. He does not know anything about rationalism. He has not done his homework. He may have collected a little bit from here and there, but he does not know the intensity of a rationalist's intelligence.

A rationalist is more like Sartre; he will say everything is meaningless. A rationalist will be more like Samuel Beckett—absurd. Samuel Beckett's plays go on, move in absurdity, because the whole of life is absurd. There is no possibility of any coherence and meaning. Somebody asks you about A and you talk about B; that too is okay because there is no way of knowing what is okay. There is no way of judging what is what. It is chaos.

Now he says my disciples are mentally deranged. Then he must have some criterion. Is Dr. Kovoov the criterion? If people are like him, then they are rightly arranged? Then he seems to be the ultimate value, Mahavir was deranged because he walked naked; Kovoov has never walked naked. Buddha was deranged because he left his kingdom, beautiful wife and child and all the pleasures. Jesus was deranged because he kept saying he was the son of God: What nonsense. God does not exist, so how can the son exist? He must have had hallucinations.

My disciples are the sanest people on earth because they are not accumulating insanity. That is the whole secret of catharsis. He must have heard that my disciples scream and shriek and shout and dance and go mad, but he should come. Madness is when it is beyond your control. Have you watched my disciples meditating, shrieking shouting, going crazy?—then suddenly Chaitanya orders them, "Stop!" And they stop.

Go to a madhouse and say loudly, "Stop!" Nobody will stop. That's how you judge madness. This is a willed madness; they are in control. They are doing it; it is not happening to them. They are going into it. They are releasing the pent-up energy.

People go mad because they don't release. Then the energy goes on accumulating and it becomes too much. One day it explodes. Then Chaitanya will go on saying Stop! Stop! and you will not stop, because you cannot stop; now it is beyond you. If Kovoov goes mad, he will not listen to "Stop!"

And it seems he has not heard anything about modern trends in psychotherapy. He does not know anything about Arthur Janov's Primal Therapy. He does not know anything about Encounters, Growth Groups, Humanistic trends. He does not know anything about Psychodrama. He has not heard anything. He is a very very ancient dead man. He is not contemporary at all. It seems he has not read anything other than Charvak and Epicurus and Karl Marx. He is out of date.

Dr. Kovoov you are dead. You don't know anything about what is happening in the world; you are not a contemporary.

I believe in release, in catharsis, because I believe that is the only way to remain sane. To remain sane in an insane world is a difficult thing because people all round are consumed with anger, sex, jealousy, possessiveness and hatred. They have been taught to control from their very childhood. They are sitting on a volcano.

Animals are saner, trees are more sane; and I am teaching you to be natural. And to be natural is to be in tune with God. To be natural, to be spontaneous, is to be religious.

And he says, "It is as bad as the Hare Krishna." No, even there he is not right. It is worse than Hare Krishna. The Hare Krishna people are very simple, almost simpletons. They don't know anything about life. Prabhupad has attracted the lowest, the stupidest people of the world, foolish people. No, sir, this is worse than that. These people around me are very intelligent.

And Hare Krishna is not going to bring any revolution in the world. It is traditional. What I am doing is worse Dr. Kovoov. It is going to bring a tremendous revolution in the world. It is going to shatter your old world completely. I am creating atomic explosions; sooner or later they will explode all over the world. They will shatter your whole society, your whole so-called civilization. They will shatter the whole past. These are totally new beings.

I am helping a new world to be reborn, a fresh consciousness, a new consciousness.

Hare Krishna people are nothing. Maybe a sort of entertainment, amusing, eccentric, but they have no future. They have a past. My people have no past; they have a future. And the future is always dangerous because if the future is allowed, the past has to be dropped.

I would like Dr. Kovoov to come here, taste some of the energy of my people. Although it is very late but better late than never. If before you die you can have a taste of something beyond it will be good. Sooner or later, Dr. Kovoov you will be dying. It is better to have some preparation. It is better to be ready for an after-death life. It is possible.

And when I say it is possible, I am not talking theoretically. I am a very practical man, down to earth. I am a Jew! I mean business. If you come here and allow me to dismantle you a little to destroy you a little I can create you again. This is a promise.

SAFARI

April 19-24

By Alkardi Mugana

April 19,

There is a cupboard here that makes a terrific racket when it is being closed, a noise loud enough to awaken the dead, a noise that I would not dare make if I was not No. 1 around here, and a noise which I made no less than about

Near Veddah-land

four times tonight in the space of about half-an-hour, between 10.30 p.m. and 11.30 p.m. with two people sleeping just outside my window which is beside the cupboard and three other people sleeping quite near by within the house precincts, and still two others, watchers, not so far off. My sole excuse is that I have been packing for an early departure, pre-dawn, and that my absent-mindedness about putting things away cannot gainsay the fact that they must be put away, according to the routine I live by. Meanwhile, other people, the sleepers, my fellow-sleepers by the time I get to bed, must think me awfully selfish. Those do not sleep too heavily to awaken, and they are probably not far wrong, and what is more likely, quite right. Even if it was a question of disturbing one person, I do not think the noise should have been made, and I would not have dared awaken the baby, if there had been a baby around, even the servant's baby. The baby would have told me all about it, but enough of this.

April 20,

To bed at 2 a.m., and up soon after 4.30 a.m. I had not been on the road long when a bus came by and took me to Kurunegalle. There was a bus there waiting to take me to Kandy, where I found a special bus had been laid for the public all ready to take me to Amparai. I was at Hunnasgiriya, on the watershed between Kandy and Mahiyangana, before I had my first bite or sup, or I should rather say, sip, drink, for the day. It would not be much of an exaggeration to say that I slept fairly solidly, or stolidly, all the way from where I set off right up to Amparai, which I reached at 4.30 p.m. I had still another bit to go. I had been fast asleep when we passed through Maha Oya, so I missed any chance I had of seeing Veddahs, whether they were old friends or not. The bus fares from start to finish had cost me Rs. 15/- for a fairly solid eleven hours of travelling involving no delay at the two changes. The Kandy-Amparai bus was crammed full of people all the way, and that route involved those tortuous hair-pin bends that anyone who has done that trip will not forget. At one of my waking moments I saw Walimbe, the famous Friar's Hood, that fearsome-looking mountain, and I realized that

although I have pretty well encircled Walimbe, which I think means bear in the Veddah tongue, I have not yet claimed it, an omission which I ought to be able to put right, now that I am supposed to be on two months' holiday.

April 21,

Christians, among others, know there is one god, but we tend to forget that god is also a community, a community of three persons, albeit a perfect community of three. We acknowledge this community, we remember the three persons when we make the sign of the cross and pronounce the words that always accompany this gesture or act. We commemorate this fact when we baptize people, the ceremony or sacrament by which we receive people into the church. A Christian's chief interest in Hinduism is again, as brought out so clearly in the Bhagavad Gita, one of the books of the Mahabharata, the fact of one god who made all the other gods, and the fact that this one god is three, three in one, Brahma, Vishnu and Siva. All this has a significance for us. We, too, are a community, and this is just like stating an old fact. In a way, we have to start with the community, and the large community is a lot of intertwining communities, and we owe the fact that we are a community at all to that community that always was, is and always will be, the one god. Among the three persons that comprise that community there is complete equality, and their difference is only one of relationship, the Father or Begotten the spoken, or begotten Word, and the love coming or proceeding from them both that binds them. The fact is that Christ, the Word, revealed that he always does his Father's will, and he asks us to do that, too. It is only a matter of common sense that we do so, because it is apparent that that is the only way that we can lead to perfect freedom.

April 22,

An adventure was my lot today, and an adventure is of one's own making. Rather than wait two hours for a bus to take me from Namal Oya to Inginiyagala, I decided to do it across country on foot, and there was a man who was able to tell me the way, to tell me where to turn off the main

road. His directions were, just keep going straight, and his description of the route tallied with what I saw. At a certain junction I was nonplussed, and there my trouble started. I could see a house a little along what I knew must be the unlikely route, and the woman there was emphatic that I must turn back the way I had come because of elephants, leopards, and it was either wild buffaloes or bears. I asked about lone elephants, and I was told there was one, lame because of someone having had a shot at it in the past, and on further inquiry I was told that lame or not, I would have to be canny about the elephant. So it was with a certain amount of trepidation that I did not turn back. I armed myself with a stout manioc pole I found lying right there. I was consoled by the fact that I could see no spoor around, but at one place I came across it, and it rather heightened my consciousness of my surroundings. I saw no game, but the challenge I had accepted left me with a feeling of exhilaration.

April 23,

An intended hour's break in my journey back made me nine hours late getting here, from missing buses, and no buses, and a nice tramp. I thought it a pity to return without having a shot at meeting my Veddah friends. It was not market day, and there were none in the hospital. One Veddah had come in the morning on a bicycle, but I have not been in the habit of thinking of him as a Veddah, as he is the grandson of a rather famous outlaw of the Bintenne jungles. I missed him anyway, but I learnt that his brother, too, had married; I gathered it was another case of two brothers marrying two sisters. Their father was well, and also one of Dr. Spittel's trackers or guides; so much I gleaned. A man from Weligama had come the third year running to find seasonal work. This time he had been unlucky, and he was thinking of selling the good shirt he was wearing to find the money to get back to his home, but not before he had a crack at Dambana. We started to walk from Padiyatalawa town, as we say in Ceylon, for the word town, adopted into the Sinhalese language, means village, although I suppose it could equally well mean town, as we understand it in English. A

bus with an obscure destination on its name board passed us and did not stop. It turned out to be a bus passing through Kandy, on his route and mine. There are no shade trees on this road, and we were glad to stop at a road-side cafe where my companion found a job, cultivation with these people, but back the way we had come.

April 24,

There must be an art about the way one handles ones equals. Montgomery was supposed to be not good at it. Reading Angelo Parelli's life of the fourth century Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, and his contemporaries, shows that life did not run smoothly for these people. Take the elements. There was some shower of rain this evening which left some people running about in it seeing to their chores which they did well, as a look round by me showed afterwards. It was certainly some rain which left the verandahs wet, the table in them, and which showed up some leaks we had not expected existed. Luckily we had begun tying the cattle up half-an-hour earlier. I must lie down for a few minutes. I woke up to find myself almost in darkness after not even ten minutes, and I find that the lamp has nearly run out of oil. A switch in lamps revealed that the other lamp was out of oil, too, and all this at 10.10 p.m. A third lamp had a wick which was too short to reach down to the oil, but it had oil, and this I filched. So I am able to finish this *safari*, and what finer way to illustrate both the difficulties of life and their God given solution. Life is like an epic, the *Iliad* or the *Aeneid*, full of trials and tragedy some seemingly final, but they are not final, because there is always a chapter two for those of good will, and this is wrapped up in being God's friend. Here we get into deep water, for there are friends and friends. It is not the name that matters, but the fact, and it is largely a question of believing, even to the point of being gullible.

UNIVERSITY EDUCATION—2

Equality In Higher Education

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Equality in education besides excellence and relevance, should be the keynote in higher education. Excellence must be relevant. Relevance must be defined, socially more meaningfully so as to bring back the 'underprivileged' and 'deprived', into if not at the centre of the common world of humanity.

In many countries where there is said to be near universal secondary schooling, there still is the phenomenon of illiteracy at the end of years; this for example is very pronounced in states like California and New York in the United States. India's 4% of the relevant age group at College come out of the less than 50% who have completed elementary schooling. They mangle or fail to, among the bare 30% who can read and or write or at best among the 50% who live above the 'poverty line.'

The major significance of the educated for equality could be through the content of their education and through their deployment in the system of knowledge, of production and of services. Higher education could help in the direction of equality to the extent its products are vehicles of ideas and services in that direction, to the extent it helps to break the existing hierarchical non egalitarian social structure.

Traditionally focus has been centred in the discussion of equality on dismantling layers of inequality particularly with regard to recruitment of students, to institutions of higher learning.

In traditional status inequalities of race, caste and sex, as they are embedded in long established attitudes and structures have attracted attention in particular.

Equalisation of sex or caste and the 'rural-urban' differentiation in principle is possible even though in practice it requires determined social effort and perhaps also significant political pressure. And once the political and social will to

major redistributions of income and wealth can be assumed to exist, the effort to do away with educational inequalities is relatively easily reviewed with some hope.

More intractable are the problems of poverty and related cultural disadvantages (which cannot exist in a civilised, decent society) and the so-called genetic differences. Soviet psychologists have unqualifiedly contested the principle of genetic differences.

The reduction of inequality, both the inequality of opportunity for or access to education and of the unequal tendency of education to people's life chances is contingent on a very rare combination of human skill and will essentially or largely political in character. It is only an altered balance of social forces which impels that expansion in educational opportunity and those changes in rules of admission, bursaries or financial aid, methods and curricula of education which may reduce inequality of access to, as well as success in higher education. But it requires even greater ingenuity and skill itself not possible without strong social will or a new balance of social forces, to promote that culture of the climate of the institutions of the secondary school level which makes it possible for youth from deprived sections to learn those kinds of skill and knowledge which are most important in society or to include in the curriculum those values, skills and attitudes which they will learn as well and to produce the educational conditions which would give positive advantage to the under privileged.

But some of these could pose problems. The ideas of a good education are not socially neutral. It is difficult to provide culture supportive of the disadvantaged or to promote the knowledge and the skills at which all can be more adept particularly in a situation where they do not command the heights of the economic or political or cultural system. Equally problematic is the relation of such skills and knowledge to the economy or to the knowledge system as it obtains in society both contemporary and prospective nationally and globally.

In any case we have to-day equality of access to education in general terms and equality of concern as John Dewey the American philo-

sopher-educational setups it and equality of treatment of different kinds of groups and individuals by education.

But the question may be posed whether it is the primary function of higher education and learning to promote equality. Is it a criticism if it fails to do so? In the long run hopefully people will all be equal. In that millennial society, there is little doubt of the higher learning being functional to equality.

The creation of new knowledge, its dissemination and its application to social purposes some tending in the direction of reducing or widening, further gross inequality in levels of living—such are some of the desirable functions of higher education and learning.

The call to equality is preceded by the call to relevance, as also excellence. It is only a relevant excellence which will orient the not higher learning to social tasks. For this the challenge lies in both equalising access to the maximum extent and fashioning a content of education which meets current needs of helping the socially and culturally under privileged.

The real obstacles to the concept and to the practice of equality are not technical; they are more social and political. The educationally and socially privileged will resist actualisation of the philosophy of egalitarianism. Besides devising procedures to ensure equality by curricula provisions and the like, an essentially helpful social climate should be created. It is also necessary for sustained and strong effort from teachers, administrators and policy makers, and political decision makers to attain this very noble, psychological, social, and cultural ideas.



BUILDING A VILLAGE HOUSE—105

The Loves And Many Lives Of Simon Baas (iii)

By Herbert Keuneman

'I was 8 years old' (said Simon Baas) 'when my father died. I don't know what his disease was: he swelled up, and died. My mother said he swelled so much he was bigger than she was—the only

time she allowed him that much! Yet she found that his contribution to the family finances had not been negligible; she discovered that on her own takings as a vatti-amma (a 'basket woman', a vendor, most often of vegetables, door to door) and on these alone, it was impossible to keep us in fish and rice and vegetables and herself in arrack. So she sold my father's plot and hut to the Muhandiram Ralahamy' (Muhandiram: a now obsolete Government officer, of middling status, Ralahamy: a still current term of respect.) 'We lived on in the place, but she now paid rent.

'One day when my father's uncle was walking with me in the lane outside our house he drew my attention to a fine breadfruit tree in the garden. He said that my father had planted it there when he married, and now what had my mother done? she had made it so that I could never eat fruit from the tree my father had planted, because it belonged to the Muhandiram Ralahamy and he claimed the produce from it.

'And suddenly I was filled with a pride in the tree and a longing to eat a breadfruit from it and a great sadness that another now claimed our tree and its fruit. And as soon as my grand-uncle had left I climbed the tree and picked two breadfruit as big as bolsters.

'Just as I was climbing down, one of the servants from the Muhandiram's *valavva* opposite came storming out of the house threatening to impale me! I barely got down, and flung a stone at him, and ran off as though ten devils were behind me. But he caught me the next day. And though I screamed loud enough for my mother to hear all the way to the tavern, she didn't hear; perhaps she was somewhere else. The Muhandiram's lady heard me, however, and she came and took the servant off me; and she told him it was my tree because my father planted it, and I should be allowed to pick breadfruit from it whenever I wished. Only, I no longer wished. Although the Muhandiram's lady was very kind and ever after used to give me a five-cents the first time each day she saw me, it wasn't the same thing I knew it was only out of charity she had said it was my tree. If I owned it, it was mine to do with as I liked, even to cutting it down; but this way I was only being of-

fered a gift of what was my own, only out of the lady's bounty. So, when she had gone in I brought the two breadfruit I had picked the previous evening and left them on the step, and went home crying.

'My grand-uncle said to me: "Poor boy! You have nothing to do now but go and seek a living in some other place and find a plot of your own."

'I can't think what he thought he was getting at. I mean, telling an 8-year-old to go away and seek his fortune! But it worked on me. And I kept thinking that my mother, through her greed for cash, could not give me to eat from my own breadfruit tree; and that worked on me, too. I thought I hated my mother. And at last I hated her so much I ran away from home. And that very first day I got all the way to Panadura, 17 miles.

'By nightfall I was beginning to be frightened, and unhappy, and very very hungry. I was more than a little weepy, in fact. I made my way to the beach, where a number of temporarily deserted *oru* (out-rigger canoes) lay and curled up on the sand under the end of one of them.

'The fisher folk of fifty years ago led a hard life; but evidently it did not necessarily breed hard men. I shall always remember the man who found me that night and took me into his own household and treated me no different from his own sons as amongst the kindest men I have ever known. (And I have met many who were good to me, may the gods that have favoured me find merit!)

'That was a happy time on the beach at Panadura, a carefree time. In the blue-and-white calm of the early year, for I soon became the companion of all the other fisher children, living out lives half in and half out of the water, with little more to do than play at lending a hand in hauling in the net every morning. The *maha dala*, the great purse-seine more than a quarter of a mile long between one end of its ropes and the other, was laid in a vast semi-circle—its ends were brought ashore more than a furlong apart—by flat-bottomed barges called *dal-oru*; and when both ends were secure it was hauled in by all the women and children and spare men of the village, sometimes three times a day. But it was far from common for the catch to justify the labour.

'My only real task was to await sailing-oru at dawn as they came riding in from the sea, the men blue-lipped and shivering from exhaustion, cold and exposure, and stiff from the constriction of their narrow craft in which a man must even stand sideways, with a steaming earthen bowl of spiced gruel—**behet kanda**—for my benefactor and his crew.

'This **behet kanda** was powerful stuff; better than **kasippu**! It was a congee of rice starch fortified with ginger and garlic, fenugreek, pepper and cardamoms. The men used to fall on it and down great draughts of it before they did anything else, before even the canoes were properly beached; and we children used to have to rush into the warm surf and hold the boats stern-on to the spent breakers, lest they slew round broadside and suffer damage, while they did so. The **kanda** seemed to kindle new life in the men, and after they had drunk it they would become toilers of the sea again and set about energetically beaching their craft and stowing their gear and getting the catch ready for the morning's auction.

'I had been some considerable time with my kindly fisher friends when my relatives discovered me. A grand-aunt did. She was the wife of the grand-uncle who had first sown in me the seeds of the notion of running away! How she got wind of my whereabouts I do not know to this day; nor do I even know why. But find me she did and carried me back home again. Blood, I suppose, is thicker than sea-water! so I did not protest unduly; in fact, home looked like a somehow not unwelcome change.

'Actually, there was more change than I expected. My mother had teamed up with a Kalutara man, a maker of tea-chests who had acquired a lease of jungle land in Pussellawa, up-country, and was felling timber and turning it into tea-chests on the spot, and she had gone off with him taking my brother Brumpy Appuhamy with her but giving me up—rather easily. I thought and still think—for lost.

'I therefore found myself seaying, for the time, with my grand-aunt. But not for long. The son of the Muhandiram Ralahamy that had bought our Dias Place property got a job in the Postal Department in Singapore, and my grand-aunt agreed to go with him and his wife

as their servant. Before she left she gave me into the care of a carpenter-baas she knew, a Moratuwa man, who was head-carpenter at Mr. Dias of Dias Place's mill.

'The **baas** was, again, a most kindly man; and his wife, grave and gentle, kindlier still. They were childless and happy to have me. Yet I spent a time of sheer misery in their house. The **baas** had expectations from his aunt—a stinkingly wealthy woman by he standards such as we were used to—and she lived with them. She was old and feeble and their expectations were lively and they dared do nothing to displease her, and for some reason she took a peculiar delight in tormenting me. I mean physically. Perhaps it made her feel a personage of power to see the look of helpless distress on the sweet face of the **baas**' wife, knowing that no word of protest would in the circumstances escape her **sambudhu-amme, ehemat napuru gahaniyak! hapinni, hapinni-mayi!** (God, what a vicious woman! A cobra, a very she-cobra!) recalls Simon Baas, still scowling at the seventy-year-old memory! 'One of her favourite devices—a sort of norm by which she measured other tortures—was to pinch the lobe of an ear between two sharp pebbles until blood oozed from the bruise!

'The **baas** lived away at the mill all week, driving home to Moratuwa in his race-tirikkale every Saturday afternoon. But even when he was there things were no better: he wanted his aunt's money more than he cared about the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. Indeed, when he was there his aunt's ingenuity in persecution and her eagerness to practise it dilated! There was nothing else to do but run away again. And this I often did I would steal a **baya** of jaggery from the house as provisions and wander about, happy enough while the jaggery lasted; but somehow I found no one to take me over, as it were, and on Saturdays the **baas** would return and drive about in his **tirikkale**, seeking me, and he would eventually find me under a hedge or somewhere and take me back. In the end, the villagers around got to know me so well by sight that the **baas** could generally find me in an hour or two and his aunt would more gleefully than ever undertake my punishment:

'At last, however, I got away. Every week strings of bullock carts would rumble through Moratuwa bearing produce from the coast to fairs in the inland vill ges. It was to one of these I usually attached myself in my escapes, plodding along with my elbows on the tailboard of the trailing wagon as though I were back again in the **pin-pokat** trade; and on this successful occasion I found myself at the weekly **salpilla** in Piliyandala, I followed the carts into the crowd already assembling in the fair-ground and was soon deep in conversation with a **vatti-amma**, a basket-woman, a lesser replica of my mother. I don't know what it was about her—I wasn't as fond of my redoubtable mother as all that—but, where on other occasions I had kept as I thought discreetly mum concerning my antecedents, I now found myself telling her my whole story and—big boy though I now was—weeping bitterly as I did so. She was the soul of understanding and sympathy, though I later found she was as tough as any **vatti-amma** in the business (and that's tough!) and she promised I should find a home with her own people and no one should take me away.

(To be Continued)

CANCER

Is It Hereditary?

by Patrick Young

Researchers have long suspected that heredity plays a role in at least some cancers. Recently U.S. scientists have succeeded in identifying specific genes that greatly increase the risk of developing certain cancers. These genetic advances suggest that in the future people with a high risk of developing certain cancers can be spotted before the malignancy strikes and the disease either prevented or diagnosed early enough to ensure a cure.

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A 40-year-old woman went to her family doctor after her twin sister developed endometrial can-

cer. A pelvic examination revealed she, too, suffered from the disease. A decade later a brother came down with colon cancer, later one of the two sisters was also diagnosed with that malignancy. The incident is one of hundreds that cancer specialists have documented to suggest that some people inherit a strong predisposition to cancer. Evidence that certain families suffer more cancer than others is as old as the Seventeenth Century and as recent as last week's *Journal of the American Medical Association*. So researchers have long assumed that heredity plays some role in at least some cancers.

But only in recent years, using extraordinarily complicated laboratory techniques, have scientists succeeded in identifying specific defective genes that greatly increase the risk of developing certain cancers. And this has lent support to a theory advanced by Dr. Alfred G. Knudson, Jr., of the University of Texas Health Science Centre, in Houston. Sometimes called the "two hit" theory, it contends that a second genetic mutation is needed for a hereditary pre-disposition to lead to the disease. The recent genetic advances hold major implications for understanding why some cancers—perhaps most—occur. They suggest that in the future some people at high risk of developing specific cancers can be spotted before the malignancy strikes, and the disease either prevented or diagnosed early enough to ensure a cure. They even hint at new treatment techniques.

But there is also a brutal message explicit in Knudson's theory. "We can reduce cancer, but we can never get it to go away," he says. "We'll never eliminate cancer because to do so you would have to eliminate spontaneous mutations. In a sense, cancer is the price we have to pay to evolve." Nonetheless, a better understanding of the genetic factors in cancer would offer better hope of prevention and treatment. "There have been major new ways of looking at the genetics of cancer in the last few years," according to Dr. Park S. Gerald of Harvard Medical School in Boston. "Cancer is a thousand problems for which we have a common name," says Gerald. "Each disease will have its own environment and genetic aspects and its own treatment. What it means is, don't expect a cure for cancer

because there is no single cancer. It's our emotions that lump them together, not their biology. There will be a thousand cures for a thousand cancers. We're pecking away at the genetics, but we're still just nibbling at the edges."

That nibbling is far more sophisticated than it once was. Researchers have gone beyond simply cataloging the increase of cancer in certain families. And the potential for evaluating each individual's risk of developing at least certain cancers promises dividends in prevention. "If you can tell someone his chance of getting lung cancer is 30 times greater than someone else's, he might listen to you," Kundson says.

In recent decades epidemiologists have found that a family history of breast, stomach, intestinal, uterine, or lung cancer increases a person's chances of developing that cancer from two to four times. More alarming, a family history sends the risk of developing a cancer before the normal age of onset soaring 9- to 47-folds, depending on the type of cancer. Other studies have shown that a family history of one form of cancer increases a person's risk of developing other kinds. Dr. Henry T. Lynch and nine colleagues at the Creighton University School of Medicine in Omaha, recently reported in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* on 4,515 patients screened for cancer. They found that 8.9 percent of the people who reported one case of cancer among their parents, siblings, or children had cancer themselves; 27.4 percent of those who reported three close family members with cancer had the disease.

Certain inherited, rare defects also send a person's cancer risk up. Dr. John Mulvihill of the National Cancer Institute in Bethesda, Maryland, writing in "Persons at High Risk of Cancer" identifies 161 such ailments. So the question is no longer whether a person can inherit a predisposition to cancer. What researchers want to know is how do susceptible genes act or fail to act to produce a malignancy?

A major clue came with the Philadelphia chromosome, named for the city where P.C. Nowell and D. A. Hungerford discovered it in the cancerous cells of chronic myelocytic leukemia patients. The phenomenon consists of a piece of genetic material moved, or trans-

located, from one chromosome to another. Subsequent studies have found the Philadelphia chromosome in 70 to 90 percent of chronic myelocytic leukemia patients. And evidence suggests that its presence is somehow involved in changing a normal cell to a cancerous cell. More important, says Knudson, the discovery "encouraged people to think there are specific genes for specific cancers."

As often happens in medicine, a basic understanding of a common problem began with one of its uncommon and exotic forms. In 1968 James Cleaver of the University of California, San Francisco, identified a specific genetic defect that explained why patients suffering a rare, inherited ailment called xeroderma pigmentosum have high cancer rates. Cleaver showed that the malfunction of a single gene prevented the cells of these people from repairing the damage done by ultraviolet light to a cell's DNA, the chemical compound that makes up genes. The ultraviolet part of sunlight tans the skin and is known to cause some skin cancers.

"This is an experiment of nature that shows that a change in DNA can cause cancer," says Knudson. Scientists have uncovered three other "experiments of nature" in the last two years that explain how inherited genes increase a specific cancer risk. English and Canadian researchers reported in April that patients with ataxia telangiectasia—an inherited disorder that involves poor muscle co-ordination and carries a high risk of lymph-system cancers—cannot repair DNA damage that results from X rays.

Two other inherited ailments that carry a high-cancer risk—Bloom's disease and Fanconi's anemia—are now known to involve malfunctions in another DNA-repair system. "We've got at least three DNA-repair systems and four ways in which deficiencies show up," says Harvard's Gerald. "The discoveries won't stop there." Some recent work suggests the specific nature of the genetic predisposition to lung cancer. Lung cancer patients seem to inherit far more activity in an enzyme called aryl hydrocarbon hydroxylase than people without cancer or people with other malignancies. The enzyme can form cancer-causing compounds from a variety of

hydrocarbons, including some found in tobacco smoke. The implication—far from proved at this time—is that people born with high-activity in the enzyme stand a higher risk of developing lung cancer. If true, measuring the enzyme may one day tell people how great their risk is.

Not everyone inherits the same predisposition or the same degree of risk. Knudson and two colleagues—Dr. Louise Strong and David E. Anderson—have concluded that "virtually all cancers in man" come in both inherited and non-inherited forms. People who inherit a predisposition, however, run a far greater individual risk of developing cancer, of developing it at an age earlier than normal, and of developing more primary tumors.

There appear to be at least five hereditary types of breast cancer, and by one estimate they account for 30 percent of all breast cancers. "A person with a dominant gene for breast cancer will get breast cancer 20 years earlier than most women," says Knudson. (A dominant disorder requires that a fetus inherits a defective gene from only one parent; a recessive disorder requires inheriting the same defective gene from both parents).

Retinoblastoma is a rare eye cancer found in young children. Knudson estimates that 40 percent of these malignancies are associated with an inherited dominant predisposition. He calculates that inheriting the predisposition increases a child's chances of developing retinoblastoma 100,000 times.

No one knows precisely how important genetic predispositions are in cancer. Knudson estimates that one or two percent of all cancers are strongly predisposed—that this small percentage of people are born essentially doomed to develop cancer. He believes another 20 or 25 percent of malignancies result entirely from spontaneous mutations, with neither predisposition nor the environment playing a role. "These are the rock bottom that tell us we'll never get to a time when people won't get cancer," Knudson says.

But there remain roughly three-quarters of all cancers that either result entirely from environmental factors, or a combination of the environment and predisposition. And these are the ones in which

prevention could reduce the cancer toll. Knudson's two-hit theory is a synthesis and refinement of several old ideas about cancer. It accepts the notion that all cancer tumors begin as a single cell that goes wrong. But it takes more than a single event to turn a cell malignant. "It is probably a small number of events—two, maybe three in some tumors," Knudson says. "One event isn't enough. If it were, every person who inherited a (cancer) gene would have every cell in that tissue become cancer."

The events Knudson talks of are genetic mutations, changes in specific genes that may somehow lead to cancer. A person may inherit a mutation; it may occur spontaneously or it may result from an environmental factor such as sunlight, man-made or natural radiation, or chemicals in food, water, air, or drugs.

In Knudson's view, a person who inherits a mutation that predisposes him to cancer is born with one hit against him, a person born without a predisposing gene needs two hits before cancer develops. And this need for only one hit after birth, Knudson says, explains why families with an inherited predisposition suffer more cancer, and why people with the predisposing gene generally get cancer at a younger age. The two-hit theory says nothing about the very important question of how cancer spreads through the body. It is aimed only at explaining what happens at the genetic level within an individual cell.

Knudson's notion is gaining considerable credence among cancer specialists. But it is not the only hypothesis to explain why a cell turns cancerous. Indeed, there is increasing evidence that Knudson's theory—while it may explain most cancers—cannot account for all cancers. Most likely the mysterious mechanism that tells a cell what it will be—skin, muscle, heart, liver, blood—is involved. An alternate theory says cancers arise when this mechanism somehow goes away.

"My inclination, if I were a betting man, would be to bet that both are correct," says Dr. Richmond T. Prehn, director of the Jackson Laboratory, an internationally known genetics-research center at Bar Harbor, Maine. "I see no reason that both can't be perfectly good mechanisms."

MUSICALIA—I

Introductory

by Mort Harbride

MUSIC is God's wonderful gift to Creation and is truly worthy of simple acceptance by us all as one of the most beautiful and natural means of universal and international communication. Be it bird song, insect sound, the sighing of the wind in the trees or the sounds of the elements, we can instantly identify Nature's diversity in its sounds of thanksgiving and praise to our Creator. All nature must do likewise.

We acknowledge this remarkable channel of communication as mortal beings—some of us unquestionably, some with reservations, but most of us with simple spontaneity.

There are those who have the gift of creating music for the delight of our fellow beings. We either perform the works of the great masters and other composers in varied arrangements and instrumentation, or we play *ex tempore* and express our feelings to our listeners. There are some of us who are endowed with the ability of interpretation of what was, we would like to think, nearest to the composer's intentions. There are others in the majority who are the listeners. We are grateful for this privilege and freedom to be able to accept or reject our likes or dislikes—whatever form of music we choose.

The creative insistence of man to provide musical instruments right down the ages to the present time bears ample testimony to his desire to provide adequate means of communication through music. The subject of musical reproduction is so vast and varied that we are compelled to touch on it now only transitorily.

Man's inventive capacity must also be mentioned in the musical sphere. Modern inventors and inventions have really stirred the otherwise prosaic acceptance of normal standards. This aspect of our thinking can well become the subject matter of a future article.

The listener-reaction is the life-line of this communication medium

in music, be the performance 'live' or recorded. With the advance in modern methods in radio and television, listeners and viewers are fast becoming more reliant on these mass media as they relax in their homes for their musical entertainment unlike in the past when theatres and concert halls drew capacity crowds. Sophisticated methods of entertaining are fast coming into vogue. Selectivity of musical programmes has been reduced to finger-tip control at home. 'Canned' music is so popular today that cassette tapes can be played with simple operation and heard with surprising clarity of reproduction and is within the capacity of the average listener's purse.

THE CONTEMPORARY LISTENER to music is just as selective in his listening as his forbears. A concert programme for the entertainment of all ages and varied musical tastes takes a good deal of forethought, planning and experience on the part of the organisers to ensure success. A noticeable alternation of Western and Oriental contributions by artistes caters to a broad spectrum of the public entertainment. Pop bands and combos are featured in most stage shows along with singers of popularity in the contemporary scene. Every effort is being made by promoters to fill the entertainment needs of the local music lover and those in search of entertainment at reasonable rates. Tourist hotels also gear their entertainment to meet the musical preference of a wide variety of their patrons. Discotheques are quite popular in the larger hotels and are well patronised.

Modern music has extensive appeal the world over and Sri Lanka is no exception. Gimmickry in technique-innovations contribute to record disc profits as all available copies of their idol's latest releases are snapped up by their eager fans. Cassette sales also show large profits.

Dance music has over the past two decades undergone marked changes. Strict dance tempo ballroom dance music of Victor Sylvestre and Joe Loss has given way to the 'frug' and the 'haze'. The couple on the floor no longer use their feet to dance in tempo but more of body and arm movement is noticed. The 'sounds' one hears

today as compared with those of the 1940s and '50 are seldom pleasing to the ear as they are blasted out in full volume by powerful amplifiers to a near-deaf public!

IN CONTRAST, there is the listenable music of Mantovani and Kostelanetz which is relaxing and easy on the ear, as their choice of renditions is melodious music in close harmony, tastefully arranged and selected for popular listener appeal. Choral music like the contributions by the Roger Wanger Choir is also restful and enjoyable in contrast to a noise-polluted situation.

The grandeur of the sounds of a full Symphony Orchestra performing the immortal works of the great composers is also refreshing to a discriminating listener. String quartets are also a source of satisfaction to those who prefer this music. A pity, however, to note the presence at Symphony Concerts of some 'social climbers' who are clueless about the music being played which is 'way above their heads' but who are present obviously for snob-appeal! Ah, well, we suppose they do help the box plan! Those who are real music lovers must doubtless echo these elements.

There is a wealth of musical talent among our youth. Some of them are encouraged to pursue their studies and eventually take their place among our leading solo performers. But, regrettably, the majority of these well-meaning students who aspire to ATCL and LTCL diploma standards, succumb to the pressures of their doting parents and eventually sacrifice their talents on the hearth or in the nursery! Pity!

IN THE ORIENTAL SCENE sound recordings of songs and background music for Sinhala films are carried on at the State Film Corporation Studios, Dalugama, Ceylon Studios, Vijaya Studios and Govt. Film Unit Studio (documentaries mostly). The Studios are invariably heavily booked by producers to complete a back-log of films to be released after censorship. Musicians who play for these recordings have been long experienced and work on call sheets (generally 8 hours) from 10 p.m. to 6 a.m. in invariably ill-ventilated studios (except for the GFU Studio which is airconditioned), and are suscep-

tible to chills constantly when moving in and out of the studio, as their duties require.

A noted observation at these recording sessions is the fact that (1) considerable call-sheet time can well be saved by punctuality and systematic functioning of the entire staff of musicians and technicians involved to cut delays (2) the Studios be given a thorough cleaning and overhauling at an early date and maintained in an efficient manner (3) out-dated equipment like microphones, recording machines etc. be modernised with the profits earned.

Among our film directors we have some excellent talent and this fact has been evidenced by their successes abroad. It is not too late to give them the recognition and encouragement to do greater productions in the future which they have so rightly deserved. Our Sinhala cinema will indeed be the richer for it.

NATIONAL UNITY

And The Vietnamese Language

THOSE FOREIGNERS who are more or less interested in Vietnamese history often wonder how the Vietnamese language could have continued to develop after ten centuries of domination by the Han. And many among them have compared it with the language of the Gauls in ancient France and that of the Celtiberes of ancient Spain.

It is indeed an uncommon phenomenon especially considering the historical background: according to Chinese records, Viet Nam in the beginning of our era had only nine hundred thousand inhabitants, a small population in comparison with that of the Han. It had an isolating and analytical language like Han: moreover Vietnamese was less developed than the latter which already had a fairly elaborate ideographical writing system. And to this the long foreign domination and its inevitable cultural impact as well as the successive waves of immigration and the matter becomes more puzzling.

To say that the continuous development of the Vietnamese language is due to our love of the mother tongue, an oppressed people's will to resist attempts at assimilation by the invaders is not a complete explanation, these qualities being no exclusive characteristic of the Vietnamese.

Other reasons must be looked for. In the first place, it is a fact that when Viet Nam was invaded by the Han, the country already had a developed and original culture, a coherent social organization and a language usually developed for those times having been elaborated in different aspects—particularly regarding its structure.

ANOTHER REASON is that for centuries, while invaders recognized only their own language and script as the official ones, the Vietnamese people had been waging an obstinate struggle—which was prolonged until long after foreign domination had ended—to minimize their effect in certain social aspects such as administration, education and culture. The Vietnamese however, did assimilate, in a creative manner, some positive elements such as scientific language to enrich the national language, create a national script, and modify these to suit the country's literary, administrative and educational preferences. That long period was illuminated with famous names and personalities such as Nguyen Trai, Le Thanh Tong, Nguyen Binh Khiem, Doan Thi Diem, Nguyen Du, Ho Xuan Huong, Cao Ba Quat, Nguy Khuyen, the most eminent among these being Nguyen Trai (15th century) and Nguyen Du (19th century).

Issuing from a common language of which vestiges can be traced in many languages still spoken in various parts of Viet Nam, Laos, Cambodia, Burma, Thailand, South China, West India, Indian Ocean islands... Vietnamese has become, after four thousand years, the language common to all inhabitants of Viet Nam, one of the most densely populated countries of Southeast Asia.

Vietnamese was used by all the inhabitants of the country, even in the 17th and 18th centuries when secession wars were opposing different feudal clans. Missionary Alexandre de Rhodes wrote: "Vietnamese is the language common not only to the two main regions—Tonkin and Cochinchina—

it is also spoken in the Cao Bang region where the population use no other language, and in the neighbouring region..." (*Dictionarium annamiticum-lusitanium latinum* (Ad lectorem) Rome 1651).

Indeed, in the Vietnamese language as spoken in the remotest mountainous regions or the plains of the Dong Van plateau in the northernmost part of the country, or at the southernmost tip of Ca Mau, there is a remarkable unity in phonetics, vocabulary and grammar which permit the inhabitants of each region to make themselves easily understood in others.

This is not to say that there are no Vietnamese dialects, but only that the differences between them are insignificant, and in no way comparable to those which exist, for instance between Breton and French as spoken by Parisians, or between Peking Chinese and the languages spoken in Kuangtung, Shanghai, Fukien...

THE DIFFERENCES between various Vietnamese dialects appear chiefly in the phonological aspect. Vietnamese as spoken in the North has six tones, while in the Centre and the South, it has only five. On the other hand, it has only 18 initial consonants in the North and as many as 21 in the Centre and the South, these differences being constituted by these retroflexes. The phonemes—each of which consists of a vowel or a vowel and a final consonant—are more numerous in the North than in the other two regions (in certain regions of the Centre and the South, no difference is made between

uo and ui, iem and im or between the final an and ng, t and c).

Minor differences also appear in the lexicological aspect. Some archaic words still remain in central Vietnamese such as *tróc-dau* (head), *doi-bat* (bow). Other words have been introduced by relatively new ethnic elements, for example in southern Vietnamese: *lo-duong* (route); *thoi-tra lai* (give back the change). Others, finally, have been adopted more recently, in various traceable circumstances: *xe dap-xe may* (bicycle); *xa phong-xa bong* (soap); *my chinh-bot ngot* (monosodium glutamate). Except for these triple differences, the vocabulary on the whole is the same in all parts of the country.

Regarding grammar, there are no special rules peculiar to any region.

It should be stressed that besides these differences which appear chiefly in spoken language—the orthography is the same in different parts of the country (except for the still common misspelling of a few words in some newly liberated regions). With the development of general education, a higher cultural level of the population, more frequent contacts between inhabitants and cadres and combatants from different parts of the country, the development of literature and the arts, press and radio, etc. the literary language—which has always been Vietnamese as spoken in the North, particularly in the Hanoi region—is taking root more and more deeply among the people and further facilitating communications

TRANS VIETNAM RAILWAY

As from January 15, 1977, the trans-Vietnam railway have officially taken passengers from both Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City. The whole Hanoi-Ho Chi Minh City line is 1,730 kilometres long. From Lang Son, the northernmost town to Ho Chi Minh City, the railway measures 1,895 kilometres. Workers, soldiers and other people have rebuilt 626 kilometres of railway destroyed during the war from Vinh (Nghe Tinh province) to Phu My (Nghia Binh province) which includes 475 bridges and culverts, hundreds of bridges have been repaired or built anew, 1,442 metres of tunnel have been restored, 150 railway stations rebuilt, 1,700 kilometres of power lines set up. The restoration of the trans-Vietnam railway required the manufacture or rehabilitation of 20,000 tons of steel, 70,000 cubic metres of timber sleepers and 400,000 cubic metres of stone. More than 70,000 people were directly taking part in the project, not including thousands of others who did supply work and logistics. The whole project took 14 months, from the day reconstruction began to the day when the last track was laid at Minh Cam Station (Nghe Tinh province) on December 4, 1976.

between those living in different parts of the country.

At present, Vietnamese is playing an incontestable role in administration and literary creation. Still, some foreigners are wondering to what extent it is used in education—particularly higher education—and in scientific research. How can the language of a country which has just regained independence and whose economy is still under-developed be expected to serve as a vehicle for the propagation of modern scientific knowledge?

It is not overnight that Vietnamese has become a developed cultural language. Before the Revolution of August 1945, a number of scientists and other patriotic intellectuals had been struggling to restore Vietnamese to an honorable place, particularly in education and the popularization of science. They had elaborated and used in their works, publicly and privately, a system of scientific terms. But the policy of the colonial administration was to be every thing possible to check the development of the Vietnamese language.

After August 1945, when power had passed into the hands of the people, a burning question cropped up: what language to use in education? Can Vietnamese replace French in this domain?

For the leaders of the RDVN, the answer was affirmative. They decided to use Vietnamese as the vehicle language in education, a bold decision which was enthusiastically welcomed by patriotic intellectuals who promptly set about completing the technical vocabulary, some working individually, others, collectively. Some professors created new words in their practice. And for these reasons, our educational activities from the primary classes to higher education, were not interrupted for a single day! Later, during the years of the wars of resistance against the French colonialists and the American imperialists and of socialist construction in the North, we unceasingly enriched our scientific and technical terminology while carrying on education work and scientific research.

At present, in all branches of social and natural sciences, of technique, the arts and literature, we have all the necessary terms. While

in 1945-1946 we had only about 40,000 of these, we had in 1970, about 900,000, according to available figures. High-level lectures by foreign scientists can now be faithfully translated into Vietnamese. Vietnamese is being used for lectures and these in all branches of science and technique, in seminars and scientific debates.

This scientific terminology perfectly fits in with the general structure of the language. It is made up of purely Vietnamese terms and a still larger number of terms of Sino-Vietnamese origin or borrowed from the *Han* language. Lastly, in the cases where such terms cannot express a notion with enough precision, phonetic transcriptions of Indo-European words are used. Benefiting by world experience in this domain, we have succeeded in giving our scientific terminology not only the necessary precision, coherence and simplicity, but also a systematic character and words expressing various shades of meaning.

At the Paris Conference on Viet Nam and various international conferences, for the first time in the history of diplomacy, Vietnamese has been given the same rank as the "international" languages.

Ten years ago, speaking of the bold and clear-sighted decision of the RDVN Government and of President Ho Chi Minh to use the Vietnamese language in education and research work, Prime Minister Pham Van Dong said: "It is a victory for our national consciousness."

While developing Vietnamese to raise it to the level of a language of national culture, we continued to treat the dialects of national

minorities on an equal footing. The Constitution of the RDVN adopted by the National Assembly on December 31, 1959, stipulated:

"All nationalities have the right to preserve or to modify their ways and customs, to use their respective languages and scripts and to develop their own cultures."

In the SRV, no language has been officially declared the national language with special distinctions or directives that it must be used by all citizens. It has never been stipulated that ethnic minorities should use only the majority language. On the contrary, the State has been helping some minorities to create their own scripts or to improve them and make them adequate for promoting cultural development of the minority peoples. This has contributed to consolidation the bloc of national unity for the defence of independence during the past three decades and for the construction of a reunified and socialist Viet Nam.

In practice, no ethnic minority can rapidly develop its culture and education without using Vietnamese. Every minority has recognized the necessity of using Vietnamese as a vehicle language in education, from the upper primary classes onward. Discarding racial prejudice, which was formerly exacerbated by the colonialists, all national minorities have of their own free will adopted Vietnamese as the common language.

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**BRIEF BIO — DATA OF H. E. PHAN HIEN
DEPUTY MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE
SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM SPECIAL ENVOY OF
PRIME MINISTER PHAM VAN DONG**

Born in 1918 in Hanoi.

Prior to 1945, student, took part in Revolution, the anti-French—Japanese Viet Minh Movement.

From 1945 to 1954, took part in the Resistance of War against the French colonialists, member of the Central Committee of the Vietnam Youth League, cadre of the Vietnam People's Army.

Ever since 1955 onwards, working in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. Participated in the 1955 Bandung Conference, in the 1967-1973 Paris Conference.

VIETNAM'S FOREIGN POLICY

Minister's Speech

—At Party Congress—

"Holding high the banner of independence and socialism, striving to carry out the Party's external policy, stepping up the building of socialism and fulfilling internationalist duty." These main factors of Vietnamese foreign policy were stressed in a speech by Foreign Minister Nguyen Duy Trinh, member of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Vietnam Communist Party and Foreign Minister, delivered at the Party's Fourth Congress. After recalling the achievements of the Party's foreign policy in the recent past, Nguyen Duy Trinh dealt with the tasks and foreign policy laid down by the Party and the Vietnamese State in the new stage of the revolution. He said: "In the new stage, we must continue to carry out in a creative way the correct international line of our Party, strive to turn to account the favourable international conditions for an early healing of the wounds of war, the restoration and development of our economy, the development of our culture, science and technology, the consolidation of our national defence and the building of the material and technical basis of socialism. at the same time we must continue to stand shoulder to shoulder with the brotherly socialist countries and all other nations who are struggling for peace, national independence, democracy and socialism, against imperialism headed by U.S. imperialism."

Nguyen Duy Trinh stressed: "The fraternal socialist countries are our reliable strategic allies in our national democratic revolution previously as well as in our present endeavour to build and defend socialism. We will continue to make every effort to consolidate and strengthen the militant solidarity and the co-operation in all fields between our country and all brotherly countries, first of all with the Soviet Union and China, on the basis of Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism. Their political support, their economic, scientific and technical assistance and co-operation and their

own experience in these fields constitute a very important factor to help us build an independent and sovereign socialist economy. Economic co-operation has become a very important content of the relations between our country and other socialist countries. We must broaden economic relations, and step by step participate in the co-operation and division of labour among the fraternal countries, thereby creating conditions for us to be self-reliant while making our own contribution to the reinforcement of the socialist system. Acting upon the Testament of the venerated President Ho Chi Minh, we will do our best to make our contribution, jointly with the brotherly socialist countries and the international communist and workers' movement, to restore and consolidate solidarity, promote mutual support and assistance on the basis of Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism, in a fair and reasonable manner."

Nguyen Duy Trinh went on: "We attach the utmost importance to the solidarity between Vietnam, Laos and Kampuchea. The close solidarity between the three countries is of vital significance to the three nations and a strong source of inspiration for the South-East Asian people's struggle for genuine peace, independence, democracy and neutrality. South-East Asia is a region of particular importance to the security and socialist construction of our country. We fully support the just struggle of the South-East Asian peoples for genuine national independence, democracy, peace and neutrality, for the non-presence of imperialist military bases and troops in their respective countries. We are ready to establish and develop relations of friendship and co-operation in many fields with the countries in this region according to the principles already stated. We are ready to develop bilateral relations, and on this basis proceed to regional co-operation with a view to safeguarding each country's independence and sovereignty over its own natural resources, mutual assistance in economic, cultural, scientific and technical fields and opposing imperialist and neo-colonialist pressure and exploitation.

"We pledge ourselves to remain for ever the reliable comrades-

in-arms of the national liberation movement as we have been. We firmly support the struggle of the Asian, African and Latin American peoples against imperialism, colonialism old and new, racism and Zionism, for peace, national independence, democracy and social progress. We fully support the just cause of the working class and labouring people in the capitalist countries."

The Vietnamese Foreign Minister declared: "We undertake to establish relations with the countries with differing social systems on the basis of mutual respect for each other's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, non-aggression and non-interference in each other's internal affairs, equality, mutual benefit, and peaceful co-existence. This is a principle in the foreign policy of our State. On this basis, we shall extend economic, cultural, scientific and technical and other relations with developed capitalist countries. With regard to the United States, we firmly oppose the policy of interference and neo-colonialist aggression of the U.S. imperialists, we firmly demand that the U.S. correctly settle the pending problems between the two countries and on the legal basis which both sides have accepted. If the U.S. renounces its hostile policy toward Vietnam we will be ready to normalize our relations with it as specified in the Paris Agreement on Vietnam."

Nguyen Duy Trinh pointed out the following fundamental ideas governing the Vietnamese foreign line: *First*, to hold high the banner of national independence and socialism—the great goal of the Vietnamese people and also the goal of our times. *Second*, to thoroughly combine genuine patriotism with proletarian internationalism, oppose any tendency to opportunism and all manifestations of bourgeois and petty-bourgeois nationalism. *Third*, to firmly maintain the line of independence, sovereignty and international solidarity, to uphold the spirits of relying mainly on our forces while increasing international co-operation. *Fourth*, to seize good opportunities, to hold the initiative to push ahead international activities.

Nguyen Duy Trinh concluded by quoting President Ho Chi

Style Of Her Own

Minh as saying: "The Vietnam Workers' Party will never stand apart from the brotherly parties. With all its practice, it has demonstrated that genuine patriotism is inseparable from proletarian internationalism and that the brotherly alliance between all peoples struggling for a common cause, for the liberation of mankind is unshakable."

ART SHOW

Leilani Cook

—a style of her own—

By R. C. Thavarajah
Retd. Supdt. of Police

The first and greatest Chinese philosopher, Kung Confucius, (C. 551-479 B.C.), son of the Magistrate at a city in the dukedom of LU in the present Shantung, whose teachings have had a tremendous effect on the history of his country said:—"A picture is worth ten thousand words". Quite obviously, he did not confine his dictum merely to the dictionary meaning of the word in any language but most emphatically referred to the effect paintings generate in our minds whether it be in the East or in the West.

I had the pleasure and the privilege of being invited to the first Exhibition of drawings and paintings by Miss Leilani Cooke which was held on Friday, the 28th of January this year at the Lionel Wendt Art Gallery. The Chief Guest was His Excellency Mr. Pierre Anthonioz, Ambassador for France in Sri Lanka. After reading Reggie Perera's and Sita Jayawardene's most deserved commendations of the work of the young artist, a compelling urge found me gazing at the grand and varied ensemble of young Leilani. Enjoying the exhibits was a mixture of the cultured elite, cavalier art critics, eager and enthusiastic students and the unlearned and uninitiated like myself. I had the irresistible feeling of being temporarily snatched away in spirit from the hum-drum, dull and dreary monotony of the every day occurrences of urban life.

It is highly commendable that the French Embassy should sponsor

the efforts of the youth of our country. The time-honoured French proverb "An art requires a whole man" cannot possibly be contradicted but vivacious and talented Leilani had convincingly proved her mettle in the field of art despite either lack of maturity or the complete development of the personality such as in the case of the Great Masters like Leonardo Da Vinci, Michaelangelo, Rembrandt, Pablo Picasso, Van Gogh and others. Heights in any field cannot be attained by "sudden flight". When a young artist manifests courage and makes a start, the solemn duty owed by society is to nurture and nourish such an entity.

History records that in France, the most invigorating encouragement had been bestowed for the development of talent among the youth as well as the adults in their path to perfection. The *Academie des Beaux Arts* was founded as early as in 1648 by the great painter Charles Le Brun. This venture won the recognition and support of King Louis XIV who eventually established the Academy in the Louvre in 1656. The *Academie de France a Rome* was founded in 1666 with the assistance of Colbert as an Institution where French painters would be afforded every opportunity of completing their training.

Young Leilani's exhibits characterise a somewhat marked deviation from the classical style or orthodox realistic convention. A vibrant Originality, unique in a style of her own is richly expressed in a vivid and bold imagination. Her Skills, however, savour strongly of Paul Cezanne's penchant for the impeccable sense of depth and juxtaposition of colour. Exhibit (37) *Temple Flowers* which I consider the 'piece-de-resistance', (6) *Still Life with flower vase* and (16) *Orchids* are undoubtedly in-

dicative of punctilious attention to detail, disciplined, sensitive arrangement and verisimilitude. Most striking animal representation in exhibits (40) *Elephants*, (39) *Buffaloes* and (18) *Heads* display a powerful character of her own where she has religiously observed her own sense of reality with extreme 'stylization'. The animal motifs reveal faultless clarity of representation.

Her attempts, inadvertently of course, in Abstract painting such as in (23) *Woman Deep in Thought*, (10) *Tea Pluckers* and (44) *Rubber Tapper* are positively captivating. She asserts that she prefers giving her own impressions. In this context, I consider it relevant to quote Michael Sauphor from the delectable book entitled "Abstract Painting"—fifty years of accomplishment from Kandinsky to the present—"Many artists of our day like to find justification for their work in science or in philosophy; the man of science and the philosopher increasingly scrutinise the phenomenon of art. I wonder if this 'Osmosis' is a healthy development. It seems to me that any truly original work stands or falls of itself, irrespective of the influences that have helped to produce it....."

Leilani has still to find an identity or attain the virtuosity of eminent artists who have filled the niches of immortality. She certainly has a style—something organic and a powerfully viable constituent of her personality. She, like others of her genre in Sri Lanka, is making her contribution in her own way. The hubris and non-chalance of pompous pundits and pharisees in the specialised 'science' of Art criticism cannot stifle a tender flame which, with God's blessings and in the fullness of time, is certain to shine as a very bright star.

SPECIAL NEW BBC PROGRAMME FOR SOUTH ASIA

At 0715 Sri Lankan Local Time every Saturday BBC World Service broadcasts a specially produced programme for South Asian Listeners on the affairs of India, Sri Lanka and neighbouring countries. *South Asia Survey* can be heard by listeners in Sri Lanka on 7.1 MHz (42m band), 6.1 MHz (48m band) and 3.9 MHz (75m band).

The aim of *South Asia Survey* is to provide in-depth reporting and analysis of the region's affairs by means of interviews, despatches and commentaries. One regular feature is a review of how British papers have handled developments in the area during the previous week, including their comment on major events in Sri Lanka. The Press Review is compiled by Evan Charlton, for many years the editor of the *Statesman* of Calcutta and New Delhi.

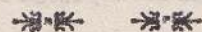
Confidentially

• Prorogation

IS IT NOT A FACT that the prorogation of Parliament on February 10 took nearly everybody by surprise? That though a large number of knowledgeable people had expected a sudden dissolution and a snap election, nobody had thought of prorogation? That this perfectly constitutional way of suspending the activities and functioning of the Assembly has only delayed the dissolution by three months? That as elections have to take place within four months of dissolution, this prorogation really means that the Government can carry on without the Assembly being in sessions for nearly seven months? That the Prime Minister can now fix the elections at the time she wants? That it had been revealed in these columns many weeks ago that it was likely that the general elections would be held in July or August on the basis of astrological prognostications? That events in December and January had made it appear that an earlier than July/August snap elections were on the cards for the simple reason that the Prime Minister and the Government were not favourably placed so far as the Assembly was concerned? That the PM and the Government were faced with an embarrassing no-confidence motion on the December strikes? That there were also other matters on which the Opposition were preparing to table no-confidence motions? That debates on no-confidence motions would provide excellent opportunities to the opposition to expose a large number of the acts of commission and omission of the Administration, the Establishment and the Government for which satisfactory explanations, apologia or defence, were not possible? That, in addition, the Prime Minister and the Government were confronted with one (and possibly more) questions of privilege that could have proved rather inconvenient to them? That more than all this was the growing reality of the disintegration that had begun to overtake the United Front and the SLFP itself? That with the CP participating in the December strikes, triggered by the LSSP,

the UF was virtually at an end? That the CP had exhibited a new independence insisting, when the strike was over, that it was justified in participating in the strikes because they were not politically-motivated strikes but were spontaneous expressions of the distressing economic situation that had enveloped the country? That the CP's political statements were a direct challenge to the thesis put out by the PM and the Government: that the strikes were politically-motivated to topple the Government and that the economic situation was not as bad as it was made out to be because of the many radical achievements of the Government during the last six years and the tremendous benefits brought to the working class, the peasantry and the common people by anti-imperialist and anti-UNP policies of the UF government. The CP had also refused to accept the position taken by the PM that the Government should not negotiate with workers on strike? That with the CP taking up this position it was clear that the remaining part United Front in the post-LSSP era between the SLFP and the CP, was over and this was confirmed when the PM decided on the prorogation without consulting the CP? That the United Front between the SLFP and CP thus ended without either the CP quitting or being expelled? IS IT NOT A FACT that an even more serious problem for the PM and the Government than the CP was the threat of defection from within the ranks of the SLFP? That a small group of SLFP Young Turks, led by Nanda Ellawela, had supported the strikes? That though this SLFP ginger group had four identified SLFP MPs nobody had called them a "gang of four" because they had broken many months ago with an Establishment-connected meteor linked with the Shanghai-cum-Peking-based "gang of four" which has received so much attention in China in the last six months? (Incidentally this meteor has vanished into thin air in jet space but there are speculations as to whether he was holidaying in the salubrious climate of California or had returned to the scene of his earlier revolutionary proclivities in London?) That it was said by SLFP stalwarts that the rebel SLFP Young Turks would come to heel no sooner the Whip was cracked by the bosses of the SLFP? That though the Whip was

cracked many times recently, the rebel group had refused to knuckle down and has persisted in the "rebellion"? That what became really distressing to the SLFP was that more and more SLFP MPs had begun to threaten defection? That the names of three SLFP Ministers were also linked with this erosion within the ranks of the SLFP? That many wisecracks insisted on believing that with the dangling the carrot of Party nominations (or the refusal thereof) the SLFP Young Turks would end their rebellion in the most abject manner? That such inducements did not have the expected or desired effect on them? (That like the Aesopian bitter grapes many SLFP loyalists now assert that these MPs—and others to follow—were among the fifteen or twenty SLFP MPs who would not have got nominations in any case? That it was only a case of quitting before being rejected? That though this has an element of truth nobody now gives much credence to it?) That instead of going on bended knees to the SLFP hierarchy, the four young Turks announced the formation of a new Party after submitting their resignations to the President of the SLFP? That, up to the time of writing, the fifth SLFP MP has submitted his resignations to the Party hierarchy? That there are various rumours about the possible number of MPs who might defect from the SLFP and join the new Party to be named National Democratic Party (or something like that)? That this number ranges from ten to twenty seven including the Ministers mentioned before? That there are even stories about Ministers and MPs who might quit the SLFP and not contest the coming elections for one reason or another? That if such defections from the UF and the SLFP had taken place, the PM and the Government would have been confronted with a vanishing Parliamentary majority in the Assembly? That this was perhaps the most compelling reason for the sudden and unexpected prorogation on February 10? That there is also no doubt that of the many options open to the PM she had chosen one which will give everybody time to cogitate upon the realities, intricacies and complexities of the current situation?



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