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race relations

in

sri lanka

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Race Relations in Sri Lanka

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INTRODUCTION

The Centre for Society & Religion presents in this volume three issues of Logos dedicated to race relations in Sri Lanka published in 1977. We are now in April 1978. The violence of August/September 1977 has long since subsided and most people have got back to their places of work or residence. However, there are still many victims who have been unable to return to their homes or do not feel secure enough to do so. There are also a few thousands of refugees who are being rehabilitated in the Northern Province specially from the plantation areas.

The Government has appointed a Commission headed by Mr. M. C. Sansoni, a former Chief Justice, to inquire into and report on the incidents of August/September 1977. Its sessions are now being held in Jaffna and harrowing tales of suffering are being reported in the daily newspapers. The Government has also appointed a Select Committee of Parliament to report on the reform of the Constitution. Mr. Thondaman, the leader of the Ceylon Workers Congress representing many plantation workers, is a member of this Select Committee. The Tamil United Liberation Front, however, is not participating in this Select Committee. The T. U. L. F. functions as the main party of the Opposition in the National State Assembly; Mr. Amirthalingam, the T. U. L. F. leader, is also the Leader of the Opposition. Thus public life now continues in a more peaceful manner in relation to race.

Certain changes have already been made by the Government concerning the language issue. The standardisation of marks on a language medium basis for admission to the University has been given up. This change aroused a certain amount of discontent among some pro-Sinhala groups; however, Government took speedy and firm steps to prevent any escalation of protest on this score. It now seems to be the accepted policy of the State to teach all children Sinhala or Tamil in addition to their mother tongue. It is thus hoped that in a few years time a new generation of youth will come up in this country who would have a working knowledge of both Sinhala and Tamil and be able to converse with each other. However, the implementation of this policy is slow particularly because of lack of teachers. An Education Reforms Committee headed by Mr. Bogoda Premaratna has also been appointed to report on education as a whole, including education for national harmony. We are also inclined to think that at present there is a greater confidence among the racial minority that the Government does not discriminate on the basis of race in administrative matters. Mr. Devanayagam, an elected Tamil M. P., is the Minister of Justice and an important contributor to the formation of Government policy.

Beneath this atmosphere of calm externally there remains, however, a certain insecurity among the minorities specially among those who live in the south and in the plantation areas. The scars of wounds received and the havoc of looting have not yet been removed or undone. There are particular difficulties when families specially those which are racially mixed want to decide on their work and residence. The plantation workers of Indian origin feel a sense of insecurity because they were attacked by the people from the surrounding villages. They are not sure that such a thing would not happen again. On the other hand, there are also harrowing stories of the condition of those who have been repatriated to India. They are at a loss as to what the future holds for them in this country or in India. Meanwhile, the repatriation under the Sirima-Sastri Pact continues along with the corresponding grant of the franchise to those who remain. The election of Mr. Thondaman to Parliament once again gives a voice to the plantation workers in the national legislature.

The situation in Sri Lanka concerning race is far from being settled. The issues remain at present largely beneath the surface. The T. U. L. F. has given time to the Government to translate its good intentions and promises into effective changes at the constitutional and political level. The more militant Tamil youth have in turn given the older leadership of the T.U.L.F. time to fulfill its promises of leading the Tamil people to liberated Eelam. The T. U. L. F. M. P. for Potuvil, Mr. Kanagaratnam who crossed over to the Government soon after his election, was mysteriously shot at and seriously injured in the heart of Colombo by unknown persons. Three police investigators searching for his alleged assailants were killed in Manner area in April this year. Deep down in the country the long standing problems of racial prejudice need to be resolved if a complete sense of security is to be enjoyed by all the citizens of the country. There is also the danger that at any given time the interested parties may even rouse up racial tension as a diversion from other economic and political issues. Over the past few months the country has had a series of minor shocks due to alleged subversive activities by different groups not so friendly to Government.

Race relations remain still a major challenge to the people and Government and all political parties of this country. We, therefore, urge the Government to do what it can in the political and constitutional sphere to ease the situation. We recommend the guaranteeing in the constitution of fundamental rights of all persons including racial minorities in such a manner that they cannot be tampered with by one racial group or political party. Secondly, we commend once again the fulfilment of the Government promise to call an all-party conference for the resolution of these

issues. It is true that the Government is increasingly involved in the effort of economic development and in facing some of the other social tensions as from workers and students. However, there should not be no illusion about the external calm that prevails concerning race relations. In fact, this may in itself be a good situation for the Government to initiate the discussions with all political parties both in and out of Parliament.

An even more basic need is for a changing of mentalities among the people at large. For racial prejudice is quite widespread among the people of the country even though the races live intermingled and go about their day to day work peacefully. We strongly urge all voluntary organisations to give attention to the problem of national integration. Sri Lanka cannot be one nation merely by law or because the British brought us together administratively. We can become one nation only if the people as a whole want it so. The religions of the country can contribute immensely to this task of nation building by their activities in favour of harmony throughout the length and breadth of this country. Trade Unions, Youth Movements and Women's Organisations can also help to bring together persons of the different races for dialogue and mutual understanding

We present in this book the socio—economic background to the problems of race; documents related to the political evolution concerning race relations during the past 22 years; the documents of the Tamil United Liberation Front setting out their case for Eelam; an analysis of Tamil and Sinhala grievances and different recommendations for resolving the problems of race in Sri Lanka. The three issues of Logos were published during the thick of the crisis of National Unity that we went through in the latter half of last year. We have reason to believe that they helped to give better understanding of the problems involved and also to strengthen the cause of national unity in spite of the temporary but grave set-back of last year. We present this volume as a continuing service to this cause. We hope study, and action groups in different parts of the country will make use of the material here for their information and motivation. Scholars here and abroad will also find in this volume a basic documentation and data concerning a crucial issue of race in Sri Lanka. It will help them to understand these problems of race within the wider context of the nation that is seeking its overall liberation from a condition of a poor Third World country in its post-colonial era. For us the lesson we derive from these troubles and tensions is that *justice is the price of unity; and unity is the best way to peace in Sri Lanka.* May we have unity with justice in peace in our times.

Tissa Balasuriya, o. m. i.

Sinhala—Tamil New Year Day
14 April 1978.

MINORITY PROBLEMS — A SOCIO-ECONOMIC PERSPECTIVE

TISSA BALASURIYA o.m.i.

(Director, Centre for Society and Religion)

(Text of a talk to the Sri Lanka U. N. Association at the Sri Lanka Foundation Institute on 1.11.76)

Over the past 1 1/2 years a group of us belonging to different races have been meeting off and on to understand the problems with relation to the races in our country. We have also held a whole day public seminar and published a statement on our agreed views. My views have been formed partly through this on-going dialogue with this group and with many others including the Council for National Unity.

The point of view of the Tamil leadership, specially of the Tamil United Liberation Front (T.U.L.F), has been expressed at this seminar and in other publications. It may be summarized as follows:-

1. That the Tamil people have been denied their language rights by the present Constitution which enshrines Sinhala as the Official Language. On the other hand the regulations for the use of the Tamil Language under the Tamil Language (Special Provisions) Act are deemed to be subordinate legislation. Hence it is argued there is no Constitutional guarantee for the use of Tamil. This creates very troublesome and humiliating situations as when Tamil people receive official correspondence in Sinhala only.
2. The use of Tamil as the language of the Courts in the Northern and Eastern Provinces is dependent on a resolution of the National State Assembly, and are not safeguarded in the Constitution as such.
3. The Tamils have not been given an equality of opportunity in employment in the public service. This has been a traditional avenue of employment for the people of the North where there are few other outlets such as industries. There is also discrimination in promotions due to the official language requirement and

through administrative devices. Increasingly there are fewer opportunities for a Tamil to be able to rise to the top positions in the public service.

4. There is discrimination against the Tamils in admission to higher education; standardization on the basis of the language medium is an unfair discrimination. But they are prepared to accept weightage in favour of the less favoured districts. This shuts out the opportunities for the Tamil youth to enter universities. It also prevents Tamils from seeking employment elsewhere in the world. The Tamil youth are restive due to this unemployment caused by such policies.

5. The country's development policies have relatively neglected the North and the East, specially in the setting up of public sector industries. The land colonization policies of successive governments have been an encroachment by Sinhala people into the traditional homeland.

6. The Sinhala leaders have not shared political power with the Tamil leaders. The Sinhala leaders of both the major political parties cannot be trusted as they have broken promises made to the Tamil leaders during the past 20 years.

7. There is now a Sinhala raj that has replaced the British raj. It holds sway over the North. An army of occupation is in the North. Tamil youth are detained without trial.

8. An attempt is being made to interfere with the religious convictions of the people, by luring them away from Hinduism.

The contention is that the Tamil people have now come to the limit of their patience. There is no hope in dialogue with the Sinhala leaders. Hence the only solution is to have a separate sovereign State for the Tamils in the North and the East (with the support of the estate Tamils of Indian origin?) This is after all only a return to the historical position prior to 1815 when the British imperialists brought the whole country under one rule. Prior to that there were two nations in Sri Lanka. "Let us return to that position, peacefully; and we will look after our problems. We are prepared if necessary to take back all the Tamil population in Sri Lanka to our traditional homelands".

While it is necessary that the rest of the country appreciate the problems of the Tamil, it is useful that the Tamil people understand some of the difficulties of the Sinhala people. Then we

can try to see how far the problems of the Tamils are really ones shared by the rest of the country also, and how far there is racial discrimination.

At the outset I would like to say that if the Tamil people wish to have the self determination to set up a separate sovereign state as the only feasible means of living with human dignity and justice, then it is for them to press for that right. However they too should consider whether there is sufficient cause for it and whether the consequences are not likely to be worse for all concerned. The majority community has the responsibility to see that the Tamil community is not compelled to seek separation due to its being seriously discriminated against.

Let us now consider some of the problems from the point of view of the Sinhala population.

Unemployment

Unemployment is becoming a rather serious concern among the Tamil people, specially youth. But among the Sinhala people it has been a severe hardship for nearly two decades. In almost all the Sinhala villages there are hordes of unemployed youth, some even above 30 years. This has been so for many years now. Let us consider some of the available statistics.

According to the Preliminary Report on the Socio-Economic Survey of Ceylon 1969-70 there were 547,700 unemployed in the country. (Table 17). Of these in

	Thousands	
Zone I	250.7	Colombo, Kalutara, Galle, Matara - 4 Districts of whom 40,000 in age group 25-34 years.
Zone II	33.5	Dry Zone - Hambantota, Moneragala, Amparai, Polonnaruwa, Anuradhapura and Puttalam. N. C. P. - 6 Districts 1,300 in age group 25-34 years.
Zone III	22.9	Jaffna, Mannar, Vavuniya, Trincomalee and Batticaloa. North East - 5 Districts 2,900 in age group 25-34.
Zone IV	238.8	Kandy, Matale, Nuwara Eliya, Badulla, Ratnapura, Kegalle and Kurunegala - C. P., N. W. P., Sab. - 7 Districts - 25,500 in age group 25-34.

Unemployment is thus mainly a rural problem i.e. 70% of the total unemployed, or 380,000 out of 546,000

Unemployed in Urban areas 115,000

Unemployed in Estate areas 51,000

In Zone I the 250,000 are largely Sinhala - 89.4% population here is Sinhala.

In Zone IV - 71% of population is Sinhala i.e. 3.5 m.

21% Tamils of Indian origin i.e. 1. m.

but these have employment and security, and where some are dislodged now, there is a chance of complaint - a sort of public responsibility for providing employment.

Unemployment is therefore largely a problem of the Sinhala and to a certain extent Moor communities. It is much less a problem for the Ceylon Tamils in the North and the Tamils on the estates. The difference is that the Sinhala people have to bear up their burden as a consequence of the poverty of the country, the exploitation in the system and the unemployment generated by the pattern of development. But when the Tamils in the North are unemployed it presents itself as a problem of racial discrimination. It is not noticed that there were 489,000 out of 546,000 unemployed in the predominantly Sinhala areas. There are perhaps as many Sinhala unemployed youth in the country as there are people in the Jaffna Peninsula. But there is no political lobby to adequately articulate the harrowing distress of the Sinhala youth.

This unemployment is partly due to the long-term discrimination against the Sinhala people specially in the hill country. The British plundered the lands of the villagers and the adjoining forests which would have been the area of natural expansion. The tea and rubber plantations totally marginalized the Kandyan peasantry. Further the same land area has now to bear 1.1 million more people of Indian origin. Agriculture was grossly neglected in public policy. Thus the main price of imperialism had to be paid by the Sinhala peasants and the estate labour both of whom were harshly exploited by British capitalism.

Secondly, the pattern of development in which foreign companies captured the local market for consumer goods and destroyed local skills and enterprises also made for further unemployment in the country. In recent decades Governments have tried to divert more people to the land, setting up new colonization schemes.

Industrial development too is very recent. What I wish to emphasize is that large scale unemployment is very much a problem of the Sinhala peasantry. They do not have an escape valve through higher education and lucrative foreign employment.

Discrimination in Employment

While language may be a source of discrimination, the Sinhala people are affected by another type of discrimination - due to their differing political parties. In addition to the traditional favouritism or discrimination on the basis of caste, family, sex, there is also the need of the M. P.'s chit. Hence many Sinhala families are disgruntled with this system. Further, the Sinhala youth too have to face a language problem, in that the more lucrative jobs are open to those fluent in English. The village youth suffers much from this type of favouritism. Even the problems of caste discrimination are not peculiar to the North. The caste system too can cause discrimination among the Sinhala people.

Female Unemployment is a further grave problem in the Sinhala areas. Out of a total of 546,000 in the category of unemployed, 213,000 were females. Of these 94,000 were in Zone I and 104,000 in Zone IV i.e. a total of 198,000 and 9,900 females in Zone II. Only 4,800 females were unemployed in Zone III.

It is to be borne in mind that in the Estate sector which is largely in Zone IV 300,000 females are employed and only 11,000 unemployed. In the Estate sector 79% are persons of Indian origin. Therefore the bulk of the 104,500 unemployed females in Zone IV are Sinhala peasant women.

All these figures have of course to make allowance for the limitations of such surveys.

It is this deep seated frustration among the youth, specially those with some education, that led to the insurrection of 1971. This was the most significant expression of public discontent in this country, since the rebellion of 1848. About 70,000 or more youth rose up in armed rebellion and faced the danger of death, because they did not see signs of hope under the present situation. Over 1,200 were officially recorded as killed in the process. Popular estimates place the figure at a higher level. When there is a complaint of discrimination in employment on the basis of race, it is good to remind ourselves that these Sinhala village youth felt they were the people without a way out - අපට පුත්තේ මගක් නැත.

Similarly in relation to imprisonment with trial, 18,000 of the insurgents spent several years in detention before release without trial. This too is not to justify any other detention, but to note that the problem is not merely racial.

Landlessness

The burden of population is also mainly in the Southern half of the country. Zones I & IV had 4.6 m. and 4.9 m. in 1969/70 i.e. 9.5 m. out of a total of 12.29 m.

The density of population is much greater in the Sinhala areas than in the Northern and Eastern Provinces.

Availability of agricultural land is-

Year	No. of Ag. Holdings	Acreage	No. of Operators	Size	Population
1946	848,527	2,817,957	-	3.31	6,657,339
1962	1,168,214	3,125,918	1,164,714	2.68	10,443,000
1973	1,646,461	3,887,287	1,623,386	2.36	13,180,000

i. e. 80% of
cultivable land

Between 1946 and 1962 - Increase in Ag. Land = 10% but increase in population = 56.8%.

Between 1962 and 1973 - " = 23% but increase in population = 26%.

Though there has been an increase in the number of holdings, there has been a steady decline in the size of holdings.

1973: No. of Small Holdings

1,646,461 - { less than 1 acre = 767,392 or 47%
1-5 acre = 690,908 or 42%
more than 50 acres = 3,729 or 0.2% - { Kurunegala 22.5%
Colombo 20.1%

In 1946 out of the land-owning families in Kandy 82.1% had less than 1 acre
in Matale 85.3% do
in N'Eliya 75.4% do
in Badulla 76.9% do

This shows the smallness of size of land holding in the hill country even 30 years ago. This is partly due to the plantations. The land of the Sinhala peasantry has been taken over for the plantations - Tea, Rubber, and Coconut.

Density of Population

A study of the density of Population shows how during the past century the growth of the pressure of population has been mainly in the traditional Sinhala areas.

Density of Population per square mile

District	1871	1911	1963
Mannar	21	27	63
Vavuniya	10	12	48
Jaffna	246	327	635
Batticaloa	33	55	206 (184 Amparai)
Trincomalee	19	38	137
Anuradhapura	16	22	109 (Polonnaruwa)
Chilaw, Puttalam	58	278	263 ?
Badulla (Moneragala)	39	66	528
Ratnapura	74	133	437
Kegalle	164	378	901
Kurunegala	113	166	463
Hambantota	60	109	274
Matara	298	472	1070
Galle	298	446	993
N'Eliya	123	328	839
Matale	83	120	333
Kandy	254	447	1,142
Kalutara	234	448	1,018
Colombo	532	1,023	2,787
All Ceylon	95	162	423

Thus the growth of population has been heaviest in Badulla, Ratnapura, Kegalle, Matara, N'Eliya, Kandy, Kalutara, Colombo and Kurunegala districts. Colombo has grown 5 1/2 times, Kandy 4 times, N'Eliya 7 times, Kegalle 5 1/2 times, Badulla 13 times and have a high density.

While we should pay heed to the criticism about Sinhala advances into the traditional homeland of the Tamils it is also worthwhile to remember that over the past few centuries, even prior to 1505, it is the Sinhala areas that have received new comers. Thus the Moors, Malays, Tamils of Indian origin and Ceylon Tamils have all settled down in the Southern half of the country. It is this area that was occupied by the plantations also. Nearly 1.1 million Indian Tamils, 500,000 Moors and Malays and about 400,000-500,000 Ceylon Tamils have made these areas their home. It would seem the Sinhala people have been quite hospitable.

Ceylon Tamil Population

In view of the T.U.L.F. demand for a separation of Sri Lanka into two sovereign states it is useful to bear in mind the geographical distribution of the racial groups in Sri Lanka.

At the 1971 census there were 1,415,567 Ceylon Tamils or 11.1% of the total population of 12,711,143. Of these -

175,000	were in the	Western Province
83,000	„	Central Province
107,000	„	Southern Province, N.W.P., N.C.P., Uva and Sabaragamuwa
60,000	„	Amparai District
174,000	„	Batticaloa District
67,000	„	Trincomalee District
648,000	„	Jaffna District
40,000	„	Mannar District
59,000	„	Vavuniya District

This means that only 750,000 Ceylon Tamils are in the Northern province. (In Vavuniya the Sinhala population is 115,000). 241,000 Ceylon Tamils are in Batticaloa and Trincomalee districts and 60,000 in Amparai. Thus 365,000 Ceylon Tamils are in the largely Sinhala provinces i.e. over a quarter of the Ceylon Tamil population.

If we take the Tamils of Indian origin too into account, out of a total Tamil population of 2.6 million 800,000 are in the Northern province i.e. less than 1/3; and 338,000 in the Eastern province. Altogether about 1,138,000 are in these two provinces along with about 250,000 Sinhala people. Hence more than half the Ceylon and Indian Tamils in Sri Lanka are out of the North and East.

What has to be taken into account is the immense human dislocation involved in the setting up of separate states. I would loathe to see our Tamil friends leave us or live here as citizens of a foreign country. After all there are 103,000 Ceylon Tamils within the Colombo Municipal limits alone. Even Jaffna Municipality has only 90,800 Ceylon Tamils. Incidentally, Colombo is the biggest city of Tamils in Sri Lanka!

The Moors and Malays

The Moors and Malays are evenly distributed in all the provinces of the country. Out of a total of 9 lakhs of Ceylon Moors, Indian Moors and Malays in 1971:-

- 231,000 in Colombo and Kalutara.
 221,000 in hill country - Kandy, Matale, Kegalle, Ratnapura,
 Badulla, Nuwara Eliya.
 45,000 in South - Galle, Matara, Hambantota.
 124,000 in Kurunegala, Puttalam, Anuradhapura, Polonnaruwa.
 128,000 + in Amparai and Moneragala.
 124,000 in Batticaloa, Trincomalee.
 38,000 in Jaffna, Mannar, Vavuniya.

i.e. about 620,000 are in the predominantly Sinhala areas of South, Central, West, N. W. P. and N. C. P., 162,000 in Jaffna and Eastern province and 128,000 in Amparai and Moneragala. Thus only about 18% of the Moors and Malays are in the predominantly Ceylon Tamil areas.

My good friends of the T. U. L. F. should consider the problems of other minorities too. What is going to happen to the Moors and Malays who are so widely dispersed all over Sri Lanka? Are they to be divided in order to satisfy the demand of the T.U.L.F.? Naturally they too should have a say in this. They are also among the most disadvantaged in the country, although a few of them are very affluent merchants. The poor Moors and Malays are badly off specially in education. They have the further aspect of being Tamil speaking with Sinhala also. They are divided into the different major political parties - with a foot in all of them and a primacy in none of them.

Nor should it be underestimated that the Moors and Malays are 7.0% of the population while the Ceylon Tamils are 11.1% in the 1971 Census.

The Tamils of Indian Origin

This is another very important minority, exploited first by the British. They were brought to our lands for imperialist-capitalist gain; - kept in semi-slave conditions, hard-worked, under-fed, ill-housed, illiterate. They were deprived of citizenship rights by Independent Sri Lanka. The Sirima-Sastri and Indira-Sirima Pacts have now provided for the repatriation of about half of them to India and the balance to be given Sri Lanka Citizenship. They are 1.2 million and their numbers will decrease by 35,000 an year for another 10 years or so. But also there will be the natural increase. About 900,000 of them are concentrated in the hill country, i.e..

Kandy	290,000	Badulla	206,000
Matale	48,000	Ratnapura	112,000
N'Eliya	234,000		

This is the traditional lands of the Kandyan Kingdom. They have lived in peace with the Sinhala population - though without much contact and with certain mutual suspicion. The Sinhala people see them as the occupiers of their homeland and the instruments of imperialism. The Indian Tamils see the Sinhala people as having deprived them of their vote and wanting to send half of them back to India.

There are only 66,000 Tamils of Indian origin in the Jaffna, Vavuniya, Mannar, Trinco and Batticaloa districts. Hence there is little contact between them and the Ceylon Tamils. Nearly 100,000 of the Tamils of Indian origin are in the Colombo and Kalutara districts.

But I think it is important that our friends of the T. U. L. F. realize that the fortunes of the Tamil people of Indian origin in the hill country are now linked to those of the Sinhala population residing there. The challenge is to integrate the villages and the plantations into one cohesive socio-economic, pluri-cultural, multi-religious whole.

The separate development of "Apartheid" of the colonial system can now be broken down, thanks to the land reform and the process of decentralization. The heart of the rural problem is the integration of these two groups in a meaningful and worthwhile manner. It is here that the races are closely intermingled.

The people of Indian origin who are to remain in Sri Lanka do not seem to want to leave the hill country and the plantations to join some Tamil Sovereign State in the North and East. The suggestion I have heard from very responsible T.U.L.F. leaders that they can take to the North all the estate labour of Indian origin, is I think, preposterous. It is a lack of consideration of human cost involved - not to mention the economic aspects. While we can appreciate the sympathetic intentions of a welcome to the Tamils of Indian origin to the North, it is not really a practical issue. Not all the waters of the Mahaveli sent Northwards nor even the oil of Pesalai can easily help absorb such a vast human displacement. On the other hand it is not conceivable that there could be pockets of sovereignty within the Kandyan areas.

Of course, if the majority community is so unwise as to exasperate the minorities, then for the sake of living with dignity such things may be opted for. But the Kandyan Sinhala peasants have been far from harmful to the Indian labourers; nor have their Tamil friends in the North been so considerate to them in the past. Both the Indian worker and the Sinhala peasant have been and are the sad victims of a long term imperialist and capitalist exploitation. Their common radical liberation by a total reorganization of our society on truly socialist lines should be our urgent concern.

Burghers

The Burghers are another minority of 44,000 persons of whom 31,000 are in the Colombo district and 3,000 in Kandy. They are resolving their language problem by learning the national languages while many others are migrating to other parts of the world.

SOME COMMENTS

From the data mentioned earlier it will be seen that some of the grievances which the Ceylon Tamils have are also experienced by the other racial groups in this country: e.g. unemployment, landlessness and civil rights.

Fundamentally there is no clash of interests between the majority of the Sinhala and Ceylon Tamil people in the villages and even in industries. The Sinhala and Tamil peasants hardly meet each other; and they are the bulk of the population. In industry and commerce too the conflict is not so much at the level of the working class.

Mr. Godfrey Gunatillake showed, in a study presented at a Seminar organized last April by a group of us, that the overall policy of the successive governments of this country since Independence has not been discriminating against *the masses of the people* on a racial basis. He took various criteria or socio-economic indicators such as the structure of income distribution, the per capital levels of income, the standard of living of the different income groups, the incidence of unemployment, the levels of literacy and educational attainment, the distribution of educational, health and other welfare services, income transfers effected through the government budget and contribution to revenue and national income. His conclusion is that though there are some differences in the distribution of benefits to the different communities, these tend to balance off. "But the

general pattern confirms the conclusion that the spread of economic benefits and the improvement of living conditions do not reveal significant disparities among communities" ... "One sees in operation a socio-economic system which has pursued goals of distribution and welfare in a pluralistic society in a manner which has benefitted all communities."

There are disadvantages experienced by different groups: the Tamils of Indian origin suffer from Statelessness or being second class citizens, the Sinhala masses face grave unemployment, the Moors and Malays have long suffered from educational backwardness, the Ceylon Tamils have a lack of opportunity of development within their home areas and the Burghers are in a quandry as to their future. It cannot be claimed that any racial group is thus in a distinct advantage in the socio-economic situation, even though the Sinhala people have a political advantage.

However there is a pressure for jobs *at the level of the elite* in the professions such as Doctors, Engineers, Scientists and Accountants. The entry into the Government administrative and clerical services is also subject to serious competition among the educated youth. There is a feeling of racial discrimination in promotion within these services. It is presently felt much by the Tamils, but the Sinhala public servants also refer to a proportionately high percentage of Tamils in several Departments of the public service. This competition is acutely felt at the point of admission to the University campuses. Standardization according to language media has hurt the Tamil youth who feel they are discriminated against because of their race. A more deserving Tamil student is said to be kept out while a Sinhala or Moor student with a lower record is admitted to the university. The Tamil youth feel blocked out from advancement under this regime. They have no hope of achieving their desires and are deeply frustrated. A point on which there is widespread discontent among the Tamils is concerning the use of the Tamil language. At the day to day level they feel insulted and humiliated when they receive a letter from a State agency in Sinhala only. Not only are they very inconvenienced, but also hurt in their self-respect as Tamils. At the legal level, the position given to Tamil in the Constitution of 1972 is not satisfactory. It had made the relative position of Tamil worse than prior to it. While the Sinhala Only Act is enshrined in the new Constitution, the regulations under the Tamil Special Provisions Act are regarded as subordinate legislation. The language of the Courts in the North and East is left to the discretion of the Minister of Justice. The Tamil people have also specific grievances about the process of opening areas for colonization, and about certain instances of disadvantages of a religious nature.

Finally there is competition at the level of the political elite. The Tamil political leadership sees itself as systematically eliminated from the exercise of real power ever since 1931, and specially after 1956.

Approaches to Solutions

Thus there are some issues which the Tamil people as a whole feel specially in the North, and there are others which affect mainly their elite. There is a serious *lack of communication* among the different communities, specially the Sinhala and Tamil people. They live in separate compartments. The educational policy of the country had furthered this communication gap. This is particularly among the educated youth at the pre-university stage. The political sensitivity on this issue has led to a certain absence of public discussion that could throw light on it. Unfortunately English remains the main medium of communication between the two races at the level of the elite and of the clerical employees.

Secondly, the political party system too is not so helpful towards a solution of the issue. The leadership in each racial group tends to think in terms of gaining advantages through an accentuation of the rights of its group. Communalism is to a certain extent fanned by interested politicians in the different races. In a certain sense here the extremes seem to meet in a common self-interest in building their own racial constituencies. This is not to neglect the existence of underlying causes, but to note the consequences of political campaigns.

We have to admit that today the racial issues are coming to a head in our country. While I have tried to show the difficulties of carrying out two sovereign states on racial lines in Sri Lanka, I wish to emphasize that national unity can be preserved only on the basis of justice and fair play to all. Whatever may have been our past as one or two nations, we have in our generation to face the issue of national unity. This can be consolidated only by a give-and-take on all sides.

Race is an important reality that is fraught with immense emotional appeal. People sacrifice much for their rights as a race, a linguistic or religious group. The majority community should have the magnanimity to understand the desires, fears, frustrations and humiliations of the minorities. The Sinhala people too have their preoccupations about their language, religion and culture. But now 20 years after 1956, they need not be so worried about the future of Sinhala. They should get rid of a certain sense of insecurity that makes them unwilling to accept the language rights of the Tamils. After all the Sinhala culture too will develop when the Tamil culture itself is vibrant and creative. Sinhala as

a language need not lose if the Tamil people can transact official business in Tamil.

This is a challenge to the leaders of the majority community. The policy of S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike was two pronged. "Sinhala only with a reasonable use of Tamil". The "Sinhala only" has been emphasized, but it should be relatively tempered with the provision of the "reasonable use of Tamil". The time seems now rife for this latter task. The very humanity of the Sinhala people will flourish in accepting and respecting the humanity of others. In this connection the present National State Assembly should try to remedy the situation by a suitable constitutional amendment ensuring the position of Tamil, prior to its own dissolution. It would be a pity if the National State Assembly should leave a quarrelsome legacy to posterity. This Parliament can easily muster the majority required to amend the Constitution of its own making.

In this connection the present Prime Minister can render another signal service to our country. She has been able to bring 86 heads of States together under her leadership. She met the problem of Statelessness of the Tamils of Indian origin through the Sirima - Sastri and Indira - Sirima pacts. She offered to mediate between China and India during their war. She has sufficient national stature today if she will endeavour to give a speedy solution to this issue in consultation with the other political parties. This is a crucial challenge to statesmanship today.

The minority leaders too should understand the problems of the other communities in the country. They have to be shown comprehension that goes beyond the confines of their own community. It is the majority that has suffered the most in the past few centuries and been at the receiving end of the blows of imperialism and capitalism. The Tamil leaders should endeavour to have a concern for the wider national issues, for without that they may not understand even the deeper issues that affect the masses within their own community. The minority communities have to ask themselves how much of the present conflict is an economic issue felt mainly by the elite, and how much is it one of race. Is the class issue of the common exploitation of the workers and peasants by the local elite and foreign agencies not more important? How far is the Tamil elite really fighting only its own elitist battle under a racial banner? It is by a consensus of the leaders that a united nation can be built and maintained. The minority leaders should also take a realistic view of the price of separation; is the cost worth the benefits? A national all-party solution should be sought for these issues. They must be taken out of the arena of party conflict and faced as national issues.

Socialist Solutions

While we stress the importance of resolving the problems of language and fairplay in administration and educational opportunities, it is important to realize that the fundamental issues of the country can only be met by deeper solutions of a socialistic nature. Thus the problem of unemployment is not merely one of giving more jobs for Tamils, Sinhalese or Moors; it is one of creating many more jobs for all. There must be a plan for increasing employment through a self-reliant, labour-intensive agricultural and industrial growth. The village and the estate need to be integrated as a socio-economic whole to provide for the large population in the hill country and plantation areas. This is an aspect of liberation of the village through a Socialistic re-organization.

In education, the real solution is not in having a 50 or 100 more Tamil students in the University but in changing the whole content, methods and relationships in education. We need to evolve an educational system that serves the masses of the population. The workers and peasants must have an equal opportunity of access to education and culture. This is a much profounder problem, than the distribution of a few places among the elite. The gaps between village and city, manual and intellectual work, masses and elite need to be bridged by a total overhaul of the educational system, economic structure and a cultural revolution. The brain drain must be halted. For now, far too many Doctors, Engineers, Scientists and Accountants leave this country after studying at the expense of the masses of our people. Those who thus leave are perhaps more than those who fail to get admission to the university due to standardization. A group of us have already recommended that while Sinhala be the official language, Sinhala and Tamil be recognized as national languages. Concerning the medium of instruction, I would like to support the growing consensus in favour of education in the mother tongue, Sinhala and Tamil as the second language and English as a third language. It is important that everyone in this country be able to communicate with the people here; while English is studied as a world language. This is not too much of a burden to youth. It will bear ample fruit in the future generations.

The decentralization of the administration is another means of ensuring a greater degree of people's participation in decision making. The steps so far taken such as the decentralization of the budget, the setting up of District Development Councils, Janatha Committees, Multi-purpose Cooperative Societies etc. can be taken further to establish a more genuinely decentralised form

of government. Those who exercise power in an area should be chosen by the people of the area and be responsible to them and not only to the central government. This should be a solution that is devised to meet the needs of the whole country. The regional Council proposals of Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike and the District Council plan of Mr. Dudley Senanayake failed partly as they were devised as merely concessions to the Tamils. Today the time is ripe for an advance towards an islandwide decentralization as a basis of the re-organisation of the economy and polity under an overall plan of socialism.

These are a few of the tasks that face us today. It is a historical challenge to our peoples to build one nation if we so desire. National unity has to come from not merely constitutions and legal concessions but the free consensus of the people. We must be wise enough to acknowledge each others rights. It would be a pity if the folly of either side should jeopardize the common future of all. However unity is worth while only if it is with justice and a respect of the dignity of all. We can all grow in facing this task as a free people and help build a multi-racial, multi-lingual, multi-religious nation based on the common acceptance of the human dignity of all.

While this is a special responsibility of the political leaders, we the common people of the country can do much by building understanding among the races. The religious groups, the trade unions and press can help immensely in finding reasonable solutions to these urgent issues.

It is a sad reality of our political scene that the Left political parties which rejected linguistic and religious chauvinism and made a radical option for social revolution did not have a sufficient perception of the religion and culture of the Sinhala and Tamil people. Hence they were unable to communicate effectively to the masses their socio-economic option. On the other hand, the Sinhala and Tamil political groups that responded to the pressures of language and religion did not have an adequately clear social option in favour of the underprivileged masses. What the future seems to need is a leadership that is wise enough to understand and respect the claims of the different racial, linguistic and religious groups and yet transcends them in a more radical commitment to the integral liberation of the socially underprivileged classes of all communities. If the present leaders of all parties can come together to resolve the problems of race on a national basis it is a very great contribution they can make to the future of Sri Lanka.

SOME SOCIO-ECONOMIC ASPECTS OF COMMUNAL PROBLEMS

(based on a talk given at the Girl Guides' Headquarters, Colombo, on 4th February 1976)

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In this brief presentation my main objective is to draw attention to some of the important socio - economic aspects of the minority problem in Sri Lanka. Here one could begin by making the safe generalisation that the roots of communal conflict in a multiracial society almost invariably lie in the *competition for scarce resources and scarce economic opportunities*. Very often this competition is either aggravated or mitigated, depending on the degree of scarcity and the level of poverty prevailing in that society. Most developing societies which have been subjected to colonial rule have experienced mounting communal tension and outbreaks of communal conflict immediately after the transfer of power from the imperial rulers to the national elites. The historical reasons for these developments have been fairly obvious. As a part of their strategy of government, *foreign rulers* have normally favoured the *minorities* living in the countries which they ruled and have provided them with better opportunities to reach positions of power and privilege in these countries. They adapted their policies to suit the different circumstances of different colonial territories. In some of the African countries we saw how the foreign rulers encouraged migrant communities to enter and obtain a virtual monopoly of certain sectors of the economy in which local skills and entrepreneurial capacity were deficient. The social and economic inequalities that these situations engendered naturally surfaced when the overlordship of the imperial rulers came to an end. With the assumption of political power, the majority inevitably moved to redress the social and economic balance which they felt had been tilted in favour of the minorities and various immigrant groups during the period of imperial rule. We in Sri Lanka have also witnessed similar processes at work in our society, whatever the rights and wrongs of the various positions taken up by the different communities might be.

Socio-Economic Indicators

Without entering into endless controversy regarding past and present structures of discrimination as they affect the different communities, it would be useful to examine on a broader front how the socio-economic system in Sri Lanka has functioned in relation to the different communities and what overall impact they have had on the socio-economic status of these communities. It would be possible to answer this question in terms of various *socio-economic indicators* that are generally accepted as measurements of the well-being and economic advancement of a community taken as a whole. These indicators would include the structures of income distribution and the per capita income levels and standards of living of different income groups; incidence of unemployment; levels of literacy and educational attainment; distribution of educational, health and other welfare services; income transfers effected through the government budget; and contributions to revenue and national income. One could think of various other indicators, but these that have been enumerated would be sufficient for us to make a broad appraisal of the relative socio-economic positions of the different communities in the country. These indicators however would reveal only the average conditions in these communities. The average conditions by themselves would not help us to uncover some of the underlying causes of the prevailing communal tensions. To obtain a clearer understanding of the situation it is necessary to examine the problems at *two levels*. First, one would have to examine the socio-economic conditions of the broad masses - the poor majority - in each of these communities. Such an analysis would help us to determine whether the existing socio-economic system works and operates in a manner which is exploitative of any particular community as a whole - whether the system has structures of discrimination which are reflected in serious differences in average standards of living, average per capita incomes, levels of educational attainment, life expectancy and so on. This is still only one aspect of the communal problem. From the average levels we need to go further and examine the situation as it affects the elites of these communities, for it is the relative positions of the elites which would be crucial to an understanding of the relationships between communities and the underlying causes of communal antagonisms and conflicts.

Per-Capita Income Levels

Let us first take the most straightforward indicator - the *per capita income levels*. We have a ready source for this information in the consumer finance survey conducted by the Central

Bank in 1973. The information given in the survey in Tables 67 and 69 are combined in Table I on page 20. If we exclude the category of 'others' which would represent small groups such as migrant groups which do not include the whole gradation of income that is to be found in a large community, we find that the highest two-month median income is enjoyed by the Moors and Malays at RS. 470. Next in order are the low-country Sinhalese with Rs. 425. The Ceylon Tamils come third followed by the Kandyan Sinhalese. The lowest incomes are received by the Indian Tamils. Their incomes are half the average. The figures that are presented in the tables show the incomes earned by income-receivers for an average two-month period. They do not give us the average income per head. The actual economic position of a household cannot be gauged from the average income per income receiver. The employed may receive high incomes in a community but the levels of unemployed may be high, and the size of household may be large. We need to get an indicator which takes care of the rate of activity and incidence of unemployment in the community. We need to ascertain the size of a household and the number of income-receivers per household. The income received per head would therefore be a more reliable indicator of the level of living. Before we go to examine the average incomes per head, it would be useful to highlight some of the other features that emerge from a comparison of the median incomes per income-receiver. A comparison of the 1963 and 1973 data indicates that *with the exception of the Indian Tamils the income disparities between the communities have been reduced during the period ending 1973.* Again, if we exclude the Indian Tamils there are *only marginal disparities in the incomes received by the income-receivers of the other communities.* During the ten-year period the greatest improvement has occurred among the Kandyan Sinhalese whose incomes in 1963 were significantly below the incomes of the low-country Sinhalese, the Indian Tamils, and the Moors and Malays.

TABLE I

Median Income For Two Months For 1963 And 1973 By Community Groups

COMMUNITY	Median Income For 1963(Rs.)	Median Income For 1973(Rs.)	Median Income Expressed As An Average Per Head (Rs.)		
			Urban	Rural	Estate
Kandyan Sinhalese Low-Country Sinhalese	164	376	133	80	86
Ceylon Tamils	199	425	137	102	94
Indian Tamils	198	385	106	90	78
Moors and Malays	118	180	108	89	83
Others	259	470	93	101	73
All Communities	467	633	169	201	47
	165	360	—	—	—

Source: Survey of Sri Lanka's Consumer Finances 1973. Central Bank of Ceylon.

If one takes the profile of income as reflected in the incomes per income receiver, one feature stands out sharply. The average incomes of the Indian Tamil income-receivers are significantly below the average incomes of the other communities. On a superficial interpretation of the data one would be inclined to come to the conclusion that the socio-economic system operates in a way which results in discrimination against the Indian Tamil community and in the exploitation of their labour. The data on median incomes of income-receivers would however need to be subjected to deeper scrutiny before we come to any firm conclusions. First, it has to be recognised that the large majority of the Indian migrant community fall into the occupational category of agricultural labour. While the majority of incomes in this community will bunch up in the low income category, the other indigenous communities whose workforce enters all sectors of the economy and who also contain the propertied classes will show a higher average income per income-receiver. The more relevant comparison in the case of the Indian Tamils would be the incomes of comparable groups of other communities, for example the rural peasantry. We could come to this comparison later. These comparisons however should not obscure some of the glaring inequalities which emerge when we compare the socio-economic position of the *Indian Tamil community* as a whole with the other communities in the country. It is hardly necessary to stress the fact that the

data reveal the plight of a community which is denied any social or economic mobility and has little opportunity for integration with the economy outside the plantation. Their position in the country is such that they are captive to a rigid socio-economic structure in which they and the majority of their children can only look forward to a certain type of occupation and continue at a certain socio-economic level. The opportunity for upward social mobility that was made available to the low-income groups of other communities through the complex processes of social change that were set in motion after independence was not within the reach of the Indian Tamil community.

When this has been said we can examine the levels of living of the various communities in terms of the average income per head. The best method of comparison would be to take the sectoral income data shown in the table and compare the incomes of the communities in terms of the incomes in the sector which contains the majority of the population of that community. In the case of the Kandyan Sinhalese, the low-country Sinhalese and the Ceylon Tamils, the rural income-receivers are in the preponderant majority. In the case of Moors and Malays, while the rural income-receivers are in the majority, about 40% of the receivers are in the urban sector. In the case of the Indian Tamils, the majority of income-receivers are in the estate sector. The analysis of income data in terms of income per head provides a picture which considerably modifies the impression one receives in regard to the situation of the Indian Tamil community from the data on income receivers. The average income per head in the Indian Tamil community is still marginally higher than the average rural income for the Kandyan Sinhalese - Rs. 83 per Indian Tamil for two months as against Rs. 80 per Kandyan Sinhalese for two months. The few Indian Tamil income earners in the rural sector and the small urban Indian Tamil community get a higher average per head than the Ceylon Tamil urban community or the urban community of the Moors and Malays. This improvement in the position of the Indian Tamil community when examined in terms of income per head is partly due to the fact that the number of income-receivers per household in the Indian Tamil community in the estate sector would be larger than that of rural households among the Sinhalese or the Moors and Malays. This is of course due to the relatively high rates of participation of the females in the plantation workforce.

It might be argued that the income of the Indian Tamil household in the estate sector is obtained through a more intensive labour input of a number of household members and that eventually the return to labour in the estate sector and to the Indian Tamil community is lower than in any other sector. If this were so one

could further conclude that this is an index of the exploitation of the community as a whole. There is however little evidence to support such a conclusion. The labour conditions in the rural farm household, the contribution of family labour to the farm and various other factors would have to be compared at a much greater level of detail before we can come to any firm conclusion. Another factor that might be borne in mind in comparing the income levels of the rural Kandyan peasant with the Indian estate worker is that out of a marginally lower per capita income the Kandyan peasant receives one-third of this income in kind whereas the Indian Tamil receives 80% of his income as money income. The data on average income per head as given in the consumer finance survey indicate that the highest income levels are enjoyed by the low-country Sinhalese who receive the highest income per head in all three sectors - urban, rural and estate. The differences however between the low - country Sinhalese and the other communities are relatively low. In the rural sector the income per head among the low - country Sinhalese is Rs. 102 compared to Rs. 101 of the Moors and Malays, Rs. 90 among the Ceylon Tamils and Rs. 80 among the Kandyan Sinhalese. According to the consumer finance data, per capita incomes in the urban sector are lowest among the *Moors* and *Malays*. This is significant considering the fact that the share of urban income-receivers among the Moors and Malays is higher than in any other community. Another point worthy of note is that in the *Ceylon Tamil community* nearly 30% of the income-receivers were in the urban sector. The average incomes in the urban sector being higher, the average income per head for the community as a whole would be pushed upwards. When one examines the total picture in regard to the income levels of the various communities on the basis of average income per head, the facts certainly point to a socio - economic system and a pattern of development which has *shared the benefits of growth equitably* and prevented sharp disparities of income as between communities.

Educational Attainment

We could next examine the levels of *educational* attainment among the different communities. Table II on page 23 contains data on the level of participation in the educational system for the primary, secondary and the higher stages of education. In the case of *primary* education, the proportion of children in the education system was not significantly different for the various communities. While the Ceylon Tamils and the Indian Tamils had increased the proportion between 1963 and 1973, there was a drop in the Kandyan Sinhalese and the low-country Sinhalese with a marginal rise in the case of Moors and Malays. When it

comes to the secondary stage, only a very small proportion of the school-age population among the Indian Tamils is retained in the system. Therefore wide disparity exists in the educational attainments between the Indian Tamil community and the other communities. In the case of all other communities significant progress was made in the secondary level of education and higher proportions of the relevant age group were retained within the system. In the case of *higher* education there has been a drop for all communities, the sharpest drop being among the Ceylon Tamils. At the primary and secondary stage, with the exception of the Indian Tamil community, the access to educational facilities and the spread of education does not reflect any wide disparities. The slowest rate of progress at the secondary level is among the Ceylon Tamil community. Here too there are major disparities between the different regions such as Batticaloa Jaffna and Mannar. According to available data the educational indicators for the Jaffna district are the most advanced among all communities. The average for the Ceylon Tamil community as a whole is a result of the relatively low level of educational attainment and participation in the school system among other sections of the Ceylon Tamil community. The indicators for Jaffna are compared with a few other districts in the country in Table III (A), (B), (C) and (D) on pages 25-28.

TABLE II

Education Classified By Community 1963 & 1973

COMMUNITY	Primary	Secondary	Passed GCE (OL)	Higher
	1963-1973	1963-1973	1963-1973	1963-1973
Kandyan				
Sinhalese	41.7-38.2	16.9-23.0	2.3-4.7	0.7-0.5
Low-Country				
Sinhalese	39.3-35.8	24.5-29.9	4.3-7.4	1.3-1.0
Ceylon Tamils	38.9-41.3	18.4-20.8	4.2-3.8	2.2-0.6
Indian Tamils	31.8-42.1	6.6- 5.6	0.6-0.8	0.1- —
Moors and				
Malays	39.1-39.6	15.3-19.6	2.8-3.5	0.4-0.4
Others	20.3-20.6	37.7-46.5	15.9-12.3	4.4-3.2
All				
Communities	39.2-37.9	19.6-23.9	3.4-5.3	1.1-0.7

Source: Survey of Sri Lanka's Consumer Finances. Central Bank of Ceylon.

Unemployment

Another revealing indicator would be the incidence of *unemployment* in the different communities. Table IV given on page 28, which is a reproduction of Table 38 in the consumer finance survey, sets out the position. The highest rates of unemployment as a percentage of the population in the community occurred among the Malays - 11.2% - and the low-country Sinhalese - 10.6%. If we exclude the small groups classified under 'other' the Kandyan Sinhalese followed third with 7%, the Indian Tamils with 6.3%. Unemployment among the Ceylon Tamils and the Moors was lowest at 5.4% and 5.3%. The ranking is slightly different when one computes the rate of unemployment as a percentage of the workforce. The lowest rate of unemployment is among the Indian Tamil community, with the Ceylon Tamil community following. The highest rates of unemployment are again among the Malays - 43% - and low-country Sinhalese - 30%. It is important to interpret this set of figures in relation to the grievances that had been frequently voiced by the minorities on the question of employment opportunities. It would appear that the burden of unemployment is highest among the low-country Sinhalese community and the small Malay community. When the fact that the Kandyan Sinhalese community has the third highest rate of unemployment is taken into account, it would be seen that the distribution of employment opportunities and the generation of employment does not reveal a pattern which is discriminatory against the minorities. On the contrary, the unemployed as a proportion of the population and as a proportion of the workforce is significantly higher in the *majority* community with the exception of the small community of Malays. But at the same time it has to be stated that the high burden of unemployment both among the low-country Sinhalese and the Malays goes with a per capita income level and average incomes of income-receivers which are the highest in the country.

1907

TABLE III (A)

Age Specific Schools Participation Rates — 1974

DISTRICTS	Population Projection 1974			School going Population			Participation Rates		
	6 - 9	10 - 14	15 - 19	6 - 9	10 - 14	15 - 19	6 - 9	10 - 14	15 - 19
	years	years	years	years	years	years	years	years	years
Colombo	249,006	312,375	302,750	203,894	235,832	73,446	81.9	75.5	24.3
Kalutara	70,355	86,166	80,772	57,583	61,590	18,251	81.8	71.4	22.6
Jaffna	71,554	91,343	83,483	64,138	69,969	22,677	89.6	76.6	27.2
Mannar	9,465	11,236	9,442	7,974	6,378	1,326	84.2	56.8	14.0
Vavuniya	11,494	13,414	11,642	9,282	8,267	1,742	80.8	61.6	15.0
Batticaloa	33,522	39,907	32,328	23,284	17,455	4,666	69.5	43.7	14.4
Trincomalee	25,202	29,090	23,104	19,386	15,066	3,691	76.9	51.8	16.0
Anuradhapura	48,253	55,739	51,006	40,380	35,633	10,122	83.7	63.9	19.8
Moneragala	26,337	30,312	24,294	16,098	14,382	3,729	61.1	47.4	15.3
Kegalle	66,390	83,751	78,306	53,170	60,105	20,813	80.1	71.8	26.6

Compiled by Marga Institute from Ministry of Education School Census.

TABLE III (B)**Number Of Government Schools Per 2 Mile Radius**

Administration Districts	Number of Schools per District	Sq. Miles per District (Approx)	No. of Schools per 12.57 sq. Miles (i. e. 2 mile radius)	Rank*
Colombo	1,122	808.25	17.44	1
Kalutara	453	623.75	9.05	4
Jaffna	574	998.63	7.16	7
Mannar	100	964.00	1.25	18
Vavuniya	171	1466.75	1.38	17
Batticaloa	138	1016.63	1.63	14
Trincomalee	221	1048.00	2.63	12
Anuradhapura	502	2808.63	2.13	13
Moneragala	155	2785.31	0.62	20
Kegalle	599	642.00	11.69	2

Source: Department of Census and Statistics Statistical Abstract of Ceylon, 1969.

*These figures were obtained by considering all 22 districts.

TABLE III (C)

Government Schools, Class Room Accommodation Per Pupil, 1972

Administrative District	School Population	No. of Schools	Classroom Space - SQ. FT	Perm. space per child sq.ft	Semi permanent space per child	Temporary space per child	Total space per child	* Rank			
Colombo	524,348	1,061	5,322,669	36,677	12,174	5,371,520	10.20	0.06	0.02	10.28	17
Kalutara	139,009	441	1,512,749	23,208	19,137	1,555,094	10.90	0.17	0.13	11.20	11
Jaffna	155,983	557	2,013,681	169,979	83,977	2,267,637	12.90	1.09	0.50	14.49	2
Mannar	15,000	104	198,090	3,130	6,036	207,256	13.20	0.21	0.40	13.81	3
Vavuniya	19,105	178	279,396	6,342	13,144	298,882	14.60	0.30	0.69	15.59	1
Batticaloa	44,666	233	475,172	22,791	23,328	521,291	10.60	0.51	0.25	11.63	8
Trincomalee	37,500	157	377,352	13,794	16,565	407,711	10.10	0.36	0.44	10.90	14
Anuradhapura	85,708	487	967,506	47,003	32,761	1,047,270	11.30	0.54	0.38	12.22	5
Moneragala	33,270	161	295,439	5,820	14,637	315,896	8.90	0.17	0.44	9.51	20
Kegalle	137,852	558	1,485,249	37,021	36,733	1,559,003	10.80	0.27	0.27	11.34	9

Source: Ministry of Education, School Census, 1972

* These figures were obtained by considering all 22 districts.

TABLE III (D)**Teacher Pupil Ratios — 1971**

Ratios of 'O' and 'A' level arts and science students to total number of arts and science graduate teachers respectively

	Ratio Arts	Ratio Science
Colombo	25.3	74.3
Kalutara	35.9	118.2
Jaffna	21.0	24.2
Mannar	39.4	28.2
Vavuniya	29.3	51.4
Batticaloa	30.4	56.4
Trincomalee	26.9	33.1
Anuradhapura	21.7	157.0
Moneragala	17.7	—
Kegalle	36.3	201.4

Source: Ministry of Education School Census — 1971

TABLE IV**Unemployment By Community - All Island**

Community	As a % of Population in the Community Group		As a % of Work Force in the Community Group	
	1963	1973	1963	1973
Kandyan Sinhalese	3.6	7.0	12.7	23.0
Low Country Sinhalese	5.4	10.6	17.5	30.0
Ceylon Tamils	3.5	5.3	11.6	17.7
Indian Tamils	3.7	6.3	6.7	12.3
Moors	4.0	5.4	14.9	21.3
Malays	0.7	11.2	2.8	43.5
Burghers	5.9	6.3	21.9	21.2
Others	—	9.1	—	28.6
All Races	4.4	8.1	13.8	24.0

Source: Survey of Sri Lanka's Consumer Finances: 1973
Central Bank of Ceylon.

Levels of Living

Another indicator would be the distribution of *amenities* and *equipment* among the various communities. The consumer finance survey does not give this data in terms of the communities. But the classification according to the sectors - urban, rural and estate - and according to the zones, each covering a group of districts, enables us to obtain some rough idea of the levels of living among the communities as indicated in the possession of basic facilities and amenities, Vide Table V given on page 33. In zones 2, 3 and 4 which cover the predominantly rural areas containing both the Sinhala and the Tamil populations, the percentage of households in possession of sewing machines, radios, kerosene cookers, refrigerators, do not vary significantly. Zone 2 which includes Hambantota, Moneragala, Amparai, Polonnaruwa, Anuradhapura and Puttalam has 2.2% of the households served with electricity, 25.4% possessing sewing machines, 22.5% with radios, 2.5% with kerosene cookers and 3% with refrigerators. These figures could be compared with Zone 3 which includes the Tamil districts. The *differences* it would be noted *are marginal*. The use of electricity in the Ceylon Tamil zone is higher. The same applies to kerosene cookers. Zone 4 which includes Kandy, Matale, Nuwara Eliya, Badulla, Ratnapura, Kegalle and Kurunegala, also contains a similar pattern. As against zones 2, 3 and 4, zones 1 and 2 represent the heavily urbanised sector of the country. The percentage of households possessing the various consumer durables is significantly higher. These zones cover the low-country Sinhalese areas. When we examine the situation in terms of the urban, rural and estate sectors, we observe that the estate sector in which the large majority of the Indian Tamil community lives has the smallest percentage of households in possession of consumer durables such as sewing machines, radios, kerosene cookers and so on. As against this, the basic facilities for housing such as pipe-borne water, electricity and sanitation in the estate sector compare quite favourably with the position in the rural sector. The data that we have analysed so far provide different combinations of elements making up the total socio-economic situation and level of living in the different communities. One set of factors is frequently offset by another. *High per capita income levels go with a high incidence of unemployment*. Households poor in consumer durables enjoy certain basic amenities not available to the same extent in some of the other communities. This diverse combination of different elements that go to make up the standard of living in different communities underscores the difficulty of making straightforward comparisons between communities. But the general pattern confirms the conclusion that the spread of economic benefits and the improvement of living conditions do not reveal significant disparities among communities.

Allocation of Budgetary Resources

An important area which one can examine for differential treatment of communities is the *allocation of resources* through the government budget. A large part of the government budget is devoted to social welfare expenditure which includes free medical service, free education and subsidised food. An analysis of the budgetary allocations over the years supports the broad conclusion that these services have reached all citizens regardless of community and without discrimination. The only community which did not benefit equally from these services was the Indian Tamil community in the plantation sector. In the case of other communities, the equity in the distribution of government services and capital investment for the provision of these services is clearly evident in the *distribution of hospitals* and hospital beds, the *distribution of classrooms* and the availability of classroom space, the *cadre of medical personnel* in relation to the population in the different regions, the pupil - teacher ratios and so on. On all these items it could be said that the allocation of government expenditures has taken adequate account of the needs of the various communities distributed in the different parts of the country. The distribution of *investments* in the rest of the government capital budget would need more detailed analysis to demonstrate how they have benefited the different communities in the country. At a first glance however it can be said that there has been a spread of investments which have included all regions. This can be clearly demonstrated in the case of *transportation and power* - the network of roads, the allocations for maintenance and the extension of the national power grid to serve all parts of the country. Investments in the irrigation system have been heaviest in the dry zone where both the potentiality and the need were greatest.

Contributions to the National Economy

One other criterion which could be applied is the national economic *contribution* made by each community. This could be examined in terms of the contribution to national output, to government revenue and to the balance of payments. Measured in terms of national income, the per capita contribution is highest in the case of the low-country Sinhalese. This is of course reflected in the fact that per capita incomes are highest in this community. The per capita contribution however is not significantly different for the different communities. There has been the popular impression that the contribution to the national income of the Indian Tamil community in the plantation sector is much higher than that of other communities and that the surplus in

this sector helps to boost the standards of living of the other communities, resulting thereby in an iniquitous process of exploitation of the Indian plantation labour by the rest of society.

It is necessary to place these arguments in perspective as they could give us a somewhat exaggerated view of the various elements in the prevailing situation. First, the total contribution of the agricultural sector to the gross domestic product is in the region of 33%. If services are excluded and only the material output in national income is taken into account, then the contribution of agriculture to material output is in the region of 60%. The contribution of tea to material output is approximately 11%. The tea sector is not manned exclusively by the Indian plantation labour. The low grown tea plantations draw on the labour available in the Sinhala community. Therefore the contribution of the Indian plantation workforce to the material output in the tea sector is a part, although a major part, of the contribution which tea makes to the national income. The figures that have been given here should be adjusted for the manufacturing component in tea which takes place in the plantation itself. Again, the gross foreign exchange earnings from tea which is about 50% of total merchandise exports is not an adequate measurement of the contribution. The Tea plantation sector is almost entirely dependent on the intermediates such as fertiliser, agro-chemicals, equipment and so on, as well as the consumption needs of the working population on supplies from outside the plantation sector. Most of these inputs have a high foreign content, including food. Therefore the net foreign exchange contribution from the tea sector is substantially less than the foreign exchange income earned from the exports of tea.

It is necessary to emphasise these facts as the concern for the exploitation of the Indian Tamil community needs to be appropriately balanced between the dramatised version of a large community parasitically dependent on a small intensely exploited community on the one hand, and the somewhat chauvinist version of a foreign sector in the economy which links our society to structures of international trade, reinforces our external dependence, and has been detrimental to the long-term national interest, on the other. We need also to look at the other popular argument regarding the contribution of the tea sector to the government revenues. There is the impression that large surpluses are generated in the tea sector and these are siphoned in the form of taxes and export duties to finance government programmes for the rest of the community, and that by this means the surplus in the tea sector is employed to transfer resources to other sectors of lower productivity. It is quite correct that the surpluses

of the productive sectors in the economy were transferred to the low income sectors through various welfare programmes initiated by the government. The tea sector did make an important contribution to this programme. But here again the role of the tea sector could be exaggerated out of all proportion. In 1975, for example, the direct contribution made by the tea sector in the form of export duty and the tea tax was less than 8% of the total revenue. Out of this too nearly 17% was ploughed back into the tea industry in the form of subsidies for replanting and improvement of the tea industry. In the past years the contribution was larger.

If we take the *Ceylon Tamil community*, its contribution to the national economy in a wide range of activities is quite significant. Important industries such as cement and salt, the output of staple food in Batticaloa and Mannar, the vital contribution to the import substitution programme in subsidiary foodstuffs such as onions, chillies and other items, all add up to a major contribution. These facts also underscore the economic interdependence of the Ceylon Tamil community and the other communities in the country. The import substitution programme in food has resulted in a significant expansion of economic exchanges between the Ceylon Tamil regions and the rest of the country. The import substitution programme in food has brought substantial benefits to the Ceylon Tamil community and enabled them to develop a high-income smallholding agriculture which has provided a model of labour-intensive efficient farming to the rest of the country. In regard to the contribution of the Ceylon Tamil community to government revenue, it has to be pointed out that many of the important economic activities of the Ceylon Tamil community are not in the high revenue-yielding sectors such as, for example, the plantation sector, industry and commerce. Their activities have been largely in domestic agriculture which has to some extent been protected from taxation. Its contribution through taxes on professional incomes would however be of some significance. It is likely therefore that in the transactions of the government budget the revenue and expenditure account in respect of the Ceylon Tamil community results in a net transfer of resources to the community. These comments however are of a very general nature and do not attempt to provide any quantitative estimate. They can only draw attention to the broad pattern of economic activity in the community and its revenue-yielding potential. As in the case of other communities, the community of Moors and Malays makes its contribution in a large number of productive and service sectors ranging from agriculture and livestock to the activity which has considerably gained in importance in recent times - the gem trade. What is important to emphasise here is the interdependence of the various communities. Each community provides a

TABLE V

Amenities and Equipment Expressed as a Percentage of Total Number of Households and Percentages —
By Sectors, and Zones.

Amenities Equipment	Urban Sector	% House hold	Rural Sector	% House hold	Estate Sector	% House hold	Zone 1	% House hold	Zone 2	% House hold	Zone 3	% House hold	Zone 4	% House hold	Zone 5	% House hold
Total No. of Households	931	100.0	3627	100.0	530	100.0	1641	100.0	725	100.0	531	100.0	2028	100.0	163	100.0
Latrine	567	60.9	2044	56.4	374	70.6	1124	68.5	330	45.5	145	27.3	1322	65.2	64	39.3
No Latrine	364	39.1	1583	43.6	156	29.4	517	31.5	395	54.5	386	72.7	706	34.8	99	60.7
Pipe Borne		36.4	119	3.3	434	81.9	189	11.5	16	2.2	42	7.9	530	26.1	115	70.6
Water Outside																
Pipe Borne																
Water Inside	112	13.1	27	0.7	30	5.7	77	4.7	8	1.1	6	1.1	55	2.7	33	20.2
Electricity	298	32.0	90	2.5	17	3.2	198	12.1	16	2.2	20	3.8	93	4.6	78	47.9
Sewing Machine	359	38.6	900	24.8	75	14.2	522	31.8	184	25.4	118	22.2	447	22.0	63	38.7
Radio	368	39.5	849	23.4	74	14.0	528	32.2	163	22.5	111	20.9	414	20.4	75	46.0
Cooker—																
Kerosene	246	26.4	126	3.5	16	3.0	203	12.4	18	2.5	22	4.1	83	4.1	62	33.0
Cooker—Other	65	7.0	78	2.2	6	1.1	59	3.6	7	1.0	18	3.4	46	2.3	19	11.7
Refrigerator	46	4.9	18	0.5	4	0.8	51	3.1	2	0.3	1	0.2	6	0.3	8	4.9

Source: Survey of Sri Lanka's Consumer Finances 1973. Central Bank of Ceylon.

critical input into the national economy and is at the same time critically dependent on the economic inputs of the other communities.

The Elite Groups

The somewhat generalised analysis which has been provided in the foregoing account was intended to give an idea of the comparative socio-economic situation of the broad mass of the people in the different communities. I think one would be justified in coming to the conclusion that when one examines the levels of living of the majority of the population in these different communities, one sees in operation a socio-economic system which has pursued goals of distribution and welfare in a pluralistic society in a manner which has benefited all communities. This is yet only one part of the communal situation. If it was the entirety, then we should have no problem of communal tension and conflict. But the fact is that the problem of national unity has today assumed grave proportions and causes serious concern to all those who are committed to the future development of Sri Lanka as a united society. For the *root causes* of communal conflict one has to look not at the relative positions of the poor majorities in these communities. One has to look at the problems of the *elites*. The main source of the communal conflict is in the fierce competition for elite positions in our society, This competition is exacerbated further owing to the fact that it takes place in a situation in which economic growth is slow and the growth of those sectors which generate demand for professional and other services at a high level of educational attainment proceeds at a very faltering pace. In this context the protest will be naturally spearheaded by that segment of the minority community which had geared itself economically and socially to supply the manpower for the modern sector of the economy ranging from *junior administrative* and clerical activities to the *higher professions* - the Ceylon Tamil community in and originating from the Jaffna peninsula. We are faced here with a situation in which a highly resourceful intelligent minority had developed a long tradition of *exporting its skills abroad* as well as to other parts of the country. It was the response of a community meeting the challenge of a habitat which was relatively poor in its natural resource base. The processes of social and political change that occurred within the country in the fifties and the sixties *effectively debarred this community from entering those sectors of activity which it had traditionally organised itself to enter*. It is of course true that these developments have affected only the *upper 5%* of the community who had the aptitude and the opportunity to proceed to levels in the educational system which equipped them to enter elite positions in the

country. But the fact that it affects only this small fraction does not make the problem less acute. A community in which there was a *fair degree of upward social mobility* which suddenly finds that the opportunities for entering elite positions have been suddenly removed or have severely diminished would naturally react very strongly to the change.

It is true that in the case of Sri Lanka's society as a whole, free education had engendered expectations for upward social mobility which were inevitably frustrated and which resulted in social tensions which even now threaten the entire system. The problem of the educated Ceylon Tamil community has to be first seen in this general context. Creating the conditions for *freer access to elite positions* in the rest of the country cannot solve the major problem of employment and productive economic activity. For the mass of the educated youth, the *main characteristics of the problem are fundamentally the same for all communities*. The break through can occur only through a rapid expansion of the economy which is also supported by a change in the structure of job expectations and the absorption of the young workforce in highly productive income yielding activities other than those to which the traditional expectations had been geared. When all this has been acknowledged, still within this general context the problem of the elites in the minority communities, particularly the Ceylon Tamil community, is a *special one*. National policies have tended to create conditions which the minorities see as a special set of disabilities and a discriminatory structure which handicaps them in the competition for the elite positions.

An Analysis of Possible Solutions

The Marxist approach to this problem would suggest that what is required is a radical change in the structures of power in our society which changes the class relations across the communities, and that this is eventually the solution to the communal problem. But the particular problems of the minority elites with the accompanying hardship cannot be subsumed in this type of structural solution. Given the present structure of communal relationships, even solutions of a structural character could result in *communalistic distortions*. The approach to the change in class relations can assume different forms which assimilate communalistic elements. This was manifested to some extent in the ideological orientation of the 1971 insurrection. Then there is the fundamental question of *the political elites of the minorities*. An integral part of this whole process of competition for elite positions is the wider issue of sharing the decision-making power at

the national level in a manner which is equitable to all communities. This involves the role of the political leadership of the minority communities in the decision-making apparatus of the national political system.

The path to national unity lies in the solution of these key problems affecting the elites of the minority communities including the political elites. It lies in a just and equitable distribution of decision-making power within our society as a whole. It can be said that a fairly sound base for the solution of these problems already exists in the socio-economic situation in which the majority of each of these communities, that is the poor and low-income majority lives. The main features of this situation and its positive elements have already been outlined. The broad analysis revealed a *large non-competitive and complementary area* in which the various communities can engage in a positive and productive exchange which leads to co-ordinated national development. What is now required is a purposeful and imaginative effort to solve the problem in the more restricted competitive area.

First, it seems to me that the most positive result could be achieved through a strategy of *decentralised development*. This is a part of the development strategy in the Five Year Plan. It is based on a development effort in which small rural communities will participate more actively in the creation of employment opportunities and the intensive use of resources available in the rural sector. It goes with a decentralisation of the government *budget* and structures of administration where greater autonomy and decision-making power will be exercised at the regional, divisional and village levels. If this pattern of development is appropriately translated to *machinery of government* which is decentralised and which provides greater scope for self-management by districts, divisions and village communities, many of the contentious problems as between the minority communities and the majority community would be solved.

The more substantive tasks of economic development and economic decision-making would devolve on the district levels and the levels below them. These policies which have been adopted by government could be employed very effectively to deal with the communal problem and transform the prevailing situation with its communalistic frictions into a *participatory development process*. Such a process would also concentrate on removing the disparities and inequalities within the communities which is in fact the more urgent socio-economic task. The wide *regional disparities* among different areas inhabited by the Ceylon Tamil community, the unequal

distribution of resources and income within the majority community as between the urbanised coastal regions and the rural hinterland, and the pockets of poverty in the Muslim community should be the main targets of the efforts of each community—efforts which are being diverted into a competition among elites. In regard to the Indian Tamil community, the land reform and nationalisation of estates provides an excellent opportunity for its integration into Sri Lanka's society and economy.

Over and above these changes that would be required is a structure which allows for a just distribution of power at the centre and a sharing of the elite positions in the modern sector. This would require constructive adjustments in a number of fields. There are *various negotiating positions* from which one could start. Those spokesmen from the majority community who argue that they have been victims in the past of processes which denied them fair access to the positions of leadership and elite roles in society advocate measures which give weightage to the majority on what is almost a principle of proportionality. This would imply some quota system for the centralised services and the professional sectors, leaving the opportunities in the districts and regions to the communities living there. At the other end there would be the demand for conditions which ensure complete equality of opportunity for the minority communities.

This demand is integrally linked to the language issue and the manner in which it affects the educational system, the access to higher education and to elite positions in the metropolitan centre of the country. While the *language* issue is a fundamental political issue concerning the ethnic and cultural identity of the majority community, its social and economic consequences for the elites in the minorities provide the explosive element in the present situation. As far as the elites are concerned, they see the discrimination which is implicit in the language problem and the way in which it operates in the educational system as going even beyond the *principle of proportionality*. It is not difficult to find a position between the two positions which have been set out above which is capable of reconciling the objectives and needs of the various communities. One could think of an acceptable framework in which one moves from some form of proportionality to complete *equality of opportunity* over a phased period wherein some of the basic imbalances in which various communities compete could be progressively redressed and the need for any form of proportionality together with the present disadvantages built through the language situations altogether disappear. (In fact, with a steadily growing economy the problem of competition in a market in which opportunities are scarce will be converted into a problem of scarcity of skills and manpower at

all levels). Such a solution would require various progressive adjustments in the prevailing system of education. It would need adjustments in policies governing admission to higher educational institutions and recruitment to government services and so on. It would call for a policy which enables the Tamil community to be administered in their language, gives the Tamil language its due place in the regions in which the community predominates, works out a reasonable formula in which it receives recognition as an official language in the centre, and which eventually promotes bilingual and trilingual proficiency among the elites of the different communities. In the short term, a freer and more liberal scheme of exporting skilled personnel which would in some concrete form benefit the country might also help to lessen the tensions. The educational system today, both in terms of the outputs from the secondary school system as well as the capacity for expansion of teaching facilities, could supply an output at the higher educational levels much in excess of the country's present capacity to absorb that output. Within a well-conceived scheme it is possible for the country to take advantage of the situation.

At the political centre of course there is the much less tractable problem of sharing political power at the highest executive level. A decentralised pattern of development would provide the clues for readjustments in the centres of executive power. One could think for example of ministries which deal with regional affairs. Districts of the Ceylon Tamil community for example could be grouped under *one ministry of regional affairs* which gives an opportunity to the leaders of that community to direct and co-ordinate the activities which concern it. The representation of the communities in the council of ministers could be on an agreed basis. New mechanisms could be created which provide the leaders of the minority communities with an equitable share in the highest decision-making processes. All these elements including an *agreed timetable* for achieving the objectives could be elaborated and defined within a *charter for national unity* to which all communities subscribe. The present positions on the part of all communities appear to have hardened to the point where negotiations on the critical issues are an extremely difficult task. The *non-political groups* in each of the communities could perform a very constructive role by engaging in a dialogue across the communities, examining different negotiating positions, and working out alternative possibilities that could be considered by the political leadership of each community-

SRI LANKA - THE PEOPLE - NATION - CITIZENSHIP

BY A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT (Oct. 1976)

Identity of Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka has defined territorial limits. It has had for centuries a definite name. It is a viable economic unit. It has a system of communications connecting all parts of the country. It has for over one and a half centuries a uniform system of administration. Throughout that period, its inhabitants have lived under the same criminal law and have followed the same laws relating to civil and criminal court procedure. Except for personal laws of limited scope like Kandyan Law, Muslim Law and the Thesawalamai, there is a common unwritten law, namely the Roman-Dutch Law. The general statute law is applicable to all inhabitants alike. Its inhabitants are free to live and earn their living anywhere they please within its territory.

Sense of Community, the Basis of Nation

For the above reasons, and for other reasons as well, there is among the inhabitants of Sri Lanka a sense of community and the accompanying consciousness that they belong to Sri Lanka and are therefore fellow-countrymen. This is basic reality.

This sense of community is the fundamental basis of our political society which we may properly call the People of Sri Lanka or the Nation. National unity means the wholeness and strength of this sense of community in our country.

The basic idea of our political society can be distorted by the use of words with unclear meanings. This danger can be avoided if the basic idea of community is kept in mind, no matter what other words are used to denote it. For instance, the English word nation is normally used as meaning the People of Sri Lanka. The word nation, unfortunately, can have different meanings. Derivatives of the word, even to a greater degree, are suggestive of different concepts. The Sinhala word "Jathiya" and its derivative "Jathika" also suffer from the same lack of clarity. In all probability, in the course of common usage the word "jathiya"

will before long be ordinarily understood as meaning the political society we call the People of Sri Lanka. For the sake of clearness, the word nation and its derivatives will be used in this book only in this sense, as indeed, it is used in the Republican Constitution. The word 'ඉරික' is used in the Constitution to denote a racial group.

Subjective Nature of Nation

A sense of community is essentially subjective. A group of people cannot be called a community unless the persons as a group generally feel a sense of community. It is true, as we have seen, that common experience, living together and the sharing of economic and other interests tend to produce this sense of community. Nevertheless, it remains subjective. In other words, a nation is a nation when the people comprising it feel they are a nation. There is no guarantee, however, that once a people have come together and have begun to feel they are a nation, they will continue to feel that way. The sense of community can be destroyed.

Supreme Duty to Foster Sense of Community

Over and above all other duties, there is the supreme duty that the people of Sri Lanka owe to themselves: the duty to do all that is reasonably possible to avoid whatever tends to weaken their sense of community. This duty is in reality the duty of self-preservation. If the sense of community is lost, the political society based on it will perish, and the integrity of Sri Lanka itself will be in jeopardy.

Unity in Diversity

The sense of community on which our political society or nation depends is a reality, despite the fact that there are in our country many racial, cultural and religious groups, each of which is held together by its own proper sense of community. There is, in other words, a unity in diversity. Persons who belong to these diverse communities are also at the same time members of the larger community, i.e. the political society we call the People of Sri Lanka or the nation. Federalism does not in essence run counter to the idea of nationhood. On the contrary, it can provide a way of safe-guarding the sense of community under certain circumstances.

Fanciful Homogeneity

In theory, it would be true to say that a country with a single language, a single ethnic origin, a single religion and a single culture would be free from the stresses and strains that we find in

multiracial and multi-religions political societies all over the world. In reality, however, there, is hardly a country in which such homogeneity exists. There are still some people in our country, fortunately very few, who indulge in dreams of such fanciful unity. With each passing decade, such dreamers have become fewer and less significant. It must, however, be noted that such men are both foolish and dangerous: foolish because homogeneity in language or culture or religion can never be enforced or even be artificially induced. Dangerous, because their misguided zeal sometimes prompt them to advocate policies having the effect of weakening the essential sense of community in our country.

Special Source of Danger

The question of language presents very difficult problems, and compounded as it is with race, it is, fraught with potential danger to our sense of community. For this reason, it will receive special attention later on.

For the moment, enough has been said to make the point that it is the duty of our political society, as well as of every member of it, to do all that is reasonably possible to strengthen the sense of community holding our people together as one nation. The point is so important that we must return to it from time to time. Some practical discussion of "reasonably possible" is also called for.

The Republican Constitution

As might be expected, the Constitution does not expressly refer to a sense of community or to a political society. Nonetheless, their existence is the tacit basis of our Constitution. If one were to ask why it does not refer to these two realities, the reply surely would be that their existence goes without saying because they are self-evident fundamental realities. It might also quite rightly be said that the political society of Sri Lanka has been indirectly referred to, in words, 'People of Sri Lanka' and the 'Nation', expressly referred to, mean the same thing. In this connexion, the opening words of the historic resolution, unanimously passed by the representatives of *all* political parties at Navarangahala Hall, for establishing the Constituent Assembly, are of vital importance: "We the People of Sri Lanka being resolved in the exercise of our freedom and independence of the *nation* to give to ourselves a Constitution..."

Citizenship and Sense of Community

We now proceed to examine the connection between the people of Sri Lanka and its citizens. It is true to say that, by and large,

inhabitants who belong to our political society, as we have described it, are citizens and those who do not so belong to that community are not citizens. This is the legal position resulting from laws relating to citizenship, kept alive by the Constitution. The Constitution itself does not define citizenship, although it gives to citizens the exclusive right to vote at elections to the National State Assembly and at local government elections. The two principal Laws thus kept alive are the Citizenship Act of 1948, and the Act for the Registration of Indian and Pakistani Residents of 1949.

Citizenship Act of 1948

The Citizenship Act of 1948 is the fundamental piece of legislation on the subject. One of its basic provisions followed a principle agreed upon in 1947 at a Commonwealth Conference.

The principle is the recognition of the need to avoid double nationality or citizenship. Accordingly, the Citizenship Act gives effect to this principle. No person who is a citizen of any other country can acquire citizenship of our country unless he renounces his earlier citizenship. Also, a citizen of Sri Lanka loses that status if by a voluntary act he acquires the citizenship of any other country. It is relevant to observe that India and Pakistan have given effect to the same principle in their citizenship laws.

Of immediate interest to us is the way in which citizenship under the provisions of this Act fall into line with the basic idea that the People of Sri Lanka are inhabitants who share a sense of community and the accompanying consciousness that they belong to Sri Lanka and are therefore fellow-countrymen.

The Citizenship Act does not use phrases like "sense of community" and "political society". Understandably so, because a sense of community, though real, is of a subjective nature and cannot easily be defined by provisions of law. The Act therefore provides objective qualifications or tests which secure the same thing.

Citizenship by Descent

Thus, all inhabitants who belong to old established communities of our country like the Sinhalese, the Ceylon Tamils, the Ceylon Moors, the Ceylon Malays and Burghers became citizens of Ceylon by descent.

Citizens by Registration

The test applicable to inhabitants who were not members of these old Ceylonese communities was a sufficiently long connection by birth, which could reasonably ensure that they were likely to share the sense of community together with citizens by descent. The test was as follows: "...was the person born in Ceylon, and further, was his father, and if not his father, his grandfather born in Ceylon"? The reasonableness of such a test was one of the points argued when the validity of the Citizenship Act came up for decision by the Privy Council in Kodakan Pillai and Mudanayake (1953) 54 New Law Report 433. The view of Privy Council was expressed in these words: 'It is as the Supreme Court observed a perfectly natural and legitimate function of the legislature of a country to determine the composition of its nationals..... The migratory habits of the Indian Tamils (see paragraphs 123 and 203 Soulbury Report) are facts, which in their Lordships' opinion are directly relevant to the question of their suitability as citizens of Ceylon and have nothing to do with them as a community'. The test for citizenship by registration was doubtless devised with the Indian plantation workers in mind - when these workers started coming to Sri Lanka, they had a clear migratory character - The test was a practical one to ensure that only those who had ceased to have this migratory character would receive Ceylon citizenship.

Distinguished Citizens

The Act of 1948 had a provision of comparatively minor importance whereunder the Government was permitted to confer the status of citizen on residents who could be regarded as having rendered distinguished public service or as being eminent in the professional, commercial, industrial or agricultural life of the country. Persons acquiring citizenship in this way were so few that, even assuming that they did not, feel they belonged to Sri Lanka, they could hardly affect the sense of community on which our political society is based.

Indian and Pakistani Residents Registration Act - 1949

The next important piece of legislation is the Indian and Pakistani Residents (Citizenship) Act of 1949. This Act provided for the registration, as citizens of Ceylon, residents of Indian and Pakistani origin who had failed to qualify under the Citizenship Act, but who had uninterrupted residence in Ceylon since 1936, if they were unmarried, or since 1939 if they were married. They also had to satisfy the registering authority that they had certain other qualifications, of which the ones relevant for our purpose

are, firstly, that there was no inherent difficulty in their living according to the laws of Ceylon and secondly, that they understood that by accepting Ceylon Citizenship they renounced their original citizenship and thus became, for all purposes, subject to the laws of Ceylon. The qualifications, though less stringent than the test in the Citizenship Act, provided a certain minimum assurance that those who succeeded in acquiring citizenship had made their home in Ceylon. In other words, such citizens too can reasonably be regarded as members of the political society we call the People of Sri Lanka.

Special Consideration due to Registered Citizens

Although new citizens registered under these provisions of law are legally deemed to have severed all political connections with India or Pakistan (as the case may be), it would be unrealistic to expect that all feelings and sentiments they must have had towards their countries of origin ceased at once when they acquired Ceylon Citizenship. It would be unreasonable and even harsh to condemn them for vestiges of their old loyalties. It would be just and also prudent to show understanding and what is possible to win there complete loyalty.

Sirimavo-Shastri Pact

A vitally important human and political problem arose out of the fact that about a million persons of Indian origin failed to obtain registration as citizens under the provisions of the two Acts we have just seen. By far the greatest proportion of these Indians are estate workers. India does not normally treat Indian emigrants and their descendents as persons continuing to enjoy rights of Indian citizenship. This is quite understandable. British plantation companies had in the past engaged hundreds of thousands of Indian workers as indentured labour to work in many countries throughout the world, including Ceylon, West Indies, Guyana, East Africa, South Africa and Malaya. From a practical as well as a legal point of view it was not reasonably possible for India to accept general responsibility for such emigrants. It is well to remember that our laws too clearly prevent our continuing to accept, as citizens, emigrants who had been away from Sri Lanka for generations even if they had not acquired citizenship of any other country.

A vast number of Indian estate workers who failed to acquire Sri Lanka citizenship had also lost Indian citizenship, with the result that they are now stateless. They have no political rights and do not have protection under international law as citizens either

of Sri Lanka or of India. A situation such as this is socially and politically dangerous, apart from being fraught with injustice..

Happily, Indian statesmen have given special consideration to the problem of Indian emigrants in Sri Lanka; and as a result an agreement was reached whereunder India, on her part, agreed to take back a specified number of Indian emigrants while Sri Lanka, on her part, agreed to grant citizenship to Indian workers who remained behind. It is a pity, that financial difficulties and lack of co-operation from plantation companies prevented expeditious implementation of the Sirimavo-Shastri Pact, as the agreement is called. Provision of money for its implementation must clearly receive high priority because a quick solution of the Indian worker problem is vital for the preservation of national unity and stability.

A Dilemma

Even if repatriation under the Pact proceeds satisfactorily, about half a million Tamil estate workers will remain behind. Absorbing them into the political society of Sri Lanka will be no easy task. The problem presents a dilemma. A large proportion of these workers still regard India as their mother country and are unlikely for some time to come, to share a sense of community with the Sinhalese villagers who live in the same areas.

On the other hand, their exclusion, for a considerable period, from our political society will give rise to political complications growing out of resentment; this will make their ultimate acceptance of Sri Lanka as their real home much more difficult.

There are divisive forces, operating within our political society, and it would be foolish to ignore the risk of these forces spreading disaffection among the new citizens. A concerted policy for receiving these workers and winning them over to our political society must receive the highest priority. There are, indeed, risks involved, but there is no choice. To postpone is to double the risk.

The problem cannot be solved just by giving the Tamil workers Sri Lanka citizenship. A host of social problems, including education and employment must be solved. It is true that once these workers become citizens in large numbers, political pressure that can be applied through the vote will ultimately lead to the solution of these social problems. But before they are solved, in this way, much injustice, hardship and bitterness would, in the meantime have ensued. Political pressures operating through the

franchise are also likely to bring about politically unhealthy alignments with sections of our political society among whom resentments have already given rise to tendencies inimical to national unity.

Tamil Estate Workers and Trade Unions

The problems of these workers and the problems of the Kandyan peasantry are inter-connected. The resettlement of Kandyan peasants on lands taken over from foreign estate companies has gone some way towards alleviating their economic plight. On the other hand, the break up of estates has resulted in serious unemployment among Indian workers. It is too much to expect that political parties will agree not to make the Tamil worker problem a party issue; yet there is no problem in Sri Lanka that calls for more urgent co-operation between them. The only hope lies in our trade union movement. If the trade union movement, as a whole, rising above the politics of the parties to which individual unions are affiliated, exert pressure to neutralise the inherent vote-catching motives that operate in a pluralist democracy, the situation can be saved. Future generations will judge trade unionism by its efforts to secure this political result. One could say the same thing about political parties that profess, in a special way, duty to support the working class.

1. You are Prime Minister not only of the Buddhists, but of all countrymen.
2. You must hold the scales evenly among Buddhists, Hindus, Christians and Muslims.
3. Religion and Language should be treated equally.
4. You should do everything to correct the situation that had hitherto prevailed.

*Maha Nayake of the Asgiriya
Chapter to the Prime Minister,
Hon. J. R. Jayawardene.
August 1977.*

A LEFT APPROACH TO THE MINORITY PROBLEM

V. KARALARASINGHAM

(Attorney-at-Law)

(Talk given to the Sri Lanka U. N. Association at the Sri Lanka Institute. Nov. 1976).

The first thing to be noted about the minority or national problem is that it is not something peculiar to Ceylon. Not only other developing countries, but even the developed nations which long ago had accomplished their bourgeois democratic revolutions and therefore had resolved these questions are today faced with similar problems. I need but refer to the agitation of the Basque people of France and Spain, of the Scots and Welsh of the United Kingdom to illustrate the point that even the countries of Western Europe face this problem. Contrary to what the Sinhala and Tamil chauvinists say, the problem in Ceylon is due neither to the communalism of the Sinhala *people* nor to the unreasonableness of Tamil demands.

Uneven economic development is a general law of capitalism and this unevenness is not confined only to the relationship between the imperialist metropolis and the colonial backyard. Within the imperialist country itself this relationship is reproduced. That is to say, the "town and country" relationship which is so characteristic of capitalism is extended to the country as a whole, and therefore Scotland and Wales in the U. K., the Basque country in France, Catalonia in Spain are the rural areas in relation to the industrial centres of England, the Paris and Marseilles industrial regions, and the financial centre of Madrid.

In the developing countries, the problem is further aggravated. In the conditions of underdevelopment, stagnation and above all the pre-capitalist heritage which weighs down heavily on these societies, the lever of state power is a powerful aid to the dominant group in the "rat race" and this dominance is based on the discrimination of ethnic, caste, religious, or linguistic minority groups. In some countries of the Third World such discrimination is open as in Pakistan which proclaims itself the "Islamic Republic", while in others, it is masked, despite lipservice to democracy, secularism and even socialism.

Tamil Frustration

What is unique about Ceylon is not the existence of a national problem but the fact that the minorities are *politically defenceless* in the face of increasing pressure on them – a defencelessness brought about by their own barren politics. I do not propose to deal with the politics of minority communalism except to state that minority communalism which is the credo of the Federal Party can never be the answer to the communalism or chauvinism of the majority community, *What I am concerned in this talk is to show that the majority people, the Sinhala people, cannot continue much longer to adopt an attitude of indifference to the aspirations of the Tamil people, that in fact these interests coincide in terms of the anti-imperialist struggle, the only worthwhile goal in the contemporary world.*

The pressure on the Tamil speaking people, in particular those in the North, has increased. It is unnecessary to list the specific grievances which agitate the Tamils but suffice it to say that a sense of utter alienation has overwhelmed them. The gulf between them and the State power which has a wholly Sinhala chauvinist character about it, is ever widening. And the Sinhala character of the State power in the Jaffna district takes on the form of a "foreign" army of occupation in those parts. The growing alienation and frustration is reflected in the fact that the government's own active supporters among the Tamils, not the 28 Sri variety of Mr. Kumarasuriar, but those Tamils seriously committed to the anti-imperialist movement in our country, have recently met to formulate these grievances. You have but to read this document to realise how basic are these demands, that their recognition by the State involves no great concessions, and that these demands are so elementary that the cultured among you will be surprised to hear that a part of our people are denied these fundamental rights. The present policy which denies these rights naturally creates alternative moods of pessimism and despair, which in their turn are the breeding grounds of reaction.

A Peril to Sinhala People too

Why do I say that *the Tamil mood of pessimism and desperation, alienation and frustration* is a peril to the Sinhala people as well? Precisely because the Sinhala speaking people are the overwhelming majority, the anti-imperialist movement in our country is predominantly Sinhala and this anti-imperialist movement cannot permit the people living in a part of the country to be used by imperialist reaction, without jeopardising the interests of the struggle against imperialism itself. When a people are driven to

these alternating moods, they become, consciously or unconsciously, the tools of foreign imperialist interests. Who can deny that the rabid chauvinism of an earlier generation of Arab nationalists contributed not a little to driving all the Jews into the *arms*, of Zionism, and therefore, of American imperialism? I am not here referring to the role of the Federal Party which is the heir and successor to the imperialist tradition in Jaffna politics. But the position today is that the mass support which the anti-imperialist movement enjoyed in Jaffna - admittedly a minority support - is being eroded and the anti-imperialist movement's own supporters among the Tamil people are compelled to ask the government to abandon its present discriminatory policies against the Tamils.

The predominantly Sinhala anti-imperialist movement in Ceylon must seek to strengthen its allies in Jaffna and among the Tamil people generally and this can be done only on a political basis. Sinhala chauvinist elements that press on the government seek an administrative-police solution and they fan all the old fears.

Dialogue Needed

This move of Sinhala reaction must be met and the anti-imperialist movement must demand of the government that it enter into *a meaning full dialogue* on the basis of the legitimate grievances of these people with the elected representatives of the Tamil people, and not foist on them dubious leaders of the government's choice. By taking a frank and honest position in relation to the legitimate demands of the Tamil people, the government would thereby drive a wedge between the reactionary leadership of the Tamil speaking people and the popular masses supporting them.

The genuine problems before the Tamil speaking people have been formulated by the government's own supporters, namely, Messrs E. R. S. R. Coomaraswamy and V. Kanapathipillai among others, they must not only be adopted by the anti-imperialist movement but it must give expression to these demands. Only by so doing will the anti-imperialist movement ensure that it has a mass base in the Tamil speaking areas of Ceylon, however small a base, however inadequate it may be in terms of Parliamentary representation. But such a mass base is essential, if for no other reason, at least to combat at the mass level, the reactionary politics of the presently accredited leaders of the Tamil speaking people. It is stressing the obvious to say that these politics are reactionary to the core.

Behind the TULF leaders are the reactionary forces of world imperialism. Of course as yet they are keeping a respectable distance from the TULF leadership, although the perspicacious

would be able to detect a link between the politics of the leadership of the TULF and the politics of world imperialist reaction. I will not say more than that for the present. Every anti-imperialist fighter among the Sinhala and Tamil people knows that as far as our country is concerned that struggle, namely, the struggle against imperialism is by no means over; if anything, we, the people of South Asia are just beginning to move into the centre of that arena. Let me come to the heart of the matter.

An Opportunity for Imperialism

After the decisive and crushing defeat of American imperialism in Viet Nam, the United States which it the leader of world imperialism is without a sizeable base in this part of the world. India under Indira Gandhi is not only ruled out as a base of America in the Indian Ocean but this country is linked by treaty with the Soviet Union and is therefore the object of American imperialist designs in the Indian Ocean area. Bangla Desh, even after the anti-Mujibur coup, is too unstable, while America's official ally, Pakistan, cannot afford to open her borders to America, lest the whole Arab Middle East explodes. No government in Ceylon will dare permit an imperialist outpost in the foreseeable future, however much her rulers may desire such an arrangement. But America's long term interest desperately cries out for a base in the Indian Ocean. Mrs. Indira Gandhi must be contained today, but tomorrow, the Indian Socialist revolution must be throttled by direct military intervention. The prospect of that revolution is the nightmare of American imperialism, and today's forward planning of imperialism and the Pentagon is centred on how best to achieve that unavoidable task. You will ask: is not Diego Garcia adequate? The answer is simply no. Diego Garcia being an atoll off the coast of Africa is only a glorified aircraft carrier, good for today's job of patrolling the Indian Ocean, but logistically and otherwise useless for the purpose of mounting a military operation to smother a developing socialist revolution on the continent of India. This is where the projected new state of "Yarl Desh" will come useful to American imperialism. And America is not unmindful of this agitation and this demand. On the one hand at present it is dutifully sympathetic, and on the other, through its Sinhala chauvinist agents on the other side, it persuades the employment of police methods and administrative fiats to put down the agitation of the legitimate demands of the Tamil speaking people, thereby opening the way to genuine mass support for the reactionary demand of separatism.

American imperialism's aim is to carve out *an Israel out of Ceylon*, in order that such a creation will subserve its imperialist

interests. In the Middle East, an Israel was needed as a bastion against the Arab anti-imperialist movement, in South Asia she needs an Israel to crush the impending communist revolution in the Indian sub-continent. When the moment comes, American arms will find their way in a regular flow to activists among the champions of the separate state. Before you could say Jack Robinson that State may not only be a reality but the American marines invited to defend the "independence" of the new State! This is no piece of fantasy.

The growth of separatist tendencies among the Tamils with all its attendant dangers to the anti imperialist movement must awaken it to a realisation of the urgent need for a correct policy to the legitimate demands of the Tamil speaking peoples, that this movement must find a solution acceptable to progressive sections of Tamil opinion, and that it must truly unify the nation and not merely one section of it. For too long socialists among the Sinhala people have fought shy of the Tamil problem but this ostrich policy cannot continue if we are to stand up to world imperialism.

Mr. J. R. Jayawardene Stresses Human Rights

"My Government is dedicated to the elimination of all forms of discrimination. In this task, the redress of the grievances of all ethnic, religious and caste groups will receive my Government's urgent attention.

To this end, an all-party conference will shortly be summoned to consider the problems of the non-Sinhala speaking people and its decisions will be incorporated in the proposed constitution.

* * *

"I reiterate the belief of my Government that fundamental freedoms are pre-requisites for the total emancipation of the people

"The full enjoyment of the freedom, thus guaranteed can only be realised by the economically emancipated".

An excerpt from the Prime Minister, Mr. J.R. Jayawardene's Message to the World Peace Through Law Centre Conference - Manila, August 1977.

NATIONAL UNITY

BADDEGAMA WIMALAWANSA ANUNAYAKE THERO

(Background Paper submitted to the Seminar held at the Girl Guides' Headquarters, Colombo, 4th Feb. 1976.

I would like to submit the following to the discussion on National Unity. I hope it will receive your consideration. The questions that arise in the country should receive the attention of all those who are interested in the progress of the country. The Buddhists of Sri Lanka have never done any injustice to anyone. It is the tradition of the Sinhala Buddhists to receive even strangers very cordially. This is a fact admitted by the majority in the world. If that is how the Buddhists treat foreigners, can there be any misgivings about their treatment of the other communities in the country?

At present there are in this country a number of communities including the Sinhalese, the Tamils, the Muslims, the Malays and the Burghers. The Buddhists expect the goodwill and co-operation of them all. Unity among these communities existed even in the days of the Sinhala kings. If there were wars, they were only against the Dravidian invaders from South India. That Sinhala - Tamil unity existed even during the British occupation of Lanka is shown by the fact that the Sinhala Buddhists accepted the leadership of Tamil leaders like Ponnambalam Ramanathan. All this indicates that so far there has been no Sinhala-Tamil enmity or a plan to suppress the Tamil people. However, it is a fact that, due to political reasons or lust for power, there are in this country a handful who work against the Sinhalese. Yet, except for the political disruption carried on by the Federal Party which is considered a Catholic organization even by the Hindus, I do not think that there is any clash among the communities in this country.

It is well known that when the Soulbury Commission came, some political leaders from the North clamoured for rights on a fifty-fifty basis. However, the Soulbury Commission did not accede to it. Those who rejected that demand of the Tamils were not Sinhala-Buddhists, but intelligent European politicians. Thereafter, the Federal Party has been continuing the fifty-fifty

struggle to this day. In certain respects this struggle has been not for 50-50 but for 30-70. The language question is an example. The demand was that both Sinhala and Tamil should be the Official Languages in seven provinces and that Tamil only should be the Official Language in the Northern and Eastern provinces. What an unjust demand is this? Will it be justified if a five-year old son cries for the same amount of food, clothing and money that a twenty-year old son gets? Can there be a father who grants such a request? While it is demanded that Tamils should be settled in all parts of the country, the demand is also made that no Sinhalese should be settled in the Northern and Eastern provinces. Is this a reasonable demand? Is it a justifiable demand? An analysis of each question will show that it is the Sinhalese who are deprived of reasonable rights. That this is no exaggeration or a falsehood can be proved by statistics. According to the 1971 Census the Sinhala population is 9,146,700. The Sri Lanka Tamil population is 1,415,600 only. The Sri Lanka Muslim population is a little more than 800,000. Thus the Sinhalese are 73% of the total. Now let us turn our attention to the members that entered the University in the Sinhala and Tamil media:

Faculty	1966 — 1970	
	Tamil Medium	Sinhala Medium
Medical	464	410
Engineering	346	336
Architecture	09	03
Veterinary	52	21
Agricultural	52	65
Dental	39	53
Pharmaceutical	79	-

What are the privileges enjoyed in the field of education by 73% of the population? If an equitable distribution is made in proportion to the population, the Sinhalese should get 81% of the places while the Tamils should get 12% and the Muslims 7%. It will be quite reasonable if population ratios are followed in the field of education, public service, administration affairs, employment etc. This system operates in multiracial countries. The Bhumiputra system in Malaysia and the ratio system in Pakistan are two instances.

I think it is the ratio system that should be supported and accepted by all citizens who eschew chauvinism and seek national harmony based on justice. Do not the Tamils comprise the majority among the high officials in the Public Service? Are not the Governor of the Central Bank, the Auditor General, the

Chairman of the Mahaweli Development Board, all the leading officers in the Irrigation Department, Tamils? Twelve of the fifteen officers in the Development Planning Section are Tamils. Although I have the statistics relating to all of them, I do not intend submitting them here. What will be the situation that arises if factual information is made available to the Sinhala public? In many places including the Western Province it is the non - Sinhalese who have more than 50% of the accommodation in the housing schemes. Among them the Tamils predominate yet there is no housing scheme for public servants serving in Jaffna. They are not even allowed to live in rented houses. What is the situation in places like Wellawatte, Bambalapitiya and Cinnamon Gardens? Who is it who suffers injustice if these matters are examined in detail? The Tamils and the Burghers were given special facilities and privileges in the public service during the British times on the assumption that the Sinhalese were trouble-makers. Although the Tamils want this situation to continue it is a very unreasonable request. For the people to live in harmony these injustices should be removed. One more word about education: Let us consider the number of schools where there are University Entrance Science classes. In the city of Colombo with a population of 1,709,000, there are 32 such schools. In the Jaffna town which has a population of 492,000 only, the number of such schools is 33. The Sinhala Buddhists have not so far fought against these injustices. Such injustices are not confined to one or two instances. In the circumstances I think it will be desirable if a balanced discussion is held with equal members for each side participating. Before the law, God or the Buddha, no one can say that an injustice has been done by the Buddhists. I am sending this letter in order to see that, at this discussion, justice is done to the cause of the Sinhala Buddhists and it is shown that no harm comes from the Buddhists to the minorities.

“But there is hope. Men and women from all walks of life have begun to affirm themselves in favour of communal harmony. Leaders of all religions have appealed for peace & justice for all. The common humanity in us all is leading persons and groups of every political or religious persuasion to cooperate in safeguading life. Promoting understanding.”

Tissa Balasuriya — “Our Crisis of National Unity”

THE MUSLIM COMMUNITY IN SRI LANKA & RACE RELATIONS

SHIRLEY CANDAPPA (*Staff Centre for Society and Religion*)

In an interview with **Mr. S. A. RASCHID & Dr. M. C. M. KALEEL**
April 1977

In Lanka's deteriorating race relations it is important to understand that the Muslim community, unlike the Sinhalese or the Tamils, is not a racial group. It is a religious group made up of different races, the common link being the Islamic brotherhood.

Originally traders, Muslims during the time of the Sinhalese kings were treated as honoured guests of the country.

By royal command they could claim a living allowance from the people marry anyone other than those from the royal family. They were given land for cultivation and for houses, were permitted to build mosques, and have their own burial grounds. Muslims never, either through their behaviour or their demeanour gave the impression of having intentions of conquering the country and therefore had these privileges extended to them. As such the Muslims have been able to live peaceably with the Sinhalese. Muslims in the time of the Sinhalese kings were made to feel part of the nation.

In an interview with two leading Muslim citizens Mr. S. M. A. Raschid and Dr. M. C. M. Kaleel I was able to gather the following data on Sinhalese - Muslim relations. Mr Raschid said the Muslims have always lived in peace with the Sinhalese and there was never any racial tension between the two groups.

The riots of 1915 were not directed against the local Muslims, but against some Muslim traders from India. That was proved by the fact he said that resident Muslims shops etc. were not burnt down or damaged, instead Muslims were protected by the Sinhalese people. A case in point was that his (Mr. Raschid's) mother gave birth to her first child at that time in the home of a Sinhalese neighbour. The houses and property of local Muslims were protected by the Sinhalese people.

Today however, the position of the Muslims has changed. They do not feel part of the nation. The reason for it according to both Mr. Raschid and Dr. Kaleel is not racial but a consequence of economic factors.

Delimitation of Electorates

Muslims feel they are being discriminated against in a number of fields. For instance, the new delimitation laws, they feel, sound the death knell of Muslim representation in the country. The Moors especially, felt that by arbitrarily increasing the numerical norm of citizens per electorate, the previous government sought deliberately to reduce Muslim representation in the legislature.

On the other hand some other members of the Muslim community do not blame the previous government entirely because a Muslim was a member of the Commission,

A result of this, was that certain areas where Muslims are in the majority were demarcated in a manner as to prevent Muslims from being adequately represented.

Muslims also felt that certain recommendations of the Soulbury Commission with reference to minority representation had been ignored by the Commission, to the detriment of Muslim interests in urban areas where they are a majority.

Education

Education was another field where Muslims were at a great disadvantage. Muslims form around 7% of the population but not even 2% of the students in the University or other institution of higher education are Muslims. The main reason is that under the present educational system Muslims cannot compete favourably with the Tamil-speaking or Sinhala-speaking students however good they may be in English.

Muslim doctors, lawyers and engineers are comparatively few. However during the past decade there has been a slight improvement of the lot of Muslims in education.

Trade

The comparative lack of educational opportunity made it difficult for Muslims to find gainful employment. This was especially so because the Moor community was composed mainly of traders who were not interested in furthering their education.

It is in the sphere of trade, however, that Muslims feel discrimination really, takes place. As mentioned earlier, trade has been their principal means of earning a living and they have been for generations in the import, export and retail business.

Nearly 80% of the Moors are traders and the entry of the state into this sphere has led to mass unemployment among the members of this community.

The problem would have eased somewhat if the state had absorbed the displaced Moors in the new structures that were set up. These Moors who were displaced could not find alternative employment, for being traders it was not necessary for them to acquire other skills. It is felt that state policy on trade was a deliberate move to wrest it from the Moors and give it to Sinhalese businessmen.

State support to a big-time Sinhalese businessman who has opened trade centres in different parts of the city of Colombo tends to affect the small time Muslim businessman and boutique-keeper.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

I. Separate State

Since the community feels discriminated against what could be the possible solutions to its problems? What of the idea of a separate state which the Tamils are demanding in the Northern and Eastern provinces. What does the Muslim community feel about it as a solution to its problems?

Both Mr. Raschid and Dr. Kaleel were aghast at the idea. Muslims, they said dreaded even thinking of such a day. Should it come the Muslims would become a mini-minority within a minority. A divided country would, they felt, create major problems for the Muslim population.

Muslims and Tamils have nothing in common, be it culture, outlook on life or religion. Although the language of the Muslims is Tamil, each group speaks a different dialect.

Moreover, they said that unlike the Muslims, Tamils always had expansionist ideas. Consequently, Muslims felt that in the event of a separate state coming into being there was a strong possibility that they would be much worse off than at present.

To the Muslims the solution to the problems of the country and the people lay not in separation or division of the country but in integration. Thinking on narrow sectarian lines of race, religion or caste, would be to their disadvantage.

II Simple Living

Whilst both Mr. Raschid and Dr. Kaleel agreed that the solution to the racial problem of the country are largely economic their own approach to the solutions differed.

Mr. Raschid considered simple living essential. A minority he said, could not continue to live off the backs of the majority (90%). Living standards if necessary, must be lowered even if it meant that everyone would be poor at a given stage. It was only when a common poverty was shared that people would stop making scapegoats of race, religion and caste.

Dr. Kaleel on the other hand, disagreed with the idea of shared poverty and taking from the haves for redistribution among the have nots. Government, he said, did not have the funds necessary to maintain the going concerns of private individuals and companies. Government policy should rather be geared towards creation of new avenues of employment, thereby dynamising the industrial sector and the economy of the country.

Neither of the proposed solutions alone will end the racial problem or help build a nation. A nation cannot be built on a religious or racial background alone. Weightage or favoured treatment of any one community, specially in a rural society like ours immediately alienates a large section of the people. If our aim is to build a nation we must join hands irrespective of race and religion and consider ourselves as one nation and one people. The present policy of a favoured position for Sinhala and Buddhism will have to be abandoned and we should learn from the examples of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. If not, we too will in the near future suffer similar consequences.

THE UNKNOWN COMMUNITY - THE ARUNDIDIARS

SUMMARISED BY Mr. P. A. W. PERERA (*Centre Staff*)

From an article by S. M. KRISHNAN, in *Attha*, 11th October 1974

A considerable section of our population, comprising about two lakhs, spend their lives amidst a thousand and one problems and hardly any one takes any interest in their conditions of life. This section of the population is employed as minor employees in the local government institutions of our villages, towns and municipalities and contribute their efforts to maintain the health services at maximum efficiency. They are engaged in sweeping roads, conserving latrines and such menial labour, and are known as "Arundidiars". They live sub-human lives in the humblest of habitations.

These persons, unlike the plantation workers were not brought by the colonial powers for capitalistic purposes, but came on their own to seek a new home in Sri Lanka because of caste discrimination in their homeland in South India.

It is a pity that no one has taken the trouble to explain their culture, language and living conditions though most of them now speak Tamil, their original language was Telegu—a dialectal form of Telegu prevalent in South India about 600 years ago.

They had to abandon the use of Telegu and learn either Tamil or Sinhala because there were no Telegu schools in Sri Lanka. But because of the problems connected with their living conditions, financial difficulties and caste - discrimination their children have practically no education whatsoever.

The seriousness of this problem may be gauged from the fact that this section of the population of 200,000 has so far not produced a single graduate, and only a single teacher. A few in the public sector occupy minor subordinate jobs.

Though all communities that live in Sri Lanka have the privilege of having their representative in the state assembly, these people

do not have so much as a Justice of the Peace in their community. Thus, they find no one who could make representations on their behalf on the difficulties they encounter in their day to day life.

Some of the customs they have are reminiscent of ancient patriarchal life. When there is any social problem amongst them they never resort to legal remedy or outside intervention. Anyone who does so is ostracised. An elder in the community acts as mediator and the aggrieved abide by his decision.

Recently there has been a social and political awakening among the youth and the workers of this community. They are aware that they can obtain social improvement only through political involvement. They have therefore formed the "Sri Lanka Progressive Arundidiar Sangam" in order to obtain their political, social and economic improvement. Mr. S. M. Krishnan, a former Secretary of the Sangam has expressed the view that if the 200,000 health labourers are banded together, it will not be a difficult matter to win their social and trade union rights. He further states that whilst they have, at no time, acknowledged the leadership of Aziz, Thondaman or the (Federal Party) TULF they were neither rightist oriented. From the very first decade of this century, they have followed leftist policies.

"The pursuit of the doctrine of hate is not good for anyone. Hate may or may not injure the person against whom it is directed, but it does definitely injure the person who hates. The Buddhists who get worked up over real or imaginary wrong doings of others are injuring themselves first. They are also creating an oppressive atmosphere which is not conducive to any spiritual growth. A person with even a little sensitiveness can feel this oppressive atmosphere in Sri Lanka today.

If Buddhism is love and compassion, who in this world can touch it, let alone destroy it? But if Buddhism is merely an empty shell devoid of the essence of love, the earlier it disappears the better it is for the world."

Dr. E. W. Adikaram — "And the Doctrine of Hate"

SOME RELEVANT DOCUMENTS

INTRODUCTION

As free peoples, the different races in this country have to work out a modus vivendi a way of living together in harmony. During the past 30 years various efforts have been made to resolve this issue. From 1948 - 1955 the problems were more or less dormant due to the superiority of English and the English educated elite in the country.

After the General Elections of 1956 the issues became acute due to rise of Sinhala consciousness of the need to safeguard and promote Sinhala as the Official language. (cf Official language Act of 1956) Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike tried to allay the fears of the Tamils through a guarantee of the "*Reasonable Use of Tamil*". The Bandaranaike - Chelvanayagam Pact (B-C Pact) of July 1957 agreed on the basis of a solution specially in terms of Regional Councils and land colonization policy. This pact was torn up by Mr. Bandaranaike in April 1958 due to militant Sinhala political pressure. The federal party resolved to launch a non-violent direct action campaign, but before it could get way there was the communal holocaust of May 1958. Emergency rule prevailed from then to May 1959.

There were two General Elections in 1960. The Federal party helped to defeat the minority government of Mr. Dudley Senanayake in March 1960, as he did not agree to their demands. In July 1960 the SLFP Government got a clean majority in parliament and decided to go it alone without F. P. support. It was during the National Government led by Mr. Dudley Senanayake that further steps were taken regarding the Tamil Language special provisions. The Dudley Senanayake - Chelvanayagam Pact of March 1965 again promised setting-up of District Councils and the resolution of the language and colonization problems. The District Councils Bill was given up in July 1968 by Dudley Senanayake again due to Sinhala political pressure. But the other provisions of the pact were respected.

With the May 1970 General Elections, Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike became Prime Minister with a two third majority in Parliament. A new Republican Constitution was promulgated.

The minority safeguards of sec. 29 of the Soulbury Constitution were not in this constitution. The Tamil members in exasperation walked out of the constituent assembly in July 1971. The F.P. and the Tamil Congress (T.C.) joined to form the Tamil United Front (TUF) in May 1976, 20 years after 1956 the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) adopted a resolution in favour of an independent Tamil Ealam for the Northern and Eastern Provinces of Sri Lanka. The TULF consisted of the F. P., T. C. and the Ceylon Workers Congress (CWC) of plantation workers led by Mr. Thondaman. The C. W. C. however had reservations on a separate State.

July 1977 General Elections were fought by the TULF to obtain a mandate for Ealam. The UNP under Mr. J. R. Jayawardane won a 4/5th majority in parliament. The UNP Manifesto promised to be just and fair to the Tamils. Meanwhile the communal holocaust of August 1977 has further aggravated the issues.

We hope the publication of these relevant documents (in this issue and later) will help understand the aspirations and fears of both the majority and the minorityes.

Editor.

(A) OFFICIAL LANGUAGE ACT NO. 33 OF 1956

An act to prescribe the Sinhala language as the one official language of Ceylon and to enable certain transitory provisions to be made (July 7th. 1956)

1. This act may be cited as the official language Act No. 33 1956.
2. The Sinhala language shall be the one official language of Ceylon.

Provided that where the Minister considers it impracticable to commence the use of only the Sinhala language, for any official purpose immediately on the coming into force of this act, the language or languages hitherto used for that purpose may be continued to be so used until the necessary change if effected as early

as possible before the expiry of the 31st. day of December 1960 and, if such change cannot be effected by administrative order, regulations may be made under this act to effect such change.

3. (I) The Ministers may make regulations in respect of all matters for which regulations are authorised by this act to be made and generally for the purpose of giving effects to the principles and provisions of this act.

(II) No regulation made under sub-sections (1) shall have effect until it is approved by the Senate and the House of Representatives and notification of such approval if published in the gazette.

(B) S. W. R. D. BANDARANAIKE, Prime Minister

REASONABLE USE OF TAMIL

(Statement in Parliament from Sri Lanka Weekly Information sheet - Information Dept. Vol. 1. No. 1. 1st May 1957)

The Prime Minister outlined in the House of Representatives last week the Government's proposals for the reasonable use of Tamil:

These proposals are:

1. The right of every Tamil to be educated in his own language up to the summit of the educational system.
2. Tamils should be entitled to sit for public service Examinations in Tamil, with provisions being made for them to acquire proficiency in Sinhalese in a stipulated period after recruitment.
3. Tamils should be given the right to correspond with the Government and receive replies in Tamil.
4. Local authorities in Tamil areas should be given the power to transact business with the Central Government in Tamil.

The following is the Prime Minister's statement:-

“The House and the Country know that it has always been the policy of the Government Party that, although the circumstances of the situation were such that the Sinhalese language had to be

declared the official language of this Country, there was no intention in fact to cause any undue hardship or injustice to those whose language is other than Sinhalese in the implementation of that Act.

“I wish also to point out that the Government Party prior to the elections in their manifesto gave the assurance that while it was their intention to make Sinhalese the official language of the country, reasonable use of Tamil too will be given. We had to wait till we saw what were the precise forms in which this recognition of the Tamil language could be given effect to.

“I am in a position, on behalf of the Government, to make a statement in general terms – of course. The details will have to be worked out and discussed and Members of the House and others will be given the opportunity of expressing their views in due course. There are certain matters that are already being done, for instance taking effective steps to see that this reasonable use is given its proper place. Administratively already certain things are being done. For instance, in the realm of education it was always the position of the Government that they did not ban education in the medium of the Tamil language, naturally, will have the right to go up to the very summit of education in that medium.

“The House and public will also remember that in a discussion we had with the University authorities, it was decided that the Tamil medium should also be used in examinations, that is, so far as those facilities are concerned where Swabasha is used, that the Tamil medium should also be adopted. It is the policy of the Government that position should be preserved.

“Flowing from that position, there is the question of the Public Service. For the present, the practice the Government is following is that those educated in a medium other than Sinhalese should be permitted to sit for examinations in the medium in which they have been taught with only the proviso that once they are appointed as probationers they will naturally be required to obtain that knowledge of the official language which may be considered necessary for the carrying out of their official duties before the probationary period eventuates in permanent employment.

“It may be that after some years the better course for those who sit for these examinations would be to take some easy paper at those examinations showing some knowledge of the official language rather than wait till they are appointed as probationers to acquire that knowledge. That is a matter that will receive the consideration of the Government.

“The other question is that of correspondence and transaction of business. That also flows from the position that the Tamil language is recognised as the medium of instruction. Those who are educated in that language will have the opportunity of addressing letters, getting replies and so on in the same language. I am not going into details. I am merely expressing certain general lines on which the Government will work out a scheme.

“The fourth question is in regard to local authorities, Regional Councils and so on. The work of these bodies fall into two categories, namely proceedings at their meetings and the transaction of general business. Proceedings at meetings will be governed by the Standing Orders and Regulations in the same way as proceedings in this House are governed by our Standing Orders. With regard to the work of the local authority vis-a-vis the Central Government, we feel that at least in certain areas in the Northern and Eastern Provinces the local authority should have the option of doing the official part of their work in Tamil if they so wish.

“These are the four main heads, and of course there are subsidiary matters that will arise. It is the view of the Government that a scheme in that way should be worked out.

“In other words, the policy that the Government intends to follow is that while accepting Sinhalese as the official language, citizens who do not know Sinhalese should not suffer inconvenience, embarrassment or any trouble as a result of that.

“Some of my Hon. Friends opposite who hold an extreme point of view will think differently. There are extremists on both sides. We cannot decide these issues on grounds of extremism whether it be on this side of the House or on that side. We have to take a rational, reasonable attitude in these matters. Of course, Sinhalese has been declared the official language of the Country. The Government now proposed to take these steps and everybody will have an opportunity to make suggestions.

“I have only given the broad outline of what we intend doing”.

(C) ‘THE BANDARANAIKE — CHELVANAYAKAM PACT’ JULY 26, 1957

Text of Joint Statements by Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike, Prime Minister and the Representatives of the Federal Party. (House of Representatives, Parliamentary Debates (Hanzard) Vol. 30, cols. 1309-1311.

Statement on the general principles of the Agreement.

“Representatives of the Federal Party have had a series of discussions with the Prime Minister in an effort to resolve the differences of opinion that had been growing and creating tension.

“At an early stage of these conversations it became evident that it was not possible for the Prime Minister to accede to some of the demands of the Federal Party.

“The Prime Minister stated that from the view of the Government he was not in a position to discuss the setting up of a federal constitution or regional autonomy or any step which would abrogate the Official Language Act. The question then arose whether it was possible to explore the possibility of an adjustment without the Federal Party abandoning or surrendering any of its fundamental principles and objectives.

“At this stage the Prime Minister suggested an examination of the Government’s draft Regional Councils Bill to see whether provision could be made under it to meet reasonably some of the matters in this regard which the Federal Party had in view.

“The agreements so reached are embodied in a separate document. “Regarding the language issue the Federal Party reiterated its stand for parity, but in view of the position of the Prime Minister in this matter they came to an agreement by way of an adjustment. They pointed out that it was important for them that there should be a recognition of Tamil as a national language and that the administrative work in the Northern and Eastern Provinces should be done in Tamil.

“The Prime Minister stated that as mentioned by him earlier it was not possible for him to take any step which would abrogate the Official Language Act.

Use of Tamil

“After discussions it was agreed that the proposed legislation should contain recognition of Tamil as the language of a national minority of Ceylon, and that the four points mentioned by the Prime Minister should include provision that, without infringing on the position of the Official Language Act, the language of administration in the Northern and Eastern Provinces should be Tamil and that any necessary provision be made for the non-Tamil speaking minorities in the Northern and Eastern Provinces.

“Regarding the question of Ceylon citizenship for people of Indian descent and revision of the Citizenship Act, the representatives of the Federal Party put forward their views to the Prime Minister and pressed for an early settlement.

“The Prime Minister indicated that this problem would receive early consideration.

“In view of these conclusions the Federal Party stated that they were withdrawing their proposed satyagraha”.

Joint Statement by the Prime Minister and Representatives of the Federal Party on Regional Councils.

(A) “Regional areas to be defined in the Bill itself by embodying them in a schedule thereto.

(B) “That the Northern Province is to form one Regional area whilst the Eastern Province is to be divided into two or more Regional areas.

(C) “Provision is to be made in the Bill to enable two or more regions to amalgamate even beyond provincial limits; and for one region to divide itself subject to ratification by Parliament. Further provision is to be made in the Bill for two or more regions to collaborate for specific purposes of common interest.

Direct Elections

(D) “Provision is to be made for direct election of regional councillors. Provision is to be made for a delimitation Commission or Commissions for carving out electorates. The question of M. P.'s representing districts falling within regional areas to be eligible to function as chairmen is to be considered. The question of Government Agents being Regional Commissioners is to be considered. The question of supervisory functions over larger towns, strategic towns and municipalities is to be looked into.

Special Powers

(E) “Parliament is to delegate powers and to specify them in the Act. It was agreed that Regional Councils should have powers over specified subjects including agriculture, co-operatives, lands and land development, colonization, education, health, industries and fisheries, housing and social services, electricity, water schemes and roads. Requisite definition of powers will be made in the Bill

Colonisation Schemes

(F) "It was agreed that in the matter of Colonisation Schemes the powers of the Regional Councils shall include the powers to select allottees to whom lands within their area of authority shall be alienated and also power to select personnel to be employed for work on such schemes. The position regarding the area at present administered by the Gal Oya Board in this matter requires consideration.

Taxation, Borrowing

(G) "The powers in regard to the Regional Councils vested in the Minister of Local Government in the draft Bill to be revised with a view to vesting control in Parliament wherever necessary.

(H) "The Central Government will provide block grants to the Regional Councils. The principles on which the grants will be computed will be gone into. The Regional Councils shall have powers of taxation and borrowing."

This pact whose implementation may have gone a long way to resolve Sinhala/Tamil problems was eventually abrogated unilaterally by Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike in April 1958 due to political pressure.

(D) TAMIL LANGUAGE (SPECIAL PROVISION) ACT 28 OF 1958

Regulations made under the Tamil Language (Special Provision) Act 28 of 1958 and published in Government Gazette 14653 of 2. 3. 66.

1. Without prejudice to the operation of the Official Language Act 33 of 1956, which declared the Sinhala Language to be the one official language of Ceylon, the Tamil Language shall be used.
2. (a) In the Northern and Eastern provinces for the transaction of all Government and public business and the maintenance

of public records whether such business is conducted in or by a department or institution of the Government, a public Corporation or a Statutory Institution, and

(b) for all correspondence between persons other than officials in their official capacity, educated through the medium of the Tamil Language, and any official in his official capacity or between any local authority in the Northern and Eastern provinces which conducts its business in the Tamil Language, and any official in his official capacity.

3. To give effect to the principles and provisions of the Tamil Language (Special Provisions) Act, and those Regulations, all Ordinances, and Acts, all Orders, Proclamations, Rules, By-laws, Regulations, Notifications, made or issued under any written law, the Government Gazette and all other official publications and circulars, and forms issued by Government, Corporations, Statutory Institutions shall be published in Tamil.

The above regulations were published in 1966, 8 years after the 1958 Act but never implemented.

COMMENTS

The Government was of the opinion that these Regulations have no legal validity, being ultra vires of the Act (See below excerpts from the speeches in the Constitutional Assembly, by the Hon'ble Felix Dias Bandaranaike, Minister of Public Administration and Justice, and by Hon'ble Dr. Colvin R. de Silva, Minister for Constitutional Affairs.

1. The Hon. Felix Dias Bandaranaike, Minister of Public Administration and Justice:-

“.....I think you have no right to vindicate, because I believe those regulations are ultra vires the main Act.....”

Vol. I No. 28, Column 2107 of 25. 6. 71.

2. The Hon. Dr. Colvin R. de Silva, Minister for Constitutional Affairs:-

“That is the view of this Government, as was the view we held and which we continue to hold, these regulations are ultra vires

the Tamil Language (Special Provisions) Act and that therefore this Government was not applying these regulations in the administration.

Vol. 2, No. 6, Column 334 of 9. 5. 1972.

That is the position of this Government, officially stated.

No regulations of legal force and validity have yet been made.

(E) SENANAYAKE/CHELVANAYAGAM PACT - MARCH 1965

Agreement

Mr. Dudley Senanayake and Mr. S. J. V. Chelvanayagam met on the 24th day of March 1965 and discussed matters relating to some problems over which the Tamil-speaking people were concerned, and Mr. Senanayake agreed that action on the following lines would be taken by him to ensure a stable Government:-

1. Action will be taken early under the Tamil Language Special Provisions Act to make provision for the Tamil language to be the language of administration and of record in the Northern and Eastern Provinces. Mr. Senanayake also explained that it was the policy of his Party that a Tamil-speaking person should be entitled to transact business in Tamil throughout the island.
2. Mr. Senanayake stated that it was the policy of his Party to amend the language of the Courts Act to Provide for legal proceedings in the Northern and Eastern Provinces to be conducted and recorded in Tamil.
3. Action will be taken to establish District Councils in Ceylon vested with powers over subjects to be mutually agreed upon between the two leaders. It was agreed however that the Government should have power under the law to give directions to such Councils in the national interest.
4. The Land Development Ordinance will be amended to provide that Citizens of Ceylon be entitled to the allotment of land under

the Ordinance. Mr. Senanayake further agreed that in the granting of land under Colonisation Schemes the following priorities to be observed in the Northern and Eastern Provinces.

- (a) Land in the Northern and Eastern Provinces should in the first instance be granted to landless persons in the District;
- (b) Secondly to Tamil-speaking persons resident in the Northern and Eastern Provinces, *AND*
- (c) Thirdly to other citizens of Ceylon preference being given to Tamil citizens resident in the rest of the island.

Sgd. — Dudley Senanayake, 24/3/65

Sgd. — S. J. V. Chelvanayagam 24/3/65

District Councils mentioned in this pact were not set up as Mr. Dudley Senanayake could not muster adequate political support for this.

(F) EXTRACTS FROM SPEECHES ON THE STATUS OF TAMIL LANGUAGE VIS A VIS SINHALA MADE BY

- (1) **Rt. Hon. D. S. Senanayake**, Prime Minister
- (2) **Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike** before he promised the country Sinhala only in 24 hours.
- (3) **By leaders of political parties** who subsequently changed their policy when they became Cabinet Ministers,

(1) **The Rt. Hon'ble D. S. Senanayake:** The essential task is to build up a nation, and build up a nation not with one language but with two.

(2) **Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike:** *Vol. I. No. 30* Column 2374. — “I do not see that there would be any harm at all in recognising the Tamil Language also as an official language. It is necessary to bring about that amity, that confidence among the various communities, which we are all striving to achieve within reasonable limits. Therefore, on the second point, I have no personal objection to both these languages being considered official languages; nor do I see any particular harm or danger or real difficulty arising from it”.

do Vol. I, No. 30 Column 2375.

“If it is the desire of the Tamils that Tamil also should be given equal status with Sinhalese, I do not think we should bar it from attaining that position. This House I am sure will vote with me that English should be deposed from its position as the official language and Sinhalese and Tamil, the ancient languages of the people, should be made the official languages of Lanka”.

He also said:

“What then is the object of having Sinhalese alone as the official language? If the object is that it is rather awkward to have more than one official language, I should like to point out that other countries are putting up with more than two official languages and are carrying on reasonably satisfactorily.”

(3) **Dr. N. M. Perera:** *Vol. I, No. 30, Column 2376.* “The Lanka Sama Samaja Party’s demand for Sinhalese and Tamil as the State Languages, it should be made clear at the outset, flows from a very real concern for the interests of the people who speak these languages.”

“We have been for Swabasha, that is, for Sinhalese and Tamil, ever since we started in 1935. That was one of our items in our first programme issued by the Lanka Sama Samaja Party, that the administration of the country should be in Sinhalese and Tamil.”

“Our Party has taken up a consistent attitude ever since our Party was launched. We have never faltered or wavered from that position because we felt that, that was the correct line to take. That position we still adhere to however unpopular that action might be”.

(4) **Mr. Leslie Goonewardene:** *Vol. I, No. 30, Col. 2377.* “Finally, I would state that in this matter we stand, naturally,

for the elevation of Sinhalese to a State Language. There is no question or doubt about that. But we oppose the injustice done to the Tamil-speaking people by this Bill. We feel that just as the Sinhalese people should have the right to be ruled in the Sinhalese language and conduct their business with the Government in the Sinhalese language, so also the Tamils should have the right to conduct their business with the State in the Tamil language and to be ruled in the Tamil language." — *Official Report 8th June, 1956; Vol. 24, Col. 1107.*

(5) **Mr. Pieter Keuneman:** Vol. I, No. 30, Col. 2377. "I am a Communist and I am proud to be a Communist..... It (Communist Party) opposes oppression in whatever form it appears. It is because of this fundamental basis of our political philosophy that we of the Communist Party oppose this Bill with all our strength. We believe that all nationals of this country have a natural and unfettered right to use their language, to govern themselves in their language, to build and develop their languages and culture. This is a right which in the case of any one linguistic group is neither more nor less than in the case of other linguistic groups. No person or linguistic group should, because of his or its language, be placed in a position inferior or superior, in the exercise and enjoyment of the rights and obligations of citizenship, to another person or language group." (*Official Report, 11th June, 1956, Vol. 24, Col. 1189-90*)

"All I am suggesting is that, in the basically Sinhalese-speaking areas, let the Courts and the Government administration be conducted in the Sinhalese language; in the basically Tamil-speaking areas, let these be conducted in the Tamil language, and, of course, in order to assert the right that any citizen of this country, wherever he may be in a unified country, can have the right to deal with Government and the Courts in his own language, let there be a system of interpretation so that interspersed minorities living in one or other of these linguistic territories will be able to communicate with the Government and receive replies, in their own language." — *Official Report, 14th June, 1956: Vol. 24 Col. 1691.*

THE CONSTITUTION OF SRI LANKA 1972

Chapter III LANGUAGE

Official Language

8. (1) The use of the Tamil Language shall be in accordance with the Tamil Language (Special Provisions) Act, No. 28 of 1958.
- (2) Any regulation for the use of the Tamil language made under the Tamil Language (Special Provisions) Act, No. 28 of 1958, and in force immediately before the commencement of the Constitution shall not in any manner be interpreted as being a provision of the Constitution but shall be deemed to be subordinate legislation continuing in force as existing written law under the provisions of section 12.

Language of Legislation

9. (1) All laws shall be enacted or made in Sinhala.
- (2) There shall be a Tamil translation of every law so enacted or made.
10. (1). All written laws, including subordinate legislation in force immediately prior to the commencement of the Constitution, shall be published in the Gazette in Sinhala and in Tamil translation as expeditiously as possible under the authority of the Minister in charge of the subject of Justice.

Language of the Courts

11. (1) The Language of the courts and tribunals empowered by law to administer justice and of courts, tribunals and other institutions established under the Industrial Disputes Act and of Conciliation Boards Act, No. 10 of 1958, shall be Sinhala throughout Sri Lanka and accordingly

their records, including pleadings, proceedings, judgments, orders and records of all judicial and ministerial acts, shall be in Sinhala.

- (3) In the Northern and Eastern Provinces and in proceedings before Quazis under the Muslim Marriage and Divorce Act, parties, applicants and persons legally entitled to represent such parties or applicants before any court, tribunal or other institution referred to in subsection (1) or subsection (2) of this section may -

- (a) submit their pleadings, applications, motions and petitions in Tamil; and
- (b) participate in the proceedings in Tamil.

In all such cases a Sinhala translation shall be caused to be made by such court, tribunal or other institution referred to in subsection (1) or subsection (2) of this section for the purposes of the record.

- (4) Every party, applicant, judge, juryman or member of a tribunal not conversant with the language used in a court, tribunal or other institution referred to in subsection (1) or subsection (2) of this section, shall have the right to interpretation, and to translation into Sinhala or Tamil, provided by the State to enable him to understand and participate in the proceedings before the court, tribunal or other institution referred to in subsection (1) or subsection (2) of this section. Such person shall also have the right to obtain, in Sinhala or Tamil, any such part of the record as he may be entitled to obtain according to law.
- (5) A person legally entitled to represent a party or an applicant may participate in the proceedings in any court, tribunal or other institution referred to in subsection (1) or subsection (2) of this section, in Sinhala or Tamil, and shall be entitled for that purpose, to interpretation, in Sinhala or Tamil provided by the State.
- (6) Subject to the provisions contained in the preceding subsections of this section, the Minister in charge of the subject of Justice may, with the concurrence of the Cabinet of Ministers, issue Orders, Directions and Instructions permitting the use of a language other than Sinhala or Tamil by a judge or other state officer administering justice or by a pleader appearing before a court

tribunal or other institution referred to in subsection (1) or subsection (2) of this section. Every judge and other state officer administering justice shall be bound to implement the Orders, Directions and Instructions issued under this subsection.

The following section 29 relating to minorities provided in the 1947 Constitution (Soulbury) was unfortunately left out of the 1972 Constitution.

1947 CONSTITUTION SECTION 29

(1) Subject to the provisions of this, Order, Parliament shall have power to make laws for the peace, order and good government of the island.

(2) No such law shall -

- (a) prohibit or restrict the free exercise of any religion; or
- (b) make persons of any community or religion liable to disabilities or restrictions to which persons of other communities or religions are not made liable; or
- (c) confer on persons of any community or religion any privilege or advantage which is not conferred on persons of other communities or religions.

COMMENTS

When the 1972 Constitution was passed in Parliament in Feb. 1972, the Tamil members of the opposition under the banner of the Tamil United Front (TUF) rejected the Constitution by walking out when the vote was taken.

The reasons for the rejection are as follows-

1. The Draft Constitution was not evolved through wide discussion and national consensus.
2. There is no chapter on Citizenship.
3. Fundamental Rights very incomplete. The brief chapter of Fundamental Rights is not comprehensive; nor does it regard rights as universal or inviolable.

4. Unequal language rights. Giving primacy to Sinhala in public administration may have the unfortunate effect of making citizens unequal and the nation divided. It will bring about two classes of citizens - Class I Sinhala-speaking, Class II Tamil-speaking. It would therefore be a denial of the democratic principle and the concept that we are one nation.
5. The selection of state officers and school teachers on the recommendations of Government M. P.'s and party men and their promotions through political patronage and this is bound to affect the integrity and efficiency of the service.
6. Does not make provision for the people to have a direct share in the process of discussion and decision making, which is a necessary component of a democratic and socialist society.
7. The President is to be the nominee of the Prime Minister whereas the President should be the choice of the Nation.

(From the Resolution passed at the All-Ceylon Tamil Conference on the Constitution. Jaffna, Feb. 5th. 1972)

Since then various factors contributed to the deterioration of the relationship between the Sinhalese and Tamils. We list below the 10 points put forward by the late *Mr. S.J.V. Chelvanayagam* President of the TUF, of the hardships suffered by the Tamils

1. Denial of equal opportunities of employment to Tamils in Government Service and Government controlled corporations
2. Sustained propoganda against Tamils through Government approved school text books
3. Continued Police and Army action in Tamil areas
4. Denial of the right of peaceful assembly
5. Denial to many Tamils and Tamil leaders of the right to leave the country
6. Absence of effective provisions in the Constitution protecting the Fundamental Rights of minorities
7. Arbitrary arrests and detentions (at the moment there are 42 Tamils under such detention) and
8. Cruel and inhuman treatment at the time of arrest and during detention
9. The grant of "the foremost place" to Buddhism and imposing on the State a constitutional duty "to protect and foster" that religion

10. Denial of the right of representation to 50,000 in Kanke-santurai Electorate by maliciously refusing to hold the by-election for the last two years,

(Memorandum presented to the 20th Commonwealth Conference - Sri Lanka Sept. 1974).

This resulted in the forming of the Tamil United Liberation Front. (TULF). The TULF at this stage asked no longer for a federal solution but for a *separate state* and it was on this that they canvassed at the General Elections in July 1977 in the Northern and Eastern Provinces.

AT THE

TULF NATIONAL CONVENTION

Pannakam (Vaddukodai Constituency) 14 May 1976

Presided over by the late **Mr. S.J.V. Chelvanayakam, Q.C., M.P.**

The following Political Resolution was unanimously adopted.

Whereas throughout the centuries from the dawn of history the Sinhalese and Tamil nations have divided between them the possession of Ceylon, the Sinhalese inhabiting the interior of the country in its southern and western parts from the river Walawe to that of Chilaw and the Tamils possessing the Northern and Eastern districts.

And whereas the Tamil kingdom was overthrown in war and conquered by the Portuguese in 1619 and from them by the Dutch and the British in turn independent of the Sinhalese kingdoms.

And whereas the British Imperialists who ruled the territories of the Sinhalese and Tamil kingdoms separately joined under compulsion the territories of the Tamil kingdom to the territories of the Sinhalese kingdoms for purposes of administrative convenience on the recommendation of the Colebrooke Commission in 1833,

And whereas the Tamil leaders were in the forefront of the Freedom movement to rid Ceylon of colonial bondage which ultimately led to the grant of independence to Ceylon in 1948,

And whereas the foregoing facts of history were completely overlooked and power was transferred to the Sinhalese nation over the entire country on the basis of a numerical majority thereby reducing the Tamil nation to the position of a subject people,

And whereas successive Sinhalese governments since independence have always encouraged and fostered the aggressive nationalism of the Sinhalese people and have used their political power to the detriment of the Tamils by -

(a) Depriving one half of the Tamil people of their citizenship and franchise rights thereby reducing Tamil representation in Parliament,

(b) Making serious inroads into the territories of the former Tamil kingdom by a system of planned and state-aided Sinhalese colonisation and large scale regularisation of recently encouraged Sinhalese encroachments calculated to make the Tamils a minority in their own homeland,

(c) Making Sinhala the only official language throughout Ceylon thereby placing the stamp of inferiority on the Tamils and the Tamil Language,

(d) Giving the foremost place to Buddhism under the Republican Constitution thereby reducing the Hindus, Christians and Muslims to second class status in this country,

(e) Denying to the Tamils equality of opportunity in the spheres of employment, education, land alienation and economic life in general and starving Tamil areas of large scale industries and development schemes thereby seriously endangering their very existence in Ceylon,

(f) Systematically cutting them off from the mainstream of *Tamil cultures* in South India while denying them opportunities of developing their language and culture in Ceylon thereby working inexorably towards the cultural genocide of the Tamils,

(g) Permitting and unleashing *communal violence* and intimidation against the Tamil speaking people as happened in Amparai and Colombo in 1956; all over the country in 1958; army reign of terror in the Northern and Eastern provinces in 1961; police violence at the International Tamil Research Conference in 1974 resulting in the death of nine persons in Jaffna; police and communal violence against Tamil speaking Muslims at Puttalam and various other parts of Ceylon in 1976 - all these calculated to instil terror in the minds of the Tamil speaking people thereby breaking their spirit and the will to resist the injustices heaped on them,

(h) By terrorising, torturing and imprisoning Tamil youths without trial for long periods on the flimsiest grounds,

(i) Capping it all by imposing on the Tamil nation a *constitution* drafted under conditions of Emergency without opportunities for free discussion by a constituent assembly elected on the basis of the Soulbury Constitution distorted by the Citizenship laws resulting in weightage in representation to the Sinhalese majority thereby depriving the Tamils of even the remnants of safeguards they had under the earlier constitution.

And whereas all attempts by the various Tamil political parties to win their rights by co-operation with the governments, by parliamentary and extra-parliamentary agitations, by entering into pacts and understandings with successive Prime Ministers in order to achieve the bare minimum of political rights consistent with the self-respect of the Tamil people have proved to be futile;

And whereas the efforts of the All Ceylon Tamil Congress to ensure non-domination of the minorities by the majority by the adoption of a scheme of balanced representation in a Unitary Constitution have failed and even the meagre safeguards provided in article 29 of the Soulbury Constitution against discriminatory legislation have been removed by the Republican Constitution;

And whereas the proposals submitted to the Constituent Assembly by the Ilankai Tamil Arasu Kadchi for maintaining the unity of the country while preserving the integrity of the Tamil people by the establishment of an autonomous Tamil state within the framework of a Federal Republic of Ceylon were summarily and totally rejected without even the courtesy of a consideration of its merits;

And whereas the amendments to the basic resolutions intended to ensure the minimum of safeguards to the Tamil people, moved on the basis of the nine point demands formulated at the conference of all Tamil political parties at Valvettithurai on 7th February, 1971 and by individual parties and Tamil members of Parliament including those now in the government party were rejected in toto by the government and Constituent Assembly;

And whereas even amendments to the draft proposals relating to language, religion and fundamental rights including one calculated to ensure that at least the provisions of the Tamil Language (Special Provision) Regulations of 1966 be included in the Constitution, were defeated resulting in the boycott of the Constituent Assembly by a large majority of the Tamil members of Parliament;

And whereas the Tamil Liberation Front, after rejecting the Republic Constitution adopted on the 22nd of May, 1972 presented a six point demand to the Prime Minister and the Government on 25th June, 1972 and gave three months time within which the government was called upon to take meaningful steps to amend the Constitution so as to meet the aspirations of the Tamil nation on the basis of the six points and informed the government that if it failed to do so the Tamil Liberation Front would launch non-violent direct action against the government in order to win the freedom and the rights of the Tamil nation on the basis of the right of self-determination;

And whereas this last attempt by the Tamil Liberation Front to win Constitutional recognition of the rights of the Tamil nation without jeopardising the unity of the country was callously ignored by the Prime Minister and the Government;

And whereas the opportunity provided by the Tamil Liberation leader to vindicate the Government's contention that their constitution had the backing of the Tamil people, by resigning from his membership of the National State Assembly and creating a by-election was deliberately put off for over two years in utter disregard of the democratic right of the Tamil voters of Kankesanthurai and

Whereas in the by-election held on the 6th February, 1975 the voters of Kankesanthurai by a preponderant majority not only rejected the Republican Constitution imposed on them by the Sinhalese Government but also gave a mandate to Mr. S. J. V. Chelvanayakam, Q. C. and through him to the Tamil Liberation Front for the restoration and reconstitution of the Free, Sovereign, Secular, Socialist State of TAMIL EELAM.

The first National Convention of the Tamil Liberation Front meeting at Pannakam (Vaddukoddai Constituency) on the 14th day of May, 1976 hereby declares that the Tamils of Ceylon, by virtue of their great language, their religions, their separate culture and heritage, their history of independent existence as a separate state over a distinct territory for several centuries till they were conquered by the armed might of the European invaders and above all by their will to exist as a separate entity ruling themselves in their own territory, are a nation distinct and apart from the Sinhalese and their constitution announces to the world that the Republican Constitution of 1972 has made the Tamils a slave nation ruled by the new colonial masters, the Sinhalese who are using the power they have wrongly usurped to deprive the Tamil nation of its territory, language, citizenship, economic life

opportunities of employment and education thereby destroying all the attributes of nationhood of the Tamil people,

And therefore, while taking note of the reservations in relation to its commitment to the setting up of a separate state of TAMIL EELAM expressed by the Ceylon Workers Congress as a Trade Union of the Plantation Workers, the majority of whom live and work outside the Northern and Eastern areas,

This convention resolves that the restoration and reconstitution of the Free, Sovereign, Secular Socialist State of TAMIL EELAM based on the right of self determination inherent to every nation has become inevitable in order to safeguard the very existence of the Tamil nation in this country.

Snippets From the Seminar 'GENERAL ELECTIONS' '77 organised by the Centre for Society and Religion- May '77

Today the Tamils were asking for a separate state in order to preserve their identity and their way of life in the face of calculated discrimination which would lead to cultural genocide. Their demand was not for separation but rather for a restoration. We are only trying to regain what we lost..... the Tamils had put forward various proposals to solve this problem of the Tamils by suggesting Federalism, 50/50 basis etc., but they have fallen on deaf ears, further even the guarantees that have been enshrined in the constitution have been by-passed, hence they feel that they have no future unless they form a separate state.

Mr. M. K. Eelaventhan

President TULF, Colombo Branch.

The right to self-determination was the inalienable right of any nation. The Tamils were a separate nation with a kingdom of their own until the coming of the western powers. The Tamil people led by the TULF are today seeking to restore the Tamil Kingdom which they lost 400 years ago so that they can live in freedom as a free nation. They hope to set up their Tamil Eelam from Pottuvil to Puttalam by peaceful means but if the need arises they are prepared to fight for their right. They regard the 1977 Elections as a plebiscite, so that the voters of Jaffna would cast their vote to decide whether they want to be a free nation or not, and not to form a Sinhala Parliament.

Mr. S. Kathiravelupillai

M. P., Kopay

THE TULF MANIFESTO

GENERAL ELECTIONS 1977

(From Tribune, Aug. 6th & 13th 1977)

For a Tamil Ealam

The Sinhalese people who gained political power from the British, drafted for themselves, in fulfilment of their sovereignty, a constitution which they put into operation and the first general election, after Ceylon was declared a republic, is being held now. The issue as to who would be put into seats of power will not be the only one that would be decided by the votes that people would cast at this election. Do the Tamils and the Muslims who have lost their freedom accept a Constitution that has paved the way for the majority [community, the Sinhalese, to usurp, in full, under a facade of sovereignty of the people, the totality of political power in this country? That is the issue to be resolved by the votes that our people would cast at this general election.

At the time the republican constitution was accepted by the Constituent Assembly and thereafter very important changes took place among the political movements of the Tamils and in the midst of the Muslim people. The Tamil parties that were at one another's throat, with conflicting goals, came together, at last, to form the Tamil United Front. This became possible at a conference of the Tamil political parties held in 1971 at Valvettiturai. Organisational consolidation followed at Trincomalee and in 1976 the Front came to be called the *Tamil United Liberation Front*.

A number of incidents that took place in the country along with certain actions of the Government following the proclamation of the republic led to a rethinking in the minds of Muslim people also. Particularly the Muslims in the Eastern and North-Western regions of Ceylon realised that their religion and language, lands and opportunities of employment were all being taken away from them and that in their own native land their lives and property too were insecure. They also realised that movements that accepted the leadership of the Sinhalese political parties would not defend even these basic rights of theirs. This realisation led to the formation of the Muslim United Front. Bound together by the bonds of a common language and intertwining lives in a common territory and brought together by the common danger of total destruction, the Tamils and the Muslims realised the indispensability of joint action. Subject to the safeguards of preserving the identity of the Muslims and ensuring their sovereignty, the Muslim United Front joined the Tamil United Liberation

Front as a constituent unit. The rights of the Muslim people in the Tamil State of Eelam will be amplified further in this manifesto. When we speak of the Tamil Nation, we refer to the entirety of the people in this country to whom the mother tongue is Tamil.

One question: Freedom or Servitude?

The General election of 1977 is a crucial one to the Tamil Nation. So far the Tamil territory is concerned, this general election is a clash between the only political movement of the Tamil Nation and the representatives of the various political parties of Sinhalese imperialism that keeps the Tamil nation under its heels. The election in the Sinhala territory decides the question as to which of their parties should come to power. And in the Tamil territory, the question to be resolved is whether the Tamils want their freedom or continued servitude. The Tamil United Liberation Front will use this election to resolve the issue.

History

Though Ceylon is a single state now, yet by facts of history, by the languages spoken by its inhabitants, by culture, tradition and by psychology, it is the common home of two nations and consists of two countries. The present republic of Sri Lanka is in reality a union of "Sinhala Land" and "Tamil Eelam". The fact that the Tamil nation has been living in this country from pre-historic times enjoying its sovereign rights under a state of its own is recorded in no less an authority than the great work of Sinhala history—*Mahawamsa*. Even before the Christian era, the entire island of Ceylon was ruled by Tamil Kings, SENAN KUDDIKAN and ELARA (ELLALAN) and thereafter for over thousand years, as a result of struggle for supremacy between the Tamil Kings and the Sinhalese Kings, the capital of the Sinhalese Kings was gradually shifted southwards away from Tamil centres. These are facts of recorded history. It is also a fact that the entire island was under the sway of Tamil kings at times and the Sinhalese kings at other times. From this background of alternating fortunes, emerged, at the beginning of the 13th century, a clear and stable political fact. At this time, the territory stretching in the western sea-board from Chilaw through Puttalam to Mannar and thence to the Northern Regions and in the East, Trincomalee and also the Batticaloa Regions that extended southwards up to Kumana or to the northern banks of the river Kumbukkan Oya were firmly established as the exclusive homeland of the Tamils. This is the territory of Tamil Eelam. For several centuries before the advent of Europeans to Ceylon in the 16th century, the Tamils

have been living in this territory under their own kingdom. Tamils reigned supreme in this country with their own national colours and their own military forces. The Portuguese who for over a century were at times entering into treaty relationships with these Tamil kings and at other times meeting them in losing battle-fronts finally, in the war of 1619, captured the Tamil king, SANKILI KUMARAN, and took him to Goa where he was hanged. It is the assistance that king SANKILI gave to the Kandyan king in transisting reinforcements from neighbouring South India for the latter's war against the Portuguese that made the European power battle in full vigour for an indispensable capture of the Jaffna kingdom. The Tamil king was captured by the military might of the Portuguese aided by local Quislings. However, for three years thereafter, the Tamils continued to fight against foreign domination under the leadership of a coastal petty king VARNAKULATHIHAN. And they lost. Neither the Sinhalese king nor the Sinhalese people did offer any assistance to the Tamils who were fighting to defend their state. It was their view that they and their country had nothing in common with the state of Tamil Ealam. This is exactly what we want the Sinhalese people to reiterate now.

The Portuguese who subdued the state fo Tamil Ealam continued to govern it as a separate state. So did the Dutch who captured it, in turn, from the Portuguese. The Cleghorn Minute clearly establishes that even under the Dutch, the judicial district of Jaffna-patnam that covered the northean and eastern parts of the island extended, in the west coast of the island, from Puttalam to Mannar and in the east, southwards up to the limits of Kumana or the river Kumbukkan Oya that separated Batticaloa from the southern Sinhalese district of Matara.

This Tamil state was captured from the Dutch by the British who too continued to retain its separate status till 1833 when for convenience of administration, it was brought under one all-island authority, the Government of Ceylon. Totally disregarding the history, traditions and aspirations of peoples of these various states, the British brought together under one authority the state of Eelam which they captured from the Dutch and Kandyan kingdom which they overran in 1815 along with the Sinhalese kingdom of Kotte.

Sovereignty of the Tamil Nation

The sovereignty of the people of Tamil Ealam changed hands from the Portuguese who defeated them in battle into those of the Dutch and later into those of the British, Ceylon was granted

independence on the fourth of February 1948. Though political power was transferred to the people of this country, yet the British Queen continued to be the repository of their sovereignty. The republican constitution that came into operation with its acceptance by the Constituent Assembly on the 22nd of May 1972 severed this legal continuity and guaranteed the sovereignty of the people of Ceylon proclaiming that the people of Ceylon themselves were the repository of this sovereignty. But the representatives of the Tamil nation withheld their consent to this constitution and rejected it. 15 out of the 19 Members of Parliament elected by the Tamil people rejected it and boycotted the meeting of 22nd of May 1972 that was called to accept that constitution. It is clear that there is neither legal continuity nor the consent of the Tamil nation to this constitution. The sovereignty of the Tamil nation and the statehood that was taken away from them, in the battle-field in 1619 by the Portuguese, changed hands to the Dutch and later to the British by right of conquest. But it is clear that the Sinhalese nation has not taken over the sovereignty of the Tamil nation through legal continuity or by consent or by right of conquest. There is no doubt that the Tamil nation, by standards of international law, does possess the right, on the basis of the right to self-determination, to re-establish its sovereignty and statehood and to draft for itself a constitution and thus to administer its own affairs, all by itself. The Sinhala nation imposing its reign over the Tamil nation and the conversion of Tamil Ealam into a colony of the Sinhala state are undoubtedly nothing else but imperialistic rule. The present constitution is one that was drafted on the basis of the right of self-determination of the Sinhala nation, on a mandate given by that nation for that purpose. In the same manner, the Tamil United Liberation Front views the forthcoming general election as an opportunity to obtain the mandate of the Tamil nation and on the basis of its right to self-determination, re-establish the independence of the state of Tamil Ealam, the expression of the sovereignty of the Tamil nation. With a view to dispelling the doubts of those who still wonder whether there is no alternative to the re-establishment of our sovereignty in our exclusive soil, we wish to record here briefly to what position of desperation the Sinhala imperialistic reign of the last 30 years has driven the state of Tamil Ealam and the Tamil nation.

The Tamil Nation under Sinhalese Domination

I. Citizenship Laws. The citizenship laws of this country were made within six months of the transfer of political power to the Sinhalese in 1948. As a result of this legislation, the Tamil labourers of the tea and rubber plantations in the central hills of Ceylon whose blood and sweat alone have built up and sustained

the prosperity of this country were rendered stateless. Out of the eight representatives elected to Parliament with their votes in 1947, not a single one could be returned in the general election of 1952 or ever thereafter. Constituencies, for the demarcation of which their voteless numerical strength was taken into compuztion, returned Sinhalese representatives whose numbers were thus inequitably swelled in Parliament. The Sinhalese people who form about 70% of the population secured for themselves 80% of the seats in Parliament. The concept of 'Safeguard to Minorities' was distorted into 'Safeguard to the Majority Community' that ensured a position of excessive representation to the majority community. One could see this very same position continued in the present Constitution as well. Thus, this disfranchisement of the plantation (Tamil) labour was the first step that paved the way for a series of denial of the political rights of the minorities with a view to enthroning Sinhalese imperialism.

Tamils and Muslims of Ceylon were made doubtful citizens by these Citizenship laws. In consequence they had to face a lot of miseries in their day to day life. And to inquire into these irritations and to provide relief to these people, the very government, in 1964, appointed a committee of government officers. The recommendations of this committee even after 13 years, today, are still in cold storage, awaiting implementation. To register a document of purchase of land made with his own savings, a Tamil or a Muslim outside the Northern and Eastern Provinces finds himself in the plight of having to pay a discriminatory tax of 100%. Tamils and Muslims who are unable to establish that for two generations before 1948 they were born here are being shut out from business, travel, trade, employment opportunities etc. The first fruits of freedom to the Tamil nation was disfranchisement, statelessness, status of illicit immigrant and a position of doubted citizens.

2. *Colonisation* The aggression against Tamil Ealam by planned colonisation by the Sinhalese governments has been drastic and grave. Beginning with the government of the United National Party and those of the Mahajana Eksath Peramuna and Sri Lanka Freedom Party that followed, in turn, put into operation planned and state-aided colonisation schemes by which lakhs and lakhs of Sinhalese people were planted in the homeland of the Tamil nation that was once ruled by the Tamil kings from whom foreign imperialism wrested this Tamil homeland through force of arms. Sinhalese people were "put in operation", at state expense, of extensive tracts of the Eastern province of Pattipalai Aru, Allai, Kantalai, Padavikulam etc. Illegal occupation of state owned lands by Sinhalese people with covert government support was

legalised and their ownership regularised by the government. Lands and coconut estates taken over from the Tamils and Muslims in the Amparai district by the state, under the ceiling on Lands Act, are now being distributed to the Sinhalese people. Lands owned by the Tamil and Muslim peasants and also lands, which these people themselves developed and cultivated at places like Kondaivettuwan and Akkilavel have been forcibly taken over and handed over, with government help, to the Sinhalese people. Puttalam is yet another district where state conspired, Sinhalese colonisation has deprived the local people of their territory. While this government has been providing these facilities to the Sinhalese aggressors of Tamil Ealam, it let loose the army, under Special Emergency Regulations, against the hill-country Tamil labourers who sought to make a living by opening and developing forest lands that lay unexploited and uncared for, at Punanai, in the Eastern Province. A cadju plantation scheme started at Kondaichi, in the Mannar District, is now a Sinhalese colony of two thousand families. In the very Tamil heartland of Jaffna, at Colombuthurai, a Sinhalese colony, like AMARASEKARA-PURA, has been opened up. The Eastern province where, when the British left in 1948, there were hardly a 10,000 Sinhalese, is now flooded with some 1,80,000 Sinhalese people. The extent of this damage to the political power and influence of the Tamils is reflected in the newly created Parliamentary constituencies of Amparai and Seruwila which have engulfed some 1,500 square miles of Tamil territory. And this constitutes a 2/5th of the land area of the Eastern province whose further development lies within these fertile lands, thus usurped. The Tamil nation is confronted with the danger of being rendered a minority and and being thus destroyed in its own homelands all over Tamil Ealam. The nation realises the need to liberate its land to save itself from annihilation.

3. *Language* Before the attainment of independence, a resolution was passed in the State Council, the legislature, in 1944 that Sinhalese and Tamil shall be the official language. Every Sinhalese political party at that time accepted this policy. But Mr. Bandaranaike's government, in 1956, passed the Sinhala Only Act. The United National Party too supported it. At present all the Sinhalese political parties have accepted the policy of 'Sinhala Only'! This Act, which, in 1956, was an ordinary law, has in the republican constitution of 1972 been elevated to a constitutional status. Regulations on the use of Tamil Language which the Tamils secured for themselves as a result of several struggles with the government have been deliberately dethroned in the constitution. For Section 8 (2) of the constitution unequivocally stipulates that these regulations will not be treated as

being a part of the constitution. In consequence has developed a situation where the Tamil speaking public servants have to groan under the loss of equal opportunities with the Sinhalese officers in matters of employment, promotions, extension of service, increments etc. The real intention of the 'Sinhala Only Act', is to create a situation that would keep out the Tamil officers and ensure the appointment of Sinhalese officers only, in government service. The rulers are greatly successful in the endeavour. This is not an emotional issue as some are inclined to believe. In a country that is being overwhelmed with nationalisation, this is a life and death issue that affects the economic life of the Tamil nation.

4. *Religion.* Buddhism has been given pre-eminence in the constitution and declared to be the only religion that would enjoy state protection. Other faiths have no right to any protection except the right of being practised, in private. Tamil nation comprises Hindus, Christians and Muslims, and the constitution has thus placed on them the stamp of second class citizens.

5. *Culture.* Though the Tamils and Sinhalese have lived in this country for over two thousand years, yet the Tamils have continued to preserve their individual culture based on their language. This culture and the traditions were nurtured even under Portuguese, Dutch and British imperialistic rule. The vital reason behind this survival was that though the Tamils in Ealam were not strong in numbers, yet they never lost the opportunities of maintaining close bonds with the powerful fountains of Tamil culture across the Palk Strait, in Tamil Nadu, South India. No doubt there were pre-eminent sons of Ealam like Arumuga Navalar, Swami Vipulananthar, Father Gnanapiragasar and others who rendered tremendous service to the growth of international Tamil culture. Yet, if the bonds of art and literature, etc. with South India are snapped, it is certain that the culture of Tamil Ealam would weaken and turn into one that is Sinhalese based. In recent times, the government of this country not only imposed several restrictions on the import of cultural works literature, quality films etc. from Tamil Nadu but also put obstacles to the visits of Tamil scholars and artists from Tamil Nadu. By the government policy of imposition of the Sinhala language several Sinhala words like POYA, POLA, LAKSALA, SALUSALA are creeping into the Tamil language in Ealam. With the curtailment of links with Tamil Nadu, on the one hand and the increasing tempo of Sinhala imposition on the other, Tamil language will undergo strange transformation and the identity of the Tamil culture will be destroyed and finally the Tamil nation itself would disappear from this land. That is the goal that the government has set for itself.

6. *Education.* Through the help of Christian religious institutions under foreign colonial rule and later through great educational institutions the Tamil people established by themselves, for themselves, the Tamil students of this country were in the forefront of education. Sinhalese students in districts like Colombo, Kandy and Galle also enjoyed similar opportunities. It is imperative that the Sinhalese, Tamil and Muslim students of the backward areas, deficient in such facilities, should be provided with those facilities and enabled to go forward. It is an obligation of the State. But several obstacles are put in the way of Tamil students outside the Northern and Eastern provinces in obtaining even elementary education. Several Tamil elementary schools are being closed down to provide accommodation for Sinhalese schools. Tamil sections in several Sinhalese schools are being destroyed. Some are not functioning because of non-appointment of sufficient number of teachers. As a result Tamil students in several areas are compelled to study through the Sinhala medium. In the heartland of Tamil Ealam, in the Northern province itself, a few people have been enticed with teaching jobs and Sinhala Buddhist schools have been opened and approved and Sinhala has been made the medium of instruction there. If the government could display so much of audacity here, then one could easily fathom the depth and fanaticism of Sinhala imperialism in the annihilation of the Tamil nation.

In the sphere of education, it was in the university admissions of 1970 that the gravest injustice was perpetrated against the Tamil speaking students. Large number of Tamil students qualified to gain university admission to the medical, engineering and science faculties that year were shut out through an inequitable device, designated standardisation. While Sinhalese students who obtained 229 marks were admitted to the medical faculty, Tamil students who were admitted were required to obtain 250 marks. In the same manner, for admission to the Engineering faculty of the Peradeniya Campus a Sinhalese student had to obtain 227 marks whereas a Tamil student had to score 250 marks. It is intolerable that while a Tamil student with even 249 marks cannot gain admission, a Sinhalese student with 227 marks could do so, with ease. For the last 7 years this standardisation has been in operation in various guises and in every faculty of the university, the number of admission of Tamil students has been going down. Here is an illustration: Of the total number of students admitted to the university in 1969, the percentage of Tamil students was 40.8. This figure has been steadily going down and it was 16.3 in 1974: it dropped still further in 1975 and 1976. One could see that the sections that were most affected by this injustice were the most backward ones in the Tamil community. Thus, parents who lacked the means to employ private tutors to get their

children pushed through this drastic ordeal had to forget about higher education to their children. As a result, the student community was driven to the brink of frustration and engulfed by anxiety about their future. Could anyone deny that the Sinhalese reign that has been responsible for the grave injury should be ended if this generation of youth is to live as human beings brimming with self-confidence.

7. *Employment Opportunities.* The very same discriminatory policies pursued in the sphere of education are being pursued in a worse manner in the field of employment. Out of a 22% population of Tamil speaking people, not even a 2 (two) percent are selected for jobs in the armed forces. In the police force, at the level of the lowest rung, the constable, five percent of the places and in higher rungs an even smaller percentage of the places only, are offered. In the clerical and technical grades also, the percentage is the same. Because equal opportunities in education were available in earlier times, the Tamil students were able to gain enough places in the medical and engineering professions. Now, even in these spheres, as a result of the impact of standardisation, a percentage that is far less than the one warranted by the percentage of the Tamil population is taken in. Vacancies in the minor grades in the Tamil areas are filled with people selected in divisional offices like Anuradhapura and Badulla in the Sinhalese areas. As an example could be cited the recent selections of the Ceylon Electricity Board for vacancies in the Tamil district of Jaffna. Out of the people selected at the Anuradhapura office, 66 were Sinhalese and 2 (two) were Tamils. In a country where as a result of the policy of nationalisation, the private sector is shrinking, should we not ponder what tragedy would overtake the economic life of the Tamil name if the government should adopt such a form of discriminatory policies. If our country is to prosper, the reins of our destiny must not be left in the hands of others. We must become our own masters of our own Destiny. That is the irrevocable goal that the Tamil nation has set for itself, now.

8. *Economic Development of Tamil Eelam.* The state-owned factories in Tamil Eelam today were set up 20 years ago. Every single factory that was set up in this country, with foreign aid, was set up only in the Sinhalese districts. Schemes like the Kachcheri Salterns, the Kankesanthurai Harbour development, Fishery Harbour at Myliddy, all of which were started between 1965-1970 by a government in which the Tamil representatives too were members, have all been abandoned for the last seven years. No major irrigation scheme of the government will help develop our Eelam. Save for the schemes like Gal Oya, Allai, Kantalai etc. whose deliberate motive was the planting of the

Sinhalese population in the territory of Tamil Eelam, no irrigation scheme of any consequence that had as its objective the welfare of either the Tamil or Muslim population in Eelam has ever been implemented during the last twenty years. There were of course some minor schemes of white-washing. When oil prospecting with Soviet aid was started in Mannar, the local Tamil and Muslim populations were ignored and 90% of the labourers were imported from the Sinhalese areas. In this private sector, obtaining licenses to start industrial ventures in the Tamil areas is a herculean task. Even in some minor factories started in the Tamil areas, the majority of the employees are Sinhalese. Not only are the Tamil people ignored in the matter of employment opportunities in the state sector but also are the Tamil areas ignored in the economic development. They have been allowed to deteriorate into backward areas.

9. *Racial Terrorism.* For the last twenty years, racial terrorism has been let loose in this country, against the Tamil and Muslim population in a matter that reminded them that they were slaves who were not entitled to any rights or protection. Tamils and Muslims have been quite often the objects of violence of the Sinhalese hooligans instigated by government supported Sinhalese communal organisations and of the Police and the armed forces in whose hands they suffered untold misery by way of looting and arson in homes, shops and places of business, by grievous injuries, loss of life and property and violation against women. In 1956 Tamils were attacked in Colombo and in a part of the Tamil territory of Eelam that had been turned into Sinhalese land, Amparai. Age-old Tamil villages like Thuraineelavanai had to resort to fire-arms in defence of their hearths and homes from attacks by Sinhalese hoodlums.

The communal fury against the Tamils in 1958 in the entire Sinhalese land is a chapter of dreadful blot in the history of this country. Thousands of Tamils were taken to the Northern and Eastern provinces in commandeered ships and army-protected convoys. Property worth several millions were lost, several hundreds lost their lives and thousands their homes. Tamil women were raped; pregnant women were slaughtered to pieces on public highways. The Murugan Temple priest at Panadura was burnt alive. Several dead bodies were retrieved from one well alone at Maha-Oya. While Sinhalese terrorism raged against the Tamils all over the country the Sinhalese government arrested the Tamil leaders and put them behind bars. It was insult added to injury.

Military terror was let loose in the Tamil provinces against the Tamils who were engaged in a non-violent campaign of Civil

Disobedience in 1961 to demand their language rights. No civilised country could have witnessed a police attack as barbarous as the one that the Sinhalese police made against the Tamil people who, in their lakhs, were listening in a state of rapture to a treat of a Tamil literary talk by Professor Nainar Mohamed on the last day of the IVth international Tamil Research Conference where Tamil scholars from the world over had assembled, on January 10th 1974 in Jaffna. The rulers of this country refused either to hold an enquiry or even to express sympathy at the atrocity that resulted in 9 Tamil deaths. This tells its own tale of the manner the Sinhalese governments treat the Tamils in this land.

Pararasa, a bank clerk, was shot dead by the police while he was returning from a temple festival, in Jaffna. Police leaders who went to the office of the police superintendent were set upon by the Sinhalese police in civil clothes. Ledchumanan, the Tamil youth, who refused to be driven out into the street from his home in the tea plantations was killed by the police. Homes of Tamil labourers at Gampola were looted and set ablaze. Unjustified Sinhalese police attacks and the fury of Sinhalese hooligans have, for the last few years, been let loose against the Muslims also. In 1976 alone, in no less than 40 places like Mahiyangana, Gampola Panadura, Sinhalese Nikawaratiya etc. unprotected Muslims were the targets of rowdies. Their losses ran into lakhs and lakhs of rupees.

On the 2nd of February 1976, seven of the Muslims at prayer inside a Mosque at Puttalam were ruthlessly massacred by the Sinhalese police, inside that holy spot. 271 houses, 44 shops 2 fibre factories belonging to the Muslims of Puttalam were set on fire, 2 Mosques were burnt down, 2 Muslim youths were burnt alive by the Sinhalese hooligans. The government was not willing to hold a public enquiry into the horrible murders. These incidents only reiterate the fact that the lives and property of Tamils and Muslims who are living as slaves in this country do not enjoy protection from the Sinhalese governments.

10. Imposition of a New Constitution on the Tamil Nation. Drafting a new constitution and its imposition on the Tamil nation is the climax of the dictatorial actions, samples of which were shown here. The Ceylon Parliament which became a symbol of perverted democracy when its citizenship laws helped grab 80% of Parliamentary representation by the 70% Sinhalese population after the general election of 1970, was formed into a Constituent Assembly. The deliberations of this Assembly were conducted under a state of emergency, proclaimed in 1971, where the freedom of speech and freedom of writing were all taken away from

the people and while a strict press censorship was in force. The two-thirds majority of the Government and the Sinhala communal majority were fully exploited. All the Amendments to the Basic Resolutions introduced on behalf of the Tamil speaking people were rejected, in toto, by the Sinhalese majority in the Assembly. A federal scheme with an autonomous Tamil state and an Autonomous Muslim state with three Sinhalese states, put forward by the Federal Party, a constituent of the present Tamil United Liberation Front, as a solution to the racial problems of this country, was turned down by the Assembly even before being examined. Neither any Sinhalese Party nor any member from the majority community came forward to discuss or offer any alternative scheme that could meet with the aspirations of the Tamil nation. Attempts made by the Tamil members to secure a place in the Constitution at least for the Regulations for use of the Tamil Language proved abortive. The only outcome of these efforts was the introduction in the Constitution of section 8 (2) that categorically stated that these Regulations on the use of Tamil Language shall not form a part of the Constitution. Realising the futility of any continued participation, the Tamil representatives in the Constituent Assembly walked out. The Assembly meeting of 22nd May 1972 which was summoned to pass the Constitution was boycotted by 15 out of the 19 elected Tamil representatives. Out of the four that voted in favour of the constitution, two lost their representative character after having been expelled from their party, the All Ceylon Tamil Congress; one was elected as a candidate of the Ilankai Tamil Arasu Kadchi (Federal Party) and was expelled from that party and thus lost his right of representation. The fourth was a member who contested on an anti-government platform and won as an independent. Hence it is obvious that this constitution was rejected 100% by the Tamil people. The manner in which the unanimous opposition of the Tamil nation was ignored and how the new constitution was imposed on them has only confirmed the psychology of the Sinhalese imperialistic masters that they are ruling over a slave nation according to their own whims and fancies. They have done away with the meagre safe-guards provided for the minorities in the constitution left behind by the British, placed their own language and religion at such high a pedestal that no one could ever tamper with them and through this imposed constitution made the Tamils their slaves without any share in the political power of this State.

Does the Tamil Nation have an alternative?

The leader of the All Ceylon Tamil Congress, Mr. G. G. Ponnambalam, before the withdrawal of British power, demanded balanced representation for the protection of minorities. Though

the Soulbury Constitution rejected the demand, yet it incorporated a safeguard in Section 29 of that constitution. But the new Republican Constitution of 1972 has deleted all that safeguard. Mr. S. J. V. Chelvanayakam through his Ilankai Tamil Arasu Kadchi (Federal Party), toiled for 25 years to safeguard the rights of the Tamil nation through the device of federalism. He entered into agreements with Premier Bandaranaike and his Sri Lanka Freedom Party and also with Premier Dudley Senanayake to obtain at least autonomy for the Tamil nation. These agreements were later abrogated because of opposition from the Sinhalese people. The demand for a federal solution was rejected by the Constituent Assembly even without a debate. Neither the six-point demand of the Tamil United Front nor the twenty-point demand of some Tamil leaders ever had any reception. What is the alternative now left to the nation that has lost its rights to its language, rights to its citizenship, rights to its religions and continues day by day to lose its traditional homeland to Sinhalese colonisation? What is the alternative now left to a nation that has lost its opportunities to higher education through standardisation and its equality in opportunities in the sphere of employment? What is the alternative to a nation that lies helpless as it is being assaulted, looted and killed by hooligans instigated by the ruling race and by the security forces of the State? Where else is an alternative to the Tamil nation that gropes in the dark for its identity and finds itself driven to the brink of devastation?

There is only one alternative and that is to proclaim with the stamp of finality and fortitude that "we alone shall rule over our land that our forefathers ruled. Sinhalese imperialism shall quit our Homeland". The Tamil United Liberation Front regards the general election of 1977 as a means of proclaiming to the Sinhalese Government this resolve of the Tamil nation. And every vote that you cast for the Front would go to show that the Tamil nation is determined to liberate itself from Sinhalese domination.

Tamil Eelam—a secular Socialist State

Hence the Tamil United Liberation Front seeks in the General Election the mandate of the Tamil nation to establish an independent, sovereign, secular, socialist State of Tamil Eelam that includes all the geographically contiguous areas that have been the traditional homeland of the Tamil speaking people in the country.

At the same time the Tamil United Liberation Front proclaims the following guarantees on the political, social and economic

structure of the State of Tamil Eelam. The Front declares that the Tamil State of Ealam will be established on the basis of these guarantees.

1. The following shall be the Citizens of Tamil Eelam:

- (a) All those people now living in the territory of Tamil Eelam.
- (b) Tamil speaking persons from any part of Ceylon seeking citizenship in the State of Tamil Ealam.
- (c) Tamil speaking people of Ceylonese descent living in any part of the world and seeking citizenship in the State of Tamil Ealam.

2. Political power shall be decentralised so that no one region or on one religion is allowed to dominate over any other region or religion thus ensuring regional autonomy for the people in the various Regions in the pattern of federalism obtaining in Switzerland. The Tamil United Liberation Front guarantees that particularly Muslims who form a part of the State of Tamil Ealam will be established in the Regions where they are in a majority as an autonomous province with the right to secede on the basis of the right to self-determination.

3. The Tamil United Liberation Front guarantees that neither a Tamil majority region nor a Muslim majority region will be allowed to be colonised by the other group thus ensuring that no group of people is reduced to a minority in its own Region.

Caste system along with the atrocity of untouchability and the grave injustice of attributing social superiority or inferiority by birth will be totally eradicated and any such practice subjected to rigorous punishment by law.

5. The State of Tamil Ealam shall be a secular one while all the religions practised by the people in the State will receive equal protection and aid.

6. Tamil shall be the official language of the state of Tamil Ealam while the Sinhalese living in the state will be provided the right to be educated in their own tongue and to transact their business with the state in their own language. Similarly guarantees will be sought from the Sinhala state about the language rights of the Tamil speaking people living in the state.

7. In the Tamil Ealam which shall be a scientific socialist state,

- (a) Exploitation of man by man will be prevented by law;

(b) Dignity of labour will be protected.

(c) While the private sector will be permitted within limits imposed by law, means of production and distribution will be state-owned or subject to state-control.

(d) Full protection will be afforded to tenant-cultivators and residents on privately owned lands.

(e) Economic development of the Tamil State of Eelam will be on the basis of socialist planning.

(f) A ceiling will be fixed on the wealth an individual or a family could accumulate.

8. While the socialist state of Tamil Eelam would follow a policy of non-alignment, it would, in the international field, lend its support to the anti-imperialist forces and democratic liberation movements.

9. The state of Tamil Eelam will develop friendship with the progressive forces in the Sinhalese state and would on the basis of fraternity, work out a peaceful solution for the mutual problems facing the two nations.

Liberation—How it will be achieved?

The Tamil nation must take the decision to establish its sovereignty in its homeland on the basis of its right to self-determination. The only way to announce this decision to the Sinhalese government and to the world is to vote for the Tamil United Liberation Front. The Tamil speaking representatives who get elected through these votes, while being members of the National State Assembly of Ceylon, will also form themselves into the *National Assembly of Tamil Eelam* which will draft a constitution for the state of Tamil Eelam and to establish the independence of the Tamil Eelam by bringing that constitution into operation either by peaceful means or by direct action or struggle. The National Assembly of Tamil Eelam will draw up and implement plans relating to the economic development, social progress, protection of territory, educational development etc. Action will be taken to enlist international support to achieve the freedom of Tamil Eelam.

Other Programmes of Work

The problems of the Tamil speaking people outside Tamil Eelam are getting complicated today. Particularly the up-country Tamil workers are being forcibly driven out of their places of work and

places of residence by the Sinhalese government and government abetted Sinhalese hooligans. It is quite clear that the terrible act of arson on the homes of Tamil labourers and the police firing that caused the death of the Tamil youth, Ledchumanan, in the Devon estate, have been preplanned and deliberate. The Tamil United Liberation Front will fight for the rights of these workers who have toiled for the prosperity of this country, to live in their own homes with security of employment fully guaranteed. The Tamil Liberation Front will work for the basic human rights and political, social and economic rights of the Tamil speaking people living in any part of Ceylon.

At the same time, the Tamil United Liberation Front will set up a special organisation to prepare plans for the well-being of and to give all assistance to the Tamil speaking people who wish to migrate to Tamil Ealam to set up their lives in their new homes.

It is indispensable that every person who is a member of the Tamil nation that aspires to be free must be able to live in enjoyment of human rights, in full. Hence, as an important aspect of liberation movement, intensive steps will be taken for the abolition of the caste system and social disabilities imposed on any section of the Tamil people.

Tamil United Liberation Front will take steps to develop friendship with the progressive forces, in South Ceylon, that recognise and are sympathetic towards, the aspirations of the Tamil nation and with countries that are sympathetic towards the freedom movements particularly with the anti-imperialist forces abroad.

Conclusion

The Tamil nation is at a turning point in its history. The unity we have achieved has made the Sinhalese imperialists take a fresh look at the situation. In this background, as a first step towards the realisation of the freedom of the nation, the unanimous verdict of the Tamil speaking people is indispensable.

Hence we appeal to you to set aside your passions for, or prejudices against individual candidates, to forget differences of region, caste or religion and, with the one and only determination of making the Tamil nation master of its Destiny, to

**VOTE for the Tamil United Liberation Front,
for the emancipation of the Tamil nation,
for the Freedom of Tamil Ealam**

Excerpts from the other Election Manifestos 1977 Regarding the Tamil Problem

UNITED NATIONAL PARTY

Problems of the Tamil-speaking People

The United National Party accepts the position that there are numerous problems confronting the Tamil-speaking people. The lack of a solution to their problems has made the Tamil-speaking people support even a movement for the creation of a separate State. In the interest of national integration and unity so necessary for the economic development of the whole country, the Party feels such problems should be solved without loss of time. The Party, when it comes to power, will take all possible steps to remedy their grievances in such fields as (1) Education (2) Colonisation (3) Use of the Tamil Language (4) Employment in the Public and semi-public Corporations.

We will summon an All-Party Conference as stated earlier and implement its decisions.

SRI LANKA FREEDOM PARTY

National Unity and National Problems

A State advisory council would be set up representing all nationalities to advise the government to discuss essential factors and to take steps including institutional reforms on cultural, social, economic, national and all language problems and peoples of all minorities.

UNITED LEFT FRONT

National Minorities

While retaining the unitary character of the state, the principle of regional autonomy will be applied within the general national frame-work of District Councils. While protecting and implementing to the full language rights already provided for, our Government will facilitate the use of Tamil as the language of administration in the Tamil-speaking areas.

The Republican Constitution will be amended to include the rights already administratively granted to the Tamil language. Tamil will be declared a national language, in terms of the Constitution, without prejudice to the status of Sinhala as the official language of the country. Discrimination in education or employment on the basis of race, religion, or caste will be prohibited. Incitement of racial or religious hatred will be declared a penal offence.

Persons of Indian origin who become citizens of Sri Lanka, will be given equal rights with all other citizens. Estate schools will be absorbed into the national system of education. The "line" system of segregation will be abolished.

The Moors of Sri Lanka will be helped to overcome as rapidly as possible the educational and other historically inherited disadvantages they experience at present.

COMMENT

The General Elections were held on the 21st. of July 1977 in an orderly and peaceful manner. The results were United National Party - 139 Tamil United Liberation Front - 17; Ceylon Workers Congress 1 Sri Lanka Freedom Party - 8 and Independent - 1. (The elections of one electorate Pottuvil was postponed to August-results of this multiple seat was UNP-1 and TULF -1) The overwhelming nature of the victory of the UNP was indeed a surprise to many, and the TULF felt that they had received a mandate from the Tamils for a separate State. The TULF leader Mr. A. Amirthalingam assumed office as leader of the opposition. Thus we have in the National State Assembly a parliamentary confrontation on racial lines.

Hardly a month passed before racial disturbances broke out in the island, starting in the North around the 16th. of August and continued for about two weeks. Reports can be cited from foreign papers as well as from meetings held in Sri Lanka to indicate the mood of the TULF in their struggle for a separate State.

We give two examples. The *first* from an interview given by Mr. Amirthalingam to the Review "*Asiaweek*", where he made a categorical claim for the liberation struggle when he said, "Any

group that is fighting for liberation, will naturally seek assistance wherever it is available (and) the Tamils of Sri Lanka will not hesitate to ask for such assistance." He also declared that "other means" would be adopted if bloodless methods proved fruitless. And again his defiant exhortation to the Sinhalese "Please leave us alone, let us rule ourselves You look after your own position!" (*Asiaweek July 8th 1977*)

The *second* from a meeting organised by the Colombo branch of the TULF Youth Assembly held in early August at the Ramakrishna Mission Hall, Colombo. Here the youth brought serious political pressure on the TULF leadership to work for a separate state by speaking of "direct struggle" if peaceful means to create a Tamil Eelam failed.

Further the Prime Minister's speech in Parliament (relayed over the Radio) repeated these statements of Mr. Amirthalingam's including the desire of the TULF to make Trincomalee the capital of a future Eelam.

All this and the rumours of what the TULF members, are supposed to have had said on political platforms in the areas they contested on the division of the country, seems to have aroused a fair amount of resentment among many of the Sinhala people.

Mr. Amirthalingam's attempt to carry out this struggle even in Parliament is evident in the ammendment he proposed on the Policy Statement of the Government. He says the government Policy statement, "studiedly refrains from referring to the mandate given by the people of Tamil Eelam to the Tamil United Liberation Front for the restoration and re-constitution of a free, sovereign, socialist, secular State of Tamil Eelam... Government policy has failed to take note of the fact the Tamils are a separate nation by all internationally accepted standards .. and are therefore entitled to exercise their inalienable right of selfdetermination." (*Hansard Vol. 23. No. 5 23rd. Aug1977*)

This ammendment however was not accepted by the House.

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MEMORANDUM ON NATIONAL HARMONY

*A group of persons from all nationalities have been working for National Harmony from early 1975. They have had several study sessions with interested persons and parties, culminating in the holding of a public seminar on National Harmony on the 4th of April 1976. They also presented a memorandum to the then **Prime Minister Hon. Sirimavo Bandaranaike** and to the major political parties. The memorandum was signed by **Ven. Dr. Hewanpola Ratnasara Thero, Fr. Tissa Balasuriya, Mrs. Sita Rajasuriya, Prof. K. Kularatnam and Al. Haj. S. M. A. Raschid** on the 18th June 1976.*

THE TEXT OF THE MEMORANDUM

We submit that,

1. The Sinhala, Tamil, Moor and Malay communities have lived in this land from ancient times. During these centuries the masses of the people have lived by and large in harmony, though there have been occasional racial conflicts. During the period of colonial rule all these communities were subordinated to foreign domination.
2. With political independence the problem of the sharing of power and of the resources of this country has arisen in a more conscious and acute manner. During the colonial era certain racial and religious minorities enjoyed more privileges than the majority community of Sinhala Buddhists. One of the major trends of post Independent Sri Lanka has been an attempt to redress the imbalance by recognising the rights of the majority community specially in regard to their religion and in making Sinhala the official language of the country.
3. Consequently dissatisfaction and distrust have arisen among sections of the Tamil community and they regard these as disabilities and racial discrimination. They also feel that adequate educational opportunities and avenues of employment are denied them, including the limitation in the use of the Tamil language.
4. As in several other countries the increase of population, the slow and lopsided economic growth and the continued exploitation

of the country by the foreign companies have led to large scale unemployment and poverty among all communities of the country. Thus the long term problems facing us are shared by all communities in Sri Lanka. Their solution needs a determined national effort towards a self-reliant economic development and a fair redistribution of incomes, wealth and opportunities.

5. In recent times the division among the races are being aggravated. However we believe that there is sufficient goodwill among the people of this country for all to live together in harmony as one nation. This will require the recognition by each group of the rights of others and of the common good of all. The masses of the Sinhala, Tamil, Moor and Malay communities expect an integral liberation that can come for a common endeavour to develop the resources of this country with a just concern for all. If we fail to reconcile our differences the sufferings of the people will be all the greater.

6. There is also the likelihood of interference by interested foreign powers to divide our country and make it lose its distinctive position in the world today.

7. Mindful of the gravity of the issues we urge the people of the different communities to bring their influence to bear on their leaders for a just and early solution to the issues still outstanding. We invite the leaders of all parties to consider this matter an urgent national priority to be settled as speedily as possible. We appeal to all political parties to regard this as a national issue to be resolved together in the spirit of statesmanship without any party endeavouring to obtain partizan benefits from the fostering of divisions among the people.

We recommend that:

1. While Sinhala continues to remain the only official language of the country, both Sinhala and Tamil be recognised in the Constitution as national languages.

2. The use of the Tamil language, in addition to the official language, in the Courts of the Northern and Eastern Provinces be also incorporated in the Constipution.

3. Other outstanding matters affecting the relationships among the different communities be resolved amicably through discussions and negotiations, and that every effort be made by all concerned to ensure national unity and preserve the oneness of the country.

A VIEWPOINT

UNIVERSITY ADMISSION (Science) STANDARDIZATION OF MARKS SINHALA/TAMIL MEDIA

Presented to the HON. PRIME MINISTER, MINISTER OF EDUCATION and members of the NATIONAL STATE ASSEMBLY by the SINHALA YOUTH FRONT, 421/2; Baudualoka Mawatha, Colombo 7.

As the above matter appears to be under a hasty review, we submit our views for urgent consideration. Standardisation has been in force for about seven years. In schools in Sri Lanka today about 82 per cent, study in the Sinhala medium and 18% in the Tamil medium. Also the number of Tamil and Muslim children opting to enter the Sinhala medium is increasing annually.

The first batch of Sinhala/Tamil students entered the University in 1961 with GCE (AL). The English stream is now virtually extinct. In 1970 a great anomaly in the pattern of admission was spotlighted by a youth organisation as is shown in Table I below. This table gives figures of admission during a five-year period on merit only (1965-1970).

Table I

University admissions on merit? only

Faculty	Tamil medium	Sinhala medium	English medium
Medicine	464	410	48
Engineering	346	336	26
Engineering (1970 alone)	94	52	07
Architecture	9	3	0
Vet. Science	52	21	06
Agriculture	52	65	05
Dental Surgery	39	53	07
Science, B.Sc.	410	412	0
Pharmacist	79	13	0

The anomaly is proved when the 1971 census of population figures are considered.

Sinhalese	...	9,146,000
Tamil	...	1,416,000

In 1970 the Government rectified this anomaly and revised the admissions by (a) cancellation of the practical tests in Science subjects (b) medium-wise standardisation of marks; and (c) by enforcing a district quota basis.

Cancellation of the Practicals: In Science it was justified since the Sinhala medium students specially the rural ones appeared to face a massacre at the practicals due to adverse and corrupt practices.

Medium-wise standardisation: From colonial times Tamil medium students had the privilege of better schools, better facilities and more teachers. Corrupt practices at examinations and Examiner variability at marking were other factors to which high marks were attributed. Table 2 below shows the admission results after medium-wise standardisation for the period 1971-1976. Standardisation was the only remedy and the means to assure the large number of qualified Sinhala medium students, a reasonable chance of higher education in their own country. Tamil-medium marks kept on rising annually very much like some index thus relegating the Sinhala-medium students to the position of second-class citizens - e.g. in 1975 itself the number of four subject passes in Science was 2410 for the Sinhala medium and 1912 Tamil medium. So that there are enough qualified Sinhala medium students who deserve Varsity admission.

Table 2

University admissions after standardisation

(1971 = 1976)

Faculty	Tamil	Sinhala
Medicine	393	785
Engineering	311	921
Dental Surgery	103	130
Agriculture	129	270
Vet. Science	36	97
Science (B.Sc.)	663	1,493

District Quotas: This turned out to be an unjust practice for the following reasons, (a) the disparity in the standards accepted from the rural and urban areas was wide - e.g. sometimes a student with four passes from a rural area could enter the Varsity whereas another with four credits from Colombo, Kandy or Kalutara could not make it. (b) This is unwarranted, since all Sinhala medium students cover the same theory syllabus and the practical tests are no more; (c) district quota allocations could give undue access to mark sheets, and pave the way for corrupt practices; (d) has created student unrest and a loss of national talent; (e) schools with very poor facilities are found even in the so called Colombo district - (f) A scholar holder from a village school admitted to Colombo is also thus penalised. Therefore district quotas cannot be justified.

The Keuneman Secretoral Committee of 1975 went into this question. Tamil delegates naturally asked for admission on merit only, and the abolition of medium wise standardisation. All the Buddhist and Muslim representations make up more than 90 per cent of the population insisted on admission on a population basis from the language media Sinhala, Tamil and English. The Keuneman Committee paid no heed to public opinion. The cabinet rejected the Keuneman Committee Report and decided to continue medium wise standardisation. Many leading Buddhists and Muslims demanded admission on a population basis.

Conclusion

1. The only justifiable and lasting remedy is admission on a population basis from the two language media. The Sinhala Tamil/population ratio is about 80/20.
2. Admission should be on merit only.
3. District quotas are not justifiable.
4. In place of No. 1 above, the only other remedy lies in medium wise standardisation.

Note: It is natural that the Jaffna Tamil delegate representing only 8 per cent of the population insist on the abolition of medium wise standardisation and admission on merit only. The Tamil speaking people have put this forward as the foremost of their 20 demands. Another demand namely the amendment of Section 18 (i) and (h) of the Constitution is also for the same purpose.

144 out of the 166 members of the N.S.A. have been elected from Sinhala-speaking areas. There cannot be any Constitutional or other obstacle to implement the justice of admission on a population basis.

CITIZENSHIP AND THE WORKER OF INDIAN ORIGIN - A HISTORY

(Documented by Mrs. BERNADEEN SILVA from "Indo-Ceylon Relations since Independence" by S. U. KODIKARA and "Politics in Sri Lanka 1947-1973" by A. J. WILSON)

In 1948 an independent Sri Lanka framed its own laws regarding citizenship. *The Ceylon Citizenship Act of 1948* (No. 18) created two categories of citizenship, (1) by descent and (2) by registration.

The qualifications of citizenship was

- (I) Any applicant's birth in Ceylon and also the father's birth in Ceylon.
- (II) If the applicant was born outside Ceylon, father's and grandfather's birth in Ceylon.

Further the Act gave the minister a discretionary power of granting citizenship to not more than twenty-five persons a year who had rendered distinguished service in various spheres of public life and or have been naturalised as British subjects in Sri Lanka. On the basis of the 2 qualifications a large number of Indian workers could have qualified for citizenship. In practice however this was not so because proof of birth of father and grandfather was difficult. Registration of birth was not required by law in early 19th century and so many were unable to show proof of Sri Lankan birth.

The Indo-Pakistani Registration Act of 1949 (Act No. 3) required (I) Proof of continued residence for 10 years prior to 1946 in Ceylon without a break of more than 12 months in the case of unmarried persons, and (II) seven years continued residence for married persons. These two Acts were followed by a 3rd one, the Ceylon (Parliamentary Elections) Amendment Act, No 48 of 1949 which laid down among other things that no person who was not a citizen could have his name entered or retained in any of the registers of electors.

"The sum effect of all three Acts was (1) to disfranchise the overwhelming majority of Indians who had up to date possessed the right to vote, and (2) to make it extremely difficult for those Indians and Pakistanis who wished to become citizens to qualify.

It was in the administration of the provisions of the second Act (No. 3 of 1949) that charges of discrimination and deliberate delays on the part of officials investigating claims were made. The Act fixed an appointed day (5 August 1949) and a two-year limit (5 August 1951) within which applications had to be filed with a commissioner appointed for the purpose.

The Ceylon Indian Congress at first chose to register its opposition to these Acts by calling on Indians to desist from filing applications. It demanded the removal of the distinction between citizenship by *registration* and citizenship by *descent* and wanted citizenship granted on the basis of 'a simple and easily ascertainable factual test of residence, and a declaration of intention to settle permanently in Ceylon'. (*Wilson* p. 41)

There was a fair amount of opposition to these acts also in India and by the local Marxist parties who felt that these acts discriminated against an important section of the working class. It was stated that many applications were rejected on the most trivial and technical grounds. (For statistics see House of Rep. Debates - 9.7.1954 - Vol. 18, Col. 180-81).

Whether strict procedures of investigation was adopted for political reasons or not was difficult to prove but it was apparent that both Sri Lanka and India tried to put the burden of registration on the other and both countries resorted to evasion and subterfuge in the process. (*Kodikara*)

The Ceylon Indian Congress boycotted the Act as a protest only to remove it a few weeks before the expiry date. One hundred and sixty thousand of the 237,034 applications were submitted in the last 10 weeks. Investigation of these applications was a long drawn out process and further most of them being by ignorant estate workers, were not accurately filled and it was only in 1962, some 13 years after the enactment of this legislation that the task was completed by the newly established Department for the Registration of Indian and Pakistani Residents and the total number of Indians thus admitted to Ceylon Citizenship was 134,188 (*Ceylon Daily News* 12 Nov. 1964).

The Indian problem became a matter of internal politics and a continuing dispute between the two governments. "The government of India made it clear that it would not accept responsibility for those Indians whose applications for citizenship were rejected by the Sri Lanka commissioner for the registration of Indian and Pakistani residents. Articles 5 and 8 of the Indian constitution made it difficult for Indians resident outside India to qualify for

Indian citizenship and this was made even more difficult by the enactment of a separate citizenship law by the government of India in 1955. Nor did the high commissioner for India in Sri Lanka show any ready willingness to accommodate Indians in Sri Lanka who applied for Indian passports. (*Wilson p. 32*)

Various attempts were made to ease the problem by the Prime Ministers of the two countries. In 1953 Dudley Senanayake agreed to an estimated 400,000 resident Indians being admitted to citizenship but it later transpired that this was only an estimate and did not in any way commit the government. The balance 250,000 (the total local Indian population at this time was at 950,000) were to be granted permanent resident permits and their future status reviewed after 10 years. It was agreed that if within this period any of them wanted to return to India, the government of India would not object. However these discussions did not end in anything tangible.

Another attempt to settle the issue was made in January 1954 with the Indo-Ceylon Agreement between Mr. Nehru (India) and Sir John Kotelawala (Sri Lanka) concluded in New Delhi. An interesting feature of this agreement was that for the first time both Prime Ministers recognised that illicit immigration was part of the problem. Both governments said that they would take all measures to suppress illicit immigration and India agreed to an amendment of Ceylon's immigration law casting the burden of proof on the accused that he was not an illegal immigrant, hitherto objected to by India. Indians who became registered citizens were placed on a separate electoral register for a ten-year period and these could elect, after a consultation with the government of India, a certain number to Parliament.

"On the citizenship question, the arrangement was that Indians not registered as citizens (and it was estimated by the Sri Lanka Prime Minister that their number would in all total five hundred thousand) would be provided with (1) facilities by the local Indian High Commission, and (2) inducement by the government of Sri Lanka if they wished to have themselves registered as Indian citizens under Article 8 of the Indian constitution. It was further proposed (and agreed) that Indians admitted to local citizenship would be obliged to acquire a knowledge of 'the language of the area, as proof of the fact that they had an abiding interest in Sri Lanka and not in India'. (*Wilson p. 35*)

Like most of the agreements because of conflicting interpretations and slow implementation, the question of the Indians were not resolved.

Discussions between the two governments, however continued, but nothing substantial happened till Oct. 1964 when the *Sirima-Shastri pact* was agreed on and it is this that is yet operative.

THE INDO-CEYLON AGREEMENT ACT. 1964 (Sirima-Shastri pact).

The Prime Minister of India, Mr. Lal Bahadur Shastri and the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka, Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike, arrived at the following agreement.

Of an estimated 975,000 persons of Indian origin in Ceylon who were without citizenship (i.e., excluding Indian illicit immigrants and Indian passport holders), it was agreed that,

(a) 525,000 persons would be granted Indian citizenship and progressively repatriated to India over a period of 15 years (together with the natural increase in their number over this period);

(b) 300,000 of these persons (together with the natural increase in their number) will be granted Ceylon citizenship by the Government of Ceylon during the same 15 years period;

(c) the grant of Ceylon citizenship to one category of persons of Indian origin in Ceylon and the repatriation to India to another category of such persons (with the conferment of Indian citizenship which this would entail) was to be phased over a 15 year period, such as they would, as far as possible, keep pace with each other in proportion to relative numbers to be granted citizenship and to be repatriated, respectively.

(d) two registers were to be prepared as early as possible, one containing the names of those who will be granted Ceylon citizenship, the other containing the names of those to be repatriated to India. The commencement of the process of repatriation and grant of Ceylon citizenship, however, was not conditional on the completion of these registers.

(e) those persons to be repatriated to India were to have the right of continued employment in Ceylon until the date of their registration according to the phased programme, or until the age of 55 years, whichever is earlier. They were also to have the right to freely transfer to India at the time of their repatriation, their assets up to a maximum of Rs. 4,000 per family of repatriates.

(f) the status and future of the balance of 150,000 persons of Indian origin in Ceylon were to be the subject of a separate agreement between the two governments.

This Agreement received legislative effect in the Indo-Ceylon Agreement (Implementation) Act of 1967.

According to *Kodikara* this agreement in its essentials was a fair and honourable settlement of a long-standing dispute. The success of this programme naturally depended on the amount of compulsion it was necessary to use to implement this agreement and it was this aspect that was criticised by both India and Sri Lanka. Though compulsion may seem odious in Ceylon's case it was adopted on the basis of a realistic appraisal of a desire among persons of Indian origin in Ceylon to return to India and a sensible scheme to relax the Indo-Ceylon travel restrictions, says *Kodikara*.

The Ceylon Tamil political groupings and the main organisations of the Indian workers were opposed to compulsion and the placing of Indians in separate electoral rolls. The government however felt that compulsion would be necessary to ensure the implementation of the phased 15 year programme of repatriation and together with the opposition party the United National Party, favoured a separate electoral roll.

Much could not be resolved for Mrs. Bandaranaike's government suffered defeat and Dudley Senanayake's national government being obliged to the Tamils removed the element of compulsion and of assigning Indians registered as citizens to a separate electoral roll. This angered the Kandyan Sinhalese.

Senanayake spoke in "terms of setting up multi-member constituencies in electoral districts where the Indian interests clashed with the Kandyan Sinhalese. This did not satisfy the latter. Moreover the Prime Minister abandoned the principle of relating the grant of Sri Lanka citizenship to the physical repatriation of Indians opting for Indian nationality on the score that the crisis in the foreign exchange situation did not make it possible for his government to permit Indians wishing to leave to repatriate their assets up to the agreed maximum of Rs. 4,000 per family. Those Indians granted Indian citizenship were therefore allowed to remain till they reached retiring age. Consequently the seven to four ratio was not adhered to. Hence at the end of the five-year term of the Senanayake government only 12,798 Indians had gone back while 7,316 obtained citizenship.

The United Front government of 1970 condemned the legislation of 1968 as doing violence to the spirit of the Sirima-Shastri Pact - especially the abandonment of the principle of linking

conferment of citizenship to the physical repatriation of Indians from the island. Steps were taken to reinsert this principle in amending legislation enacted in January 1971". (*Wilson* p. 37)

Since 1970

The Sirima-Shastri Agreement by which citizenship was granted in Sri Lanka to 300,000 and 525,000 to India, left the status and future of 150,000 persons and their natural increase undecided. This was resolved only in January 1974 by a second agreement between Sirimavo Bandaranaike and Indira Gandhi whereby Sri Lanka would grant citizenship to 75,000 and India to 75,000.

According to the information given by the National Union of Workers, Colombo, 152,524 persons received citizenship by July 1977 - this includes the natural increase. From 1964 to July 1977 those repatriated to India amounted to 211,821. This leaves a backlog of about 375,000 to receive citizenship and about one lakh to be repatriated.

The events of August 1977, with its unwarranted onslaught on those of Indian origin, particularly the poor and harmless estate workers, has created in the minds of persons of Indian origin a fear even of their future. Their argument is that with Sri Lankan citizenship, they have become a voting power and therefore a target for political abuse. (e.g. voting strength in Nuwara Eliya/Maskeliya electorate in July '77 was 6.97% Ceylon Tamils; 19.68% Sinhala and 71.2% Indian and Muslim). Hence a recurring target every six years. Also in the estate districts, the Sinhala peasants in the surrounding areas, see the estate workers (though conceding that they are the lowest wage earners) far better off than they who for the most part do not have jobs, land or even proper shelter. Most of the Sinhala peasants eke out a miserable and meagre existence. Hence when communal disturbances erupt, they become scapegoats, even though they are not concerned with the Ceylon Tamil cause and a separate state.

Even in the towns those who were attacked, were the boutique keepers, gram, old newspaper and bottle sellers etc. - persons having some sort of job and at that level economically better off than the Sinhala unemployed from the same strata of society.

From all this it is possible to discern that the communal disharmony is not really racial but more economic and that one of the main solutions lie in bringing about a better economic life for all.

As a result of all this, a fair number of those waiting for Sri Lankan citizenship and from among those who have already become citizens, want to leave for India. The first group is eager, to have their repatriation expedited and the latter to renounce and seek Indian citizenship. Discussions with the Indian High Commissioner regarding the second, resulted in a "No" from India. According to the newspapers, Mr. S. Thondaman, MP for Nuwara Eliya/Maskeliya and a citizen of Indian origin, left for India to discuss this matter further with the Indian government. The outcome of this is yet unknown.

+ +

A PRAYER FOR SRI LANKA - IN TIME OF CRISIS

*Lord, we are in a crisis and deep trouble
It hurts to see a divided nation
a shattered brotherhood
riots, killing, murder, anger, injustice, turmoil, anxiety,
fear, looting, theft, misery, revenge
in a land, where a religious history has educated us
to a life of love, compassion and tolerance.*

*Lord, it is a devastated and a torn land
the isle, that was once the gem of virtue and concord.*

*Bring us back Lord to our pristine glory
We want to gather again to know, to love and understand*

*Help thy people and our nation to repent lest we perish
To quicken this return lest it be too late*

*Lead Sri Lankans to love where there is hate
to dialogue where there is misunderstanding
to goodwill where there is suspicion
to harmony where there is disorder
to concord where there is discord
to compassion where there is revenge
that our mother land, once the symbol of beauty and virtue
may find herself a sanctuary where your "Glory" can abide.*

Fr. Leopold Ratnasekera, o.m.i.
(National Seminary, Ampitiya)

OUR CRISIS OF NATIONAL UNITY

TISSA BALASURIYA, o. m. i.

I. CRUEL AUGUST 1977

During the last two weeks of August 1977 many in Sri Lanka lived agonizing days and nights, Looting, Arson, Lawless. Gangs have beaten others, inflicted horrifying injuries and even resorted to manslaughter. All this apparently due to racial animosities. As yet the full story, how it started, how it escalated is not known.

According to official sources over a 100 have lost their lives. About 50,000 have left their homes, and moved mainly to the North, and a few thousands to the South. Houses, shops and residential lines have first been looted then set ablaze.

The lines of division have once again gone deep into the hearts of people. Every act of communal violence is a blow to national unity. Man, woman or child chased away from home by physical blows or fear of person, and that person's heart is lacerated by anger. Hatred has been generated far and wide during the past few weeks.

Innocent children have lost a mother or father. A price they will pay all their lives due to the communal hatred fanned by so many consciously or unconsciously. Bewildered children will for all time remember the refugee camps - the only place of solace for their mother and father for uncomfortable days and nights. Days of great privations.

But there is hope. Men and women from all walks of life have begun to affirm themselves in favour of communal harmony. They call for a peaceful resolution of our racial problems. Leaders of all religions have appealed for peace and justice for all. The common humanity in us all is leading persons and groups of every political or religious persuasion to cooperate in safeguarding life and promoting understanding.

The intensity of this national tragedy, been repeated, has alerted us to the deep seated nature of the problems of race that confront us as a nation. They have grown gradually over the past 50 years

or so. In the days of the Ceylon National Congress the leaders of all races worked for self government and political independence. But slowly step by step the problems have got aggravated. The pan-Sinhala ministry of the 1930s, - the demand for 50 : 50 by the Tamil Congress, the disenfranchisement of the plantation workers, the demand for federalism by the Federal Party, the "Sinhalese Only Act" with the provisions for the "Reasonable use of Tamil" the communal violence of 1958, the resistance by Sinhala Opposition Groups to the Regional Councils and District Councils, the Republican Constitution of 1972, the formation of the Tamil United (Liberation) Front, and the demand for Eelam, a separate sovereign State for Tamils, are all stages in this history.

During the period 1970-77, too the situation was aggravated. The government did not face the issue squarely. Sinhala Tamil relations during the past 50 years are a sad history of several lost opportunities. Often a workable solution was within the grasp of leading political groups. On every occasion extreme views prevailed to the detriment of the nation as a whole. With each successive stage the Tamil demands increased.

2. THE TULF DEMAND FOR EELAM

The growing frustration among the Tamil people, specially in the Northern Province, has led the leaders of the Tamil community to sink their political differences and form the Tamil United Liberation Front. On 14th May 1976 the first National Convention of the TULF, at Vaddukkodai, presided over by S. J. V. Chelvanayagam adopted the resolution -

"that the restoration and reconstitution of the Free, Sovereign, Secular, Socialist State of Tamil Eelam based on the right of self determination inherent to every nation has become inevitable in order to safeguard the very existence of the Tamil nation in this country".

In order to understand the significance of the 1977 General Elections concerning the demand for Eelam, we must see how the T. U. L. F. understands this issue. According to the T. U. L. F. manifesto the new 1972 Constitution was drafted by the Sinhala people for their own advantage. It is said to have been rejected by the "Tamil Nation" which now has no alternative but to take its sovereignty into its own hands. For this the T. U. L. F. wanted a mandate from the "Tamil nation".

How does the T. U. L. F. understand the "Tamil nation"? The Manifesto details the grievances of the Tamils including "the

Muslims in the Eastern and North-Western regions of Ceylon." It says "When we speak of the Tamil Nation, we refer to the entirety of the people in this country to whom the mother tongue is Tamil". It adds "The T.U.L.F. views the forthcoming general election as an opportunity to obtain the mandate of the Tamil Nation and on the basis of its right to self-determination, re-establish the Independence of the State of Tamil Eelam, the expression of the sovereignty of the Tamil Nation".

But when the Manifesto says that the 1972 Constitution was rejected by the Tamils, it takes into account the boycott "by 15 out of the 19 elected Tamil representatives." At this stage the support of elected Muslim representatives for the Constitution is neglected. Hence there is an ambiguity in the use of the terms "Tamils" and "Tamil Nation".

The reasons of the T. U. L. F. for coming to this position were given on pages 1 and 2 of Logos Vol. 16 No. 2. The following causes taken from the text of the Vaddukodai resolution and several of the speeches of the leaders and T.U.L.F. publications are added to them;

- (a) Disenfranchisement of plantation workers of Indian origin thus reducing Tamil representation in Parliament.
- (b) Giving the foremost place to Buddhism under the Republican Constitution thereby reducing the Hindus, Christians, and Muslims to second class status in this country.
- (c) Systematically cutting them off from the mainstream of Tamil cultures in South-India while denying them opportunities of developing their language and culture in Ceylon thereby working inexorably towards the cultural genocide of the Tamils.
- (d) Permitting and unleashing communal violence and intimidation against the Tamil speaking people as happened in Amparai and Colombo in 1956; all over the country in 1958; army reign of terror in the Northern and Eastern provinces in 1961; police violence at the International Tamil Research Conference in 1974 resulting in the death of nine persons in Jaffna; police and communal violence against Tamil speaking Muslims at Puttalam and various other parts of Ceylon in 1976—all these calculated to instil terror in the minds of the Tamil speaking people thereby breaking their spirit and the the will to resist the injustices heaped on them.
- (e) Capping it all by imposing on the Tamil nation a constitution drafted under conditions of Emergency without opportunities for free discussion by a constituent assembly elected on the

basis of the Soulbury Constitution distorted by the Citizenship laws resulting in weightage in representation to the Sinhalese majority thereby depriving the Tamils of even the remnants of safeguards they had under the earlier constitution.

Area Claimed For "Eelam"

There is no clear indication of the *area claimed for Eelam*. The only reference is to a 13th century position.

The *Vaddukoddai resolution* describes the composition of Eelam as follows -

"That the State of TAMIL EELAM shall consist of the people of Northern and Eastern provinces and shall also ensure full and equal rights of citizenship of the State of TAMIL EELAM to all Tamil speaking people living in any part of Ceylon and to Tamils of EELAM origin, living in any part of the world who may opt for citizenship of TAMIL EELAM".

The T. U. L. F. 1977 Election Manifesto gives a more detailed description of the area with reference to a 13th century position. "At this time, the territory stretching in the western sea-board from Chilaw through Puttalam to Mannar and thence to the Northern regions and in the East Trincomalee and also Batticoloa, regions that extended Southwards upto Kumana or to the Northern banks of the Kumbukkan Oya were firmly established as the exclusive homeland of the Tamils, *This is the territory of Tamil Ealam.*"

This is a large chunk of Sri Lanka. It is far more than the Northern Province. This is also the area that the TULF contested in the last general elections.

3. PEOPLES VERDICT ON "EELAM"

"Unanimous Verdict Indispensable"

The TULF Manifesto said that "the General Election of 1977 is a crucial one of the Tamil Nation". It ends with a fervent appeal to the "Tamil Nation" to vote for the TULF, for "*the unanimous verdict of the Tamil speaking people is indispensable. Hence we appeal to you to set aside your passions for, or prejudices against individual candidates, to forget differences of region, caste, or religion and, with the one and the only determination of making the Tamil Nation master of its Destiny, to VOTE for the*

Tamil United Liberation Front, for the emancipation of the Tamil Nation, for the Freedom of Tamil Eelam." (Quotations from TULF Manifesto in *Tribune* August 6th and Aug. 13, 1977). We do not discuss here the reasons for this demand for Eelam. But let us see what the results have been. We have tried to analyse the figures as available from the newspapers and will be grateful for the correction of any errors or discrepancies. We believe, however, that these do not affect the substance of the argument. We have written in an earlier article concerning the distribution of the Tamil population in Sri Lanka. Over a quarter of the "Ceylon" Tamils are outside the Northern and Eastern provinces. Less than 1/3 of the total Tamil (i.e. "Ceylon" and "Indian" Tamil) population is in the Northern Province. If we take Tamil-speaking people as the "Tamil Nation", then the proportion in the Northern Province is still smaller. Colombo with 103,000 "Ceylon Tamils" is the biggest city of "Ceylon Tamils" in Sri Lanka (and the world!).

In order to analyse the TULF General Election results, we shall consider four areas: Northern province in two sections (a) Jaffna Peninsula and (b) Mainland of the Northern province excluding the Peninsula. (c) Eastern province (d) Puttalam Electorate. Thereafter we can see the results for both Northern and Eastern provinces together, and with Puttalam i.e. the whole area claimed for Eelam.

(a) Northern Province

In the Jaffna Peninsula the TULF got a clear verdict in favour of it. The 10 electorates gave the TULF 223,463 votes out of its total of 311,235 votes. Independents got 76,103 votes, UNP 7,140, LSSP 4,529, SLFP 1,042 in the Peninsula. Hence 71.8% of the votes were in favour of the TULF. This was 58.5% of the electorate. One could therefore argue that the Jaffna peninsula responded positively to the TULF demand. Ten of its 18 seats in the National State Assembly are from the peninsula. The absentees in the Jaffna peninsula were 70,356 or 18.5% of the electorate. This is high compared to the national average of 87.2. The absentees are more than 1/5 of the number who voted in the elections.

(b) In the rest of the Northern Province (the Main land)
In the Mainland the position is less clear though the TULF won in Kilinochchi, Mannar, Vavuniya and Mulletivu. *In Kilinochchi* it obtained 15,607 votes as against 4,006 for the SLFP and 1,499 for the UNP. *In Mannar* TULF obtained 15,141 votes while the UNP and Independents had 14,211 votes. The TULF got 930

votes more out of an electorate of 31,767 and a total poll of 29,352. This can hardly be a case for a separation of *Mannar* from the rest of the country. In *Vavuniya* the TULF polled 13,821 and the UNP 9,444 and an Independent 151. Though the TULF has 4,200 votes more than the other two it has only 48.6% of the total electorate due to the 5,034 absentees out of the total electorate of 28,450. In *Mullativu*, the TULF received 10,261 votes while the three Independent candidates together polled 9,335. The difference is 926 out of a total poll of 19,596 and an electorate of 24,698. 5,102 abstained from voting i.e. over a fifth of the electorate. Here too the case for separation is not unanimous. It is actively supported by a little over 41% of the electorate. Hence in the Northern Province, outside of the Peninsula and Kilinochchi less than half the electorate has voted for the TULF and 33,131 voted against it; while 12,548 abstained from voting out of a total of 83,915. The total poll in these three electorates is about 85% or less than the national average of 87.2%. Can this be a convincing case for separating the country specially with a frontier to be located within this area?

In the Northern Province (a+b) as a whole 68.5% of the voters and 56.4% of the electorate were for the TULF i.e. 278,293 votes out of 406,257 voters and an electorate of 493,176. Abstentions and spoilt votes were 86,919 or 17.5% of the electorate. In the Northern Province 85% of the population is "Ceylon Tamil" and 95.4% is Tamil speaking. Hence even here that one third of the votes were against the TULF has some significance. It may be of interest that the vote for the UNP, SLFP and LSSP was 40,013 in the Northern Province. This is nearly 10% of the votes. (see chart on page 123)

Eastern Province Rejects Eelam

(c) In the Eastern Province the Election results are clearly against separation. The UNP won eight seats: Samanthurai, Kalkudah, Kalmunai, Seruwila, Batticaloa (2nd), Amparai, Mutur and Potuvil (1st). The TULF won Padiruppu, Trincomalee and Batticaloa (1st) and Potuvil (2nd). The TULF would have lost in *Padiruppu* if not for the division of votes among the LSSP, SLFP and UNP which together got 16,412 votes as against 15,877 for the TULF. In terms of votes the UNP had 136,296 thousand votes, TULF 92,163 votes, SLFP 81,419, LSSP 6970, FP (Batticaloa) 11,221 and Independents 7,252. The Independents have fared very badly indicating high political consciousness among those voting. The UNP, SLFP and LSSP which are definitely against separation obtained 224,665 votes or 67% of the votes and 58.3% of the electorate. The TULF had only 27.5%

VOTE IN GENERAL ELECTION 1977

	Total Electorate & Spoilt	Absent.	Total Polled	% Polled	TULF Vote	TULF % of Elec.	TULF Vote as % of Votes
Northern Province							
(a) Peninsula	381,591	70,350	311,235	81.5	223,463	58.50	71.8
(b) Mainland (outside Peninsula)	111,585	16,563	95,022	85.1	54,830	49.3	57.7
Total (a+b)	493,176	86,919	406,257	82.51	278,293	56.4	68.5
Northern Province							
(c) Eastern Province	385,191	49,890	335,301	87.0	92,163	23.9	27.5
(a+b+c) Total	878,367	136,809	741,558	84.4	370,456	42.2	49.95
Northern & Eastern Provinces							
(b+c) Eastern Province and Mainland of Northern Province	496,776	66,453	430,323	86.6	146,993	29.6	34.1
(d) Puttalam	37,177	6,107	31,070	83.5	3,268	8.8	10.5
Total Northern and Eastern Provinces and Puttalam (a+b+c+d)	915,544	142,916	772,628	84.4	373,724	40.8	48.31

votes of the votes cast. Absentees were 49,792 or 12.9% votes of the total electorate. The Eastern province has clearly rejected the idea of a separate State for the Tamil speaking people. Though 76.8% of the population are Tamils and Moors (Ceylon & Indian) only 27.5% voted for the TULF. Ceylon Tamils alone are 40.9% of the Eastern Province and even they have not voted as a whole for Eelam. The Sinhala population is only 22.5% of the population and hence they could not make for the bulk of the 66.9% that voted for the UNP, SLFP and LSSP which are definitely against the division of the country into two states. One would expect the TULF to be quite sobered by this decision of the Tamil speaking people in the Eastern Province. They have definitely no mandate to claim the Eastern Province for any proposal for a sovereign 'Eelam'.

Northern and Eastern Provinces Together (a + b + c)

When we take the Northern and Eastern Provinces together we see an important phenomenon. Within the Jaffna Peninsula 71.8% of the votes were for the TULF. In the electorates Kilinochchi, Mannar, Vavuniya and Mullativu 57.7% of the voters opted for TULF; and in the Eastern Province 28%. Taking both provinces together the TULF had 370,456 votes. This is 49.9% of the votes cast. But as there were 136,714 absentees, *the TULF vote is only 42.2% of the total electorate in the North and East.* The voting pattern is 81.5% in the Peninsula, and 85.1% in the 4 Northern electorates outside the Peninsula, and 87.0% in the Eastern Province. The national average was 87.2%. Nearly 1/5 of the Peninsula has not voted. Therefore considering the population of these two provinces together one cannot say that they have voted as a whole positively for a separate State. Just about half the votes cast are for the TULF.

In the *Mainland and Northern Province and Eastern Province (b + c)* - excluding the Jaffna Peninsula the electorate is 496,776, the voters were 430,323 and the TULF got 146,993 votes. The TULF obtained the support of only 34.1% of these votes and 29.6% of the electorate there. Unlike in the Jaffna Peninsula where only 81.5% voted, in the mainland North and East 86.1% went to the polls. The TULF is in a minority position outside the Jaffna Peninsula even in the Northern and Eastern Provinces. 65.9% of the votes in this area from Kilinochchi to Potuvil were against the TULF.

(d) Puttalam Electorate

The Puttalam Electorate touches Mannar in the North and has nearly 20% Ceylon Tamils, 38.4% Ceylon Moors and 2.9%

ANALYSIS OF 1977 ELECTION RES

Northern Province

	Total Electo- rate	Absen- tees & Spoilt Votes	Total Polled	% Polled	Majority	UNP	SLFP
(a) Jaffna Peninsula							
79 Kayts	36,372	8,831	27,541	75.72	8,960	0.661	
82 Manipay	41,373	8,571	32,802	79.28	24,250	3,300	
85 Pt. Pedro	28,447	5,156	23,291	81.89	6,570		
86 Chavakachcheri	36,959	5,302	31,657	85.65	9,218		
81 K. K. S.	43,907	7,430	36,477	83.0	25,833		
83 Kopay	41,824	8,354	33,470	80.0	22,353	2,699	
88 Jaffna	34,865	6,164	28,701	82.3	9,291		
80 Vadukkodai	40,684	7,363	33,321	81.9	18,208	480	
87 Nallur	40,205	6,813	33,392	83.0	28,137		1,042
84 Udupiddy	36,955	6,372	30,583	82.7	14,747		
Total	381,591	70,356	311,235	81.5		7,140	1,042
(b) Northern Province Mainland (outside the Peninsula)							
89 Kilinochchi	26,670	4,012	22,658	84.9	11,601	1,497	4,006
90 Mannar	31,767	2,415	29,352	92.3	2,212	12,929	478
92 Vavuniya	28,450	5,034	23,416	82.3	4,377	9,444	
91 Mullativu	24,698	5,102	19,596	79.3	2,629		
Mainland Total	111,585	16,563	95,022	85.1	23,79	23,870	4,484
(a+b) Total Northern Province	493,176	86,919	406,257	82.5		31,010	5,526
(c) Eastern Province							
100 Samanthurai	27,308	2,446	24,944	91.0	5,027	13,642	2,605
98 Padiruppu	35,909	3,620	32,289	89.0	10,244	5,189	5,590
96 Kalkuda	33,995	4,753	29,242	86.0	545	13,140	3,507
94 Trincomalee	35,778	6,518	29,260	81.3	5,321	11,823	1,674
101 Kalmunai	28,826	9,922	25,904	89.8	5,543	12,636	5,922
93 Seruvila	31,250	5,313	25,937	83.0	4,359	14,926	10,567
97 Batticaloa (2)	63,039	9,095	53,944	70.0		12,672	16,536
99 Amparai	49,006	7,471	41,535	84.0	8,572	24,581	16,009
95 Mutur	30,389	2,539	27,850	92.0	4,730	12,530	7,800
102 Potuvil (2)	49,691	5,213	44,478	89.5		15,157	11,180
Total	385,191	49,890	335,301	87.0		136,296	81,398
(d) Puttalam	37,177	6,107	30,070	83.5		17,583	8,415
	915,544	142,916	772,628	84.4		184,889	95,339

Northern, Eastern Provinces
and Puttalam (a+b+c+d)

ANALYSIS OF 1977 ELECTION RESULTS

Id	% Polled	Majority	UNP	SLFP	LSSP	FP	Independent	TULF	% of Total Electorates	% of Total Poll	
1	75.72	8,960	0.661				9,240	17,640	48.5	64	
2	79.28	24,250	3,300				1,952	27,550	66.6	85	
01	81.89	6,570					10,302	12,989	45.6	56	
7	85.65	9,218					11,629	20,028	54.2	64	
7	83.0	25,833					5,322	31,155	70.9	86	
0	80.0	22,353	2,699		3,487		1,444	25,840	61.8	77.2	
1	82.3	9,291					12,450	16,251	46.6	56.6	
1	81.9	18,208	480				9,457	23,384	57.5	70.1	
2	83.0	28,137		1,042			2,492	29,858	74.2	89.4	
3	82.7	14,747					11,815	18,768	50.7	61.3	
5	81.5		7,140	1,042	3,487		76,103	223,463	58.56	71.8	
8	84.9	11,601	1,497	4,006			148	15,607	58.5	68.9	
2	92.3	2,212	12,929	478			804	15,141	47.6	51.1	
6	82.3	4,377	9,444				151	13,821	48.6	59.0	
6	79.3	2,629					9,335	10,261	41.5	52.3	
2	85.1	23,79	23,870	4,484			10,438	54,830	49.3	57.7	
7	82.5		31,010	5,526	3,487		86,541	278,293	56.4	68.5	
4	91.0	5,027	13,642	2,605				8,615	31.5	35.0	
9	89.0	10,244	5,189	5,590	5,633			15,877	44.2	49.0	
2	86.0	545	13,140	3,507				12,595	37.0	43.0	
0	81.3	5,321	11,823	1,674			619	15,144	42.3	51.7	
4	89.8	5,548	12,636	5,922			253	7,093	24.6	27.3	
7	83.0	4,359	14,926	10,567	392		52				
4	70.0		12,672	16,536		11,231	191	13,324	21.0	30.0	
5	84.0	8,572	24,581	16,009	945						
0	92.0	4,730	12,530	7,800				7,520	24.7	27.0	
8	89.5		15,157	11,180				6,137	11,995	24.1	26.9
1	87.0		136,296	81,398	6,970	11,221	7,252	92,163	23.9	27.4	
9	83.5		17,583	8,415	533			1,271	3,268	8.08	10.5
3	84.4		184,889	95,339	10,990			95,109	373,724	40.8	48.31

Indian Tamils and Moors. Hence 61% of the population are Moors and Tamils. The TULF toyed with the idea of attracting the people of this electorate to its fold. But the TULF obtained only 3,268 votes out of 31,070 voters in an electorate of 37,177. This is 10.5% of the voters and 8.8% of the electorate. Hence even the 20% Ceylon Tamils here have not voted TULF. Is this an indication that the Tamil speaking people outside the Northern and Eastern Province reject the proposal for Eelam?

If the Puttalam area is also taken into account the vote for the TULF in Puttalam, the Northern and Eastern Provinces is 373,724. This is 48.36% of the voters and 40.8% of the electorate. Hence in the whole area claimed for Eelam less than half the vote has been for the TULF.

Tamil Speaking Muslims

The 1977 Election results have shown clearly that the Tamil-speaking Muslims do not favour a separated Eelam. This is seen in the Eastern Province, and in Puttalam. In Mannar the Muslims being nearly 30% may explain the large vote against the TULF in an electorate where only 4.2% of the population is Sinhala.

One can say that the TULF has failed to obtain the support of the Moors for their proposal for a separate State for the Tamil-speaking people of Sri Lanka. Not a single TULF elected M. P. is a Moor.

This also counters the TULF claim that the Tamil speaking people have not accepted the Republican Constitution of 1972.

"Indian" Tamils

The Ceylon Workers Congress (CWC) which joined the TULF expressed its unwillingness to support the idea of a separate state for the Tamil speaking peoples. In the General Elections and in the new Parliament the CWC stand apart from the TULF. It is said that the Tamil plantation workers who have the vote supported the UNP where the CWC did not contest (i.e. outside Nuwara Eliya-Maskeliya).

Postscript:

It has been pointed out in the Sunday Times and in the Tribune of 15.10.77 that Mr. Kasi Ananthan's vote of 11,221 and Mr. V. Navaratnam's 8,673 votes in Kayts should be added as favouring Eelam. I accept this. The substance of the argument is, however, not affected by these two additions. I shall be grateful for any other corrections or comments.

4. TAMIL COMMUNAL VOTE DECREASING

The percentage vote of the Tamil Communal parties has been decreasing since July 1960 in the country as a whole, even though the number of votes has increased with the increase in population. In 1970 the FP and TC together polled 361,314 votes. In 1977 in spite of setting up the TULF and intense campaigning the TULF had 370,456 votes or only 9,142 more than the FP and TC in 1970; (and that despite an increase of 147,389 in the electorate and of 141,022 in the actual number voting). In May 1970 the FP and TC obtained 361,314 votes out of a total vote of 600,536 in the Northern and Eastern Provinces i.e. 60.1%. In 1977 July the TULF got only 49.9% of the vote in the Northern and Eastern Provinces. This is an indication of the drop in the support for Tamil communal politics as its demand became more separatist. Hence in spite of much enthusiasm among the proponents of Eelam the *Tamil electorate in the North and East is gradually moving away from Communal politics*. Yet the decimation of the SLFP and the liquidation of the Left in the National State Assembly has given the TULF the prominent position of being the chief Opposition Party. This is likely to give the Parliamentary debates a communalist tone far beyond what the voting in the country sanctions.

In spite of an apparent importance of the TULF it is getting itself isolated in the country as a whole. The TULF base is mainly the Northern Province, and specially the Jaffna Peninsula. It seems rather insensitive to its lack of support in the rest of the country. Even in the North the stage seems set for the emergence of alternative views or for the growth of the influence of the more nationally oriented parties. It is noteworthy that the UNP; SLFP and the LSSP obtained 40,013 in the Northern Province or nearly 10% of the votes cast.

If the Government and the rest of the country gives a fair response to the Tamil grievances, the demand for a separate State will whither away due to a lack of support even in the North. What can increase support for TULF separatism is communal violence by the Sinhala people and or unfair governmental policies.

A Way Forward for TULF Leaders?

The result of the General Elections are far from the unanimous verdict considered indispensable by the TULF Manifesto. In 1970 the FP and TC together obtained 361,314 votes out of 600,531 voters in the Northern and Eastern Provinces i.e. 60.1%.

DECREASING TAMIL COMMUNAL VOTE

	Votes Polled		% of total votes polled in the country		% of seats won		Candidates contesting		Seats won	
March 1960	FP	175,106	5.6	9.9	19	15	27	8	16	1
	TC	38,275	1.2	0.6	10.6	1				
July 1960	FP	213,753	7.0	10.5	20	16	30	10	17	1
	TC	46,803	1.5	0.6	11.2	1				
1965	FP	217,916	5.3	9.2	20	14	35	15	17	3
	TC	98,746	2.4	1.9	11.2	3				
1970	FP	245,747	4.9	8.6	19	13	31	12	16	3
	TC	115,567	2.3	1.9	10.6	3				
1977	TULF	370,456	6.14	10.7	24	18				

(Data for 1960—1970 from A. J. Wilson 'Politics in Sri Lanka 1947—1973 pp. 170—173)

In the recent elections the TULF got 370,456 votes out of 741,558 voters i.e. only 49.9%. Is this not an indication of their decreasing acceptance by the Tamils, as the leaders' demands increase? This should give the TULF leaders a reason and an opportunity to reconsider their stance with reference to a separate State. They should be able to tell their more ardent supporters that even the Tamil people of Sri Lanka are not with them for dividing the country into two sovereign States. The TULF leadership would be well advised to see the long term trends in spite of the present heightening of tension due to the recent communal disturbances and looting.

In fact the results point a way out of the dilemma they are placed in due to the promises they made in the manifesto and in their election campaigning. They may wish to keep Eelam as a future goal but they have to be realistic enough to accept that the General Elections of 1977 did not give them a mandate to ask for a separate State in the Northern and Eastern provinces. *They must respect Tamil opinion*, even if they may not be so sensitive to the sentiments of the rest of the people or even to the good of the country as a whole. We would urge the TULF leaders to desist from any desire to resort to armed struggle or even to speak of it, as well as to unequivocally disassociate themselves from the sporadic violence of certain youth groups in the North?

5. THE PRICE OF SEPARATION

One need hardly mention that the problems of setting up a separate State do not seem to have been seriously considered by the TULF. Where will the boundaries be drawn? Will it be only the Peninsula, or include Mannar and Trincomalee? How will such an international frontier be demarcated and maintained? Such a division will create employment but not useful productive activity. It will mean an enormous waste of personnel and funds on armaments and 'defence'. Invitation to foreign intervention will irretrievably aggravate the issues. One can hardly conceive of such a vivisection of the country without a continuing and bloody civil war. Are not the examples of Cyprus, Northern Ireland, Vietnam and Korea warnings against division?

If Eelam is implemented, as suggested, an international frontier would run from Puttalam in the West coast to below Potuvil in the East Coast. It will cut across the Dry Zone where the Northern province meets the North Central province. It will require the division of the country not only North to South but also East to West. It will be only a few miles above Anuradhapura the historic capital of the ancient Sinhala kingdoms. Eelam

would impose on the two States to be thus created a land frontier that would be about 400 miles in length. The area of Eelam would be about 7500 square miles. This is about 30% of the land surface of the country. In 1971 this area had a population of about 2 million or less than 1/6 of the island's population.

The Sri Lanka of the South outside Eelam will be left with about two fifths of the sea coast. Eelam would then benefit from the 200 miles of sea from the coast that were claimed as territorial waters of Sri Lanka by the last government - to the detriment of the South. Trincomalee, according to Mr. Amirthalingam the TULF leader, would be the capital of Eelam.

When we think a little more in depth on the significance of this request we see how patently unfair the demand is. After all it is only some of the Ceylon Tamils in the North who ask for Eelam i. e. a section of that 11% of the population of Sri Lanka. They want two of the largest provinces including the whole eastern coast. This type of thinking might indicate to the Tamil people themselves how preposterous the TULF demand is. The Sinhala people might respond that this is precisely the type of demand the Tamil leadership consistently makes. They want a separate state for themselves with about 1/3 of the land surface and 2/5ths the sea coast, and yet over half of the Tamil population would be outside this area. The Sinhala people do not seem to be so intolerant when such a proposition can be canvassed at the general elections and in the international forums.

Explosive

The setting up of such an Eelam will create an *explosive socio-economic situation in the island*. One third of the island would thus be carved out for less than 1/6th of the population. The remaining 85% of the population will be cramped into the North-Central, South Western and Central parts of the country. They would have less of the sea as an outlet. There is already acute landlessness in these areas. A good portion of the under populated area that could be developed would be in "Eelam". This is bound to cause much social tension inside the reduced Sri Lanka and the proposed Eelam. This consideration makes one ask how fair is the Tamil leaders' demand to reserve the colonization of the Northern and Eastern provinces exclusively for the Tamils.

We wonder whether those who thus conceived of this idea of two sovereign States have thought of the *enormous costs* involved in

maintaining a 400 mile frontier. It would be the erection of a zone of continual friction in the country. A good number of the male population, specially of the "Ceylon" Tamils, would have to guard the long frontier. Still others would be customs officials, not to mention the smugglers. What a price the TULF leadership is asking the peoples of this country to pay in order to satisfy their demands! What a folly for the Sinhala leaders to drive the Tamil people to a point of frustration that could lead many of them to even consider separation. Till recently most of us did not consider the implications of Eelam. But now that the TULF has entered the Parliament to canvass its case, it is necessary that people be aware of the gravity of the issues involved. Fortunately the peoples of the Eastern and Northern provinces and Puttalam have not given their clear approbation for this vivisection of our common motherland.

The Constitution of an Independent Eelam will involve an enormous economic dislocation, specially with the inevitable movements of population and the division of assets. A totally different process of economic planning would have to take place. The very aggravation of racism will cause further havoc to the economy and to social harmony.

Tamils outside the North

What will be the position of the *Tamils in the Southern, Eastern and Western regions* in the country. Would they be foreigners in Sri Lanka, where they now have full rights of citizenship. Will they be temporary residence permit holders (T. R. P. s)? or will they have to migrate to the North? What will then be their means of livelihood and employment? What would the costs of setting up alternate housing, educational and health facilities be? Will they be happier there than now, or less unhappy than now? What will be the costs of population movements? Will it not engender more suffering and bitterness than anything which has happened so far?

What will happen to the economic enterprises set up by the Tamils in the South? Their houses? their property? their work places and jobs? Their assets and their liabilities? their goodwill? How will the assets of the government of Sri Lanka be shared? What about the public debt - specially our foreign debt? Embassies and foreign missions will have to be multiplied - this will benefit some, but be expensive to the poor people of both areas.

More serious than these in human terms would be the personal problem of the Tamils in the South, specially the plantation

workers. Eelam has now to be reduced to a demand covering the Northern province as the Eastern province has voted against it. The leaders of the Eelam movement do not seem so sensitive to the fate of the Tamils outside the North. It is too easy to write them off as people who are alienated from the North, or as people with vested interests in the South. There are many poor Tamils living under difficult circumstances in the South. A slight dislocation in their work, incomes or relationships is an upsetting of all they have; and that is very little. The affluent Tamils can migrate to the North or even to foreign countries. They can send their children to other countries for higher education. But the poorer Tamils are made the scape goats of this escalation of communal feeling leading to separation. They will have to begin life anew under great hardships.

Divisions among Tamils too

In trying to understand this situation it is useful to see how among the Tamils too there are different groups with different interests - just as among the Sinhala, Moor, Malay and Burgher communities. Communal tensions may give the impression that race is the most important division or conflict in our country. But is this so? What about the divisions within the races: of geography, caste, incomes, age groups etc. Even the Ceylon Tamils of Jaffna, Colombo, Batticaloa, Mannar and Galle have different interests and even mentalities. Within the Northern province the Tamils in the Peninsula are privileged compared to those in Vavuniya or Mannar. Class and caste are not absent as the normal lines of division in day to day living in any part of the country. Those who push towards a separate State neglect to face the difficulties caused to other Tamils.

We can understand the demand for Eelam as a result of the frustration - specially of youth who have been unable to continue their education into university or are unemployed. But the solution suggested seems far worse than the disease it sets out to remedy.

Sri Lanka's Geographical Oneness

Separation is likely to cost the Tamil people in the North (and East) even more than it would be to the rest of the country. The country is so constituted by nature and its oneness depends not only on its sea boundry but also the unique situation of the central hill country. The hill country has not only the most salubrious climate and the main assets in terms of world trade. But even more significant for long term planning is that *the water*

supply of the entire island flows down from the central highlands. Other than rain water and underground water, the rest of the water supply is mainly from rivers that take their source from this region. This is an absolutely important potential for planning. It can also be a major source of conflict between separate nations. Such problems between India and Pakistan, India and Bangladesh and even among the States of India are a warning to Eelamists. The entire irrigation system of the East and North might have to be devised without dependence on the water from non-Eelam.

Water is also the most important source of power in this country. We are self reliant in *hydro electric power*. But the sources of this power are in the central highlands. Hence if there is a separate state of Eelam, it will have to find its own source of power. At the present level of technology and given the lack of oil (so far), Eelam will have a heavy foreign exchange bill for its power supply. If it depends on the other half of Sri Lanka, Eelam would be vulnerable to power cuts from the South. So also for water resources. Much of the mineral resources also seem to be in the area outside Eelam. The forests of the hill country have also an important function in the country's ecological balance.

At present the patterns of *communication* are also more centered around the metropolis. This can however be transformed by new networks of roads, railways, and a telecommunications system. Yet this will also involve an enormous cost. The very geography of the proposed Eelam will mean high costs in communication. The Eelam strip of land from Mullaitivu through Trincomalee, Batticaloa, and Pottuvil to the Kumana or Kumbukkan oya will demand a heavy investment in communications (not to mention defence and customs points).

While we can sympathize with the demand for Eelam as a cry of frustration or desperation, one cannot help thinking that it seems to go against the common good of the people of both regions. Mahatma Gandhi spoke of India as one country even according to its natural physiognomy (cf. Ceylon Daily News, Oct. 1st 1977). How much more should we not stress the oneness of the island of Sri Lanka specially in terms of modern knowledge, potentialities and needs. If we are one our natural resources are much greater for the benefit of all.

6. COST OF SEPARATISM

In addition to the permanent damage that separation will cost, we have also to think of the price of separatism, i.e. of the advocacy of separation. For the TULF leadership this may be a political strategy to bring about some redress of the grievances of the Tamil people. Some sympathizers of Eelam mention this demand as part of the process of bargaining. They say we must ask for much to get even a little. There may be some truth and practical sense in this. It may be the language that communicates to the rest of the country to a certain extent.

But it has also a *boomerang effect*. We have seen how even the FP, TC, TULF vote has been decreasing proportionately as their separatist demands became more far reaching. The 1977 General Election results also show that the support for a Separate State is largely from the Northern province, specially the Jaffna Peninsula. The Tamil "Eelamist" leadership is isolating itself to the North. Their separatism may have induced the Moors and Malays in the East and North Western Coast from Mannar to Puttalam to make common cause with the larger national political parties. The UNP has once again a wide national following. It is no longer so Sinhala based as it tended to be after its 1956 Kelaniya resolution in favour of "*Sinhala Only*" as the official language. The SLFP and the LSSP are also now more capable of appealing to the Muslim and Tamil Voters too. The Tamil plantation workers and the "Indian" Tamils elsewhere in the country favour neither separation nor separatism

It is said that some "Ceylon" Tamils in Colombo favour separation, specially after the recent troubles. But they too do not like to talk of separation, and specially talk of violence or of recourse to foreign support. The Tamils outside the Peninsula and Kilinochchi electorate do not much favour separatism. Such talk causes havoc in their areas. They have seen what damage it can cause to the otherwise peaceful relationships among the peoples of different races.

It may be asked, can we not talk? What's wrong about 'talking'? There is a difference between talking of one's problems, and talking of vivisectioning the country, specially by means which are not so peaceful. The *TULF Manifesto* gave the following path to liberation —

"Liberation - How it will be achieved? The Tamil Nation must take the decision to establish its sovereignty in its homeland on the basis of its right to self-determination. The

only way to announce this decision to the Sinhalese government and to the world is to vote for the Tamil United Liberation Front. The Tamil speaking representatives who get elected through these votes, while being members of the National State Assembly of Ceylon, will also form themselves into the National Assembly of Tamil Eelam which will draft a constitution for the State of Eelam and to establish the independence of the Tamil Eelam by bringing that constitution into operation *either by peaceful means or by direct action or struggle.*

The National Assembly of Tamil Eelam will draw up and implement plans relating to the economic development, social progress, protection of territory, educational development etc.

Action will be taken *to enlist international support to achieve the freedom of Tamil Eelam.* (Tribune - p. 17. 13/8/77.)

The TULF helped create in the minds of the Tamil people in the North and specially of their youth the expectation that Eelam would be set up on the morrow of their victory in the general elections. We can understand this build up of enthusiasm before the Elections. But the TULF leadership has to be careful about the nature of the forces it is helping to unleash both in the North as well as in the South. It is not unfair to say that the TULF election campaign was not designed to sow racial harmony among the Tamils and the Sinhala peoples. If it had been more successful the relations between the Moors (and Malays) and the Sinhalese would also have been embittered. Fortunately the Moors and the plantation workers did not fall for this separatist appeal.

Unfortunately the separatist approach has led quite a few Tamil persons in the North and East to the conviction that even a violent solution is better than the present position of being "second class citizens". They argue that if the Central government uses force to control them, it may be necessary to have recourse to the support of other countries, even for armaments. The situation is further complicated by the existence of youthful terrorists in the Peninsula. They seem to have a certain capacity of hardening separatist positions among the TULF leaders also. The Tamil people have not only to face the injustices which they suffer in the country, they have also to live in fear of their own more violent youth. When these latter clash with the police in Jaffna the situation worsens. Or, when the police do not behave in the best interests of law and order, the militant youth may seem to be right in resorting to violence or counter-violence.

What we wish to point out is that even talk of separation is such a sensitive issue that it can have repercussions in the rest of the country. Even if Eelam is not well thought out or is not viable, the talk of Eelam may bring political success to some, but deadly consequences for others. This is true of the provocative writings or speeches of the Sinhala people also. Newspaper articles such as one advocating that all the Tamils should be sent back to India can be equally hurting to the Tamils. Both such trends build walls of division and animosity among the two races. Not infrequently extremists on either side do not mind it. The extremes may meet in their views: the ordinary people suffer.

A Cause of the Violence ?

We have also to ask ourselves whether one of the causes of the *communal conflagration of August 1977* was not this cry of separation by the TULF. Those who know the historical fears of the Sinhala people and their defensive psychology can appreciate this aspect of the explanation. This is not to justify the violence, particularly since those who suffered were persons innocent of politics and helpless citizens. The concatenation of events leading up to August 1977 can be seen as partly the consequence of the relationships of political parties. As separatism became more vocal and strident during the months of the electoral campaign prior to 21 July 1977, the Sinhala people began to be seriously concerned about it.

When the Election results revealed a solid TULF block of members of Parliament in the North there was apprehension concerning the situation. This was further aggravated by the utterances of TULF leaders after Elections. They were emboldened to speak of setting up Eelam, if necessary even by resort to means other than peaceful ones. The news papers reported such statements made at Wellawatte at the Ramakrishna Mission hall. The interviews to foreign journals - mentioning the likelihood of arms flowing in from foreign countries to support the liberation forces of Eelam - were also reproduced in local news papers. The amendment to the government's policy statement demanding Eelam seemed to indicate that the TULF meant to push towards separation. The mention of Trincomalee as the capital of future Eelam was highly provocative to the Sinhala people. The Prime Minister repeating all this in the Parliament and his speech relayed over the radio also had an impact on the Sinhala people. Thus when the events of August 1977 erupted there was an explosive situation both among the Tamil and the Sinhala people. The politics of separatism and the political debate in parliament and the newspapers were part of the cause of the ghastly brutality

that was unleashed around the 16th August and spread rapidly throughout the country during the next 10 to 14 days. As Mr. S. P. Amarasingham, the Editor of the Tribune stated rather forcefully: If the TULF is to have any credibility - even among the Tamils - it must know what impact the demand for a separate state has had on the Sinhalese mind. Realities must be recognised to formulate credible pronouncements and work out appropriate strategies. One can start a war by misplaced rhetoric. But, one starts a war only when one is ready for it, otherwise it will be a massacre. Whatever one's legal rights or moral justification, The TULF must know the extent of its responsibility, however indirect and vicarious it may be, for the recent communal conflagration. Such realisation will mark the beginning of a new political wisdom essential for the TULF to play its role in the political life of the country today. (*Tribune Editorial, 19/9/1977*).

One of the consequences of separatism is that it tends to make the relationships among the races worse. The TULF leaders may well argue that separation will do good to both sides, and that it can be a peaceful, non-violent operation. But the more it is pressed, the more the existing wounds are deepened. The minds of persons then tend to get blocked. It becomes difficult to see the things that unite us all in Sri Lanka. The positive achievements of the past 30 years are ignored or glossed over. Even the development that the Tamil language, culture and education has witnessed in this period is not given its due significance. After all has not Tamil as a language and vehicle of culture and medium of education progressed more since 1948 than during the 150 years of British rule? Is not the demand for Eelam itself due to the growth of a new generation educated in Tamil - alongside Sinhala youth educated in Sinhala? This education system is showing its drawbacks; but it has also achieved something.

“Eelamism” tends to reduce the existing good will and trust among the persons of different communities. It makes even for a certain melancholy mood of despair among the Tamils - who are thus convinced that there is no way out. The sort of “second class citizenship” feeling is aggravated psychologically even more than it may be in real life. This in turn makes communication more difficult. There is *a vicious circle of worsening relationships*.

On the other hand the acceptance of national unity can engender more good will, harmony and an environment for the acceptance of each other in a plurality and diversity within a more fundamental oneness as a nation.

An Opportunity for Tamil Leaders too

The emphasis on communalist positions has an effect on the Tamils themselves. They concentrate so much on their own problems that they cannot see the sufferings of the other peoples in the country. They became so convinced that the government is a "Sinhala" government that they fail to sympathize with the sufferings of the Sinhala masses. Unemployment, lack of educational facilities, landlessness, police harshness, political favouritism are as much a problem of the peasants of Uva and Sabaragamuwa as of the youth in Jaffna. The children of the Wannu have as little chance of entering the medical faculty as those of Vavuniya and Mullaitivu.

The TULF leaders tend to argue that those are the creation of the Sinhala governments that have ruled the country for 30 years. There is some truth in this. The TULF leaders can help the Sinhala masses also to liberate themselves from an elitist class of all races that dominates the masses. The TULF needs the Sinhala masses too to ensure the rights of the Tamil people (not to mention a market for onions and chillies). The Sinhala masses generally live peacefully with the "Ceylon" and "Indian" Tamils who are settled in what might be regarded by the TULF as the traditional homelands of the Sinhala people.

While the majority community and its leaders are not without blame in communal relations, we may also ask whether the Tamil leadership has not been deficient in not concerning itself with the overall problems of the country specially of the oppressed Sinhala, Moors, Malays and Plantation Tamils? Today the Tamil leaders have an opportunity to return to the political scene as national leaders. They form the main opposition group in Parliament. They can safeguard the human rights of all in this country. They can join the galaxy of Tamil leaders like Ponnambalam Arunachalam and Ponnambalam Ramanathan who were first national heroes while being Tamil leaders also. The sufferings of our time can have a good result if we thus meet this issue.

7. SINHALA FEARS AND GRIEVANCES

For there to be a sensitive dialogue on the issues of race there must be an understanding of the point of view of the different races. When we meet a group of ardent Tamil "Eelamist" supporters from Jaffna, we feel that they have a strong conviction of suffering injustices under the Sinhala "imperialists" - as mentioned in some TULF publications. On the other some

Sinhala groups have an equally firm conviction that the Sinhalese are the people who have been getting a raw deal throughout the past few centuries and even recent decades. A dialogue between these two views and groups is essential for mutual understanding.

Much of the modern history of the relationships among the different groups in Sri Lanka can be understood in terms of interplay of class, race, religion, (caste) age and geographical region. Population wise the majority are Sinhala in race, Buddhist in religion, rural in living and oppressed in socio-economic relationships. The dominant groups have been the Western educated urban elite of all the races. Among these the Burghers and the Tamils in the Northern and the Western provinces were relatively more privileged as a race, the Christians had an advantage among the religious groups. The cities, specially Colombo, dominated much of the political, social, economic and cultural life of the country. The Sinhala Buddhist were among both the dominating and the oppressed masses.

With self government in 1931 and political independence in 1948 the masses of the people began to feel their power as electors. Gradually their political pressure increased and expressed itself in the choice of governments at general elections. The majority Sinhala Buddhist rural oppressed sought relief and redress through the democratic operations of the state. This in turn brought different reactions. The Christians as a religious group accepted the change brought about by the others. They adjusted themselves by and large to the new situation. The struggle of the classes is still continuing with the ups and downs of the different electoral choices. The clash of urban and rural interests continues unabated. The insurrection of 1971 marked a desperate effort of rural youth to turn socialism in their favour.

The problems of race have been also rather intractable. The Sinhala people have had several grievances due to their historical situation. Among these were:-

1. Education and employment
2. Religion and the national (or Sinhala) culture
3. Language
4. Landlessness.

Deeper than all these is a basic Sinhala insecurity given the geo-political situation within the island and in relation to Tamil nad.

As they tried to remedy these, new problems arose. The Tamils felt discriminated against. The balance was tilted in favour of the Sinhalese. Thus the Tamil grievances began to gather momentum and that in terms of these same problems. Education, employment, religion and culture, language and colonization. The Sinhala people used state power to achieve their goals. The Tamils felt the state to be an agent of the oppressive Sinhalese. This went on worsening till some Tamil leaders decided that the only solution is a separate state for themselves.

Here we want to try to understand the Sinhala grievances and the dynamics of Sri Lanka society in terms of the crisscrossing of the forces of race, class, religion, (caste), age group and region.

Often the Tamil people, specially in the Northern peninsula, are not aware of the fears and grievances of the Sinhala people. Even the plantation workers, enclosed as they are within their estates do not have much opportunity of knowing the sufferings of the rest of the country. To the Tamil minority this may seem strange, that the people of the majority community too have their grievances and insecurities. In the previous article of 1.11.76 I referred to the problems of unemployment, landlessness, density of population and the relative socio-economic conditions of the different communities. Mr. Godfrey Gunatilleke dwelt at length on these in Logos Vol. 16, No. 2 of August 1977, pp. 17-40.

A Basic Insecurity

Strange as it may seem, the Sinhala people have a basic fear that they may become a minority in Sri Lanka itself. They are aware of the closeness of India, specially South India with its 50-60 million Tamilians. The Sinhala people are fearful of the cultural domination as well as of the political implications of this closeness to South India. This has a long historical background and a contemporary realism.

Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike gave expression to these misgivings during the language debate in the House of Representatives in October, 1955 when he said:

“I believe there are a not inconsiderable number of Tamils in this country out of a population of eight million. Then there are forty or fifty million people just adjoining, and what about all this Tamil literature. Tamil teachers, even the films, papers, magazines, so that the Tamils in our country are not restricted to the Northern and Eastern provinces alone; there are a large number, I suppose even ten lakhs, in

Sinhalese provinces. And what about the Indian labourers whose return to India is now just fading away into the dim and distant future? The fact that in the towns and villages, in business houses and in boutiques most of the work is in the hands of Tamil-speaking people will inevitably result in a fear, and I do not think an unjustified fear, of the inexorable shrinking of the Sinhalese language " (p. 25 A. J. Wilson: *Politics in Sri Lanka 1947 - 73 MacMillan, 1974*).

In a certain sense the Sinhala people are *a minority in the larger geo-political region of South India and Sri Lanka*. Even though there is an international frontier between them, there is a historical consciousness of having been subject to invasions from South India. This consciousness is now reawakened (since political independence in 1948) by the accent on the study of Sri Lanka history. The Sinhala people are aware that the decline of their rule in Anuradhapura and the pushing of their capital South to Polonnaruwa, and finally Kandy was due also to the Tamil pressure from the North and subsequently the European thrust from the West.

There may be no such danger now. Even the historical data may be debated. Several other causes such as climate and disease may also be attributed to the decline of the Sinhala kingdoms. But what is important is that the Tamil people - both "Ceylon" Tamil and "Indian" Tamil - recognize this deep rooted fear and insecurity among the Sinhala people. They have also the consciousness that the Sinhala race and language can be preserved only in one country in the whole world, that is in this island. The Tamil people are spread out in many countries and continents in substantial numbers to maintain their identity - though they have no independent nation of their own anywhere. Further in South India a Tamil person can feel at home among a Tamil speaking population that is as large as that of France, Italy or Germany, which have their own languages and cultures. But where else can the Sinhala people have their language and culture respected?

Educational Imbalances

The Sinhala people saw that the advantages of education were in favour of the Tamils and the Christians. Hence also employment. The better schools were in the Western coast, the Northern province and the principal cities. This was disadvantageous to the rural areas, the hinterland of the country that was mainly Sinhala and Buddhist. The Tamils of the hinterland, the Muslims and the plantation workers of Indian origin were also very badly off.

But they did not have much political pull in the 1930s and 1940s. The educational imbalance was more marked at the university level.

In 1946, 29.4% of the students in the University of Ceylon were Tamils and 34.8% were Christians. Only 42.4% were Buddhist, the Sinhalese being 61.7%. Muslims were only 2.8%. The Burghers were 4.9%. In the science and medical faculties the proportions were much more favourable to the Christians and Tamils. The geographical distribution was very unfair to the Eastern province (1.1%), North Western province (2.2%), North Central province (0.2%), Uva (1.1%) and Sabaragamuwa (2.8%); whereas the Central province had 6.9%, Southern province 10.8% Northern province 12.4% and Western province 65.5%. The advantage in educational facilities meant also better opportunities in employment and economic and social advancement.

Language, Religion and Culture

At the end of the British rule the Sinhala and Tamil languages were relatively badly off in the country in comparison with English. The rural people knew little English. They were not well received in the government offices. The Sinhala and Tamil educated were second class citizens in their own country.

Buddhism, Hinduism and Islam were not given the same importance as Christianity by the British rulers. This was also a grievance strongly felt by the Sinhala Buddhists who were convinced that without state support they might be submerged by an alien religion. The way of life of the people specially of the Sinhala race was being threatened by Westernization and Modernisation. The westernized elite that had cultural and social status. All these led to a strong sense of grievance among the masses of the people who wanted to shape a new country according to their own languages, religions and cultures. It was the Sinhala people who led in this struggle. Unfortunately their success had the effect of relegating the Tamil language, culture and Hinduism to a second place.

Unemployment and Landlessness

These have been chronic evils in the Sinhala areas, particularly in the hill country. It comes down from the time of the opening up of those areas for the Tea, Rubber and Coconut plantations and the marginalization of the Kandyan peasantry as well as of the low country villagers. The rapid rise of population after the mid 1940s worsened the land-man ratio and increased landlessness

(c.f. Logos Vol: 16 No: 2). The spread of education increased the consciousness of the youth concerning their plight. Extreme poverty has been endemic in the Sinhala villages throughout the decades. The malaria epidemic of 1935 revealed their utter helplessness.

Even though the Sinhala people have had the advantage of governmental policies since 1948 concerning education, employment, religion, language and culture, yet unemployment and landlessness still press heavily on them. The forces of history have concentrated population migration in the wet zone. So also the plantations. With population increase there is pressure for land. From the time of D. S. Senanayake since 1931 there has been a policy of "colonizing" the dry zone, in the Eastern, North Central and Northern areas of the country. Here there is land without much population and without water. It is precisely this area that the Tamils consider their "traditional homelands". Sinhala families are being settled in these areas, as in Amparai and Padaviya. The Tamil grievance is that such a policy would dilute the Tamil presence in those areas. They will gradually be turned into Sinhala regions and electorates. Thus Tamil language and culture would recede further.

The Sinhala grievance is that they have no land. The foreigners and local capitalists took much of their land. A million of "Indian origin" have been settled in their areas. Even the "Ceylon" Tamils have taken up jobs and land in the South. Hence they do not have much opportunities for earning their livelihood. Therefore the government should help them. The Tamil answer is that they have come up on their own efforts without any colonization policy of the government. The Sinhala claim is that the Tamils have an advantage in education. The Tamils might maintain that they are more industrious, thrifty etc..... and so the argument goes on.

The reality is that we are in a tough situation in the country at present. This is also a result of policies of the past 150 years and of the present international economic situation.

The worsening world economic situation of the 1970s has brought about a greater unemployment in the country. Over 1,000,000 out of the 14,000,000 population are unemplyed. These are mainly Sinhala, rural youth. It is they who tried to resolve the issues by the insurrection of 1971.

The Tamil youth also are now feeling the problem of unemployment, reduction of educational opportunities and a sense of losing their traditional homeland areas for colonization by them.

Due to education in the Tamil medium they cannot go abroad for employment or education. Hence there is much unrest among them for the first time in several centuries.

8: RACE, CLASS AND RELIGION IN THE DYNAMICS OF SRI LANKA POLITICS

Politics and Race

During the early decades of this century the Ceylon Reform Movement was led by Sinhala, Tamil, Muslim and Burgher nationalists. There was a *togetherness* among them in their demand for a greater degree of self government for the Ceylonese. They later formed the Ceylon National Congress - inspired also by the great struggle of the Indian National Congress for Swaraj. Thus there grew up a sense of national unity. This was based on a communication in English by the educated elites of all the communities. The values of the British way of life and of liberal democracy were accepted by all of them though in differing degrees.

Much of the post 1931 and post Independence history of Sri Lanka can be understood in terms of the effort specially of the rural Sinhala population, with political electoral power but living on the margin of society in severe poverty, to improve themselves. The European planters, the Christians, the Tamils and the elite classes of all communities were seen as obstacles to the rise of the rural masses. There are many other cross currents such as the struggles of the urban working class for their rights, the problems of the plantation workers and the ideological impact of Marxism, Socialism, secularism and modernization.

After the grant of self-government in internal affairs and universal adult suffrage in 1931, the divergences among the races began to grow. Matters of domestic policy were now being determined by Ceylonese. In 1931-1936 there were Tamil Ministers in the State Council, However in 1936 a Pan-Sinhala Board of Ministers was formed partly in order to help the Board of Ministers to take a clear stand with the British in negotiations for Constitutional Reforms. The Tamils felt powerless and neglected. Mr. G. G. Ponnambalam then campaigned for 50: 50 i. e. in the legislature the minority representatives together should be equal to the number of those of the majority community. The Soulbury Commission sent after the War rejected this demand. The 1947 General Elections were on the basis of the Soulbury Constitution. Ceylon became independent in 1948. Mr. G. G. Ponnambalam was a member of the Cabinets of Mr. D. S. Senanayake and

Dudley Senanayake from 1948 to 1953 on the basis of "responsive co-operation" with the Sinhalese.

Universal suffrage and general elections quickened the political consciousness of the electorate. The disenfranchisement of the plantation workers of Indian origin in 1948 gave a heavy weightage at general elections to the rural areas, specially in the Kandyan districts. Already the Soulbury Constitution gave a weightage to the rural areas by assigning one member for every 1,000 sq. miles, in addition to members according to population. In the Kandyan areas the number of M.Ps was decided on the basis of the total population though only the citizens had the vote.

The result of this situation was that the Sinhala people, specially of the rural areas had effective political power at general elections. They are largely Sinhala Buddhists. But they had no economic power, social status or cultural standing. Economic power was with the capitalist class of all communities and the foreign companies; social status was mainly enjoyed by the urban Westernized elite. Culturally English and the Western way of life dominated our society. When the British transferred political power to the people of this country, the groups they had favoured inherited state power and its advantages. These groups were the Western educated local elite of all races.

The UNP Governments of 1947-1956 did not give much room for the rural population to assert themselves. Yet the "Free Education" scheme introduced in 1945 and the change in the medium of instruction to Sinhala and Tamil prepared the way for the rise of a social consciousness among the poorer people of all communities. At that time the social pressures were not so acute. The population was half the present one. There was enough foreign exchange due to the reserves built up during the war and thanks to the Korean war boom.

Language

During the mid 1950s the pressures of the Sinhala groups began to increase, specially with the Report of the Buddhist Commission. The government of *Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike (1956-1959)* changed the official language from English to Sinhala. This was not intended to be an anti-Tamil law, it was directed against English. But militant Sinhala pressure prevented Mr. Bandaranaike from making adequate provisions for Tamil. The 1956 MEP Coalition of Mr. Bandaranaike represented a thrust of the rural middle class against the Western oriented urban elite. It

took a pro-socialistic turn in economic affairs and international politics, in comparison to earlier governments.

The Marxist led parties espoused mainly the cause of the working class, particularly in the urban areas. Since 1956 some of them joined the SLFP or UNP governments in support of populist and reform policies. Thus continual political pressure came up around issues such as "free education", medium of education, schools take over, official language, place for Buddhism in the country, nationalization policies and land reforms.

In the period after 1956, the Tamils, Christians and urban capitalists had their privileges somewhat reduced. The "*Sinhala Only*" Act made it easier for the Sinhala people to enter the public service. The policy of "*Sinhala Only*" was qualified by provisions for "the reasonable use of the Tamil language" in education, and in certain administrative spheres. Though the demand for employment on the basis of religion and race and for key appointments to be reserved for Sinhala Buddhists was not conceded by any Government, yet there was a tendency to emphasize ethnic considerations in the public services to the disadvantage of the Ceylon Tamils. This is how gradually Ceylon Tamils who earlier had the advantage, began to feel and complain of discrimination.

The Rise and Resolution of Religious Tensions?

During the 1950s there were tensions on religious lines specially between Buddhists and Christians. In the period from 1956-1965 *the pressure on the Christians* increased. The entry of foreign missionaries had been stopped already by 1953. Those who were here were not so readily permitted to continue. The contract of the nursing sisters for service in the State hospitals was terminated. The most important step was the nationalization of the schools in 1961. Only a few Grade I and II schools were allowed to remain out of this scheme. Even they were not authorized to charge fees. The Christians, specially the Catholics, mounted a strong campaign against the "Schools Take Over" leading up to the physical occupation of the schools during 6 weeks in defiance of the law. But eventually they gave in. They had to come to terms with the State. They did not oppose later pro-Buddhist measures such as the shift of the weekly holiday to the Poya day instead of Sunday, or the Republican Constitution of 1972 when it declares that the Republic "shall give to Buddhism the foremost place and accordingly it shall be the duty of the State to protect and foster Buddhism".

The Schools Take Over was the bitterest blow that Christians had to face since the Dutch left our shores in 1796. Yet it was at the same time a sort of liberation for them, from being a privileged group in Sri Lanka society. They could now enter into the main stream of national life. The Schools Take Over did not however effect very much the class bias of the educational system. The elitist public and private schools continued as before to serve mainly the more affluent. Thus the class solidarity of the rich proved more effective than the divisions according to religion.

Religion, race and class are not exactly similar in their impact on social life and public policy. However the experience of the Moor and Malay races, the Muslim religion and of the Christians in Sri Lanka can be of some relevance in our approach to the present problems of race. The Moors and Malays have generally lived in harmony with the rest of the people in Sri Lanka. The Muslims have found a way of preserving their religious practices and traditions through the centuries and within vast changes. It is only in more recent years that they are beginning to benefit in a somewhat proportionate manner from the policies of education of successive governments.

The Christians have gone through a traumatic experience of having to adjust themselves to political independence and safeguard their rights within a democratic society. It is through an approach of give and take that a way of living together has to be worked out. In the long term the changes effected in the 1950s and 1960s can be a help the development of an indigenous Christian culture. At the same time Christians have also to contribute towards the shaping of democratic and socialistic policies and participate in the cause of national harmony in the present phase of our country's development. The experience of these two racial and religious minorities may be of some value in the present issue when the two major racial groups have to evolve a way of respecting each other's rights and fulfilling their obligations. The fact that there are Sinhalese and Tamil-speaking Moors and Malays and Christians can also be a cementing force within this country in its crisis of national unity.

The change in the medium of instruction to Sinhala and Tamil tended to *integrate the people within the linguistic groups*. Now we seem to have a situation in which there is more understanding within the Sinhala and Tamil racial groups. The differences between Hindus and Christians among the Tamils have been reduced. There are supporters for Eelam or for one Sri Lanka among both religious groups. The traditional caste divisions in the North also seem to be rather submerged in the face of the wider issue of the future of

the Tamil people. August 1977 has sharpened the trends in these directions. These are situations which we notice and need to be taken account of in facing these problems. It shows the extent to which race can be an uniting and a dividing factor.

The Reaction of Burghers, Moors and Malays

The *Burghers* are generally Christian in religion, Euro-Asian in racial composition, and English speaking in language - at least till recently. They have contributed much to Ceylon's political evolution in the past, but are now too few to be a major influence in the country - though their presence can be quite significant as in the appointment of former Justice M. C. Sansoni as the head of a Commission to inquire into the recent racial disturbances.

The Burghers went through a hard time in the 1950s and 1960s. Many of them felt they could not accomodate themselves, specially their children's education to the emerging trends in Ceylon and migrated to other countries, specially Australia and Canada. Those who remain here are being assimilated to the rest of the population.

The *Moors and Malays* are in distinct situation. They are quite different as races and together in religion. They are also somewhat divided on language. Many of them are Tamil speaking, but quite a number know Sinhala and have their education in Sinhala; but neither Sinhala nor Tamil is their original racial language. Hence they do not seek their identity specifically in a language or culture. Religion is more an identifying base for them. Geographically they are dispersed in the country. Hence they cannot be happy with any proposals for separation of the country into sovereign states. They will become very small minorities in two racial states, and this will be much less satisfactory than at present.

The resolution of the religious issues in the period prior to 1965 has also meant an acceptance of their identity as peoples with a distinct religion and rights in this country. Since independence their educational opportunities have been expanding. With the rise of the Arab States and of the Islamic countries in Asia and Africa to world power positions, the Moors and Malays have also got a greater sense of their identity in the world at large. The position of Sri Lanka as an important base of the non-aligned countries movement makes them feel at home within a united Sri Lanka that is respected by the "Third World" and non-aligned countries.

We have to take these factors into account in trying to understand the political configuration in Sri Lanka in 1977. They help to explain both the greater agreement in the North and among the Ceylon Tamils in general as well as the differences between the North and the more Muslim areas of the East, Mannar and Puttalam.

Class Issues

In the period since 1956 there has been a trend to reduce the disparities between the *urban rich and rural poor*. Measures such as the nationalization of the bus services, the taxation policies, the subsidies on food and the guaranteed price for agricultural products and the 1972 land reforms were designed to help the poor. Prior to 1957 the Bus Companies with their owners (Mudalalies) were among the chief supporters of the conservative UNP. They largely financed the UNP election campaigns of 1952 and 1956. The Ceylon Tamil peasants who cultivated chillies, onions and paddy also benefitted from these measures.

During the past 20 years a new class of industrial and commercial elite emerged under the protection of the State. They profitted from the import restrictions and the shortages of goods. Some of them belonged to the rural elite that had come to the forefront in the post 1956 era. The very poor peasantry did not benefit much from these "socialistic" and nationalist trends due to oppression by the new elite in power in conjunction with the earlier upper classes.

The attack on *foreign capital* was pushed ahead by the SLFP governments of 1956-65 and 1970-77. The coalition with the Marxists gave greater strength to this. The oil and insurance companies were nationalized between 1960-65. The foreign plantations were nationalized in 1975, as were also several foreign industrial and commercial ventures. Foreign enterprise seemed to be on the way out from Sri Lanka. But after September 1975 the SLFP began to make strong overtures for foreign investment. The new UNP government is now pledged to provide special facilities for foreign investors including the setting up of a Free Trade Zone or export promotion sector. It would thus seem that the struggle of the rural masses against foreign exploitation may be successful in the agricultural sector, but not in industry and trade. At this stage in October 1977 the initiative seems to have passed to the capitalist class once again. They now have the support of a strong local technocratic elite also.

Tension in the Plantation Areas

The *plantation workers* of Indian origin were another group that felt the pressure of the permanent population of the country. The peasantry in the Kandyan areas and the dry zone have a historical grievance against the British policy of beginning plantations and bringing in Indian labour who now number over a million persons. It was this pressure that led to the negotiations between the governments of India and Sri Lanka and the Sirima-Shastri and Indira-Sirima agreements. In pursuance of this policy about 210,000 persons were repatriated to India between 1970-1977, and correspondingly about 140,000 from among those who are here were given Sri Lanka citizenship. The Land Reforms of 1972 and specially 1975 opened up possibilities of redistributing marginal plantation lands to the peasantry. As the Indian citizens left this country there were more openings for the Sinhalese.

Tens of thousands of innocent plantation workers were the worst affected by the communal disturbances of August 1977. Several persons were killed and their poor lines looted and burnt. What could be the cause of this eruption of communal violence in the hill country? Could it be mere looting, or politically inspired revenge after the general elections? We are inclined to think that the prevailing economic and social difficulties of the poor in the hill country and the North Western Province might have sought a relief in such actions. It could be a conscious or unconscious search for more jobs and land. This could be one of the causes of this violence.

With the nationalization of the plantations the conditions of some of these workers has been improved. Their wages have been raised to a position comparable to the rest of the working class. Their housing conditions are being improved. There is a demand for monthly wages and talk of workers obtaining a share in management. The trade unions feel they can deal more directly and with greater hope with the State which is the new owner.

On the other hand with the return to India of about 200,000 Tamil workers, Sinhala labour has been recruited in larger numbers to work on the tea and rubber estates. Some rural families have received land under the land reforms of 1972 and 1975. They now see potentialities of employment on the estates. Gradually workers in these will have conditions similar to those in other state enterprises - with possibly ill effects on the economy.

Thus the hill country is witnessing a period of *great social mobility and pressure*. We can see in the recent violence in these areas some sort of a releasing of these tensions, and even a push of the

villagers against the plantation workers of Indian origin. The political angle can also be seen in so far as the plantation workers of Indian origin are said to have voted for the UNP (as Mr. Thondaman their leader said in Parliament); and the SLFP was roundly defeated in the hill country also. Political frustrations could thus combine with racial jealousies to bring about this unfortunate eruption of violence.

Now that this dynamic has been begun, if there is no large scale increase in employment in the hill country, the dry zone or in the industrialized low country, we could expect mounting pressures on the estates from the surrounding village unemployed. We may blame the thugs for the violence, but we have to realize that there is a situation in which violence is endemic specially given the socio-political pressures unleashed by the land reforms and the expectations generated by the political campaign around them. Here too we can see a meeting place between the causes of the 1971 insurrection and the communal violence of 1977.

This is most unfortunate; and bad for the economy itself. But when social conditions deteriorate, people look for a way out. Further, communalism has been roused in recent months in the country by the Tamil demand Eelam, which in itself is a cry of frustration. Unfortunately communalism makes the poor of different races fight instead of turning their attention to the real causes which are due to a lack of productivity and bad distribution of income and wealth. Communal tensions put class consciousness in the background.

If this assessment has some element of correctness in it, then we must take a long term view of the Sinhala grievances to understand the build of these pressures as the economic situation worsens, and population grows. *This is not to justify violence by anybody.* But we must see the deeper causes and try to solve them radically, if there is to be an environment in which the different communities can live in harmony in Sri Lanka. The reactions of communal groups are not often rational and well thought out. But when they are so widespread as was the August violence, there are generally deep seated causes of a social, economic and psychological nature. This is also true of the Tamil feeling of frustration and hopelessness.

The present configuration

The dynamics of forces in Sri Lanka society have thus brought about a situation in which the earlier dispossessed and less well off Sinhala majority has asserted itself through the democratic

process of self government. The others have had to respond to this pressure. The Burghers have left the country or have to accept to be gradually assimilated among the Sinhala or Tamil language streams. The Christians have generally adopted themselves to the new national situation, with the elite still having their private schools. The Muslims have accommodated themselves to these social thrusts and advanced with them. They have cast their lot mainly with the majority community. The Ceylon Tamils now feel the severe pressures of the contraction of the economy. They are unwilling by and large, to accept a rather less favourable position than in the past. The plantation workers are veering away from the coalition with the Ceylon Tamils in the TULF. They are still the worst off in an overall sense.

While the racial situation is thus polarized into a Sinhala-Tamil issue, the country has taken a capitalist turn in relation to the class issues. The new UNP Government has promised populist measures of cheap food and jobs or insurance against unemployment. The local and foreign capitalist classes also get much encouragement. A strong government is the order of the day. The pro socialist SLFP has been decimated, the Marxists have been electorally routed and are temporarily in disarray.

The future will tell us whether the issues of race will predominate or whether the class interests will call the tune to our social relations in the coming years. The organized working class is keen on racial amity. The government is pledged to solve the problems of race. If the economy expands and if the racial extremes do not clash, Sri Lanka may be on the way to a peaceful resolution of the racial tensions that have developed over the past 40-50 years. If on the other hand the divisions grow and racial troubles erupt again we shall have neither a viable Eelam nor a prosperous Sri Lanka, but rather an insurmountable chaos in which our country will deteriorate rapidly. Hence the urgent need of a concerted action for inter racial understanding in the coming months and years.

9. INTER RACIAL UNDERSTANDING

When we speak of the fears and grievances of the Sinhala and Tamil peoples we get the impression that the issues are very serious and almost unsolvable. This becomes worse when a group is closed up in a ghettoish situation and has little contact with others. Those who have gone through the nightmare of physical harm, loss of property and mental anguish can hardly think of the problems with equanimity.

Yet the fact is that in almost the whole country, Sinhala, Tamil, Moor, Malay and Burgher people live in peace and harmony with each other. They work together, and live close to each other. Inter marriages is not uncommon. The normal relations of good will are however not news. They do not make headlines in the local or world press. They are only in our subconscious as a reality of peace and unity. It is the occasions of disturbance that are recorded and studied. 1915, 1958 and August 1977 are remembered in the popular mind and the books of history. The decades of peaceful relations in between seem interludes in a story of violence and conflict. This is true both in relation to time and to geography. The study of our island history is also similar. Chesterton once wrote that if a dog bites a man it is not news, but if a man bites a dog it will catch the headlines. This is true also of the public attention paid to race relations. Conflicts, invasions, wars and destruction are recorded and remembered. The centuries of peaceful inter-penetration of life and culture are taken for granted and not given their due weightage in the historical analysis of the issues.

The consideration of the grievances of the Tamil and Sinhala peoples all the same shows, that there is need of a great deal of mutual understanding between them. We are all in a poor country within a poor and long exploited Continent of Asia and a marginalized 'Third World'. If we do not understand the common cause of our misery in the world, and of the plight of the poor of all races within our country, we will not be able to resolve our problems. On the contrary it is likely that we will tend to see Tamils and Sinhalese as enemies of each other, This will be to the detriment of both, as well as of the country as a whole. For the growth of a meaningful understanding there has to be an honest effort at knowing each other's point of view. Through this knowledge we must come to a larger and higher synthesis in which we transcend racial differences and make common cause as human beings. After all, race is an accident of birth. It is neither a merit nor a defect. It is not something to be proud of, nor to be apologetic about.

But race is a reality. Race can divide people. It can blind them towards other races. It can also generate loyalties even unto much suffering and hardship. It has to be taken into account. When socio-economic conditions worsen, racial issues tend to get aggravated. Then there is likely to be a *vicious circle of racial conflicts leading to worse economic conditions* and hence more conflict. Suspicions grow among the races. Small issues get inflated. Tensions rise; prejudices come to the surface. Hatred is generated. Tensions get exasperated. Anything can then

cause a major conflagration. Mass communal disturbances do not take place unless there has been a large scale generation of discontent, distrust and animosity in the country at large. The activities of the leadership of different racial and governmental groups have a greater causality for such disturbances, than the actual process of looting and violence may indicate. Violence is caused by the underworld. The causes of violence are generally in the socio-economic situation and the attitude of the leadership to them. In 1915, 1958 and in 1977 the activities of the prominent citizens, political leaders and governments in power had brought about an estrangement of the peoples before violence erupted on an open and mass scale.

To foster inter-racial understanding we must *combat the obstacles* to it. These include actual injustices as well as prejudices and ignorance. Hence it is necessary at an intellectual level to critically evaluate the causes of tensions and the grievances of the different groups. We should try to see what is the element of truth in them, and try to remedy the injustices. In so far as there are myth, prejudice, ignorance and misunderstandings we should try to remove them by rational reflection and the creation of an environment in which trust and confidence are generated. If we begin with distrust it is extremely difficult to resolve the issues. On the other hand when we begin with respect and trust, even the more difficult problems can be faced amicably. This is similar to the problems within a family. If there is talk of separation, situations contend to worsen. When there is a desire to stay together, difficult issues can be faced—provided one party does not take advantage of this to continually harass the other.

It is in this spirit that we try to consider the different grievances as felt by the Sinhala and Tamil peoples. The Tamil grievances come out clearly from the TULF 1977 Election manifesto and the 1976 Vaddukoddai declaration in favour of Eelam. We have tried to gather together some of the Sinhala grievances and interpret them within the context of Sri Lanka's socio-political evolution of the last fifty years. From the 1920s the racial divergences have been building up i.e. from the time a certain amount of effective political power began to be in the hands of the Ceylonese. The togetherness of Sinhala and Tamil was mainly against British colonialism. But since the 1920s political differences have begun to develop between the leaders of these two communities. We have now come to a point where we must either start healing them or live in an uneasy truce which might even lead to separation with all its dire consequences. Hence the urgency and the importance of facing these issues.

We must look into the questions of language and culture, education and employment, decentralization of power, colonization, fundamental rights and national integration. In India this was a high priority soon after Independence - partly due to the trauma of division into India and Pakistan, and partly due to the variety of races, languages and religions in India and the statesmanship of India's then leadership. Sri Lanka, having more favourable economic circumstances and less divisions took more time to come to grips with this issue. The absence of the Marxist parties in the new Parliament makes the racial clashes more direct. The antagonisms of class may get diverted to a racial direction. The difficulties due to an overall contraction of the economy and an increasingly difficult world situation may be less noticed than the discrimination and irritations due to race. The new militancy of the youth in the North can be understood in this context. They tend to think that their future cannot lie within a united Sri Lanka but in a self-determination for the Tamils. In the anguish of their distress and in the relative isolation of the North, they fail to give due importance to the misery of all the poor in the country and in the rest of the exploited world.

A. Examination of the Issues

The grievances and issues raised need to be analysed as dispassionately as possible in order to work for justice peacefully among the races. Factual analysis is required on many issues. Psychological factors, which do not enter into the general socio-economic statistics, have also an important bearing and need to be taken into account.

(1) Education

The complaint of the Tamils is that they do not get fair treatment today. The grouse of the Sinhalese is that the Tamils have better facilities and have been better off during a whole century. The Muslims are just coming up. The data on this question can be more easily gathered. If distinctions are also made between the social classes and the geographical regions of the country - the problem may seem more socio-economic than racial. "Standardization" at the University Entrance level was a problem for the Tamils. The new government has abolished it. The question of fair play in admissions remains, and a solution needs to be found for it.

(2) Employment

There seems to be some justification in the Tamil position that the North and East have been neglected in public sector investment policies. Future planning and decentralization of the

administration should help remedy this. There are also charges of *discrimination* in employment. Both Sinhala and Tamil groups make the accusation. The data needs to be looked into again with a sense of the differences of time and space, of history and geography, and of cultural and social groups. Discrimination in employment, promotions etc. are more difficult to resolve by legislation or judicial processes. An *Ombudsman* may serve a useful purpose, up to a point. It is much more important that there be general good will, understanding, fair play and trust for otherwise it will be extremely difficult to overcome this issue. The same is true of discrimination on the basis of political party affiliations. The youth of the North have also to understand that unemployment has been and is a major problem in the Sinhalese areas too. Perhaps the youth in the North are beginning to feel unemployment as a serious problem for themselves only now; and it comes over to them as being a result of racial discrimination.

(3) Language and Culture

Here the issues can be more easily identified in terms of public policy, even though the sensitivities may be more acute. The Tamil people's right to the use and development of their language should be recognised by the rest of the country and provided for in the Constitution. The Tamil people should on the other hand help Sinhala also develop and not to be submerged by English specially to the detriment of the poorer masses. Cussedness of officials should be counteracted whether it be against Tamil in using Sinhala, or against both in preferring English.

It has also to be recognized that the policies for the promotion of the Swabasha have helped the development of both the Sinhala and Tamil. During the past 30 years both these languages and cultures have been strengthened in Sri Lanka. Our present problems are partly due to this. A new generation has grown up with Sinhala or Tamil only, and they cannot communicate with each other, while being intensely pro-Sinhala or pro-Tamil.

In the long term there seems to be no alternative to both the Sinhala and Tamil people learning each other's languages. This could best begin at school level. Appreciating each other's cultures is also of immense value. In fact this takes place imperceptibly in music and art. It can be further fostered. The reform of the content, methods, and structures of education is an urgent priority in this regard. We are now beginning to perceive the disadvantages of linguistic segregation at school level. The teaching of history, geography, social studies, religion, literature etc. need to be rethought in terms of building national harmony.

If we do so, the very sufferings of August 1977 may bear fruit in the long term in building a bi-lingual nation. English is also now more readily recognized as a necessary world language that should be available to all.

(4) "Colonization"

Concerning this grievance of the Tamils we have first to find the data of the government's policies during the past 40-50 years. How many colonists have actually been settled in what are called the "traditional homelands". How many of these are Sinhalese? How many electorates have changed their racial composition due to this? Is this a real danger or only a fear which may not be based on facts? Does the government have a duty to try to reduce population pressure and unemployment in the country by population migrations. How can this be done without injustice to the races? Is separation into sovereign States likely to resolve this issue? Can we find peaceful means for it? Instead of transplanting standing armies, police and customs officials on a new 400 mile (?) land frontier. The data seems to indicate that colonization has not taken place much in the Northern province or the sea coast of the Eastern province. Is there agreement as to what are the "traditional homelands" of the Sinhala or Tamil people. What of the right of Tamils to settle anywhere in Sri Lanka and the plantation workers migration to most provinces of Sri Lanka.

Are not the real solution to be found in a different approach that would seek economic development through national integration, social justice and self reliance on a socialistic basis?

(5) Administrative Decentralization

Over the past 50 years the Tamil leaders' demands have been successively for separate representation in the legislature, weightage for the minorities, 50: 50; federalism and now Eelam. The Sinhala leaders have been against separate racial constituencies, (the Donoughmore and Soulbury Commissions did not favour these) against parity or a balancing of forces and against separation. They have accepted weightage in terms of land area since 1947. They have got rid of the special guarantees for minorities in Sec. 29 of the 1947 Constitution. But both SLFP and UNP have separately and at different times accepted some form of regional or district decentralization. The new UNP government is also in favour of this for the whole country. Therefore this can now be effected. The Central Government must be prepared to effectively decentralize and not merely delegate authority to

the local bodies including district or regional councils. This is an important area of dialogue and implementation that can considerably ease racial tensions. It can also provide Tamil leaders a valuable opportunity of creative sharing in governmental power.

It will also help the different provinces to develop a sense of their own identity and self-reliance without being too subject to domination by values and priorities determined by the Colombo Metropolitan complex. An important question is the extent of powers to be given to the regions or districts or to be retained by the Central government. Evidently defence, foreign affairs, finance, planning, and justice will have to be with the Center; subjects such as education, culture, and health can be decentralized. Economic development will probably be shared. These are matters for discussion and negotiation.

(6) Fundamental Rights

Many of the problems of race concern public policy. If the actions of the State and its agencies can be prevented from being unjust, then a good deal of irritations can be reduced if not removed. The enshrining of fundamental rights of the racial groups in the Constitution and making them justiciable is one means of preventing injustice by governmental agencies. In India this was done soon after Independence. One disadvantage in this, is that it may prevent progressive legislation needed for social change as for instance, if the right to private property is thus guaranteed.

The issue of fundamental rights is a general problem affecting all persons, and as such could be canvassed on a broader framework. The rights to free speech, publication, association and meeting are rights which concern all citizens. Our experience of self-government since 1948 seems to indicate that there will be a definite advantage in guaranteeing such rights in the Constitution. The problem is that such rights can be suspended as under "Emergency" rule. Naturally such rights are limited by a basic acceptance of a democratic frame work of government by consent. The State will not permit groups who plan for its overthrow by violence such rights to free association and movement. On the other hand the existence of provisions and facilities for the free expression of opinion is one way of allowing issues to surface themselves in public. Thus peaceful solutions are likely to be found for them by the process of give and take following rational discussion.

In order that fundamental rights be effective they need to be guaranteed through institutional devices. For instance the freedom of the Press and of the Mass Media could be ensured by the

governing boards of the nationalized press and the Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation being appointed by the major political parties together and not only by the Government of the day.

The resolution of the problems of race in our country is going to take at least a decade or more, in the most favourable circumstances. It requires a change-1) in the attitudes of the people of the different races to each other, 2) in their relationships in society and 3) in the socio-political and economic structures of the country. Our programmes of action have therefore to be both immediate and short term and continuing and long term. Now that immediate physical violence has subsided we should lay stress on the basic issues that confront the people and take a racial turn in their manifestations.

B. Overcoming Internal Obstacles

The barriers to racial harmony are not only in the problems external to the individual person such as those mentioned earlier. Race has a capacity of building a togetherness among a group to the exclusion of others. Other factors such as language, culture and religion can reinforce such a uniting bond and dividing line. Hence the action for inter racial harmony should include a programme for overcoming such barriers within each one of us. This is both an individual and a collective task. It requires an examination of the issues preferably in a group and an overcoming of the narrowness of communal prejudice and myths.

This is not an easy task; for the *socio-cultural* conditioning of a group can be very strong and deeprooted. It gets communicated from one's youngest days. In Sri Lanka the belonging to a particular race has an enormous impact on a family, its mentality, relationships and expectations in life. Where one lives, what one eats, the way one cooks, dresses, speaks and behaves in society are partly determined or influenced by the fact of race. In our country being a Sinhalese, Tamil, Moor, Malay or Burgher implies a certain type of response to the factors mentioned above. Even within each group there are differences as between Portuguese and Dutch Burghers, low country and Kandyan Sinhalese, "Ceylon Tamils" and "Indian Tamils" etc. Earlier society was based on the emphasis on the differences as shown, for instance, in the diversities of dress. Today the modernization of life and a scientific approach to reality is helping remove a good deal of these differences. Youth like to wear "unisex" clothes as if to tell the world that the difference of sex is not so fundamental as it is made to appear or is thought of in society.

Communal relationships may contain injustices as in the case of the domination of one race by another due to economic, political or military power. To that extent the feelings of being unfairly treated by the more powerful is not a prejudice but the reflection of the state of affairs in a society. Thus the Tamils in Sri Lanka specially in the plantations may have a legitimate grievance against the rest of the country if they are deprived of a chance of cultural expression and survival as a race. Or the Sinhala people in Uva, Sabaragamuwa and the Wannu may be justly convinced that the rest of the society including the "Ceylon" Tamils do not provide them adequate opportunities of education or employment.

Prejudice is something that is not totally based on reality. It tends to view reality from a narrow one sided perspective. Prejudice is a state of mind that perceives unfairly the ones against whom there is such a pre-judgement. When we are prejudiced our judgment is coloured, pre-weighted against some one or thing. Thus during centuries the Christians were prejudiced against the Jews. During the situations such as a war, prejudice is heightened to fever pitch. The British thought ill of the Germans, the "Huns" during the two world wars. Then persons are not judged as persons, but as merely belonging to a given race and therefore having pre-determined vices (or virtues). These are "stereotypes" into which we place persons and peoples: Thus in Europe the Northerners tend to think of South Europeans as not so industrious, but easy going and care free. The Southerners consider the Northerners to be hard working but melancholic, stoic and exacting disciplinarians. Even words embody these prejudices, e.g. German discipline, the Ugly American, the Russian bear.

One of the ways of overcoming prejudice is to take stock of the situation rationally, to analyse reflectively our own mentalities. Some have gone through this process in having to deal with religious prejudice; or in the women's movements against sexism. In religious prejudice there has been a tendency towards exclusivism, monopoly of truth or of salvation.

It is only in very recent decades that many peoples have begun to live consciously and actively in an environment of religious plurality and tolerance. This has been due to a growth in secularity, rationality, the spirit of scientific inquiry, travel and interrelations among persons of different religions. As the prejudices were dropped the religions themselves learnt more of each other and of the universalist core of their own faith and tradition. The movement for inter religious understanding was both a question of justice to the different religions, as well as an *internal liberation* for persons and religious groups. They had to liberate

themselves from prejudice; from falsehood; from unfair judgments; misunderstandings; myths about themselves and others; from hypocritical assumptions about their own truthfulness or virtue.

Liberation from group prejudice is a difficult process. It requires a rupture within one's own self. It demands a frank and honest personal and group evaluation; self criticism and assessment. When there is prejudice as between two persons the judgment is warped. One can think of prejudice as also favouring some one. A parent and child can be prejudiced in favour of each other; Prejudice is a form of error and untruthfulness. It takes hold of us. It conditions our psychological reflexes. To overcome it we must consciously foster correct assessments, values and attitudes in our own minds. Thus a person can overcome an antipathy for another by deliberately accustoming oneself to see the good in that person. By this favourable attitudes are fostered. Gradually this new mentality begins to influence his thoughts and actions.

This is also true of group thoughts, reactions and reflexes. Thus the women's movements have been partly successful in making themselves and males aware of the forms of oppression they suffer and from which they seek liberation. Among racial groups a similar process of freeing ourselves from injustices in external reality and in our minds is necessary. For this there has to be a *mass re-education* of ourselves. Part of this can take place in the context of formal school education - such as through the content and context of the school curriculum. The main thrust has, however, to be in the wider adult society. For the adults influence the children even before they enter a school. Mass education has to take place through the various organizations and agencies that form the popular mind, e.g. religions, trade unions, voluntary organizations, political parties, other professional, scientific and cultural associations, youth and women's movements and specially the mass media such as the press, radio and cinema.

A *methodology* has to be evolved for this process of building racial harmony in our society. It should be a conscious effort by groups that are concerned with national unity and the welfare of our people. Negatively it will mean combatting divisiveness. This in turn requires an action for communal justice and a combat against racial prejudice. Positively there should be the fostering of mutual understanding and friendship. The modern methods of community building, of encounter, dialogue, group therapy can be fruitfully utilized for this cause. These require careful preparation, sensitivity to others, and consistent follow up work.

9. TYPES AND LEVELS OF ACTION FOR NATIONAL HARMONY

In order to promote national harmony action is required at different levels: personal and group, local, regional and national, long term and short-term. We deal here mainly with the long term action.

Political Action

Political action is required in order to resolve the problems at national level. The laws concerning language, or fundamental rights can be resolved only by the legislature. Administrative discrimination has to be combatted by the executive at the national and local levels. The impact of the main mass media depends much on policy decisions by the government.

By political action we do not mean that a person has necessarily to join a political party. This is not excluded; but it is not essential. What is needed is that there be an impact at the political level - on public opinions, parties, governmental agencies etc. In this sense we are all involved in politics. There is no real neutrality. If we are indifferent when some of our fellow human beings are being hit, we may be accomplices in the crime. If we love this country and its peoples can we be unconcerned when there is a threat of dividing it? Political solutions depend on political pressures, specially in a democracy. In Sri Lanka all of us have a political responsibility for this issue. We must participate in this process of active nation building. We can all at least influence our members of Parliament, the local political parties and leaders. We can *write a letter* to the press, or to different political leaders. If the members of Parliament get letters urging them to resolve this problem early in a just and peaceful manner they will be more aware of such public opinion.

Cultural Action

Another level is *cultural action* for national harmony. This can be quite varied. Educational reforms are a part of a cultural programme for inter racial understanding. The appreciation of one another's cultures is a very important aspect of the growth of people to a sense of unity in diversity. The different cultures are a richness of a country. We must learn to appreciate the cultures of the Tamil, Burgher, Moor, Malay and Sinhala people. Cultural festivities or evenings when songs, dance and other celebrations of the peoples could be performed can be a powerful means of building mutual appreciation.

These cultures can and have influenced one another. Our culture can be richer for being in communication with another culture. Children readily learn the songs, dances, musical instruments of other cultures. Music is an universal language. The dance is a means of communication which young and old enjoy. It is one of the surest means of bringing about communication among the youth of different countries in spite of differences of language or ideology. Cultural action for social harmony can include the fostering of the study of Sinhala and Tamil both in the schools as well as in non-formal education. Folklore, the stories children learn, the popular religiosity and festivities can all help the growth of harmony if they contain a message of justice with peace.

Artists, writers, journalists, teachers and other moulders of opinion have a considerable responsibility in this regard too. Too often the art forms tend to emphasize the differences or idiosyncracies of people and groups and not their unity and harmony. Films, theatre, songs, records, picture-stories, skits, short stories, essay writing, posters etc. can all be means of communicating this message to the people - perhaps beginning with the youth. All these can contribute towards a cultural reorientation of our people as a whole. We have to effect a sort of cultural revolution, a mental regeneration towards living in genuine racial harmony.

Our generation has to face this problem of cultural understanding more seriously and directly, because the languages have been developed and that separately. Education has spread. English and a Westernized form of culture can unite only a small elite. The mass of the population of each community can communicate only in one language. Hence the urgent need of cultural appreciation. On the other hand the fear of cultural extinction or deprivation leads a community to feel repressed, discriminated against the victimized. This generation has to face and resolve this issue by evolving the sense of a *Sri Lankan culture* that is pluralistic and yet has a certain oneness in the wider world and at a deeper level of understanding and values which we all share in this country.

Religious Action

Action at the *religious level* is another important sphere. This includes both the action by organized religious groups and the moral motivation of all persons towards national harmony with justice. Racism and racial discrimination are evils which all human beings should combat out of a sense of morality and

righteousness. This is the ultimate level of motivation against individual and group selfishness of which racist approaches are one expression. The moral consideration of the universal human rights is a basis on which all persons can work to overcome the present ills in our intercommunal relations.

The action of the organized religions can give form and expression to this moral sentiment for justice and peace among our peoples. The foundations of all our religions are in unselfishness and service to others. All religions emphasize the sisterhood and brotherhood of all human beings, they stress peacefulness and consideration for others. Even if historically the religious have not infrequently, been causes of division and wars among peoples, today they are increasingly coming together as agents of human understanding. This is a world wide phenomenon.

In Sri Lanka we have four major world religions: Buddhism, Islam, Hinduism and Christianity. They are fairly substantial groups, spread out in the country, so that their impact can be very significant. One of the important levels of action for national harmony can therefore be the linking of religious groups both nationally and locally. If the religious leaders—both clerical and lay—join hands in a serious and sincere search for a resolution of our problems, it would be a firm foundation for national harmony.

Such inter-religious action requires a *nation wide campaign*. During the height of the troubles of August 1977 all religious bodies appealed for harmony. Now that the violence has been tamed, it is necessary that the religious leaders get together to build positive peace with justice. Religions should not be active only to prevent violence or to come out during emergencies. They can be the builders of a stable Sri Lanka community in a longer term manner.

This is a challenge to the religions? Did they understand the problems which the country was facing? Were the ordinary day to day activity around the temple, kovil, mosque and church sufficiently related to peoples real problems? Are they aware of the deeper causes of violence within our society: the violence of grave inequality, unemployment, of luxurious living for a few and some others eating out of dustbins and sleeping on pavements? How are the religions related to the explosive underworld of crime, drugs, pickpocketing and robbery? How far have these been caused by the injustices and unemployment of our society? Can religions undertake a quest for a national solution of such problems - at least in so far as they are a by product of social injustices?

Each religion has a special responsibility in the present crisis. The *Buddhists* being the majority religion can both explain the sufferings of the majority community and also interpret to the nation the difficulties and aspirations of the minorities, specially the Tamils. The *Hindus* can bring a message of peace and brotherhood to the Tamil people and through them to the whole country. *Muslims* are both Tamil and Sinhala speaking. They have also a deep conviction concerning justice, human equality and sharing. They can be a connecting bond of national harmony and unity. They can manifest how the two languages can be linked together in a common faith. *Christians* are from different races. They too have a message of loving sacrifice and sharing. They are also widespread in the country and can be a valuable link among the peoples of the country.

The religions are today loosely linked at the national level, thanks particularly to the Congress of Religions. They are also in several national organizations and movements, including the Citizens Committees for National Harmony. The present phase of the development of inter-religious action could be an active linking of the religions at the local levels. In each city and village the religions could get together. In this the leadership may come from the clergy and/or laity, from men and women from youth and the old. This is an area where all social classes can meet for a specific task of nation building.

If such groups are in some way connected to each other, at least in motivation and response to our crisis of national unity, then they would be a wide spread and broad based *people's movement*. Such a linkage in understanding can also help combat other evils such as political party rivalries that lead to violence and injustices. In the coming years the religions and religious persons can have a vital role in helping build a just and free society on a religious and moral base of righteousness. The present government too is committed to this. The religions can help in this and also be a constant reminder to the government and the country of the demands of moral righteousness (Dharmista).

The religions can also be an inspiration for the *overcoming of the internal obstacles* to racial harmony. They can provide the opportunity and the framework for such reflection - both within one religious group and in inter-religions sessions. The different religious values and concepts such as of virtue and vice, merit and sin, maitreya and karma, right thought and action can be developed in relation to our present issues. The services in Temples, Kovils, Mosques and Churches can help generate the motivation for harmony with justice.

The religious education of children in schools can also be geared towards such a task of community building. We have fortunately provision for this within the school system. The teachers of religion and the teacher training colleges have a profound responsibility in this regard. The youth movements of the religions can be a liberation of human relations. The youth when well motivated, can be the main thrust for peace, just as some of them could be for violence.

The religious research in this country can also contribute to this cause. We have Buddhist universities, Islamic institutes, Hindu Educational foundations and societies and Christian schools of Theology, Philosophy and Social research. All these can bring much light to bear on our contemporary problems. Sri Lanka can then be a pathfinder on the religious road to peace with justice. If all these resources are meaningfully tapped our country can emerge from this crisis stronger both as a socio-political organization and a moral community.

Mass Organizations

After the religions (which are the longest surviving and most wide spread mass organizations) the more important mass organizations in the country are the political parties, trade unions, youth and student movements and the women's organizations. Other groups such as the Lions, Rotary, Jaycees are more limited in numbers and interests.

The *Trade Unions* are a movement that cut across racial frontiers and barriers. Among the biggest trade unions are, those of the plantation workers, the CWC and the DWC: - The Ceylon Workers Congress and the Democratic Workers Congress. They represent the workers of (recent) Indian origin. The two are however divided ideologically, and have their political affiliations. The other major trade unions are organized around a business enterprise or public service and are linked according to their political colouring. There are persons of all races in these unions. They are more concerned with the interests of the working class as such, than with the racial aspects of our national problems. The workers have an interest in national harmony. Otherwise there will be no working class solidarity. They also feel the sufferings of their fellow workers and supervisory officers who have been subjected to physical harm and mental agony by the communal disturbances.

The immediate responsibility of trade unions in this connection is to ensure peace in the work places. This requires a conscious combatting of racial animosities and violence within their own

offices and factories. After the sad events, they could create an atmosphere in which those in distress could return to work or have alternative arrangements provided for them. The members of trade unions can also take some leadership in their residential areas which are in the cities or suburban villages.

For all these the trade unions can have long term training and *educational programmes*. One of the weaknesses of the Sri Lanka trade union movements is the low priority given to worker education on a more general level. With the five day week in many offices, there are now greater opportunities for workers' education on a more regular basis. This will improve their awareness of issues and their sense of civic responsibility. The trade unions can also be a means of a workers linkage throughout the country.

The trade unions would stand to gain if there could be an ongoing *dialogue* between the CWC and the DWC and the other trade unions which represent more the rest of the country outside the plantation areas. In this way greater understanding can be built among workers throughout the country. The crisis that the trade unions themselves face, with the possibility of legislation to control them, can also be an occasion for such togetherness.

Youth and Student Movements

Many of the Youth and Student movements are organized partly on political lines and partly on the basis of the religions. There are others such as the Boys Scouts and Girl Guides which are non sectarian, though they may have their own implicit ideology. The students go through a rare experience in their schooling at the higher education level. Most of them have been educated in the Sinhala or Tamil medium and in schools or classrooms with only one race. At the universities (as yet) the races mix specially in the extracurricular activities. The Jaffna Campus with its Sinhala staff and students is also an important innovation.

The youth and students have gone through the shock of racial violence for the first time in their lives. Many of them were not born or were tiny tots in 1958. They have now to go through the process of trying to fathom this temporary insanity that overtook some of our society. For a couple of weeks, the entire fabric of peaceful relationships broke down. Schools and University holidays have been long extended. Some fellow youth and teachers are no longer with them.

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These movements have also to evolve their own methods of coping with this issue and, hopefully, coming forward as positive builders of a new, united and peaceful Sri Lanka. There is much

The religious education of children in schools can also be geared towards such a task of community building. We have fortunately provision for this within the school system. The teachers of religion and the teacher training colleges have a profound responsibility in this regard. The youth movements of the religions can be a liberation of human relations. The youth when well motivated, can be the main thrust for peace, just as some of them could be for violence.

The religious research in this country can also contribute to this cause. We have Buddhist universities, Islamic institutes, Hindu Educational foundations and societies and Christian schools of Theology, Philosophy and Social research. All these can bring much light to bear on our contemporary problems. Sri Lanka can then be a pathfinder on the religious road to peace with justice. If all these resources are meaningfully tapped our country can emerge from this crisis stronger both as a socio-political organization and a moral community.

Mass Organizations

After the religions (which are the longest surviving and most wide spread mass organizations) the more important mass organizations in the country are the political parties, trade unions, youth and student movements and the women's organizations. Other groups such as the Lions, Rotary, Jaycees are more limited in numbers and interests.

The *Trade Unions* are a movement that cut across racial frontiers and barriers. Among the biggest trade unions are, those of the plantation workers, the CWC and the DWC: - The Ceylon Workers Congress and the Democratic Workers Congress. They represent the workers of (recent) Indian origin. The two are however divided ideologically, and have their political affiliations. The other major trade unions are organized around a business enterprise or public service and are linked according to their political colouring. There are persons of all races in these unions. They are more concerned with the interests of the working class as such, than with the racial aspects of our national problems. The workers have an interest in national harmony. Otherwise there will be no working class solidarity. They also feel the sufferings of their fellow workers and supervisory officers who have been subjected to physical harm and mental agony by the communal disturbances.

The immediate responsibility of trade unions in this connection is to ensure peace in the work places. This requires a conscious combatting of racial animosities and violence within their own

offices and factories. After the sad events, they could create an atmosphere in which those in distress could return to work or have alternative arrangements provided for them. The members of trade unions can also take some leadership in their residential areas which are in the cities or suburban villages.

For all these the trade unions can have long term training and *educational programmes*. One of the weaknesses of the Sri Lanka trade union movements is the low priority given to worker education on a more general level. With the five day week in many offices, there are now greater opportunities for workers' education on a more regular basis. This will improve their awareness of issues and their sense of civic responsibility. The trade unions can also be a means of a workers linkage throughout the country.

The trade unions would stand to gain if there could be an ongoing *dialogue* between the CWC and the DWC and the other trade unions which represent more the rest of the country outside the plantation areas. In this way greater understanding can be built among workers throughout the country. The crisis that the trade unions themselves face, with the possibility of legislation to control them, can also be an occasion for such togetherness.

Youth and Student Movements

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more scope for developing methods of inter-racial encounter among the youth. The movements can organize inter-racial dialogues, live-ins, picnics, work camps, study camps, prayer-reflection sessions. Groups of youth can go for a week or so from one part of the country to another with a different racial composition. They can organize Sharmadana campaigns to rebuild a burnt house; or to supply a looted family with the essentials for living. In the process they could also help repair the damage of friendly human relations. It is to be hoped that in the coming months, the youth and student movements will take a lead in such creative action rehabilitating our society itself. At the universities, the student movements can encourage research and reflection towards national harmony. The cultural action for this can also find a strong support in the youth movements and the universities.

Women's Organizations

In the campaign for national harmony the women's organizations can have a crucial impact. They represent half of our adult community - the better (and more peaceful) half at that. The women's organizations are not well linked together island wide. Some of them are urban oriented, others rural based; some others are related to political parties and religious organizations. The crisis of national unity may bring together the women's group for a common cause, at least on a short term basis. In communal disturbances *women have to suffer* much as when a bread winner is killed, a house is burnt or possessions are looted. The thousands of refugee mothers with children are a sad witness to our racist inhumanity. The women's movements have therefore to concern themselves with this national tragedy. Just as flood relief should not limit itself to feeding flood victims, but try to remove the causes of floods; so also in the case of communal violence, the root causes must be eradicated.

Women can have a major impact in helping overcome internal obstacles to harmony. Racial prejudice is planted first in children prior to schooling. The mothers can, if well motivated, ensure that the next generation of children are more universalist in their approach to racial issues. For this the women themselves have to go through the hard process of collective rethinking. Here too methodologies need to be evolved by the movements.

Women's organizations can have a political impact both at general and local elections, and also in day to day life. They can be a powerful lobby for peace and harmony. What was said earlier re political, cultural and religious action is particularly applicable to the work of women's organizations.

An efficient linkage of women's organizations can be a powerful antidote to the forces of violence which find active supporters mainly among the males. The development of methods of non-violent pressure for justice and peace can be a special contribution of women's movements in the present crisis. Those of us who denounce violence, owe it to our people to evolve non-violent strategies, that are powerful enough to meet the grave communal and social problems that generate violence in our country. For are not the causes of violence largely to be found in the unjust socio-economic structures of our society?

10. TOWARDS A SOLUTION

The middle path of give and take

We can be one nation only with justice and fair play to all. Mere physical power or even democratic majority rule cannot keep a country together for long if there is grave injustice to one major group or the other. Likewise two separate States are not likely to be more just or more peaceful if we do not face together the issues involved both in the country as a whole or within each community.

We are convinced that the future of Sri Lanka is in our being united in a just, free and socialist society in which all persons are equal in dignity and rights. We believe this is possible given the resources of nature, civilization and good will that we have in our country. We are also convinced that this problem cannot be left merely to politicians. All citizens must concern themselves with our future as a nation. The religions too can be a binding force, provided they live their authentic values. The advance of knowledge and human understanding can help contain communalistic trends and build unity based on a respect for all persons.

The resolution of the communal problems is a long term issue. It involves changes in attitudes and mentalities and an acceptance of human beings as persons irrespective of race, creed and caste. This is a task of mass education. A immediate remedy is at the level of political relationships. Fortunately the Sinhala people now understand the Tamil disabilities better. The Tamil people too are becoming aware of the grievances of the Sinhala masses. Both the Sinhala and Tamil people have to learn a lot about each other. We can become one nation only by going through the hard process of *national integration* through our own voluntary efforts. The country has been made one legally and administratively, but

not in the minds of people with a positive acceptance and respect for plurality and diversity. The price of dividing the country or of continuing tensions is far greater than what needs to be done to settle this issue. The Sinhala people must give serious consideration to the problems which face the Tamil-speaking people and vice versa. Fortunately, the UNP manifesto elaborates the outlines of such a policy.

U. N. P. Policy

“The United National Party accepts the position that there are numerous problems confronting the Tamil-speaking people. The lack of a solution to their problems has made the Tamil-speaking people support even a movement for the creation of a separate State. In the interest of national integration and unity so necessary for the economic development of the whole country, the Party feels such problems should be solved without loss of time. The Party, when it comes to power, will take all possible steps to remedy their grievances in such fields as (1) Education; (2) Colonisation; (3) Use of Tamil Language; (4) Employment in the Public and semi-public Corporations.

We will summon an All-Party Conference as stated earlier and implement its decisions”.

The new Government's policy statement in the N. S. A. reiterated this.

Decentralization

In the 1977 General Elections the communal issue was not raised outside of the areas contested by the TULF. The Election Manifestos of the UNP, SLFP and ULF were all in favour of further decentralisation of the administration in the entire country. The time is now ripe for the implementation of a policy of decentralisation which would give each electorate, district and province a measure of responsibility for certain limited functions. The concept of Local Government can be expanded without jeopardy to the oneness of the nation.

The proposed appointment of District Ministers by the Central Government is a welcome feature of the new Government's proposals. However, as these Ministers are likely to be the long arm of the Government in the provinces, it is also desirable that the local authorities elected by the people for a given area have jurisdiction over some matters such as health, education, culture etc. subject

to the overall national policy. Such a policy was adumbrated in both the Bandaranaike-Chelvanayagam and the Dudley Senanayake-Chelvanayagam Pacts.

The guaranteeing of the fundamental rights, including the language rights of the Tamil speaking people, in the Constitution can also be a means of safeguarding their cultural identity. The example of neighbouring India, being one State with over 600 million peoples of several races, languages, religions and even colour, can be an inspiration to us. These fundamental rights are guaranteed to all and the work of administration is decentralized under a strong Central Government in New Delhi.

Dignity and Equality

These are a few general recommendations. One would like to urge that while many Tamil people have rejected the proposals for Ealam the rest of the country agrees to guarantee the legitimate rights of the Tamil people. They should be able to live in this country with a sense of security, dignity and equality as citizens. The whole country must rally together to resolve this problem to the satisfaction of all as no economic development or even social harmony is really possible without such a response to the present crisis. We cannot maintain national unity merely by law or force. It has to be built in the hearts of all in one land.

The resolution of the constitutional problems and fair play in administration are essential for national unity. The giving up of "standardization" in the admission to the Universities may be an indication of the good will and of the determination of the government to seek justice, though this does not quite resolve the issues.

All those who believe that we can make this island a peaceful and happy home for all its inhabitants must rally together to resolve this issue. We have now the political climate and the urgent need for a just resolution of the racial tensions that bedevil our life. We have sufficient physical, economic and human resources to build a free and just country for all its inhabitants. Fortunately the new government has promised to take the initiative in this. We appeal to all political parties, religious groups, trade unions and other mass organizations to do all they can to solve this basic issue once and for all in our time.

SINHALA/TAMIL CONFLICT - An obstacle to the building of a democratic socialist system in Sri Lanka

BERNADEEN SILVA

(Staff, Centre for Society and Religion)

In most countries in the world, there are races within each nation which because of their difference have or tend to have an inequitable share in the rights and benefits of the total community in relation to their proportionate responsibilities and duties to it. These differences of the races have taken the form of Racism as seen in Southern Africa or racial discrimination as seen in Britain, U. S. A., Australia and some countries of Latin America and Asia. What we have in Sri Lanka is racial discrimination and not racism. *Racism* is a systematic ideology of racial supremacy with claims of being scientific and is based on a fallacy that one race or a group is culturally superior because of its biological characteristics which are transmitted only to its own succeeding generation whereas *racial discrimination* can mean to be the unequal treatment of various ethnic groups and refers not so much to a doctrine as such but as to the practice of it. One could even say that racial discrimination is a cultural trait, most often fostered by an exploitative economic system and maintained for political gains.

Both racism and racial discrimination have been and are an obnoxious obstacle to the building of socialism. This function of building a democratic socialistic system has had overwhelming effect and conflict within countries. Of course, religious and ethnical differences have further confused race relations.

Some of the problems of nation building through socialism are (1) Consolidate a geographical nation—this means getting the loyalty of all minority groups including that of race (2) to create a modern economy—this means adapting some attitude to foreign entrepreneurs and internal racial minorities who may be important in the economic process (3) to choose a cultural personality—this involves attitudes to education, the religion and language of the minorities resulting often in culture—and racial polarization.

Tension is caused where there is an attempt to force acculturation of all people to the dominant culture. When people feel that their cultural identity is threatened, they close up, segregate and refuse to communicate and this is not good for the building of one nation. (4) to decide on a policy towards immigrants somewhere in the range from total assimilation to total rejection. (5) to establish a foreign policy which implies attitudes towards affiliates of enemies both in the East and the West, the attitude towards the old colonial masters and to the Socialist countries of the West and East.

Thus Race Relations should be considered as an integral part of the total national process; racial integration has been accepted as a necessary condition for development; and development today has become the keynote in all the Third World Countries.

In Sri Lanka, the minority races are the Sri Lanka Tamils, the Indian Tamils, the Moors, the Malays and the Burghers. Of these it is the relationship between the majority race and the Sri Lanka Tamils and the Indian Tamils that has caused tensions and has become a political issue threatening the building up of the Nation. I will take only these two groups.

The Indian Tamils

We have 2 categories of Indian Tamils (a) Those who came for trade and business and (b) those who were brought in by the colonial masters as cheap labour for the tea plantations, as toddy tappers and municipal workers.

The first category is small and except for being an economically exploiting group draining away the foreign exchange of the country, do not cause serious political tensions.

The Immigrant Indian Labour

It is the 2nd category—immigrant Indian Labour—that has become an important issue today. This problem has stemmed from the importing of cheap labour for the plantations. In parenthesis I would say that this immigrant labour problem is one started and left behind by the Colonial rulers. The Indians come from a major civilization with a long tradition of power and culture and they find it difficult to submerge their cultural identity to the host (receiving) country. Most of those who came were poor and uneducated and are therefore more inclined to be ghettoish, finding emotional shelter and security by holding on to their own roots. This is evident when one enters any home of

these estate workers. The pictures on the wall are those of Mahatma Gandhi, Mr. Nehru and Mrs. Gandhi - and scenes of India. The Estate Indian Worker is thus an "Outsider" not only by his own desire but also made to be by the very structure of the plantation set-up begun by the British Government and continued for long after independence, by the British Companies. It is this "Indian" consciousness and the alienation from the rest of the community that has led these estate workers to trust communal leaders even when they really represent Capitalistic interests.

He is an isolated individual, he and his community alienated from the rest of the surrounding region, living in sub-human conditions and subject to inhuman attitudes from those who are not of his race. In addition, most of them were stateless and this is to be in a desperate situation for it means no security psychologically or otherwise. Most of them live in fear of the Police, the law, government officials and the Sinhala people of the region - for they are persons with no rights and are rootless. All this has obstructed nation building and has also resulted in the loss of human dignity of the immigrants.

In 1964 this problem of being stateless was resolved by the Sirima-Sastri pact (an agreement between the Indian and Sri Lanka governments) when it was agreed to give a percentage, citizenship of Sri Lanka. And the balance to be repatriated to India. Though there are many difficulties confronting those who seek citizenship or repatriation (they are often pushed around, victims of lawyers and government officials when seeking to get their papers attended to), the decision to give status to these stateless persons is a good one and should have been done very much earlier.

THE REGISTERED CITIZENS

The most disturbing problem and a factor that has to be taken into account in the building of a Socialist nation is the political and social position of those workers who have obtained Sri Lanka citizenship. Many vital structures and issues crop up - will these new registered citizens be eligible for obtaining land for cultivation; be given a right to a share of the profit and decision making and participation when those estates are converted into cooperatives or state owned; will their children be given the same right to secondary and university education as that given to the Sinhala village counterpart; will measures be enumerated to break down the social prejudices that prevent these New Sri Lankans from obtaining employment outside the plantations, other than as it is usual today to be employed only as a labourer,

a domestic servant or for menial conservancy work; will he be accepted by the people of the region if he stands for local election; will the environment and atmosphere be cleared enough for his acceptance as another Sri Lankan?

Another important factor which almost always accompany citizenship by assent is that these new citizens are of divided loyalty. Will these new citizens earning their living in Sri Lanka expecting the same benefits and rights as those given to the indigenous population (and those benefits and rights I believe should be given to them) be more loyal to India than to Sri Lanka and even drain away from this country their excess earnings without re-investing in this country? Will ultimately the estate workers undermine the economy of Sri Lanka? Will in other words the implementation of the Sirima-Sastri pact create a new breed of second class citizens?

These questions, and I am sure there are many others, enter my mind and I think that long term planning is necessary in the context of what is best for Sri Lanka. If we think of a democratic Socialistic system, we must work out what type of socialistic structures of democratic organization would be necessary for building of the economy and how can we integrate these new citizens into the life of the village and of the country, so that they could contribute to the nation's interest and loyalties.

Geographical Integration

This raises the important problem of the total integration of the plantation economy into the rural economy of the country. Today in the region, the plantation sector is divorced from the rest of the village and this separation seems to have been intensified by the fact that the estate workers are of Indian Tamil origin. The plantation worker and the peasant is separated by race, religion and origin. It will not be easy to solve this problem as social prejudices diehard and mentalities are more difficult and slower to change than the granting of political and economic rights.

Here it is not irrelevant to speak also of the dire conditions of the peasants who live around the plantations. From a historical standpoint these are persons deprived of their lands and homes and each village is isolated from the other by the massive extent of plantation land. The estate population, though they do live under trying conditions and get also low wages, yet are assured of some work, a place to live though small and dingy, rations on account and close to their place of work and some sort of medical benefits. Whereas the poor peasants, (most often includes Ceylon

Tamil peasants too) are not assured even of a day's living and do not appear on third world programmes of Television and films nor are spoken of in Seminars or "sold" as "projects" to visiting aid groups.

However, the granting of political and economic rights, giving equal opportunity and recognition to all irrespective of their origin will greatly help to break down the social prejudices and to change mentalities.

Thus, in addition to the granting of citizenship and bettering of wages and conditions of living, Government's policy and action should also be directed to the important problem of integrating the plantation economy into the surrounding village. One method I could think of, in addition to the granting of land to the new citizens, is that of beginning new industries in the rural areas. There is bound to be in the near future excess labour in the plantations too. These, together with the unemployed rural folk could be absorbed by the industries and thereby also help reduce the rush to the cities for jobs. Another method is by incorporating both the estate workers and the peasants in the development process of the village. It should also be remembered that the estate workers are an important component of the working class in Sri Lanka and therefore very essential to the development of the working class struggle itself and for the building up of socialism. As stated by Mr. Doric de Sousa (in the "Nation" 14/11/75) the task should be "Build a political cadre on the estates free of Indian consciousness, but also be ready to cope with communal consciousness among the Kandyan peasantry and inspired with the idea of making common cause with the poor rural population among whom they live as well as solidarising with the rest of the working class in Sri Lanka."

AUGUST 1977

The August 1977 communal disturbances very badly affected the Plantation workers. Unlike in 1958, this time the Tamil estate workers were also a target for looting and arson. Many of these estate workers, the poorest and most exploited of the working class, lost all their meagre possessions, even their shabby 'line' rooms were raised to the ground. It is an indictment on the Sinhala race that they had stooped to this degradation on a group of persons who have sweated for them to earn the much valued foreign exchange and also a group that has categorically by their utterances and behaviour have shown no desire for a separate state. Recently six plantation trade unions of the upcountry areas in a memorandum to the Prime Minister stated that they

stand for a *United Sri Lanka* where all communities can live with equal rights and one of their proposals was for the setting up of peace councils to "ensure security in the plantation population and also to promote communal harmony". Even though their only representative to Parliament, Mr. S. Thondaman is a member of the TULF, he has opposed the demand for a separate state while associating himself with the demands for fundamental rights for the Tamils inclusive of the Tamils of Indian origin.

Political observers have stated that the attack on the Estate workers was more a political assault than a communal one. Whatever the reasons, the outcome has been a tragic one and one wonders whether it can ever be forgotten for

"the moving finger writes and having writ
moves on..."

THE SRI LANKA TAMIL

The problems of the indigenous Sri Lanka Tamils is a much more serious and complicated one. This group consists of men and women of Sri Lanka who have a local history as long as that of the Sinhalese.

The history of discontent between the indigenous Tamil and the Sinhalese dates back to the days of the Sinhala kings when history narrates the tale of King Dutugemunu who answered his mother thus "How can I sleep comfortably with the Indian Ocean pressing on me on one side and the Tamils on the other" when questioned as to why he sleeps cramped up. However if we hope to march forward, we cannot thrive on past history and legend. There is nevertheless much in our history to show that the two major races have worked together. Though the indigenous Tamils did work side by side with the Sinhalese to gain political freedom, from time to time eruptions have taken place to indicate underlying differences between the two major races. This we must recognize and try to see the reasons why.

Ever since the grant of independence in 1948, there has been in Sri Lanka, an upsurge of nationalism mixed with emotionalism. The chief cause seemed to be a fear of insecurity among the Tamil minorities. In 1948 there were 6,000,000 Sinhalese, 1,000,000 indigenous Tamils and 1,000,000 South Indian Tamil Immigrant labourers who were brought down by the British for cheap labour on the estates. With a fast growing population in the hills, the Kandyans felt that the Indian estate labourers were taking their jobs and this partly led to the then Prime Minister

D. S. Senanayake putting an end to the open influx of South Indian labour by enacting the Ceylon Citizenship Act which defined the qualifications for citizenship in Sri Lanka. This in turn created a fear of insecurity among the estate workers who formed themselves into Unions, and also among the indigenous Tamils. There was also a fear among the Sinhala citizens and politicians that the Indian labour would join the indigenous Tamils who were fast getting discontented and forming a formidable minority.

This discontent among the Tamils worsened when Sinhala was made the official language in 1956. With the growth of democracy it was inevitable that Sinhala (the language of 75% of the population) would replace English as the official language. This was the cry of the 1956 Elections - "Sinhala Only". The Tamils who were holding important posts both in the public and private sectors and whose leaders had fought side by side with Sinhalese patriots in the struggle for independence, thought that 'Sinhala Only' is a discrimination against them and in any case, they queried, why should not the Tamil language be used in the areas where the Tamils predominate? The 1956 Elections gave the *Mahajana Eksath Peramuna*, S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike's People's United Front 51 seats (out of its 60 candidates) and the leadership. In the predominantly Tamil areas the Federal Party led by S. J. V. Chelvanayakam, who advocated a Federal form of government with equal status for Tamil as an official language swept the polls. Ten out of the 14 candidates won seats. This was the beginning of a clear polarisation in politics on a racial basis.

The 'Sinhala Only' Act threatened National Unity for it created a sense of insecurity among the minority races. The indigenous Tamils wanted equal status for Tamil. The Indian labour felt threatened by the Sinhala labour. The Ceylon Moors numbering *over a million* mainly traders and businessmen, were scared that they would be lumped together with the Tamil minorities. And Burghers - a group of about 45,000 decendants of the Portuguese and the Dutch, most of whom identified their interests with the West began immigrating to Australia. (Tarsie Vittachi - Emergency 1958)

This insecurity together with increasing social and economic hardships resulted in outbursts of fanaticism - in 1956 in the Gal Oya Valley where 150 were killed during a spell of race hate between the Sinhalese and the Tamils. Then there was an island wide curfew and an emergency resulting in a blood bath in 1958 and again in 1977 with its unprecedented acts of looting, arson and refugee camps of many and of long duration.

The Growing Discontent of the Tamils

With the passing of the years the Tamils felt that more and more of their legitimate rights have been denied to them. Some of these have been listed in C. Suntharalingam's "Grievances of Eylom Tamils from Cradle to Coffin". He gives instances of discrimination in the recruitment in Administrative, clerical services, admission to Higher Education, to the Army, Navy and the Police. In 1968 out of the 24 Sub-Inspectors recruited, only one was a Tamil. Even in the alienation of land, more Sinhala persons were given land in the North and Eastern areas than the Tamils. It was also pointed out that comparatively more industries have been set up in the non-Tamil areas although in some instances experts had stated that the best location is in the North - recommended Sugar factory at Thunukkai in the North but erected in the Sinhala settlement area of Gal-Oya and not a single textile factory sited in the Northern District and so on.

It is not far wrong to say that as a result of the building up of all these grievances, today we have the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) born out of a long history of disappointment with the Sinhala leaders and their promises and of a sense of a need to preserve and maintain their identity by forming a separate state - EELAM state in the North. That the TULF is a force to be reckoned is to be seen in the outcome of the July '77 elections with the party winning 17 seats and its leader Mr. A Amirthalingam becoming the leader of the opposition. The TULF grievances are listed and discussed in some of the articles in this issue as well as in the earlier issue of *Logos* (Vol. 16 No. 2) and here I will refer to them only in the context of my subject of relationship between the Tamils and the Sinhalese being an obstruction to the building of Socialism in Sri Lanka.

The August 1977 disturbances have further aggravated the problem. A new feature has emerged in the communal disturbances of August 1977. Though it lasted only two weeks, it seems to have created more bitterness both among the Tamils and the Sinhalese. This time many more indigenous Tamils do not wish to return to their old places of work in the Central, Western and Southern Provinces. Some of those of Indian origin who have received Ceylon citizenship want it revoked to return to India, while others want to be re-settled in the Northern and Eastern provinces, the traditional Tamil areas where they feel safe. Some Sinhalese too have become more anti-Tamil chiefly because of the demand of the TULF for a division of the country, and also because of the lack of interest shown by those demanding for a separate State, in the general problems facing all peoples of the country.

Threat to National Unity

There are many arguments that could be adduced to show that basically the problem of discontent is economic and social and that what problems the Tamils have, such as unemployment, poverty, malnutrition etc., are also problems of the Sinhalese. It cannot however be denied that the Tamils fear of insecurity whatever be its causes, even psychological or artificial, has become a threat to national unity, an instrument for political manouevring and a hindrance to the building of Socialism. It is certain that a balanced and an integrated development cannot take place under a situation of constant stress and strain - economic or emotional.

If Sri Lanka is to move towards Socialism it is imperative that a reasonable settlement of this dispute be made, that a formula be devised acceptable to all communities and this done immediately. Race relations should be taken out of politics and an all party conference summoned to decide a formula acceptable to all, taking into account the point of view of the TULF, the Muslim minorities and the socio-economic condition of the country. This is possible only if the majority race, the Sinhalese, do concede that there are disabilities for the Tamils under the present Constitution and if the indigenous Tamils concede that the problems of alienation of land, educational opportunity, unemployment, poverty are problems not only to them but to the poorer sections of the Sinhalese too. It is really a problem of class, of poverty, injustice and exploitation of workers and peasants. - altogether affecting the poor of Sri Lanka.

A Many Faceted Problem

The majority race, the Sinhalese imposes severe limitations on its own growth and development, if it allows this attitude of dissatisfaction to persist among one of Sri Lanka's largest minority groups. One can understand the need of the Tamils for wanting a separate State for over the years there has been a growing dissatisfaction among the Tamils and they have lost faith in the promises of the Sinhala leadership. But the setting up of a separate State, I think, is self-defeating and in no way help solve the problems of the Tamils particularly the poorer Tamils.

We welcome the J. R. Jayawardena government's call for an all party conference to discuss this problem. We hope this Conference will be called soon and here I would like to make a few suggestions to which this conference should address itself to. An *all party permanent Commission* should be set up to study and understand the need for a cohesive society in the interests of the

nation. Merely tackling only the problems of language, recruitment to Public service, discrimination in Education and land alienation etc, will only be treating the symptoms, while the root cause of the disease will remain and continue to grow.

To further illustrate my point, I shall take this example. It is true that discrimination is a denial of equal opportunities to a group in some or all spheres of the nation's life. Hence admittance to the University if on a racial basis is discriminative, for a person of merit belonging to a minority race is not on equal par with a person of lower merit belonging to the majority race, though both are citizens of Sri Lanka. Also in the law courts of the North and East, a Tamil does not have the same chance of obtaining justice as that of his Sinhala counterpart in the South - since records are kept in Sinhala only. It is also a fact that when records were kept in English, both the Tamils of the North and the Sinhalese of the South were at a disadvantage, but now that Sri Lanka is independent one would expect equity for all those who are Sri Lankan citizens.

However, if these two problems are solved merely by increasing the intake of Tamils into the Universities and by the keeping of the law records in Tamil in the Northern areas, it will only be a limited success. What is needed is a *deliberate* policy towards changing attitudes and mentalities of both the Sinhala and the Tamil people. The adopting of English as the medium of instruction for all is not the solution as some tend to believe, giving the United States and Australia as examples. Complete assimilation they say has taken place in these two countries because they have adopted one language. This is doubtful for you do get in the United States, the Black quarter, the Chinese, the Puerto Rican Quarters etc. This indicates that for assimilation, the crucial factor is not language alone, but culture; and greater the cultural heritage of a race the more difficult assimilation becomes. The Tamils in Sri Lanka have a long history and culture of their own and also an affinity and a physical proximity to about 50 million people in South India. Thus assimilation with the Sinhalese who also have a strong cultural heritage, is not possible and any attempts made to assimilate will only crush individuality and deaden the people, for they would become a rootless race. Ultimately such assimilation is detrimental to the building of a wholesome nation.

The problems must be seen in wider perspective of the basic question of the need for the *identity* of the minority races, *cultural pluralism, integration and assimilation* in the interests of a single cohesive State. [Clashes of different cultures can produce

a healthy diversity and where there is cultural pluralism there is openness, real communication and a cooperative and cohesive society. "Cohesiveness" (sticking together) is better than "assimilation" i. e. the making of one group to be like another group. Integration though it may be the "knitting together and harmonizing of manifold activities of the entire "organism" is often in reality the same as assimilation. No minority group would like to lose its individual identity and form a single unit with the majority race, and this type of assimilation is detrimental to the intellectual growth of its people. Assimilation is a subtle form of racism and even though it may be asked for on the basis of the need to preserve "national identity" and to reduce tensions, it is definitely a doubtful way of securing a cohesive society. A cohesive society is imperative for the building of a democratic socialist state.

Today's Situation

What is feared today is that the leadership and some of the leading figures in the Tamil Community may be given palliatives to satisfy bourgeois needs by the granting of high administrative posts, land, permission to set up private trade, medical, engineering practice, together with some changes to erase some of the glaring injustices such as standardisation, allocation of land and jobs while nothing fundamental will be done to eradicate the attitudes rooted in most of the Sinhala and Tamil chauvinists. These deep-seated prejudices could be eradicated to a great extent through the *educational system*—to give a few examples—to have mixed classes for some subjects from Grade I itself, teaching of Sinhala, Tamil and English for all; stern censorship against discriminatory caricatures in the mass media, drama etc and a serious re-writing of Ceylon History from the standpoint of a recognition that we have two predominant cultures. Unless a deliberate and serious attempt is made at national level to eradicate extreme chauvinist mentalities, I fear, it will be difficult to achieve a truly cohesive state. An increase in the intake of students into Universities will not help solve the problem of racial prejudice, neither will it help the economically poor Tamils. Education must not be measured in merely terms of grades but also in terms of character building, and this includes attitudes of justice and peace for all. We may call this an ideological awareness.

That this ideological awareness (which in practical terms should mean serving the people) is imperative is seen when one discerns the nature of class in this problem of minority discrimination in Sri Lanka. The rich upper class Muslims exploit the poorer Muslims and so is it among the indigenous Tamils, Christians and even the Indian origin Tamils. How the 'kangani' of

an estate exploits the estate workers is a glaring example of how class operates even among the less privileged groups in a capitalistic set-up. Then you also get the rich upper class groups of all the minorities together with their counterpart from the majority race exploiting the poor of all races.

Not an Isolated problem

That is why, in the final analysis ethnic discrimination is not and should not be considered as an isolated problem, and should not be tackled as such. It is part of the general liberation struggle of man against all types of exploitation and his need for justice and peace. The problems of poverty, malnutrition, unemployment, freedom, fear, insecurity cut across all the races. Tamils speak of police injustice in the North, what about the Police injustices in the rest of the country and what of the brutalities during the 1971 insurrection. This is a police/public conflict and has not so much to do with race prejudice. Thus the transfer of the police in and out of the Northern province will not settle the problem. The police force has become over the years the strong arm of the government rather than the guardian of the law, impartial and independent as it should be in a democratic socialist system.

The exploited, the poor, the have-nots of all races, who have so much in common, should rise above race and religion to combine to struggle against the oppressors, who are in all the groups. Together they should work for justice, peace and freedom. These problems are inherent in a capitalistic system and it is not by seeking alternative piecemeal development strategies that we can solve these problems, but only through a socialist transformation of the Sri Lankan society. Thus due consideration must be given to questions of redistribution of wealth and income, to foreign investments, Multinationals, peasants, re-organisation of the administrative system to oppressed groups—workers, youth and women—to cultural transformation.

The need for Socialism

Under Socialism the people accept the sharing of common resources, of power, of administration, believing in the principle that "the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all". Socialism believes in giving all minorities self-governing socialist systems, and carries with it "a policy of preservation and protection of distinctive cultural characteristics of the different nationalities, their languages, costumes, folklore, music and traditions." Self-governing socialist systems means decentralised budgeting and administration in some spheres such

as Education, housing, industries and transport and this will increase the reality of democracy in our society for it brings power closer to the people. This will also help solve the problem of the Ceylon Tamils for by managing their own affairs in the traditional Tamil areas, a place will be provided for them in a unified nation.

On the other hand, capitalism like colonialism can thrive only on divisions, - rich/poor; Majority/Minority; employer/employee; White/Black; and power and wealth are concentrated in the hands of a few on the sweat, blood and tears of the many. The government therefore professing to establish a just and free society should have a definite political philosophy of democratic socialism which has to begin with a complete overhaul of the present system which is basically a capitalistic one, otherwise it will be the same patchwork "socialism" as that of former governments and therefore capable of only limited success and short term achievement.

We hope that with the revision of the Constitution, provision will be made to set up a truly democratic, socialist government in which all irrespective of race, caste, creed, class or sex, will have a place of dignity and an equitable share of the nation's wealth.

I do not claim to have given the right answers - in fact I do not know whether I have posed all the questions. I have merely tried no doubt, in a limited manner, to give thought not only to an important but also an agonising problem that faces our country and keeps erupting in acts of violence of degrading forms and therefore needs immediate attention. This, however is certain: it is absolutely necessary that the various differences of race and religion be eschewed in the interests of Sri Lanka in its struggle towards the liberation of her people through democratic Socialism based on justice and freedom.

THE ROLE OF CULTURE AND MASS MEDIA IN THE INTEGRATION AND MOBILISATION FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE TAMIL-SPEAKING PEOPLE (13.11.73)

DEVANESAN NESIAH

An Indigenous Tamil Culture

The mobilisation of cultural forces and mass media for national integration and development is fraught with special problems in respect of the Tamil-speaking people of Sri Lanka. There are several reasons, historical, political and social for the existence of obstacles peculiar to the Tamil medium. Some of these may be capable of solution by administrative action within the framework of Government policy. This paper is concerned with identifying some of the difficulties and indicating the type of administrative action which may help remove them.

Those at the helm of cultural activity among the Tamil-speaking people are often accused of being narrow and insular in relation to cultural activity in other language media in Sri Lanka, drawing inspiration exclusively from or merely reflecting cultural patterns in South India, and failing to evolve and develop a culture indigenous to the Tamil-speaking people of Sri Lanka. On the other hand, a frequent accusation made by those involved in cultural activity in the Tamil medium is that Tamil-speaking artists and their work get insufficient recognition in Sri Lanka, that they get inadequate opportunities and facilities to develop their skills and the art forms peculiar to the Tamil-speaking community, and that the culture, the history, the architecture and the traditions of the Tamil-speaking people are virtually excluded from the national image projected at home and abroad. It is not difficult to see that these charges are closely interconnected and mutually reinforcing.

Lack of Tamils in Cultural spheres

In this situation, the Ministries of Cultural Affairs and Information and Broadcasting, particularly institutions under them such as the Departments of Cultural Affairs, Archaeology, National Museums and Information, the Government Film Unit and the Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation(t) have important

roles to play. Some of these organisations have no senior Tamil-speaking officer on their cadre, and this must necessarily inhibit them in the task of national integration and the mobilisation of the Tamil-speaking people for national development. There ought to be among those in authority, in such institutions persons closely in touch with the traditions of and current developments in Tamil Film, Drama, Dance, Naattu Koothu, Music, Art, Poetry and Literature, who are familiar with the different schools and the leading personalities in these fields, and who have an intimate knowledge of history, the mythology, the temples and the festivals of the Tamil-speaking people of Sri Lanka. It will not do to rely exclusively on minor officials, informal contacts and advisory panels for such expertise. A glance at the Administrative Report of some of these organisations will reveal the existence of considerable unconscious bias.

A natural corollary to the lack of informed direction in the field of Tamil culture is the poor selection and inadequate representation of the art, culture and history of the Tamil speaking people in national ensembles, cultural pageants, cultural delegations abroad, cultural shows on national and state occasions, film documentaries, government publications in these and related fields, museums, exhibitions, archaeological research and restoration(2) the architecture and decoration of national monuments, the decoration and motifs used on national and state occasions etc. Similarly Tamil areas are often excluded from the itineraries of foreign cultural delegations and troupes in Sri Lanka. Adequate representation in such matters will serve to inspire creative activity among the Tamil speaking people, promote national integration and better understanding among the linguistic groups, and help to develop centres of gravity and centres of inspiration of the Tamil speaking people within Sri Lanka. An exclusive cultural nationalism can be as devious and destructive as a balanced integrated cultural nationalism can be creative and constructive. An exclusive Sinhala-Buddhist projection of the nation cannot claim the loyalty of the minorities. An interpretation of history which portrays the Sinhalese and Tamils as enemies and the Tamils as interlopers and destroyers of Sinhala culture must necessarily cause communal suspicion and hatred.

No interaction between Sinhala & Tamil Cultures

Another corollary of the absence of a Tamil presence in the cultural organs of the State is the lack of interaction between the Sinhala and Tamil Cultures. The Kala Puwatha, which can serve as an important link, is not published in Tamil. There are far too few translations of outstanding classics, poetry, plays,

short stories, novels etc. from one national language to the other (3) The culture, traditions and art forms of the Sinhala and Tamil people have so much in common that much of the music, dance, stylised drama, nadagam, naattukoothu etc. can be well appreciated by people of the other linguistic community with the help at most of a brief introduction, (4) In spite of this advantage cultural intercourse between the Sinhala and Tamil linguistic communities is almost non-existent whereas there is a fair degree of appreciation and exchange of ideas between the Sinhala and interest, English media, which relationship is supported by reasonably good coverage in the English language mass media of activities and developments in the field of Sinhala culture:

The coverage in the English language mass media of Tamil culture is poor, and so is the coverage in the Sinhala and Tamil language mass media of cultural activities and developments concerning the other linguistic community (5) The newspapers, the SLBC and the G.F.U. can give a hand in this matter. An open appeal to outstanding artists to help promote such cultural intercourse should have a good response. A conscious attempt can also be made to generate a Sinhala—Tamil bilingualism in the cultural community by teaching the two languages, sponsoring combined Sinhala—Tamil show programmes etc.

The Need for a Common Publishing House

A strong case can be made for the establishment of a publishing house primarily devoted to the publication of works promoting amity and understanding. Such works are far too few. (6) This publishing house can undertake the translation and publication of outstanding literary works from Sinhala into Tamil and vice versa and the production of periodicals in both languages. (7) Particular attention could be focussed on children's literature, an excellent medium for sponsoring national integration. The policy direction of this publishing house can come from a National Amity Advisory Council which can also sponsor exchange of ideas between the linguistic communities, e. g. by organising writer's symposia, sponsoring adaptation of selected Theatre from one language medium to the other sponsoring suitable broadcasts and plays and sponsoring suitable research projects etc. (8) This council can also perform another function that of bringing to the notice of the Government any item over the radio or in a film or on the stage or in any book, newspaper or other publication which may be detrimental to national amity. There is harmful material even in the textbooks used by children in the schools today.

The impact of an exhibition, or a cultural programme or the commemoration of a national hero or a national event, or the establishment of a national institution intended to rouse patriotism, spread understanding and generate creative energy is often needlessly subverted by lack of sensitivity to feelings among the minority communities.

A sense of alienation and even hostility is built up by numerous often unintentional, irritations which may appear superficial but are in fact insidious. The damage caused by Tamil being absent from or given an inadequate place on name and sign boards, on banners and placards exhibits and posters, in announcements, program sheets and brochures, and in correspondence is far greater than the inconvenience caused to the individuals affected. Similarly, the absence of provision for Tamil speaking artists to take part in meetings, seminars, discussions, theatre workshops etc. will have harmful side-effects apart from the retardation in cultural development in the Tamil medium. The Ministry of Cultural Affairs is wellplaced to give the lead in this respect.

Muslims and Hill Country Tamils also affected.

While the points made above are applicable to the Tamil-speaking population in general, the special positions of the Tamil-speaking Muslim population and the Hill country Tamil population add extra dimensions to the problem of cultural alienation. Though in some respects the Muslims may appear to be more integrated in the nation than the Tamils, in the cultural sphere the obstacles are greater, particularly in respect of the Tamil speaking Muslims. The range of cultural activity among the Muslims of Sri Lanka is limited in some fields (e.g. there seems to be no traditional Ceylon-Muslim theatre) but this is all the more reason to give special attention to the activities of special interest to Muslims in the field of poetry, folk songs, art and crafts etc. While it may be desirable to integrate the Muslim culture elements into Sinhala and Tamil language cultural streams, the existence at present of differences in form, style, tradition and dialect must not be ignored. For this reason it is desirable for Muslims to be represented on the various advisory panels and committees in the cultural field. The newspapers, particularly in the Sinhala and English media give insufficient attention to the history, the culture, the traditions and customs, the special skills and crafts, and the writers and scholars of the Muslim people. The newspapers and the radio can help correct this bias and enable the nation to derive the full benefit of the creative potential of the culture of the Ceylon Muslims.

Perhaps none of the major communities of Sri Lanka is culturally more alienated than the Hill country Tamils. Cultural contact with the Sinhala neighbours is almost non-existent and cultural contact with the other Tamil speaking communities is largely restricted to a one-way communication via the radio and newspapers, and even these seem to say very little of particular relevance to the Hill country Tamils who make up a sizeable fraction of the listening/reading public. They have virtually no share in any State sponsored educational or cultural activity nor any voice over the radio or in the newspapers nor indeed in almost any activity not centred on their own community within the plantations. In the public image, and in fact in official racial classification, (used in the census, birth certificates etc.) they are all Indian Tamils irrespective of citizenship and domicile. From childhood, even in respect of schooling, they lead largely segregated lives. In the circumstances, there is very little identification with the Ceylonese nation. Their participation is not sought in national programmes such as the food drive. This situation must be remedied for, the welfare of this community apart, the Ceylonese nation can ill-afford to have less than the wholehearted participation in development of so large a section of the population (numbering about 1 1/2 million now and perhaps about 1 million at the end of the repatriation program). The radio and the newspapers can give a lead by giving time/space on the mass media in all three languages for the plantation Tamil community, and also by taking sympathetic interest in the problems and welfare and the culture of these people. Greater recognition can be given to the artists from this community, some of whom⁽⁹⁾ have made significant contribution in the field of literature, and some selected works can be used by the mass media in all three languages. The Ministry of Cultural Affairs could make a special attempt to reach these people, special attention can be paid to the children, through whom a new relationship can be established: They could be brought into public and State sponsored activities such as Sahitya day and Pradesheeya Kala Mandala programmes, National festivals, etc. Artists from this community could also be included in some of the advisory panels of the Ministry of Cultural Affairs.

The vital role of culture and mass media in national integration and development has not been fully appreciated. The national culture has been enriched over the centuries by contributions from many traditions - Sinhala, Tamil, Moor, Malay and European. Our history (contrary to the popularised version which views it as a record of incessant Sinhala-Tamil war and rivalry) shows many centuries of Sinhala and Tamil, and later of Sinhala, Tamil and Muslim friendly coexistence and social, cultural and

racial intermingling, almost uninterrupted by occasional clashes among the ruling classes, over the last four centuries, we have seen cooperation in the anti-imperialist struggle involving all communities. The common elements and the points of common interest of our peoples far outweigh any differences and conflicts. Some of the frustrations and misdirection of the Tamil-speaking people can be corrected by administrative action within the broad framework of government policy. Such action can greatly strengthen the people of Sri Lanka in our effort to build a strong, prosperous and united nation.

Notes:

1. The SLBC is seriously handicapped by the fact that its Tamil language beam is weak and not clearly heard in most of the Tamil majority areas, particularly in the Northern Province. In contrast the Tamil language beam from Trichy of Radio India comes over very clearly and is very popular.
2. The Department of Archaeology has done very little work on the ruins of the early Tamil civilisation of Sri Lanka, and little is known of such work as was done, What has been done to commemorate the last ruler of Jaffna, King Sankili, who fought (and ultimately lost) a series of brave battles against the Portugese? Who were the Vanni chiefs who fought courageously against the Portugese and the Dutch, and where were their headquarters? What do we know of the irrigation systems, the architecture, the tools and utensils, of the economy and the social and political institutions of that period? What is the history of the Tamil settlements of the North and East?
3. Gam Peraliya, Selalihini Sandesaya, Nari Bena and children's stories by Munidasa Cumaratunga are among a few Sinhala books translated and published in Tamil. Amba Yaluwa by T. B. Hanganatne has been rendered into Tamil and is about to be published. One of Dayananda Gunawardana's plays has been translated. Nari Bena has been staged in Tamil. There are far too few of these. Translations from Tamil to Sinhala are even fewer.
4. Some years back, with some help from the Department of Cultural Affairs, I arranged for some outstanding items of the Sinhala Theatre including Hunu Vattaya Kathawa, Nari Bena, some of Sarath Chandra's plays Kandyan Dances etc. to be included in the programmes of cultural festivals organised by the Pradesha, Kala Mandalas of Mannar and Batticaloa. These items were presented on open air stages, free of charge to the public and many thousands saw and appreciated these performances. Most of those who attended the festivals had no previous exposure to the Sinhala theatre. I failed in my attempt to persuade the Department of Cultural Affairs to arrange for outstanding cultural items from Mannar and Batticaloa to be shown in other parts of Sri Lanka, and there was some resentment among the local artists on this score.

5. S. M. J. Faisdeen, Thambiyah Devads, Sivasubramaniam and a few others have interpreted the Sinhala literary scene to the Tamil reading public, but we need more of this. The interest taken in the Tamil literary scene by the Sinhala language Mass Media is almost nil. The initiative taken in 1962 by the progressive Writers Association to establish a continuous dialogue between the linguistic groups has lapsed.

6. e.g. Sinhala and Tamil film, drama and literature and literature generally lack sympathetic character portrayal of other communities. The speech and mannerisms of those of other communities are, often ridiculed on the screen or stage. The short stories of Dominic Jeeva, T. V. Saratharjan and C. Yakanathan in which the sinhala man has been portrayed in a friendly and favourable light are rare exceptions.

7. Subsidising the local publication of periodicals may be expensive but is in every other way better than linguistic discrimination in the import of periodicals.

8. e.g. on identifying common elements in the Sinhala and Tamil culture and language or on the Buddhist period of Tamil History.

9. C. V. Velupillai's work in the field of short story has recently received recognition by the Ministry of Cultural Affairs.

“Every culture is made up of borrowed and a very few invented elements, and is dynamic. Sinhalese culture is no exception. It has borrowed from India, China and the Pacific Islands, and is borrowing from the West.”

—Martin Wickramasinghe

EDUCATION AND RACIAL PREJUDICE

SUNIL BASTIAN

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Sri Lanka has just emerged from a repetition of its recent history. Nearly after two decades, we witnessed the same ugly scenes which we saw in 1958. The country has come slowly back to 'normal'. She will take many more years to recapture what she lost in material terms. But to make sure that our mother Lanka will not suffer again due to the same reasons we (that means each and every citizen of this country, and not just the Government) shall have to do a lot.

First of all, we must be certain as to what direction a solution lies to the Sri Lanka's national question. The incidences in the past few weeks, triggered many to put forward their own solutions. Some of these can be classified as impracticable or even fanatical. Therefore at the very outset it is necessary for us to indicate in what direction does a solution lie to our national question.

We believe that a possible solution lies only in the direction of forming a Ceylonese Nation in the island of Sri Lanka where all the nationalities will be able to live as citizens of one nation enjoying equal rights irrespective of their nationality.

I. Society, Community and Culture

The social nature of his existence, is the most important characteristic of the human being. Along with the development of the language and use of tools his social nature has contributed not only for his survival but also for the development of his humanness. As anthropological studies have shown us the history of the human society includes several forms of collectives into which humans have organised themselves. The important ones of these, whose characteristics we can easily study, are the kingship organisations, the tribes, the nationalities and the nation. These form a evolutionary order in an increasing degree of complexity. Each of these forms has a certain type of productive relations at its base. It is the economic necessity of people which brings together larger and larger groups. The kingship organisations consisted of small isolated groups of people related by blood relationships and having collective ownerships at its base, while tribes consisted of number of kingship organisations. Nationalities were formed

on the basis of an agricultural society in a feudal system. Finally we have the capitalistic mode of production attempting to form a Nation. Each of these forms develop a whole host of characteristics which we call culture. Cultural symbols identify and distinguish each of these groups and at the same time form a great barrier towards their integration.

This process of integrating people to larger and larger groups is not a smooth one as it might appear to be from the above description. It is possible for countries to exist as an economic unit although people are not consolidated into one Nation. For example we have a stronger case for a British Nation than for an Indian Nation. This means the integration of different nationalities in Britain (i. e. English, Welsh, Scottish, and Irish) had taken place to a greater degree than in the case of India.

In Sri Lanka, we have a situation where our major communities viz. Sinhalese and Tamils themselves are not integrated enough, leave alone the formation of a Ceylonese Nation. Both these nationalities show a stratification based on caste, which is an element of the feudal society. Apart from this certain inherent tendencies of our economic system like economic competition, lead to antagonistic relations between communities. Finally we have to think of the influence of our cultural symbols separating us, whose revival had taken place recently after a long period of colonial domination. Mostly it is the superiority complex developing around these cultural symbols, with condemning attitudes towards the symbols of the other culture, which contribute to this process of racial antagonism.

It is our intention in this article to consider the role played by the education system in creating racial prejudice. Broadly speaking we shall consider this question in three aspects. First we shall look into the extent to which education process can really influence the appearance of racial prejudice in children. That means in the first section we are concerned with the relative weight of education in this process when compared with the other factors. Secondly our concern will be with those characteristics of the personality of the human beings which goes together with racial prejudice. Finally the role played by the education system in this process is analysed in detail, taking the situation in Sri Lanka as an example.

II. Education System as a Factor in the Process of Socialisation

“There are four aims in a good education. The first is the one that pre-empt all present systems: the training of the

pupil for an economic role in society. The second is teaching nature of society and human polity (the form or constitution of government). The third is teaching the richness of existence. And the fourth is the establishment of that sense of relative recompence which man in contrast to the other orders of animal life has so long lost. In simple terms we need to fit the student for a livelihood, then for a living among human beings, then for enjoying his own life and finally for comprehending the purpose (and ultimately the justice) of existence of the human form.

A. N. Whitehead (On New Education).

Education as one of the social institutions influencing people in a mass scale is a relatively new phenomenon. In the present world most of the societies consider educative process as something which prepares the younger members of the society for lives as responsible members of the society. As the above quoted passage suggests at the present moment most of the education system tend to give a greater emphasis to the training for an economic role. Specially in the under-developed with their keenness to get on with economic development this economic role gets much attention at the expense of the other aspects. Sometimes this attitude reduces the educative process merely to an affair of getting certificates which guarantees certain material benefits to the student. This type of training does not have as its aim socially conscious citizens, but only 'cogs in a big Economic Machine'. This goes a long way in producing individuals who are not only alienated from the society but also alienated from himself. (He gets an education not for himself, but to drive a big economic machine). We shall see latter how this has a direct bearing on the question of racial prejudice.

Our consideration of the education system is on a broader basis. Education to us is a part of a wider process of socialization. It is part of a much more wider process through which society is able to transfer its norms and values. Really speaking even in the narrower 'economic' view of education it is possible to argue that such an attitude itself arises in the society in which such a system is functioning. And the education system is adopted in such a way so as to transfer this attitude of the society. Therefore here too education system is involved in a process of socialization, although a narrower meaning had been given to the word socialization.

Apart from the education system we can think of a number of other channels or means of socialization: Family, Mass media and Poor groups being the major ones. Therefore during

childhood development other than the education system there are number of other factors affecting and influencing the development of personality of the children. Another point that we ought to keep in mind is in comparison to the education system most of the channels of socialization begin their interaction with the child much earlier. With respect to our problem of racial prejudices this factor assumes much importance because most of the studies have shown that racial prejudice in children can start very early in their lives, sometimes even at an age of four years. In addition to this, the influence of the education system is eroded by the fact all children do not attend school, which is specially true in the case of developing countries. (For example a recent socio-economic survey in Sri Lanka has shown that 44.6% of our children gets an education only up to the primary level.(1) That means they are in school approximately from an age of 5 years to 10 years). Finally even when a child attends the school he spends a greater part of the time at home with his parents and relatives or among his friends. Apart from this the pupil is exposed to the influences of the mass media while in school and outside. Therefore if we are truly interested in eradication of racial prejudice from our societies there are many more facts into which we shall have to diverge our attention other than the education system.

Education system trains the students for an economic role and plays a part in developing the personality. The norms and values imparted to the children itself comes from the society itself. Naturally the question arises 'Is the role of education simply a passive one of transferring the norms created already outside?' If our answer to this question is an adamant positive, it is difficult to think of the purpose of the present study at all. If the social reality contains elements of racial prejudice and if the role of the education system is simply to transfer them, there will be no point in investigating the education system in detail, instead the concentration should be only on the social reality. But on the other hand we can expect to 'undermine an unjust social reality' from below by imparting to the children norms which are in contradiction to the existing social norms. Taking this hope further we can expect the newly created norms to force a change in the social structure. In other words we are hoping for a social change through an attack on the elements of the suprastructure, of the established system. We have shown above the odds against such a hope in the suprastructure of the system itself, viz. the family, the mass media, etc. Other than this, the biggest cloud covering such a hope comes from the doubt whether the education system can really bring about an undermining of the entire system, including the economic base. Probably our thinking

will be on an idealistic plane if we hope for such a transformation. Therefore although we are taking up a study of the entire education system it would be futile to expect that changes in education will have a great impact, unless it is augmented by the changes in the economic structure and of the entire system as a whole. To put it in simple language what will be the use of preaching and teaching love towards your neighbour if the economic system under which we have to earn our living and the social system under which we have to exist forces us to compete with him? But on the other hand there are two good reasons why we should take up such a study. Firstly, we might be harbouring illusions if we expect everything to change automatically once the economic relations change. Secondly we would be shunning our responsibilities as people interested in education if we do not perform even the little we can do to undermine the system from below and merely wait for a change in the economic system. In actual fact such an attitude will only be an excuse for inactiveness.

III. Education, Personality and Racial Prejudice

Education process of children begins a few weeks after his birth. From this time onwards the child begins his interaction with the environment and his development begins. Initially the medium through which the child reacts with the environment is his physical activity. As he grows pictorial representation and later symbolic representation begins to play a major role in his interactions with the environment, although physical activity too continue to exist. Psychological studies, notably the psycho-analytical theories on child development have emphasized the importance of first three to four years of the child, since what happens in this period has a direct influence on the development of the personality.

Personality of an individual is a category in Psychology through which psychologists hope to get an overall picture about an individual. Hence they speak of a Personality structure and of various tests and methods which have been devised to assess this personality. In addition to personality studies, motivational development and the development of the cognitive abilities are two other branches of Developmental Psychology through which the science of psychology attempts to trace the development of the child. Therefore as we have seen if we use personality studies to get an overall picture of the child, motivational studies give us an idea about the forces which drive children in their actions and studies on cognitive development concentrate on their ability to form concepts and use them at different ages.

Now if we look at the individual as a system which is evolving with time and consider personality structure, motivational states and cognitive abilities at each age as characteristics distinguishing the system we can begin to think of the factors influencing the system. These factors will influence the system by affecting each of the three characteristics which we have enumerated above. Basically these factors will consist of internal biological factors and external environmental factors. External environmental factors in turn can be classified broadly as Physical, Socio-Cultural and Situational factors. By physical factors we mean the climatic and geographical factors of the environment. Socio-Cultural factors include the influence of the cultural heritage and socio-economic set up, and finally the situational factors include those characteristics of the environment limited to the particular individual. Most of the influences of the family can be included in this third factor.

In view of these factors, the following questions arise: What characteristics of the Personality structure, motivational states and cognitive ability can be correlated with the phenomenon called racial prejudice and secondly, how one of the factors of the environment, viz. The Education System contribute to the appearance of these characteristics in the personality structure motivational states and in cognitive ability.

One of the most important facts, which had come out of research on racial prejudice is the possibility of its early appearance, even at a tender age of four years. This appearance is not based on direct experience of children (mostly the superior racial feelings) but either on visual examples or on verbal communication. What most of the studies show is that racial prejudice is internalised early in the life of a child through the action of social communication, whether it be from parents, friends, relatives, 'general opinion', etc... Once it had internalised it grows its roots deeply, sometimes existing almost at the level of the unconscious, and readily forms a basis of explanation of the world to the individual (e.g. 'All our economic difficulties are because of the Tamils) sometimes consciously and sometimes unconsciously. This basis can be strengthened later by the educative process itself. This attitude internalised very early in life is never questioned, but only fortified sometimes up to such an extent so as to include animal features to characterise the race against which prejudice had developed. This feature of accepting uncritically the approved values of the group with which they identify themselves (in this case your own race) has been found to be characteristic of racially prejudiced individuals. This in a broader sense means that they tend to accept authority readily. For them accepted

values of his race, rather than his own reasoning tend to form the basis of thinking. This means lack of self confidence and creative thinking. Furthermore racial prejudice seemed to be accompanied by certain feelings of frustration and hostility resulting mostly from the methods of rearing.

"...prejudiced attitudes seem to be an expression of profound feelings of general hostility, which are related to parent - child relationships and personality structure. Mothers of prejudiced, intolerent children are inclined to be highly critical, rigid, authoritarian and controlling in their disciplinary practices... As might be anticipated, therefore, prejudiced children have more narrow and rigid personalities, tend to think categorically in terms of 'good and bad' or strong and weak and are intolerant of ambiguous or non-conforming such as passive and feminine behaviour in boys and tomboyishness in girls. They tend to accept uncritically the approved values of the group they identify with".

"...Prejudiced children are basically frightened and frustrated; superficially they conform to authority, but they harbour deep seated feelings of hostility and destructiveness. They admire all that is strong, tough and powerful, but fear weakness in themselves. Characteristically, a prejudiced child lacks confidence in himself; is distrustful, uneasy and insecure in social relationships; feels discontented about his current status; and is hostile and bitter in his views of the world. When he feels frustrated as he often does, he blames others, turning his agression outward, displacing it into minority groups (prejudice against them being acceptable in the culture because he fears that other kinds of hostile expression will bring punishment".(2)

Basically this personality structure is characterized by lack of self confidence and a feeling of frustration arising out of that which is displaced towards the minorities, augmented by the acceptance of approved norms of racial prejudice uncritically. These characteristics of the personality structure can be further understood if we look at them along with the motivational features. Abe Maslow has given the following picture about changes in motivational states with age. (3)

Characterising further, people who are motivated by self actualization needs, he states are not governed by tradition or by other peoples wishes and are always seeking novelty, stimulation, challenge rather than safety. All these characteristics seem to be lying on the other side of the fence from those that we saw in a racially prejudiced person, who readily accepts traditional values, lacks self confidence and depends on the group for secu-

rity and self identity. Therefore they do not really develop the need for an individuality in their own character. Instead they obtain their self identity merely from the fact that they belong to a certain race, which for him is on a higher scale than other races. Instead of really developing an individuality they seek a shelter from an accident of birth. This means either their motivational states do not develop to the level of adulthood or their adulthood motivations are distorted.

Finally what implications does this have on the process of cognitive development. Cognitive psychology make use of the category called the 'concept system' in order to understand cognitive development at different ages. Every human being in order to deal with the complexity of the environment in which he lives makes use of a method of classification called Concept Formation. A concept really includes a group of objects, actions or phenomena of the environment which the individual treats as if belonging to a single class. In this fashion the complexity of the environment is reduced and the individual deals with their environments in terms of these classes. In the process of cognitive development the child acquires the ability to form concepts and also alters the nature of the concepts and the criteria on the basis of which concepts are formed with the age.

If in personality structure studies and in motivational studies there is some research from which we can draw some conclusions with regard to racial prejudice, when we come to the field of cognitive ability we can only hypothesise. At the level of first approximations, we can think of the following features as characteristic of the concept systems of the racially prejudiced individuals. 1. Concepts will be formed more by making use of criteria obtained readily from the social and cultural reality. No attempts will be made to question the validity of these criteria. This will be specially prominent when we come to the concepts like 'good-bad', 'correct-incorrect' etc... 2. The conceptual system thus formed will be rigid, allowing little flexibility or tendency for alterations. Concept system will be geared more towards conformity rather than towards creative thinking. We must be careful before making sweeping conclusions in this question, since conformity with regard to race might not mean conformity in all sphere of thought.

Concluding this section on the psychology of a racially prejudiced person we can summarize his basic characteristics as follows: He tends to lean on tradition, without questioning the accepted values, which means he is prone to succumb to authority. His concept system is rather rigid allowing little flexibility at least in

sphere of social relations. - He tends to obtain his self identity by leaning on his race, whose prejudices he readily accpts. He always seeks the security of the race and does not depend on his own self. This can be interpreted as lacking in self confidence. As a result he can be frustrated and hostile since there is no actual self realization on his part but only a group identity on which he passively depends. As a result he can easily project his hostility on another race always or when an occasion arises helped and triggered by the social reality.

It is at this point that we turn to the Education system with two ideas in mind. One to see whether the system facilitates the development of such a character and to find out how it can be remedied; two to find ways and means of neutralizing with the help of the education system, the anomaly of the human character which had developed and is developing through the other processes of socialization.

IV. Education system and the development of racial prejudice

A careful study of most of the education systems will show how they reflect the principles of the society, in which it functions. It is due to this fact that many declare about the possibility to understand a society by studying the education system. For example in a class society with economic competition based on private property, the education on one side will strengthen the class basis with different schools for different classes, and on the other side will internalise the competitive psychology making use of competitive tests, examinations etc... Although in Sri Lanka the government had taken several steps to remove the class differences in schools, we can still observe the same pattern existing to a large extent. The whole series of private institutions, tutorials, etc., which had been created by the real situation in the country plays a part in strengthening this class basis in education. In relation to the question of racial prejudice we can think of four aspects of the education system which can have an influence on creating racial prejudice. This four aspects correspond to the following four questions; 'Where (in what type of organisations) we teach our children?', 'What is taught to our children?', 'How our children are taught?', and 'Who teaches our children?'. We can formulate these four aspects with respect to our question as follows:

- (a) Structure of the education system and racial prejudice.
- (b) The content of the curriculum and its influence on racial prejudice.

(c) Method of teaching and its influence on racial prejudice.

(d) Teachers and their influence on racial prejudice.

(a) **Structures of the Education System**

By structure of the education system we mean its organisational aspects. With respect to racial prejudice, one of the important questions that we have to consider is segregation on a racial basis. Segregation at an early age has been recognised as one of the important factors contributing towards racial prejudice. It is also in this direction that major attempts have been made to modify racial prejudice. Although some doubts have arisen about its results, de-segregation from a small age still remains a major hope in combating racial prejudice.

How does this question of segregation apply to the situation in Sri Lanka? What are the possibilities of bringing together pupils of different races in their educative process from a small age. It is evident that after the change of medium of instruction segregation on a racial basis has increased to a certain extent. Is it possible to counteract this using the organisational aspects of the education system?

A preliminary survey of the distribution of our population can be a starting point in understanding the possibilities of using the school system as an instrument of bringing the races together. The following table shows the distribution pattern of our population on an electoral basis.

Gr.	% of Majority Race	% of Minority Races	No. of Electorates	Districts
1.	100-90	1-10	69	
2.	90-80	10-20	29	
3.	80-70	20-30	16	Ratnapura N'Eliya, Kandy, Badulla,
4.	70-60	30-40	9	Kegalle, Colombo City
5.	60-50	40-50	5	Ratnapura, Kandy, Badulla, Colombo City, Trincomalee
6.	50-40	50-60	8	N'Eliya, Kandy, Badulla, Colombo City

Gr.	% of Majority Race	% of Minority Races	No. of Electorates	Districts
7.	40-30	60-70	2	Colombo City, Puttalam, Trincomalee
8.	30-20	70-80	3	N'eliya, Mannar, Vavuniya
9.	20-10	80-90	3	
10.	10-1	90-100	16	

Majority Race — Sinhalese

Minority Races — Others

Although North and Eastern provinces of Sri Lanka had been traditionally associated with the Tamil speaking population, population distribution shows that more than half of the Ceylon and Indian Tamils in Sri Lanka live outside these two provinces. In the column four of the table we have tried to bring together those districts where there is a greater intermingling of races. In this column we have included the districts where the population of minority races is more than 20%. It is possible to count 43 electorates in this category situated in the districts of Nuwara Eliya, Badulla, Kandy, Ratnapura, Puttalam, Trincomalee Mannar, Vavuniya and in the city of Colombo. It is at least in these areas, that it is necessary to find ways and means of reducing racial segregation in schools. If different streams of study based on language makes it impossible for the students of different races to mix, we must explore the possibilities of using extra-curricular activities like sports, different types of associations, clubs, shramadana work, etc., for this purpose.

Of the other parts of the island certain electorates of the Colombo district around the city of Colombo and also number of electorates of the Kalutara, Kurunegala and Anuradhapura districts fall within the group two of our table. And from the other end we have few electorates of Amparai and Vavuniya districts falling to the ninth group of our table. These are areas where the percentage of the minority races fall within the range of 10-20% and they can make a claim for de-segregation in education, to a lesser degree. It is in the remaining areas of the island that there is bound to be some sort of racial isolation at the primary and secondary educational levels. And it is in these areas where people are geographically isolated that very much attention should be given in developing racial harmony making use of the opportunities provided by the education system.

The question of reducing racial prejudices in our higher educational institutes becomes more important due to several reasons. It is here we find for the first time students together from localities where there have not been any possibilities for inter-racial contact. And tragically in Sri Lanka, the entrance to these institutions had become a focal point of racial conflict. In higher educational sphere it is necessary to introduce organisational reforms to facilitate greater intermingling of races both during studies and in the hostels. Much can be done outside the prescribed courses, by organising seminars, talks and workshops to foster racial harmony.

Organisational reforms of the education system should have as its aim reduction of segregation according to race. Probably many things can be done in this through extra-curricular activities as exemplified above. This is all the more important, where there is no possibility for physical de-segregation,

(b) Curriculum

If the structural reorganisation of the education system toward racial de-segregation and racial communication is hampered by reasons like geographical isolation, it is in the field of curriculum reorganisation that much can be done without these difficulties. But probably it is in these area that we'll have to do much 'searching' in ourselves and also much 'researching'. By searching I mean the necessity to look into what we teach our children in subjects like History, Literature both in terms of their tendency to create racial prejudice—racial prejudice can be created not by condemning another race but also by inventing an aura of nobility around your own race, making use of myths and legends. The most important thing is that these attitudes about your own race prevents a person from looking at other races as phenomena with equal validity and value as your own race'. By 'researching' I mean the necessity to look into the formation and introduction of new disciplines and school activities both within the curriculum and outside which can propagate racial harmony'.

Recently in Sri Lanka a programme was introduced in the educational field to bring about wide changes. Although we cannot judge this new system now and also do not know about its fate, one thing that we have to note about this new system is that through this for the first time in this country an attempt was made to do away with an education which divided children very early in their lives according to different specialities. Pupils sat for their first public examination along with this specialisation. As a result a pupil finishing the secondary school came out with

a very scant knowledge of what is happening in the society, about his history as a human being, about the history of the country in which he is living and about his own literature. On the other side pupils specialising in humanities came out of the schools without having any basic knowledge of a force whose methodology and whose products are bringing about wide social changes and changes in the field of knowledge in general. Having accepted the fact that this new education system tends to do away with this lopsided education at least to some extent, now let us look at it in terms of racial harmony.

In the new system the Junior Secondary Education is common for all students, consisting of ten subjects and students sit for their first public examination at the end of the ninth grade. The subjects taught are 1. Religion 2. Language of instruction 3. Second Language 4. Mathematics 5. Science 6. Social Studies 7. Aesthetic studies 8. Health-Physical Education 9. Pre-Vocational Studies I 10. Pre-Vocation Studies II. Question about a third language has arisen. But the emphasis is towards teaching Sinhala for the Tamil medium students and to teach practical Tamil to Sinhala medium students where there is a demand for it. Clearly the idea behind both these proposals for a third language is 'job Oriented'. Thus Tamils are keen on learning Sinhala to satisfy the demands of the Official Language Act and Sinhalese want practical Tamil so as to get on with their work. Possibly such an attitude towards the third language on the long run can destroy the communicative and integrative function of the language by making Tamils feel that they are forced to learn Sinhala and by creating a pragmatic approach to Tamil among the Sinhalese. Introduction of a third language is needed specially in those areas with a mixed population. But it should be given a different outlook rather than something to be used and thrown out, specially in schools.

Religion, Social studies and Aesthetic studies are other subjects of the Junior Secondary Education that must be considered, remembering the presence of different races in this country. It is these subjects which teaches us about people, about their beliefs and customs arising from them and also about their creative activities which identifies them. It is in these fields that we get to know about our own cultural symbols. And while imparting this knowledge about our own cultural heritage it is necessary to teach about the uniqueness of any culture. The finest expressions of human creativeness is found in the sphere of culture. The strength of these have made it possible for them to cross frontiers and act as a means of communication between nations. In teaching our children about our own cultural heritage we must

also give them an idea about this uniqueness of any culture, if we are keen on preventing these cultural symbols from acting as barriers between races. Thus while teaching religions it is necessary to remember about the other religions which the pupil comes across in the outside society. A comparative knowledge of religions will make it easier for the pupil to develop a healthier attitude towards other religions. Aesthetic studies should not mean only a training in some cultural activity like dancing or singing. It should also include some basic knowledge about the Theory of Culture, which gives the pupil a knowledge of culture as a unique character of any human. This will make it possible for the pupil to understand and appreciate any culture. Probably this should be augmented with a knowledge about the culture of the other race with whom we are sharing this country. Since our two cultures has so much in common both historically and otherwise it will not be difficult for us to design courses which will give our children an idea about their history, and about their culture, These can be done not only in terms of simple book learning, but through project works, excursions, surveys, etc., which will include actual mingling with other nationalities.

Probably Social studies has a special mission among all these subjects. It is in this subject that we hope to educate our children about the present situation in our society and about the historical process which had brought us to the present situation. However much History, Geography or Civics a child might learn if it does not help him to understand the present social situation and thereby be a socially conscious being it is not possible to think of social studies as successful. Through these new educational reforms we have got an opportunity to give an idea about the development and about the nature of our society to our children. Although our education with its elements of competitiveness and 'success' based on that, and our entire economic system based on competition tends to create utter selfishness in our society in contrast to social consciousness it is by giving a knowledge and consciousness about the society that we hope to counteract this in our education system. In addition social studies has a special mission in imparting to our children the understanding that this country of ours belong to all of us who can call themselves Ceylonese and not just to one race and the fact that our economic problems cannot be solved by deporting one race out of this country or from certain areas of this country.

(c) Method of Teaching

I would like to take up the third aspect of the education system viz. How we teach our children?, by taking up the primary edu-

cation. This I do because the attitude towards knowledge imparted to the child during those initial years leave a permanent impression on them. By attitudes I mean the answers to the questions like why we need to study? and what is the purpose of knowledge? and so on and so forth. Our task is to see that the education is geared from the primary level for the broader process of personality building. Our task is to see that education system is adopted to produce a personality which is characterised by a critical and a creative mind. But if we make our children understand that you need to do well in class, i.e. repeat what the teacher had told you, simply to be the first in the class, we give a distorted purpose for gaining knowledge, that of competition with your neighbour. The above said of the education system will only be a dream with such methods of teaching.

Most of the literature about the new reforms in Primary Education give a much more correct aim for education. "The overall effect of the reforms has been to transform the rigid and artificial atmosphere in the class room to one in which the children feel free to engage themselves in a variety of activities. They find ample opportunities for exploration, become aware of their environment and learn to appreciate it. They have sufficient scope to develop their creativity, to acquire leadership qualities and to work in co-operation. What is most important is that they are 'learning to learn' and that they are enjoying it." (Education in Sri Lanka—New Horizons Ministry of Education Publication.)

Clearly the ideas and aims of these educationists are quite different from what we have had so far. Now let us reflect a bit to our basic problem of racial prejudice, with these basic reforms in education in view. The question is, what if the environment about which the child is trying to become aware of has different types of people, who speak a different language and about whom he had heard so many bad things at home and in other places. Shouldn't environmental activities, which is one of the subjects at this level include something about people in general, who constitute a part of this environment. Shouldn't we teach children something about the variety of these people. Then we can only hope that this creative mode of thinking given at the early ages along with a more broader view about the variety of humans will make the pupil judge the traditionally held views about the races much more critically.

(d) The Teachers

Finally we come to our last aspect of the education system, that of teachers and their influence on racial prejudice. Earlier in

this article we saw how children internalise radically prejudiced attitudes early in their lives mostly through the examples of their parents, relatives, neighbours, etc. It is to minimise these influences that we are hoping to use the education system. Therefore racial prejudice on the part of the teachers will not only strengthen earlier accepted stimuli, but also will go a long way in undermining all the other reforms in the education system directed towards reducing racial prejudices. Although educationists can make many plans to counteract racial prejudice, the actual implementation of these plans will lie in the hands of the teachers who are in direct contact with the pupils. The problem becomes all the more complex because there is very little that can be done to overcome these difficulties, other than disciplinary measures, the feasibility of which at the present situation in Sri Lanka is doubtful.

We tried in this final section to see into the reforming of the education system to counteract racial prejudices in the society. We attempted to do this by considering the education system in four aspects and brought forward possible approaches to a solution in each of the aspects. With all these reforms we must note that any education system of a country tend to reflect the characteristics of the society in which it is functioning. Hence we cannot expect these measures to succeed in a society, where the principles on which these reforms are based is not acceptable. This helplessness of the formal education system can be compensated only by the creation of a nonformal system of education which has a greater freedom and a wider range of action. I shall conclude this section by pointing to the necessity for the educationists to pay attention to the non-formal education, if they are keen on using education as a means of counteracting the unjustifiable social norms.

CULTURAL SYNTHESIS AND EDUCATION

Man began his existence in isolated, self sufficient groups with subsistence economies. But the story of his evolution in the course of history had been one, where he broke the barriers between these isolated groups and followed a process of convergence. It was the necessities of life itself which demanded from him this process of coming together. First it was his activities of harnessing nature to produce the material necessities for his living which forced Man to unite with his fellow human beings. For example we see a greater concentration of people taking place, with the appearance of agricultural economy in comparison with the earlier form of existence based on hunting and gathering. Later on human beings united not only to com-

pete against nature, but also to compete against his fellow humans. But even here it was his increasing material demands which dictated him to form larger groups. Hence we see a material basis behind this process of integration of people into larger groups,

It will be quite useful to find out what happens in the other spheres of social life when this integrating process takes place. More than anything else it is what we mean by culture that interests us here.

A definition of Culture

The word culture had been defined in various ways. The widely accepted notion of this word equates culture with learning, certain 'refined' characteristics found in some people and with aesthetic abilities. Therefore a 'cultured person' is someone who has a certain degree of learning and is endowed with all types of 'good manners' and not only has a considerable knowledge of various types of fine arts but also has the ability to experience and value this aesthetic side of life. By these characteristics he stands out and away from the 'common mass'. We can easily note the class basis of this attitude towards culture whereby the elite or the aristocracy is endowed with culture in contrast to the uncultured commoner,

Here we wish to start with a more progressive definition of culture, which is widely accepted by modern anthropology. In this definition, within the term culture of a group of people, all that can be considered as 'their way of life' are included. This means culture of a group of people has as its components, their behaviour (i. e. customs, manners, rituals etc.,) as well as products of their behaviour (household goods, pottery, works of art, costume etc.,) plus their interpretation of the environment, resulting from their behaviour (i. e. attitudes and values). Thus all groups of people in their interaction with the environment, which is mostly directed towards sustaining their lives, develop a culture peculiar to them, and this characterises their way of living.

Really speaking, it is these features which we included in our definition of culture which characterizes the process of socialization of man. During the process of socialization, the culture of the group in which man is brought up, gets internalised into him. More than anything else *the function of these cultural symbols is to give an identity or an individuality to the individual.* By being a member of a certain group, each individual comes into

possession of a whole host of characteristics or a cultural symbolic system which distinguishes him from the others.

The individualising function of the cultural symbolic system does not take place in a vacuum. It occurs in a definite socio-economic and historical set up. It is this socio-economic background which gives to these symbols a superior or an inferior value. For example all those characteristics which identifies a white person are considered superior to those which characterises a negro person, in the present capitalistic socio-economic set up of the United States of America. In a different socio-economic and historical set up this might not be the same.

In this article we are concerned with a third property of culture which has a direct relevance to the process of integration of human beings about which we spoke of earlier. This is *the changing and evolving nature of the cultural symbols*. Cultural symbolic systems of any group of people has features acquired from outside. This is a proof of the fact that from the time of mans appearance people began to communicate and associate with each other. When this process of communication and association goes further and comes to a state of living together and intermixing there is going to be not only a borrowing from each other's cultures, but also a natural synthesis of different cultures to produce something new and original. When we remember the fact that people are bound to come together in larger and larger groups to solve their problems of living and existence, the inevitability of this cultural synthesis can be easily understood.

Let us look into the process of cultural synthesis little more deeply to understand its demands and consequences. More than anything else we must try to understand the difficulties and antagonisms that arise as a result of this process of cultural synthesis. The antagonisms and contradictions arise because this everchanging nature of cultural symbols contradict its other function of individualisation and identity giving function. Basically, while the cultural symbols give an identity and a uniqueness to a person on one hand, they tend to change with time on another side. The reaction of a person who gets his identity and security and finds a place in this world with the help of these symbols can be definitely hostile to this process. This reaction would be more so if the socio-economic set up in which he is living gives a superior status to those cultural symbols with which he is identified. But the reality of historical development demands from us more progressive and a more healthy attitude towards cultural evolution, and this has direct implications in educational planning.

Probably it is necessary to take into account all these characteristics of culture in designing a curriculum of aesthetic studies,

specially if our education is going to be geared for social change. Teaching of culture in such a manner so that it becomes a rigid system of reference naturally will not help our children to accept and understand these changes that are taking place in the sphere of culture. Ultimately, the readiness and a flexibility of the mind to accept something new, whether it be in the sphere of culture or in any other sphere is clearly connected with the development of the critical mind, which should be the true aim of education.

Cultural Synthesis in Sri Lanka

In Sri Lanka today we have four major communities—Sinhalese, Tamils, Muslims and Burghers. The first three of these are further divisible into two groups in each case—Low Country & Up Country Sinhalese, Ceylon & Indian Tamils, Moors & Malays. If we take all the other smaller communities like Veddhas into one more group we can speak of eight communities speaking four languages (Malays have their own language) and several dialects. Other than the languages, the customs & beliefs of each of these groups goes to make up the cultural richness of our tiny island. Contributions from each of these communities have made our daily life rich in variety. Specially in urban areas where there is a greater mixing of communities this is greatly felt. Deprivation either of the taste of Buriyani or Wattalappam, or the funfare at the Vel Festival or the strolling on Wesak day or the carols at Christmas would make life in Colombo a note below in the richness of experience than it is at present. But how often do we forget about this intermixing of communities in our daily lives.

Each of these communities in Sri Lanka has evolved with its own peculiarities. During this process they have influenced each other and still continue to do so. Therefore a study of our history will not be complete without an understanding of the role played by each of these communities in our country. Probably a history showing how the common people lived in this country, rather than a history giving the chronological succession of kings will truly reflect these features of our history, and will show how Sri Lanka as we know today came into being.

To understand the dynamics of cultural synthesis in Sri Lanka it is necessary to take into account the influence of another, factor other than the mutual influence of the communities of this country. This is the overriding influence of Europe and modern

science which have entered our society through our colonial past and is still continuing to encroach on us through education and mass media. The usage of the English Language and the fact that we have many connections with the world capitalist system goes a long way to enhance this process.

The need for a Cultural Synthesis

Really speaking there are three ways in which we can react to this process of cultural synthesis that is taking place in our midst and which of these ways we are going to adopt will profoundly influence our educational system. In the present day Sri Lanka specially when it comes to the cultural sphere it is possible to find a dogmatic glorification of the past and a nostalgia for a glorious past which was there and which will solve all our problems if only we could bring back those conditions again to our land. From this type of thinking is derived the concepts of 'Pure Sinhalese Culture' in which we should educate our children. At the sametime there is an acceptance of the fact that this pure culture is already dying, probably reflecting the reality, and therefore this feeling of nostalgia begins to increase. This is actually one way of reacting to the process of cultural synthesis. And of course this approach tends to put history back on its course and in many aspects can play a reactionary role. This approach if adopted in the education system can severely compartmentalise the pupils not only away from reality, but also from different other communities present in this society other than his own. On the other hand the presence of a number of cultures in a society means a great wealth or a great asset to the society. More than anything else it goes to make up the richness of experiences and the variety of stimuli that persons can have when living in that society. And richness of experience lies at the base of any true education and finally in the development of creative ability, which is a goal of any form of education. Therefore any confinement of the pupil to the cultural symbols of any one community, on the aim of teaching him something 'pure' only means cutting away of the pupil from a wealth of experiences and stimulation, which goes against basic principles of true education. The Education system should make the pupil aware of these diverse cultures instead of compartmentalising him in only one

The second approach to the process of cultural synthesis consist of passive borrowing and a crude imitation of the elements that comes to us from outside, specially from Europe. In actual fact cultural imitation is the opposite end of the process of cultural synthesis. While the latter is a creative process, the former is a process, the former is a passive and a dull process. More than anything else cultural imitation takes place in a socio-economic

set up which identifies a superior status with the borrowed cultural elements. If education system is aware of these facts it can do much to undermine its influences.

The third and the healthiest approach to cultural synthesis is to be aware of it and to create the conditions so that something new and something uniquely Sri Lankan will come out of it. Our education system can do a lot towards this. This will not only make our education closer to reality, but also will go a long way in promoting national harmony and in the emergence of a united Sri Lanka.

THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF SRI LANKA on MINORITY RIGHTS

(a) While retaining the territorial integrity of Sri Lanka and the unitary character of the state, provision should be made to enable the Tamils of Sri Lanka to enjoy regional autonomy in such contiguous area or areas where they have traditionally lived;

(b) In addition to the position of Sinhala as the Official Language and the rights guaranteed to Tamil under the Tamil Language (Special Provision) Act, both Sinhala and Tamil should be constitutionally recognised as national languages of Sri Lanka.

(c) The right of Tamil speaking people to conduct their business freely with the public administration and the Courts in the Tamil language should be guaranteed;

(d) all rights available to the Tamil language in administrative use at present should be constitutionally guaranteed.

From a statement issued on the revision of the 1972 Republican Constitution of Sri Lanka—SUN Newspapers 16th. Jan. 1978

The JATIKA VIMUKTHI PERAMUNA

(National Liberation Front) in one of their statements say,

“As the Sinhala speaking people, the Tamil speaking people of this country are also entitled to their national rights, without any differences. No one has the right to prevent this.”

THE POWER OF NON-VIOLENCE

K. NESIAH

(Retired Senior teacher—University of Ceylon)

During the thirty years since Independence, the race problem has grown into being the country's major problem; with the wide-spread violence and injury to persons and property during the 'black fortnight' just closing the race problem has become Sri Lanka's number one moral problem. The shame of it, during this very moment, we have witnessed some of the organs of the mass media pouring fuel into the fire, and some of those pleading for racial harmony at some gatherings, advocating racial discrimination at others! Are we to look in vain at the horizon for the leader who embodies in his person the Sri Lanka Man and brings to bear on its problem an All Sri Lanka mind?.

Nor has the Tamil leadership yet emerged which does more than lip service to the concepts of Truth and Ahimsa. There are multitudes of youth who have come to the fore, but where are those who are free of violence in thought and word and action? Where are the trained peace volunteers to stand up to the violence of the men in uniform or to protect their fellow citizens and their property? Do the men in the Tamil Front realize that it is moral power from within that can sustain a just struggle?

Sri Lanka's present plight is the more inexcusable since we have lived in the Gandhian epoch and derived inspiration from the Mahatma's message. That message should hold an appeal to us because it is based on centuries of Hindu insistence on the wonderful spiritual value of self-suffering, Gautama Buddha's instruction to overcome hatred by love and Jesus' teaching to love your enemy. Said Gandhiji: "Nations, like individuals, can be made through the agony of the Cross and in no other way." Through strict adherence to non-violence in thought, word and deed, through fasting and prayer and campaigns of civil disobedience based on the principle of suffering love, he led his countrymen to the gates of liberty. Do we not remember the admonition which he gave to the Sikh refugee in Delhi, who wanted to take revenge on the Muslims of the Capital City, that if he must indeed kill he must go back to Pakistan and kill just those persons who had humiliated his wife and daughters, and how, touched by Gandhiji's stand, the burly Sikh fell at the Mahatma's feet and confessed the error in his thinking.

Perhaps, Mahatma Gandhi's finest vindication of the revolutionary power of the Cross was in 'the Calcutta Miracle'. Instead of joining in Independence Day celebrations in Delhi in August 1947, he proceeded to the blood-stained City of Calcutta, entered a Moslem house and undertook a fast unto death. He broke his fast when after several 'sympathetic fasts', including one by five hundred policemen led by their Anglo-Indian police chief, the Hindu rioters laid down their weapon before him and called off the killings. It may be said that the community thus re-created in Calcutta has endured to this day.

It is something to be thankful for that not one Sinhalese person has so far suffered grievous bodily harm in the Jaffna District during this black fortnight. But, there has been some damage to property, especially bakeries; may be in retaliation for the massive arson damage suffered by Tamils in the Grand Bazaar area of the City. According to Gandhiji, no distinction should be made between injury to person and injury to property.

The test and proof that Tamil Eelam is a hill worth ascending is that non-Tamils who have lived here as our friends and engaged in legitimate enterprises should still be able to do so, protected when necessary by their Tamil neighbours and by peace volunteers ready to sacrifice their lives on their behalf. May be, this will evoke a corresponding moral response in the South; but we should not be after a bargain, anyway.

It is on this moral basis that the Tamil Front can develop into a Tamil Movement charged with irresistible moral power.

THE SINHALA—TAMIL CONFLICT IN SRI LANKA

Rt. Rev. C. L. WICKREMASINGHE

(Bishop of Kurunegala)

and **Ven. Dr. HEWANPOLA RATNASARA Thero**

(University of Sri Lanka—Vidyalankara Campus)

The problems arising from this conflict are of a dual nature, There are problems arising from the recent communal disturbances and their aftermath and there are the ongoing problems relating to the communal conflict which has plagued Sri Lanka for so many years.

Problems arising from the disturbances

These can be summarised in the following manner:

(i) *Relief to destitute persons.* There are still over 5000 Tamils of plantation origin in refugee camps in and around the Jaffna district. They are being maintained by the Government and sustained by voluntary organisations through Catholic clergy and nuns. Their continued existence in these camps is causing great frustration. The attitude of the Central Government and the activities of the Social Services Department seem to be ambivalent, in regard to their future.

Refugees of Jaffna origin were accomodated by relatives or friends, and some help has been given by the Citizens' Committee for Tamil Refugees in Jaffna. The more limited number of Sinhala refugees from Jaffna and Vavuniya districts have been supported by Government relief programmes.

(ii) *Token compensation* for those who have lost their relatives and/or property. The Government has promised compensation to those who have lost members of their families. How far this promise has been fulfilled in all cases is not known as yet. Voluntary groups have given limited help to those whose condition have been brought to their notice; many have received no compensation.

Some estate labourers in various parts of the mid-country and low-country who have suffered looting and violence, but who have retained their jobs and homes, have been given help by organisations such as Satyodaya, and a token grant by many

estate authorities. But others have received no token help at all so far.

(iii) *Maintenance of Government servants who have fled* from insecure places of work. These persons were given a loan initially but salaries are being paid only to those who have returned to work, unless proper leave was sought before departure from place of work. Only some fled who from insecure areas have been trans-ferred elsewhere; others remain in an unenviable position in regard to their future.

(iv) *Rehabilitation of craftsmen and artisans* or small traders who have lost their means of livelihood through acts of violence. There is need to supply them with some form of capital to enable them to resume their trades. The Jaffna Citizens' Committee for Tamil Refugees has sought to help those of Jaffna origin to some extent. But those of estate origin in Sinhala areas have received minimal assistance.

(v) *Re-settlement of refugees now in camps*, who have refused to return to places where they suffered violence from their Sinhala neighbours. These are mainly Tamils from the NCP and NWP (though there are a limited number of Sinhala refugees from Vavuniya districts). The attitude of the Government to the Tamil refugees' re-settlement is not clear. It is said that citizens will be offered land and money for re-settlement somewhere in the N. E. sector; *non-citizens* will be offered land only, while organisations like the Catholic Church will be asked to undertake their re-settlement. Meanwhile, the Tamil Refugees Rehabilitation Organisation is seeking to re-settle many of them on private land donated for this purpose in the N. E. sector with local and foreign aid.

(vi) Provision by the Government of adequate *protection* by the Security Forces to persons of Tamil origin residing in Sinhala areas. As human beings and citizens they are entitled to security of life and property and also travel without fear or hindrance. Such kind of protection was sadly not given to them during the recent disturbances. The Government has assured them of such future protection. Attempts are being made to re-organise the Police Force in particular, with this end in view.

(vii) The appointment of an impartial *Commission* to inquire into the causes of recent mob violence directed against the Tamils. Such a Commission has already been appointed by the Government.

(viii) Dealing with the *disillusionment and bitterness* among Tamils resulting from the violence they have suffered recently. While there is some appreciation of the friendship and protection shown by Sinhala neighbours in several instances, the *wounds* created by the brutality of Sinhala mobs remain deep-seated. Patient and imaginative efforts towards healing these wounds are required from the Sinhalese. Such efforts and initiatives must include at least the following:—

(a) some disciplinary action against members of the *Security Forces* who are proved to have encouraged or blatantly ignored mob violence against the defenceless Tamils. (b) full discharge of the promise of compensation to those who lost their family members in the recent disturbances. (c) further, transfer to more secure places of work of those Government servants whose requests are proved to be genuine. (d) the taking of active steps to re-settle refugees of estate origin now stranded in Camps in the Jaffna district, on land in the N. E. sector. Any to be repatriated can also be re-settled until the time falls for their actual repatriation. Sinhala refugees from Vavuniya district can also be re-settled in like manner. (e) the initiation of negotiations to settle issues.

Problems and Perspectives relating to ongoing issues

These problems have to be seen in their proper perspective. The aggravation of communal conflict in Sri Lanka since the granting of Independence, has been due primarily to the *inability of a stagnant economy to provide sufficient employment* and an adequate standard of living to the rapidly growing population. Communal animosity has therefore been heightened, underlying fears increased, and provocative racial memories re-activated.

In this situation, two extreme solutions have been proffered. One is the demand for a separate state for the Tamils, called *Eelam*. The simple fact is that no Sinhala-dominated Central Government will ever permit it. With modern means of communications and weapons, force can be used to prevent any attempt to create a separate state. Short of foreign intervention on behalf of the separatists, this solution is not capable of implementation.

The contrary reaction is the demand for *an army of occupation* composed of Sinhala troops, to be stationed permanently in the traditional homelands of the Ceylon Tamils. The obvious fact is that the Tamils will resist this unrelentingly with all the means available to them. The result will be to drain the resources and energies of the Central Government to support this army, and

thereby create massive problems in the Sinhala areas, already restless with growing unemployment and a rising cost of living. Also, such a policy will have adverse international implications. This too will not be capable of implementation.

The present situation will be eased considerably if the economy can be expanded rapidly enough for sufficient jobs and a better standard of living to be made available for Sinhalese and Tamils alike. Until such a state of economic progress is reached, other solutions will have to be found to foster communal peace with justice, in a potentially, unstable situation.

Present Trends

Recent events have begun to lead to a discernible shift of perspective among Sinhalese and Tamils alike.

(i) The shift in perspective among the Tamils after the recent violence they suffered in Sinhalese areas can be described in this way. In the recent past, they had looked upon their *traditional homelands* as their birth-place to which they could always return, but from which many desired to venture into more prosperous areas in the island, to earn a livelihood and improve family prospects. Now, they have begun to look on these homelands as *the territorial space which is distinctively their own*; it is herein alone that a majority of them can retain their self-respect and security, develop their economy and freely manifest their language and culture. Some would however venture forth elsewhere in the island to reside and to earn their livelihood. They are beginning to find their sense of identity to be rooted in the greater majority of them residing in their own homelands. They are now claiming their rights primarily as a distinct communal group in Sri Lanka, though also seeking their basic rights as individual citizens, without prejudice to the Sinhala majority.

(ii) The shift in perspective among the diehard Sinhalese is discernible in the emergence of more liberal attitudes within some significant members among them. In the recent past, they had envisaged the vision of Sinhala-Dhamma-dvipa in a restricted sense; they felt that Sinhala-Buddhist hegemony required its unmistakably dominant presence throughout Sri Lanka. Now, they are beginning to envisage the concept of *Sinhala-Dhamma-dvipa in a more inclusive sense*; they realise that while the dominant presence of Sinhala-Buddhism should find adequate expression in Sri Lanka, it is the moral ideals included within the vision of Dhamma-dvipa that should pervade and influence the nation, so as to form the foundations of its social and political order. These ideals are such that they can be accepted by persons

of all races and religions. The trend then, within some liberal sections is to find the identity of Sinhala-Buddhist partly in the notion of a dominant presence and partly in the *notion of pervasive moral ideals*.

(iii) The other shift of perspective slowly discernible, is within the present bourgeoisie leadership among Sinhalese and Tamils alike. It consists of a greater desire than before to reach some sort of settlement of outstanding issues. This is because both Sinhala and Tamil leaders alike face pressure from extreme youth groups. Such groups propose alternative solutions, partly radical, partly violent, which tend to appeal to their peers. If a settlement could be reached, the present leaders could combine to solve urgent economic problems, thereby easing *the pressure stemming from young radicals*. Such a solution of communal problems is in the interests of the dominant class from which the present leadership stems.

Creative Pioneers of Sri Lankans

What is needed at this juncture is the fostering of a creative group of pioneers from among Sinhalese and Tamils alike who will seek to build on these emergent trends. They must forge *an ideology* which will provide the framework for seeing the future of Sri Lanka as a *pluralist nation, wherein individuals and communities develop within the framework of equality and justice*, while giving due recognition to the special position of the majority community; in pursuance of this goal, certain tasks have to be performed.

(i) The relative fears of Sinhala and Tamil communalism respectively have to be *explained*, so that each side will grow in mutual appreciation.

They are becoming more conscious than hitherto of their distinctiveness as a Tamil minority in contrast to the Sinhala majority.

The insecurity and 'minority complex' of the Tamils must be placed in historical perspective. Successive inroads into the position they held at the time when Independence was granted to Sri Lanka, with regard to language rights, colonisation of their traditional homelands, access to educational opportunities, public services, development financing, employment prospects, have made them feel that permanent disabilities have been imposed upon them. They fear that they are victims of discrimination by deliberate design. The violence and cruelties they have suffered in 1958 and again in 1977 have revealed their defencelessness. In

the context of the communal conflict, they feel that the Sinhalese want to restrict their development in their traditional homelands, and also restrict their opportunities in Sinhala areas, without their having any proper means of redress.

The insecurity and 'minority complex' of the Sinhalese-Buddhist majority must also be understood in historical perspective. Successive inroads by the Tamils from South India, the Arabs and the European powers have left significant minorities settled in their traditional areas within Sri Lanka; viz. the Tamils in the North and the East and in plantation districts, the Muslims in parts of the coast and the interior, and the Catholics (Christians) along the coast, especially the western sector. These minorities have close links with peoples of like race or religion in other lands; they are part of international groups. On the other hand, the Sinhala-Buddhist community alone is confined to Sri Lanka, with also a sense of its unique historical role, expressed in the term 'Sinhala-Dhamma-Dvipa'. There is an intense awareness that Sinhala - Buddhist identity and hegemony in the island have been undermined, and there is fear of its greater disintegration. In the context of the communal conflict, the Sinhalese feel that the Tamils want maximum benefits in their traditional homelands where few Sinhalese live, while seeking maximum advantage for themselves in traditional Sinhalese areas where also a considerable number of them reside.

(ii) There is the further task of activating these racial memories in each communal group which will help to *liberate their fears* rather than 'fixate' them. The writing of *history* should eliminate emphasising the conflict of Sinhala-Tamil relations. For example, the ideology based on the Dutugemunu-Elara episode should be discouraged. The Dravidian elements in Sinhalese racial composition and language, and the Buddhist influences in Dravidian civilisation should be indicated more effectively. The role of national leaders among Tamils and Sinhalese alike who worked jointly to struggle for Independence, during nearly one hundred years, should be made more widely known. The implications of British rule in forging links, administrative, technical, and educational, throughout the island must be given their due importance. As a result, separated communities have become intricably linked for better or worse.

We cannot return now to separate politics; we have to learn to grow together into one nation, while recognising our diversities as a smaller river joins a larger river and jointly flow into an internationally important port. *A Sri Lankan ideology* must communicate a shared memory of the past which sees conflict in the perspective of confluence; and also a shared hope of the

future, which sees communal identity expanding into national identity. As the combined energies of his Dravidian (Kalinga) and Sinhala inheritance enabled the great Prakrama Bahu to develop Sri Lanka in such a magnificent way, hope should be fostered that the combined energies of the Tamil and Sinhala communities will engender a similar period of national development in the future which lies ahead.

(iii) The final task is to base this ideology on *our common religious insights and moral ideals*. These will relate to human dignity and equality, laws which enshrine justice and which are administered with both impartiality and equity. The distinctive claims of contending communalisms have to be seen in terms of an underlying humanism, which is both human and humane. Such foundations of a Sri Lankan social order are rooted in the teaching of Sinhala-Buddhism. The vision of an ideal Buddhist ruler in the Digha Nikaya, the advice of King Dhammasoka in his Fourth Pillar Edict, the virtue of magnanimity in the Dasa-raja dhamma, all point to an inheritance on which persons of all races and religions can build an island of righteousness (dhamma-dvipa).

Issues for Negotiation

The on-going issues to the Sinhala-Tamil conflict which require settlement in stages can be described as follows:

(i) *Language rights* for the Tamils—in their traditional homelands, with regard to Central Government enactments, and in Sinhala areas. Their Constitutional status. (ii) *territorial security for Tamils* in their traditional homelands or limits to Sinhala-oriented colonisation schemes. (iii) *autonomy for government* and financial resources for development, of the districts recognised as traditional Tamil areas. The possibility of grouping them as a regional unit. (iv) basic opportunities guaranteed to Tamils in Sinhala areas in relation to education, public service and corporations, commerce, property Security of life, possessions and travel. (v) some share in the decision-making process in the Central Legislature, and other Central Government institutions such as the Supreme Court, Advisory Boards to Ministries etc. (vi) due recognition by Tamils of the special Constitutional status guaranteed to the Buddhist religion, and the Sinhala language; and of the authority of the Central Government over the whole island.

Negotiations can proceed only on the basis of an initial magnanimity on the part of the Sinhalese leaders. The settlement of issues in stages will foster growing mutual trust. The improvement of economic conditions by providing more jobs and a better standard of living especially for the youth, peasants and workers, will consolidate whatever settlement is reached.

FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS IN SRI LANKA

VAJIRA CABRAL

(A talk given at the Centre for Society & Religion-16 Nov. 1977)

Recognizing the U. N. Declaration of Human Rights (1948) as the base on which the question of fundamental rights in Sri Lanka is to be worked out, much emphasis, I feel, should be placed on the two preceding U. N. covenants of 1966. i.e.

I The International covenant on Civil and Political Rights.
II The International covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. While Civil and Political Rights could be secured immediately, adequate economic, social and cultural rights could be acquired only progressively, according to each state's available resources, hence the separate covenants. Though Sri Lanka has voted for it, it has not yet either signed nor ratified either covenant thereby not recognizing and protecting a wide range of human rights.

The following areas could be regarded as feasible guarantees of human rights in Sri Lanka. To protect its people by law against cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment. To recognize the right of every human being to life, liberty, security and privacy of person. While prohibiting slavery guaranteeing the rights to a fair trial and protecting person against arbitrary arrest or detention. To recognize freedom of thought, conscience and religious freedom of opinion and expression, the right of peaceful assembly, and of immigration and freedom of Association. As well as striving to promote better living conditions for its people. The right to work for fair wages, to social security to adequate standards of living and freedom from hunger and health and education. Also the right of everyone to form and join trade unions. To which extent are the above mentioned rights incorporated in Sri Lanka?

Since the U. N. declaration is merely an internationally endorsed statement of principles having no force or law, basic human rights in Sri Lanka are provided for in the constitution and in other written law as well as by common law, custom and usage. Being more important a quick passage of the constitution reveals that governmental rights are limited to one section i.e. section 18

(1). While I feel that it is wholly inadequate—more so because of section 18 (2) which restricts even the already meagre 18 (1). Precisely because 18 (2) could be interpreted in a wide context thereby nullifying the entire necessity of 18 (1). While the expansion of 18 (1) would be a refreshing welcome the repeal if not at least the modification of 18 (2) would be of greater importance. (*a)

When identifying problems faced in the Sri Lanka police action as regards unlawful arrest, detention etc. needs special consideration. While sec. 18 (1) (*b) & (18)(1) (*c) deals with the citizens rights how far has it been a forceful guarantee? Police brutality has been admitted not only by leading personalities but also by the Police Commission. (2) The citizens life is certainly in jeopardy if such a state were to continue and more go during emergency. It is worthy to note that (sec 90) (8), 91 (1) and 92 (2), section 103 to mention a few of the Administration of Justice Law (AJL) has attempted to remedy the situation. (*c) That is by curtailing indefinite periods of detention etc. The post AJL rules as regards this seems a healthy step forward than the pre AJL rules. However since the government has decided to scrap the A. J. L. does it mean that the above mentioned sections too are going to be abrogated? If so are we walking back to the pre A. J. L. era thereby aggravating the situation more? It is hoped that at least these sections of the A. J. L. would be not scrapped or in the alternate better defined laws to deal with police action, would be promulgated.

Related would be the *Emergency* with its unchecked powers of decree thereby exposing human rights to a greater stake. Recently we saw the 1971 declared emergency continued till 1977 meanwhile the cause for emergency had long past gone, the state of emergency prevailed. What checks are available and to maintain such arbitrary actions of the state? Sec. 8 of the p. 5. Ordinance states that no court may call in question on the emergency regulation. Though cases like *Hidramani V. Ratnavale*—where the Supreme Court expressed the view “that an application for a writ of Habeas Corpus, it could inquire into the bona fides and validity of a detention order purporting to have been made under an emergency regulation” is a healthy trend, together with the recent case of *Amirthalingam* are praiseworthy certainly but is no dependable guarantee. Hence could not a more effective method be formulated e. g. Judicial control notwithstanding section 8 of the P. S. C. This situation needs more attention specially after the 2nd Amendment. The President certainly seems to

have supreme power as regards arrest etc. etc. A detailed consideration to this problem is of vital necessity,

It is agreed that the writ of *Habeas Corpus* has for over a century been regarded as the most important safeguard of personal freedom. Here the courts must be vigilant in ensuring that the infringement is restricted to the limits set down by the legislature (The emphasis on rule of Law and separation of power arises:-)

However what, if an unknown citizen is arrested and remanded?

(1) Who would know of his existence in the police courts.

(2) Even if known would he have sufficient interest to ask for a writ of H. C. ?

The 1975 Report of the Amnesty International Report to Sri Lanka in 1975 at page 28—on Prisoners held without trail on charge gives a better insight to these problems involved.

The desirability of *Constitutional Courts, (C.C.)* seems to promote conflicting views. While it is urged that more power would be vested with the C. C.—contrary opinion calls for the abolishing of it, and reverting to a similar system in India, i. e. Whereby a law which infringed a freedom right of a citizen can be argued in any ordinary court of law. As it exists to-day in Sri Lanka it is not the law but the bill that can be argued and that too only by the C. C. The latter course could deprive a citizen of remedy if years later after the bill is passed his rights were to be interfered with. Similarly defects of an act could be manifested sometimes not while in a bill but after it has been put into practice, e.g. the 1956 Sinhala only Act—came into heated focus only after a span of 15 years after its passage in parliament. As in the case of Kodeswaram.

The question of *minority rights* is a very important aspect of this topic. While dealing with the largest minority in Sri Lanka it could be seen that though most of their grievances are justified some of their demands cannot be met. This fact should be emphasised to the T. U. L. F. by constant dialogue etc. As regards their main grievance which is their language rights, it is seen that as it exists Tamil language is not constitutionally guaranteed. It is only a subordinate legislation. Hence could it be urged to make Sinhala as well as Tamil, National Languages of Sri Lanka while maintaining Sinhala as the official language. This could be constitutionally enshrined. Secondly adequate constitutional protection can be made by amending Section II—whereby the direction of deciding what language is to be used in the Courts

of North and East is transferred from the Ministry of Justice and made an accepted policy i. e. that it should be Tamil. By such manner etc. this problem of the Tamil could be dealt with adequately. A more detailed approach to their problems would be most welcome. When dealing with this matter special care should be taken not to raise the wrath of the majority. Constitutionally and otherwise the grievance of the Tamils could be met but I am firmly of the opinion that granting of a separate state is not the solution. In fact how justified is their demand for such a State is a matter of doubt. *However considering the magnitude* of the issue and also bearing in mind that this basic demand of the T. U. L. F. will lead to more unfortunate incidences in the future if it goes unchecked, would it not be possible to enshrine in the Constitution a provision to the contrary, i. e. declaring Sri Lanka to be inseparable. This of course is more a submission which, if feasible, could be studied in detail in the course of the work progress program—

It must be mentioned that though Article 15 of the International covenant prohibits *Retroactive Legislation* there is no such provision in Sri Lanka. While the constitution is silent on it neither can the courts declare retrospective legislation invalid on the ground that it is retrospective. There are many such procedure, laws, election laws, and more recently the foreign exchange laws etc. passed in Sri Lanka retrospectively. How justified are they as regards fundamental rights of citizens? As H. N. G. Fernando proclaimed in the controversial Q. V. Liyanage "we share the intense and almost universal aversion to ex-post such laws in the strict sense, that is laws which render unlawful and punishable, at the time of their commission had not been declared to be offences." If therefore one were to agree with this sound reasoning should not preventive procedure be made effective or should one make a distinction between retrospective laws which are justified and which are not? If so on what criteria and where would the boundaries of demarcation lie?

At this stage I venture to seek out and appeal for the abolishing of capital punishment. Statistics reveal that there has been a revival of hanging since of late in Sri Lanka, specially in 1975 where the number executed had risen to 24. As a civilized nation should we not seek to urge for its repeal. Public awareness should certainly be of immense help in this issue too as well as on all other issues.

Related would be the *rights of prisoners* as elaborated in Article 20 of the covenant on Civil and political rights. In the absence

of such a guarantee in Sri Lanka the administration of such prisoners as far as practicable is conducted according to the standard Minimum Rule for the treatment of prisoners formulated by the U. N. adequate to safeguards against inhuman treatment could be urged as well as basic human facilities such as reading, etc. should be catered for having in mind their reformation and social rehabilitation. However it must be noted that Sri Lanka prison conditions are generally considered satisfactory, apart from isolated cases of ill-treatment. However a general upliftment of standards could be feasible.

Notes:

(*a) Sec. 18 (1) mentions the fundamental Rights and freedoms guaranteed to all citizens of Sri Lanka.

Sec. 18 (2) states that the exercise and operation of these fundamental rights and freedoms shall be subject to restriction as the law prescribes the interests of national unity and integrity, national security etc.

(*b) Sec. 18 (1) (b) of the constitution provides that in the Republic of Sri Lanka no person shall be deprived of liberty or security of person except in accordance with the law. Sec. 18 (1) (c) goes on to add that no citizen shall be arrested, held in custody imprisoned or detained except in accordance with the law.

(*c) Sec. 90 (8) of the AJL lays down the procedure adopted in arresting without a warrant.

Sec. 91 requires a person arrested on a warrant to be produced before a magistrate "without unnecessary delay". While Sec. 92 (2) provides that if a person is arrested without a warrant he should be produced before a magistrate within the time limit not exceeding 24 hours,

Sec. 103 deals with the time limits fixed on remand roughly from 15 days to 9 months in the aggregate as in special cases.

COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

His Excellency, the President of Sri Lanka appointed a Commission chaired by **Mr. M. C. Sansoni** to inquire and report on the incidents that took place between 13th. August and 15th September 1977 (*commonly known as the Communal disturbances*). We give below the submissions made to the Sansoni Commission by the **CITIZENS COMMITTEE FOR NATIONAL HARMONY (CCNH)** and the **CENTRE FOR SOCIETY AND RELIGION (CSR)**

THE CCNH SUBMISSIONS

The CCNH was formed on the 22nd August '77 with the object of how best to fulfil our moral and social responsibility in the face of this grave threat to national harmony. Our immediate response was to help in rehabilitation and in creating good will among all the categories of persons in the country. We have not been in a position to ascertain clearly and precisely the immediate factors and agencies which participated in this outbreak of communal violence. It is our considered opinion that the incidents that took place between Aug. 13 - Sept. 15. 1977 are a reflection of a deeper, long term malaise in our society. We are a multi-racial, multi-religious multi-class society. The underdeveloped nature of our economy, the large scale unemployment, the imbalance of political power and economic relationships among the different groups have brought about a situation of deep discontent among several categories of persons in our country. These occasionally erupt into overt violence as in 1956, 1958, 1970, 1971, July 1977 and Aug. - Sept. 1977,

It is important that these long term causes be inquired into and remedies sought if such unfortunate incidents are to be avoided in the future.

Among the immediate circumstances of Aug. - Sept. '77 incidents were also the general elections of 1977 and the strained relations

between the two major communities in the country. This is a result of a long term estrangement that has been reflected in the political field in the failure of the leaders of the country to agree to resolve the issues amicably.

The problems date back to the 1920s when the struggle for independence was taking shape. In the 1930s & 40s the issues were gradually sharpened, specially with the Pan Sinhala Board of Ministers of 1936 and the demand for 50-50 in the 1940s by the Tamil Congress.

Soulbury Commission provided certain safeguards for the minorities under section 29 of the Soulbury Commission. The disenfranchisement of the Plantation workers in 1949 further increased the imbalance in the political relationships.

The Sinhala Only act of 1956 led to a frustration among the Tamil people, whose leaders reacted with the satyagraha campaigns of 1958. The communal riots of 1958 were a major blow to the harmonious relations between the two races. No adequate steps were taken then to remedy the situation. The Bandaranaike—Chelvenayagam pact had been abrogated, unilaterally by Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike. In the period 1960-65 there were satyagraha campaigns by the Tamil political parties specially in 1961. In 1965 the Dudley Senanayake-Chelvanayagam pact was also given up by the then PM Mr. Dudley Senanayake when he found that he could not implement the District Council proposal. This led to further frustrations among the Tamil people.

The 1972 Constitution got rid of the Soulbury guarantees and did not give an adequate guarantee of fundamental rights to the people of this country including the minorities. Emergency powers under the Public Security Act were used from March 71 - '77 March to prevent public manifestations of dissent.

Population continued to increase in the 1970s, and the unemployment worsened over the years. Youth unrest grew in the North too. The conditions in the plantations deteriorated after the land reforms of the '72 & '75 due to a variety of causes. The Sinhala villages too felt the pressure on the land due to the increase in population, the drought and their long term disabilities.

While the problems were thus getting aggravated the TULF decided on the demand for a separate Independent State, Tamil Eelam for the north & East. They did so out of utter frustration. There were quite a few among the Sinhala people who resented what was set out as the attitude of the Tamil people. The TULF

campaign also added considerably to arouse mass opinion on racial lines. The speeches in the new parliament and the publicity given to them by the mass media aggravated the situation in August 1977.

We believe the long term causes have still a relevance and need to be dealt with. They must be examined and remedies sought for. These include, besides economic growth and reduction of unemployment:—

- Political solutions - eg. guaranteeing fundamental rights, decentralization of the administration,
- Educational reforms including changes in content of Education.
- Social justice to the exploited masses.
- Religions to be relevant to the lives of the people and then basic message of harmony and justice.
- Restructuring of economic & political life to integrate village and estate.
- Ensuring cultural rights to all.
- Settlement of the issue of colonization.

The present government solemnly pledged to call an all party Conference to resolve this issue and enshrine its decisions in the Constitution. This promise should be honoured before it is too late.

We believe the time is now ripe for a speedy resolution of these issues, in a more fundamental manner. If this is done it is not likely that there will be serious eruptions of communal violence on a national scale in the future. If we allow these basic issues to go unattended and thus worsen, the next stage of our Island history may be more calamitous. Irreversible tragedies may be on us before long.

We earnestly pray that your commission give considerable attention to these long term national issues, while inquiring also into the immediate incidents and their short term causes. We are a group from all races and religions. We have given considerable thought to these issues and will be happy to make oral representations to your Commission.

16th Jan. 1978.

CSR SUBMISSIONS

In law Sri Lanka is a unitary state. Geographically, it is an island. Administratively, it has been unified since 1815 due to the British conquest of the whole country. However it has not yet been adequately and meaningfully integrated as one nation with a common bond of nationality. It has a diversity of peoples, religions, social classes, castes and geographical regions. In Sri Lanka there are Sinhala, Tamil, "Indian" Tamil, Moor, Malay and Burgher as races; Buddhists, Hindus, Christians and Muslims as major religions; an upper class, middle class and the poor as socio-economic classes; a wet zone and a dry zone, a lowland and hill country. Urban areas and a rural hinterland. The divisions of caste cut across the lines of race, religion, class and region and bring in another rather imponderable though real variable into the network of relationships in the country.

A Volatile Social Background

This social plurality exists within a background of a poor country under long-term exploitation by colonizers, and is now being fitted into the world framework of "developed" metropolitan centres and "underdeveloping" peripheries. Within this periphery, that is Sri Lanka, there is a social system that marginalises the poor in the rural areas, plantations and urban slums. These are the overwhelming majority of the population. A small local elite of 10-15% live relatively comfortably even by the standards of the affluent countries. Unemployment is heavy and chronic. Out of a population of 14 million and a labour force of 4 million over 1 million are unemployed. With universal franchise since 1931 and the vote for 18 year olds since 1960, and a high level of literacy there is a considerable degree of political and social consciousness.

This combination presents a volatile background for social upheavals. Social welfare measures and the possibility of turning out governments periodically have so far contained public discontent. Yet we are now fast reaching breaking point. The youth insurrection of April 1971 was an indication of the extent of this frustration in the Sinhala educated youth, specially in the rural hinterland. The tensions have now enveloped the Tamils in the Northern and Eastern provinces. Their demand for a separate sovereign state of Eelam is born of this frustrated desperation. The communal disturbances of August '77 reveal the

racial turn that the expression of public unrest is taking. Political groups, the underworld of the unemployed, trade rivalries and racial prejudices all combined to produce this sad outburst of communal violence.

The violence was quelled in a couple of weeks. The armed forces, the police, local peoples (Vigilance) organisations and a massive expression of public opinion helped to stem the tide of violence. Over 75,000 refugees moved away from their residences at least temporarily.

Tens of thousands, specially in the plantation areas, lost all their possessions. Many still live in fear, insecurity and tension. The roots of discontent have not been eradicated.

Sri Lanka thus faces a major problem of ensuring national integration while trying to develop its economy in a world system of growing exploitation of the poor by the rich countries and their companies. *National racial harmony is a pre-requisite for our very survival as a viable nation.* We are convinced that division into two separate states will cause more problems than it will solve. Specially due to the intermingling of the races throughout the country our future lies in our togetherness. Only with justice to all and with respect for the dignity and equality of all persons irrespective of race, religion, caste, sex and region can we be one nation.

An Immense National Effort Needed

In order to realize this an immense national effort is needed. The care of refugees, their rehabilitation or resettlement in new areas are an immediate and necessary task. But a wider and deeper need is the creation of a mental and social environment for the resolution of the major issues of racial harmony. Unless there is racial harmony, even the other social tensions will not be reduced. Class inequalities can grow while races, religions and cultures conflict with each other. The subordination of the country to the world metropolises can be heightened while local groups are engaged in internecine internal conflicts.

We cannot now afford to merely look back nostalgically to the different racial histories of the past and hope for separate sovereign states, given the integration of the country that has taken place during the past 180 years. Nor can a stable national harmony be built on the domination of one group by another or a mere government army of occupation in trouble spots. We need

to build a *Sri Lankan ideology* based on justice and quality for all, while appreciating the fears and insecurities of both the minority and majority groups. All the racial and religious in Sri Lanka have their own grievances and insecurities. This is true of the Ceylon Tamils, the Moor and Malays, the plantation workers of recent Indian origin, the Burghers, Christians and also the majority group of Sinhala Buddhists. We need to articulate a just and viable ideology of communal and social justice and enshrine it in the hearts of the people and where suitable in the Constitution of Sri Lanka. In the process we hope the fundamental human rights of all will be safeguarded against the incursions by the state, other groups of different persuasions or the organised violence of gangs. Our experience of the past 30 years should teach us that the future of Sri Lanka lies in all accepting that we are a multiracial, multireligious and multilingual country. We must consciously work towards building one nation on the basis of all races and religions.

The Centre for Society and Religion has been concerned with this issue of racial harmony ever since its inception in 1971. During the past two years a group related to the Centre presented a memorandum on Racial Harmony to the Prime Minister and political parties, held seminars inviting persons of all political parties and the public to participate. Three issues of "Logos" published by the Centre, are devoted to Race Relations in Sri Lanka. We are now engaged on a campaign for creating the conditions for resolving some of the issues at the present time. This requires an understanding of the problems of both majority and minority groups. The alerting of public opinion to the danger of separation and the cost of separatism, and building a people's movement for racial justice.

I. Political Action

One of the principal areas of action for preventing future eruptions of communal violence and for building national harmony is in the political field. We have analysed the main issues; education, employment, language and culture, colonization, administrative decentralization and fundamental rights in Logos Vol. XVI No. 3 specially pp 80-84. In this connection *to recommend*:

- The enshrining of the fundamental rights of all persons and groups in the Constitution, specially in relation to language and religion. There should be a guarantee against discrimi-

nation on the basis of race, religion, caste or sex. Fundamental rights can provide against legislative discrimination.

The fundamental rights proclaimed in article 18 (1) of the 1972 Constitution are not effective due to the provisions of article 18 (2) and 18 (3) which give the government power to overlook them. We recommend that certain fundamental rights relating to race be guaranteed in such a way that the legislature cannot abrogate them merely by a Parliamentary majority against the wishes of the minority. Sec. 29 of the Soulbury Constitution had some such provision.

We believe the Commission could with reason emphasize on all political leaders, the need of getting together to resolve our major issues of race in a just manner in the political field once and for all. Politicians should desist from seeking partisan advantage out of racial differences. Unfortunately this has been so too often during the past 40-50 years. This is true of both majority and minority groups. The political leaders of the majority race have a major responsibility in this. Unfortunately their actions in the late 1950s and late 1960s led to the abrogation of the Bandaranaike-Chelvanayagam and Dudley Senanayaka-Chelvanayagam Pacts. These last two years of the 1970s can on the other hand lead to a worthwhile resolution of this issue, if the political leaders learn the lessons of history as well as of the recent disturbances of Aug. — Sep. '77.

The healthy ecumenical relations arrived at among the religions of the country can be an indication to political leaders that people can transcend narrow limits of race, creed and caste, specially if the leadership is determined on it.

Language

Language has been a major cause in Sri Lanka among the races. *We recommend:* that while Sinhala remain the Official language, Sinhala and Tamil be constitutionally recognized as National languages. Tamil also should be recognized as a language of the courts.

We further suggest that in all schools Sinhala or Tamil be learned in addition to the mother tongue which shall be the medium of instruction. English should also be provided for all as a world language.

All Party Conference

The United National Party promised in its election manifesto, electoral campaign, and "throne" speech to call an All Party Conference and to enshrine its decisions in the Constitution. We submit that this is a good proposal that can now be carried out. It is a better method than the present select committee of Parliament which does not have the participation of the T.U.L.F. and the Left Parties. Further its procedure is not broadbased enough to obtain maximum consensus in the country. The thorny issue of colonization can also be referred to such a conference. The present opportunity of a political consensus should not be missed by the failure to call the all Party Conference.

Decentralization of the Administration

This has been one of the main demands of the Tamil people. The Bandaranaike Chelvanayagam and Dudley Senanayake-Chelvanayagam pacts failed on this issue of regional and district councils. We recommend a genuine decentralization of the powers of Government. Mere appointment of District Ministers by the Central government without consultation with the districts cannot resolve this problem. It may even lead to greater central control by the Executive President. It can also be open to grave abuses of patronage and corruption as in the now defunct District Political Authority system.

We recommend a decentralization of authority in such a way that certain areas of administration are left to the local authorities of the regions or districts. Thus matters such as education, health, transport minor irrigation and even aspects of economic development could be left to the districts, under overall national planning through the setting up of district councils, village committees and grama sevaka area institutions.

Immigrant Indian Labour

During the August 1977 communal disturbances in some estates complete lines were destroyed. In the colonisation schemes where Tamils of Indian origin lived side by side with the Sinhalese, the Tamils were subject to hurt and looting. Though the Indian labour problem stemmed from the importing of cheap labour for the plantations, the problem has been worsened by the social and economic conditions prevailing in the country. The estate labourer is an isolated individual. He and his community are alienated

from the rest of the surrounding region; live in sub-human conditions and are subject to inhuman attitudes from those who are not of his race. Even after some of them became citizens of the country, this problem continues. The accusation that these registered citizens are of divided loyalty may be partly true, but if we are to have an one unified nation, deliberate attempts must be made by the State to integrate these new citizens into the life of the village which surrounds their estates and into the way of life of the people of the country. They could thus contribute to the nation's interest and culture.

Some suggestions for integrating the plantation economy into the surrounding village:

- granting of land to the new citizens;
- begin new industries in the rural areas and employ both Sinhalese and registered citizens;
- incorporate both the estate workers and the peasants in the development process of the village;
- trade unions of estate workers to be integrated into other trade unions for the building of a working class movement;
- participation of plantation workers in local government activities of their area;
- common educational and health services for all in the area.

Compensation for plantation workers who lost their bread-winners or possessions could be provided from the income of the estates.

We have made recommendations in our publications: "Towards a Socialist Sri Lanka" (Jan '77) and "The Liberation of the Village". (March 1977)

Ombudsman

It has been reported that the proposed Ombudsman to be set up by the Government will be only for investigating the grievances of public servants, the police and the armed services personnel. The scope of the proposed Ombudsman should be widened to include the grievances of the members of the public who suffer from bureaucratic maladministration; this will also cover ethnic discrimination in selection to employment, in education and in any type of public-state relationships.

The grievances of the Tamils that are being administratively discriminated against on account of their race, and the grievances of the Sinhalese that the Tamils are a favoured minority can be greatly remedied by the establishment of an Ombudsman.

Minority conflicts give further reasons to justify the need for an Ombudsman. An Ombudsman will also give a certain amount of 'Psychological' security to a citizen for she/he knows that there is someone to whom she/he could appeal to. It will also induce the public officials to be more careful and respectful in their dealings with the people.

Women's Organisations

In communal disturbances women generally suffer more as when a breadwinner is killed, a house burnt or possessions are looted. Hence women can be a powerful lobby for peace and harmony. Through political, cultural, religious and women's organisations women can be motivated to have a significant impact particularly on children, e. g. to mitigate or completely eliminate racial prejudice in the community.

2. Economic Development Race and Employment

If the immediate expressions of racial tensions are in the political field, the more important causes are at a socio-economic level. The cultural and psychological factors are even deeper and more longterm. Severe unemployment in our country that tends to heighten race conflicts, racial tensions are strikingly evident in the competition for jobs specially among the elite groups—thus the problem of standardization and University entrance. The unemployment of youth, particularly educated youth is a major short term cause of the build up of racial animosities during the past few years. Hence the resolution of the problem of employment is essential for harmonious race relations. A study of the areas where violence broke out in 1971 and 1977 may indicate a correlation between unemployment and violence.

The capitalistic base of our economy lends itself more to "cut throat competition". The powerful and the wealthy prosper. The others are neglected. This fosters favouritism. In our racial context this tends to take a communal complexion. Capitalist countries have been unable to solve their problems of unemployment on a long term structural basis. Hence we are wary of the

present governments policy of heavy reliance on a "free economy" and the "Free Trade Zone" with dependence on the loans and "advice". We doubt whether the employment to be generated by the FTZ. will compensate for the heavy expenses on the infrastructure estimated at Rs. 2000 million. Even more worthy of public caution are its social costs in urbanization pollution of the environment and further marginalization of the rural areas—not to mention the under world of smugglers and the "over world" of big business tycoons with special Swiss type numbered bank accounts. This practice of development will mean the growth of urban slums and shanty areas; This in turn will be a breeding ground of future looters and gangsters. The policies of the 'free economy' with easier imports may also be a disincentive to local production and thus lead to further unemployment. These policies are likely to increase our dependence on the big multinational corporations which are a cause of our unemployment specially in the rural areas.

Hence the government should be advised to consider seriously the social and economic consequences of some of its policies. We commend on the other hand its policies in favour of self reliance, and the development of the rural areas. The Mahaveli development project can be an immense benefit to the country in producing food, developing the dry zone, providing more living space for the population and uniting the country in the use of its water resources. The natural geographical unity of the country with the central highlands and the rivers flowing into the sea through the low country can be harnessed as a unifying factor linking the peoples.

The spreading out of investment in industry away from the Western Province to the rest of the island including the North and the Eastern can help in reducing inequalities in economic opportunities among regions and races. The Central, Sabaragamuwa and Uva are also very neglected areas that need more investment and employment opportunities.

We recommend that a maximum effort be made to develop the economy based on our raw materials and agricultural products. At present we export much of these in an unfinished or semi-finished stage. This gives us less income, and deprives us of potential employment and valuable markets. Thus in the tea industry the packeting of tea can give employment to about 50,000 persons which, after all, is what the F. T. Z. is expected to do. Coconut is a major crop in our country, specially in the thickly populated South Western region. At present we export coconut

as a primary semi—produced product which is processed into end products by the “developed” countries. It is they who receive the main benefit from our rubber and coconut lands which form about 2/5 of our cultivated area. It is estimated that producers in our Third World countries receive only about 15% of the final selling price of the end products (Cf. J. Tanner, ‘New Deal for the Poor’)

We give as an example a list of the primary products exported by Sri Lanka in the coconut industry and the end products produced by “developed” countries.

Primary Products Exported By Sri Lanka	End Products Of Developed Countries
Coir Fibre	Rubberised coir products etc.
Oil	Soap and Detergents, Margarine Shortening, Ice cream synthetic, rubber sheets.
Coconut Cake	Animal Fodder
D C	Confectionary

Rubber too has immense possibilities of industrial development and employment generation. At present we export far too much of our rubber in an unprocessed form. Why could not our development programme be geared to the better use of our Coconut and Rubber resources. How far are the firms coming into the FTZ going to help in this? Will they develop our skills, increase our incomes and enable us independent relations with the world markets.

A similar case may be made concerning fishing and the development of the sugar and cotton industries. If we are self reliant in our economy, if we use labour intensive methods in production the racial tensions will be largely diffused. Such self reliance will also increase regional interdependence within the country.

3. Education

Removal of prejudice based on race and the promotion of mutual understanding between communities are basically problems for education. This is true whether we are concerned with children or with adults. Any long term measures aimed at bringing harmony between communities should therefore give the necessary

emphasis to the reforms in the education system. When viewing our existing education with this question in mind number of areas where it can be reformed stand out. What follows is a brief outline of the questions involved.

Racial prejudice in children can have a very early origin. These can be further strengthened in the home atmosphere or in the society outside the school. Therefore attention should be given to this question of prejudice already at the level of pre-school. In a country like ours where only a small percentage gets the opportunity for pre-schooling, at least an attempt should be made to tackle the question of prejudice as early as possible.

Therefore a decision on *the age of admission* should take these facts also into account.

The isolation of children from a small age based on their mother tongue is a striking feature of our education. Although this system had been adopted for administrative effectiveness and carried out as a policy in certain areas, it had resulted in children growing up in isolation. Sometimes children had been separated into two schools based on their languages, from one school where they were together earlier, for administrative convenience; thus breeding ground for the development of prejudices has been increased. Reorganisation is necessary to remedy this situation at least in areas where there is a considerable population of different communities.

The damage done by the *schools curriculum* to inter-racial understanding can be clearly pointed out. The present curriculum does not create awareness of understanding, but on the other hand tends to isolate the pupils of different communities. This is further strengthened by the attitudes prevailing in the society at large.

The curriculum and text books should be designed in such a manner so that the children become aware of the different communities that are living in this country and through that about the cultural richness of this tiny island of ours. At the same time awareness should be created about the interaction between the races and about the synthesis of the cultures that is taking place in our present day society.

The subject of history be taught in such a way so that the children become aware about the role that was played by the members of different communities in various aspects of our history, and to

show how all these combined in the emergence of Sri Lanka as we know her today. Our books of history and the lessons could profitably and correctly emphasize more the history of the peoples, than of kings and rulers. This will thus be more a history of harmony than of wars and conflicts. It will also be the story of the intermingling of peoples, cultures, traditions, religions and economic practices. The counteracting of the myths that feed on and nurture racial prejudice could be consciously undertaken in the coming years.

The fact that we have a number of communities in this country should be kept in mind in planning the programmes and text books for subjects like aesthetic studies, religion, social studies, etc... Teaching of these subjects should also be in such a way so as not to compartmentalise the children in the cultural symbols of one community alone (eg. Dutugemunu-Elara outlook). Reform in the curriculum with these factors in mind, will go a long way in development of a unique Sri Lankan culture which could be a unifying factor of all people in our country. In this connection the learning of the languages of all communities by all is very important.

In training of the teaching personnel it is extremely important to keep in mind the question of racial prejudice. Not only are our children taught separately on the basis of their mother tongues, but their teachers are also trained separately. Teacher training in fact goes a step further in this process by segregating them for training on the basis of communities. This makes it all the more important to give the teachers awareness of the problem of prejudice with specially designed courses.

The development of the prejudice in the mind of the child is closely connected with stereotype thinking. Opposed to this there is creative thinking which should be developed and encouraged in our schools. It is necessary to review our *teaching methods* with this in mind. In an education system geared for the more passing of examinations this becomes still more important.

The content of education need to be more concerned with the skills relevant to employment, the development of our resources and the satisfaction of the basic needs of the people. The adoption of education to regional needs must be more developed, while leaving the doors open for persons of special talent to advance further, National service, future employment and the educational structure need to be considered together.

The *values* of the education system are even more important. The competitive basis of our whole educational network has an impact of making children less cooperative and group orientated in a good way. Value orientation should be an integral element of the formation of teachers. It is values of sharing and service rather than of competition and individualistic accumulation that can help gear the youth towards mere concern for others and the common good.

Reorganizing University Education

Education is an area where there is much competition specially for the admission to the Universities. This is particularly so for the faculties of Medicine, Engineering and Science. Such competition takes a racialist turn as seen in the issue of "standardization". Solution to the problem is further complicated by the two language media with different examiners. The brain drain too has a relationship both to the type of education and a feeling of acceptance or otherwise among the different racial groups in the country. It is noteworthy that though there is such a rush for admission to these faculties, the country is short of Engineers, Doctors and Science Teachers. On the other hand several countries such as U.K., U.S.A., Nigeria, Canada, Australia and New Zealand have each more doctors and engineers than several provinces of Sri Lanka taken together.

We are of the view that these problems of education which affect race relations cannot be satisfactorily resolved by merely adjusting marks and quotas, or even by multiplying universities as at present. The problems need more fundamental remedies. The content of education needs to be changed to serve the needs of the people as a whole and of the country in its present stage of development.

We recommend that those chosen for admission to the Universities should have at least two years work (or national service) experience in a relevant field. Thus engineering undergraduates should have some field experience such as in the irrigation works of the Mahaveli area. They should be prepared to serve the people of this country at least for a period of 10 years before going abroad for further studies which Sri Lanka cannot provide or migrating elsewhere. The development of Ayurveda and the linking of Western medicine and ayurveda may be helpful in many counts. The important issue should be the service of the people and not only the advantage of the individual and a family. Our socialist orientation can learn much from the more socialistic

countries of the world where education is thus geared to the good of the masses of the people.

4. Mobilizing Community Participation

We recommend the building up of local community loyalties across the barriers of race and religion. This is essential as even the armed forces and the police cannot deal effectively with a mass eruption of communal violence, as recent experience has shown us. For this purpose the setting up of neighbourhood groups is essential. Community centres, rural development societies, Co-operative societies, cultural and religious associations, educational and social institutions could be a base for such groupings. They could also help in the rehabilitation of the displaced persons, ensure harmony in the neighbourhood and be a long term preventive measure.

Trade Unions, as mass organizations, generally cut across racial barriers. During the communal troubles some trade unions helped to maintain peace, law and order in the work places. Some of them have very large membership - eg. CWC. They are often closely related to political parties. If the Trade Unions are mobilized for this national cause they can make a valuable contribution to the solution of the political issues, to mass education and also in times of racial conflict and crisis, should they recur. They should have creative opportunities of contributing towards the common good through their education and other services.

Youth Movements including student movements can likewise be a powerful force for harmony with justice. The idealism of youth when channelled to nation building can overcome many barriers set up by elder generations and centuries of accumulated racial prejudice. Joint work camps, youth seminars etc. are important methods of non-formal education which need to be encouraged. Student participation in educational institutions, and youth participation in social and civic life needs to be fostered in order to give them an opportunity of initiative and impact.

The mass media are another extremely important means of community building. The press, radio, cinema (and perhaps eventually television) can all be consciously geared to this task without interfering with their right to free expression.

The mass media also contributed somewhat to the growth of racial tensions. Its undue control by the government prevented the last government from knowing popular feeling among the Tamil people.

We recommend the setting up of an mass media commission to guide the policies of the state controlled Press, Radio and Cinema. It should be appointed by government and the opposition parties.

5 Religions and National Harmony

The four world religions present in Sri Lanka in significant numbers: Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, and Christianity can be a powerful motivating force for communal peace with justice to all. The basic inspirations of the religions are universalist and foster human understanding and respect for one another.

In Sri Lanka the religions need to get together more organically to face the present challenge. It is not enough for them to come out with appeals when there are eruptions of violence. The religions need to take on the long term task of building amity and fairplay among the races at all levels. At the local level the temple, kovil, mosque and church can be agencies of village or urban integration and not of segregation. For this the religions themselves must positively develop their thinking and action on universalistic lines so as to include all human beings within the area of their concern. Thus the religions themselves can grow in their spiritual contribution to nation building, without losing or diluting their message or identity.

Your Commission can contribute towards this by encouraging the religious groups to come forward to render their service to the country in its present need, Likewise your Commission can help form public opinion and influence the government to mobilize public and voluntary bodies to make an intense effort at nation building with justice in the immediate future. We need positive planning for our social and cultural goals as much as we need it for economic growth. A two year plan geared towards this might achieve much if carried out with dedication and earnestness.

16. Jan. 1978.

SELF DETERMINATION AND NATIONAL MINORITIES

A. AMITHALINGAM

(Leader of the Opposition, National State Assembly & General Secretary
Tamil United Liberation Front)

The U. N. Charter on Human Rights and the subsequent U. N. Covenant on Fundamental Human Rights declare that "All peoples have the right of self-determination... and that this right of self-determination was not only an individual but also a group right, which has to be respected if there was to be peace and progress. "One of the groups entitled to this group right is a nation, which can be defined as a territorial community, historically evolved, and with a common language, culture, traditions and economic life coupled with a desire to live together. In the light of this definition, Sri Lanka is the home of 2 nations, one of which is the Tamil nation. It is only in the economic sphere that there seems to be a little hitch as we have had an intertwined economy since the British times. In 1833 under the Colebrook commission Ceylon was brought under an unified administration with Colombo as the hub, with the result that several 1000's of Tamils have, migrated southwards during the 140 years. But during the last 2 decades there has been a change in this pattern. The parting of the ways began with the social revolution ushered in by Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandarnaike, when the 2 nations were made to drift apart, Sinhala Only as the official language in practice meant Sinhalese people only in the Public Service, while the non-Sinhalese people were reduced to 2nd class citizens. The motive behind the Sinhala only Bill was an attempt by the majority community to get a larger share of the plums of office which had been taken by the Tamils through English. That the Tamils monopolise the Public Service out of proportion to their numbers is not true today. In the Defence Force the intake is not even 2%, while in the Police Force it is less than 5%. Thus the economic life of the Tamil people is gradually made to depend on the development of their lands in the North and East. The well-planned, politically motivated attack on the Tamils in August 77 has shown in unmistakable terms that the Tamials are not wanted in the Sinhala areas and that they should go back.

Once the premise of the existence of 2 nations in Sri Lanka is accepted, what is the position of the Tamils today under this political set up? We have a majority nation ruling over a minority nation—a Brown Imperialism has replaced the white. The Tamils are denied a share in the political life of the country, but has it not the right to self-determination? It has the right to declare and live as equals in an Union or break away and live as a separate nation. We want to live peacefully but with honour and the only guarantee we have is the right to self-determination and to rule ourselves in our own territory. The events of August 77 have underlined the need for an area where the Tamils will be in a majority so that it could be a refuge during such times for even wild animals are provided sanctuaries.

The study of 3 languages (Sinhala Tamil & English) has been offered as a solution but it does not solve the basic problem viz the stamp of inferiority that is placed on one language. Until the Tamil language is given its due place the language problem cannot be solved. What happened to language was extended to Religion as well in 1972 by the Republican Constitution which sought to safeguard Buddhism only, and to do so in the name of Socialism is a contradiction in terms and hardly a way to promote national unity.

In the recent past deliberate in roads have been made in the name of colonization, into areas which have been traditionally regarded as the home of the Tamils, so that in the end there would be no part of the country where the Tamils would be in a majority. Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike was against planned colonization but the Bandaranaike—Chelvanayagam Pact was torn up in less than a year.

The demand for Tamil Eelam is a demand for the right to exist in freedom, the right to one's language, religion and territory, so that with the establishment of Eelam the equality of the 2 nations will be established and the 2 nations will be able to live peacefully. How the right of self-determination is to be exercised, he said, may be a matter for negotiation.

(A talk delivered at the Centre for Society & Religion and reported by a staff member)
(14 Nov. 1977)

RACE RELATIONS — A SPIRITUAL CHALLENGE TO THE NATION

TISSA BALASURIYA o. m. i.

Religions and Communal Justice

Sri Lanka is a beautiful country. Sri Lankans are kindly people. We are peaceful and religious minded. Yet many deep social maladies afflict us. We have the reputation of having one of the world's highest homicide rates. We have tolerated for centuries the evils of the caste system. The class imbalances condemn many of the poor to utter destitution and misery. The conditions in the urban slums, the neglected villages and of the exploited plantation workers are a permanent condemnation on our way of life. Among such evils racial prejudice is a prominent factor.

Racial Prejudice a Fact

We are not racist as a people. The racial divisions do not impinge so deeply on our society as in the U. S. A., South Africa, Britain or even Malaysia. The different races intermingle here far more freely. Even inter marriages are not infrequent. Within each social class there is much inter race cooperation. Thus owners of capital of all races invest together. There are workers of different races in the same trade unions. However, racial prejudice is a reality. It is communicated through language, folk lore, culture, education and ways of living. Even divisions of religions can augment racial divergences. The political disensions on racial lines have been a long term factor in our public life. The eruptions of violence on racial lines specially in 1958 and 1977 have deeply strained those relationships. The loot, arson, rape and murder of these occasions have left an indelible scar on social life. The refugee camps and migration of families affect the mentality of persons for decades.

Mutual suspicions, fears and distrust are a social reality in inter race relations. We have analysed earlier some of the grievances of the different races (cf. Logos Vol: 16. 2, 3). The resolution of the outstanding issues and elimination of prejudice is a challenge that our nation faces in the immediate future. For this we need a positive approach to the entire problem of human relations, including race relations.

Majority Community Responsibility

In Sri Lanka the members of the majority community have a major responsibility in race relations. Given the way the political power has been exercised during the past 47 years, it is the Sinhala party leaders who have had governmental power. Since we are a democratic country, public opinion is an important factor that influences our rulers. If the members of the majority community take the initiative in advocating communal justice, there is more likelihood that the ruling powers would be influenced to heed them. For this the Sinhala people have to understand that their own human and spiritual advancement can take place only in a context of justice to all. It should be easier to stress this at present since the present government is pledged to remedy the grievances of the Tamil people, and the new President has insisted on ruling the country on the principles of righteousness (Dharmista). The majority community must ask itself to what extent is it just or unjust in the exercise of the political power that it has due to its position of being a demographic majority.

If the minorities are pushed to extreme measures, such as the seeking of a separate sovereign state for themselves, it would be largely due to the folly of the majority community in not understanding and acceding to the just demands of the minorities. Work for communal justice requires among the majority community members a certain sensitive discernment of issues and a courage to affirm publicly the rights of the minorities. Often the majority of persons among the majority community may not appreciate such a view. Quite a few of them would tend to view such approaches as a "betrayal" of the Sinhala rights and demands. These latter are generally quite conscious of the disabilities of many of the Sinhala people, specially the poor in the rural areas. They tend to give a racial interpretation to situations which often reflect the class imbalances of society. Those concerned with communal justice must persevere through all such difficulties.

Minority Community Responsibility

Members of minority communities too have their responsibilities. When issues come to a real head as with the demand for a separate sovereign state their position is unenvious. Their option can be a difficult one, when they experience their grievances and the practical obstacles to satisfactory solutions. However they too have to try to co-operate in remedying the situations fundamentally. They can be tempted to leave the initiative only to

their politicians or to the more concerned among the majority community. To persevere in the midst of difficulties, and specially when feeling hurt in one's innermost being requires a certain courage and virtuousness. When some members of a minority community are thus dedicated to resolve the issues, it is easier for those among the majority who wish to work in like fashion.

Both majority and minority community members living in relative affluence have to reflect that they are both privileged with reference to those living in slums and shanties, the unemployed and the plantation workers without civic rights. The suffering felt due to communal troubles can make the affluent elite understand the need of serious concern by them for overall reforms to remove the grave inequalities that plague our society. How very easily those who live in affluence forget the rest of their society! How little relevance their search for spiritual growth has to these basic situations crying for redress. This is an indication of the extent of the alienation of our religions from the real experience of identifying with the other. How far religiosity can be, from a genuine spiritual experience and search.

Spiritual Resources

In our desire for the resolution of the racial problems, it is normal to think of the political and educational remedies. We are also quite mindful of our historical linkages and of the physical, geographical and economic factors that relate the races in Sri Lanka to one another. The religions are strongly invoked in times of crisis, such as in August—September 1977. They generally bear a message of peace and harmony.

But once the gravity and the urgency of the problems subside, the religious forces fail to continue their action for a long term solution of the issues. We saw a similar phenomenon during the youth insurrection of April—May 1971. The religious leaders appealed for peace and non—violence. Their messages were beamed over the mass media. But once the violence was put down by the armed forces, there was little effort by them to find out the real causes of the uprising, and much less to remedy them. More or less the same thing happens in the daily life of the country. So long as life goes on peacefully the religions take the slums and shanties, the plantation lines and the mass unemployment for granted. In this way the religions, as it were, come to terms with the prevailing status quo. They even give it a legitimation. They perform their religious rites and

rituals taking very much into account the divergences and even the discrimination based on race, class, caste, and sex. Thus the religions fail to have a catalytic influence for good by actively campaigning for the remedying of these basic social ills that afflict our nation.

In this the religions too choose the path of least resistance, In spite of notable exceptions, this type of approach seems to be the general rule among the religious institutions of our country. They may not be bad; but are they very much better than the institutions of the political, social, cultural and economic fields?

A Joint Religious Effort

During the August—September 1977 troubles, the leaders of different religions met at the All Ceylon Buddhists Congress Hall at the invitation of the Citizens Committee for National Harmony. The Assembly issued a public statement pledging unanimous support for the cause of communal harmony. It undertook to follow up with a continuing programme of action. It is extremely desirable that this initiative born of a time of distress be continued and that the action be carried out systematically throughout the country. What a source of inspiration such a combined inter—religious effort can be to the whole country—including all the political leaders.

The recent statement issued by Ven. Havanpola Ratanasara and Bishop Laksman Wickremasinghe is another very helpful step in this direction. (see pp 44 to 50) Their suggestion that we must work towards a *positive Sri Lankan ideology* in which there is a place for all persons, races, religions and cultures is a valuable contribution to our ongoing search. We have to get beyond any narrow sectarian concepts that may be an impediment to the building of a united Sri Lanka with justice to and acceptance of all. The recent crisis has thrown up many such initiatives in different parts of the country. They need to be welded into a powerful movement for peace with justice to all races. The present atmosphere of general goodwill should be harnessed for long term solutions. It would be a great pity if it were allowed to slip by, and if relationships among the races were to worsen.

Basic Inspirations

We are very fortunate that in Sri Lanka we have religious traditions at the base of our history and cultures. The religions

have a profound influence on the outlook of the masses of the people. Sometimes this influence has a strong admixture of myth and prejudice that are alien to the better inspirations of the religions. Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Christianity and the other religions such as Zoroastrianism all have a universal acceptance of all beings as equal in dignity and calling. They all emphasize service to others and the spirit of community. Great leaders like Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King were inspired by the religions in their struggles against racial injustice.

In Sri Lanka we need a mass engagement of the religious in the task of building one contented nation out of the different peoples who have come to inhabit this land in different periods of history. Less than a long term mass education programme is inadequate to heal this problem once and for all. Mere structural and political solutions are insufficient unless the mentalities of people are also fundamentally activated towards racial justice and harmony. We present some comments on such an action with special reference to Christians as we are more familiar with this religious tradition.

Christians and Communal Justice in Sri Lanka

Christians are a minority of about one million out of a total population of about 14 millions. Yet they have a significant place in race relations here. In race they are Sinhala, Tamil and Burgher. They are found in all the provinces, districts, towns as well as in the plantation areas. They are related to the cultures of these peoples. The Muslims are Tamil and, or Sinhala speaking. On the other hand most Buddhists are Sinhala, and most Hindus are Tamils. Generally the Moors and Maylays are Muslims and the Burghers are Christians. Thus the Christians are a sort of linking factor within the country in so far as the religious ties are strong enough to affirm themselves even in times of racial tensions. The institutions run by Christians, specially the schools have also been a meeting place of different races, even after the language media separated the children racially into separate media streams. Thus Christians can and must be in the future a group that works for harmony in Sri Lanka with justice towards all.

Christian Motivation

Each religion provides its own motivation for human relations. Kindness and justice are enjoined by all. Christianity has love of neighbour as absolutely central to its understanding of good-

ness and holiness. *Jesus* taught that love of God and love of the neighbour are equal in importance. In fact the two form one commandment. When asked who is the neighbour who has to be thus loved unselfishly he narrated the parable of the good Samaritan. A Jew who fell among thieves, was beaten and left half dead on the road side was not helped by fellow Jews. Even the religious persons passed him by. It was a stranger, of another race, a Samaritan who stopped and took all the trouble to help him. Jews and Samaritans were then traditional enemies. *Jesus* thus taught the extent of the love of the other required of those who wish to follow his path.

Jesus regarded whatever is done in genuine love towards anyone else as done to him. "Whatever you do to the least of those my brethren you do unto me". The criterion for admission to heaven, the eternal reward, is once again our attitude towards others. "When I was hungry, you gave me to eat... when I was in prison you visited me.".....Mt. 25. In his teaching there is thus strong identification of love and concern for all others with the love and worship of God.

The teaching of the apostles is also clear. St. Paul says, in Christ there is neither Jew nor Gentile. St. James protests strongly against acceptance of persons merely because of their social position. Racism is thus incompatible with the gospel of *Jesus Christ*. Racial prejudice is incompatible with genuine Christian holiness of life.

Unfortunately throughout the history of the Church, there has been the need to combat the human weaknesses of racism, clanishness and casteism. Thus in the early Church there was a protracted debate before Gentiles were accepted as Christians. The Judaizing apostles were keen on imposing the Jewish culture of circumcision on all followers of *Jesus*. This was the main issue of the first Council of the Church—the Council of Jerusalem.

In future centuries Christians were guilty of racism when Europeans expanded their empires to other Continents. By then Christians had come to accept the implicit superiority of the White race over the others. Hence the combat against racism is centuries long struggle. It may have to be waged for many more ages till human beings are more thoroughly transformed to be truly human and hence closer to God.

A Fundamental Conversion needed

Due to our human weakness we tend to be selfish. Selfishness is individualist and collectivist. Collective selfishness supports the promotion of ones kith and kin even as against the good of others. Racism is a form of collective selfishness. Racial prejudice is nurtured by collective selfishness, specially in the expressions of culture, myth, folklore and even history.

Such selfishness makes us unconcerned about others, specially when there is apparent calm in the situation. That is why we tolerate slums alongside the five star Inter Continental and Oberoi hotels. Similarly concerning race relations. When another's language is not given a rightful place it may not affect us. We do not feel it because we do not identify with the other. We may be satisfied with our position so we do not do anything about the evils around us. This can be true of members of the majority as well as of the minority communities. Can we be satisfied that we are really loving God and others if we ignore the causes which lead to such strained relations and even bloody violence?

Recognition of our own guilt can be the beginning of wisdom and remedial action by us. It is essential that persons and religious groups recognize that racial prejudice is a deep long term malaise in our society. It is a form of *social sinfulness* that pervades and perverts our relationships. It takes structural forms as when the political constitutions and legal system deny justice to persons. *As a Christian group we have not analysed this sin of our community relationships.* It is doubtful whether there is adequate theological reflection on it in the training of the seminarians, religious and laity. Even the Sunday sermons would tend to refer to it in times of crisis, but not as an ongoing situation which challenges us to a human and Christian response of righteousness and virtue against ingrained evils. Christian institutions have responded generously during times of racial crisis. The dedication of groups like the women religious was heroic and extremely self sacrificial. We need to bring such enthusiasm to the long term remedying of the racial problems, otherwise we may only do remedial work after the damage takes place.

An Option Required

In order that we undertake to work systematically for communal justice and harmony a conscious option must be made for the types of race relations which are just. With clear awareness

of the difficulties involved we must decide to give time and attention to it. This is more than even working for the rehabilitation of refugees, which too is a necessary and valuable work. We must strike deeper at the root causes of the evil, within ourselves and in their socio-political, economic and cultural manifestations.

It is true, issues of communal justice are somewhat complicated ones, with political implications also. Hence too easily persons, committed to personal sanctification and to guide others in moral and spiritual advancement, neglect the *analysis and study of these issues*. They are said to be far beyond the ordinary persons reach; or sometimes even regarded as too mundane. A few of the more spiritualist guides tend to soft pedal these issues, since they believe that the kingdom of God is not limited to more earthly goods and values. Whatever the reason, there is a tendency for religious persons to shun away from the social analysis needed for understanding these issues; and consequently for taking an option for justice. Yet these very problems impinge so deeply on people's daily lives, on their attitudes towards others and their work; on their feeling of being wanted or unwanted in this country and society.

When calamities like August 1977 occur over a hundred thousand had to leave their homes and flee for safety as refugees. Can we truly love others as ourselves, and love others as children of the same loving God and not want to seriously ask ourselves why these things happen, and what we can do to prevent such inhumanity in our country and in our time? Can the moral guides of the people be silent on these long term issues, without forfeiting their very credibility? The issues are complicated and grave; hence also the deeper obligation for the religious leaders to take the means necessary to study and reflect on these issues and place their enlightened judgment and guidance before the masses of their followers and all others.

An option for communal justice is a spiritual decision as well as a *political option*. We must have no illusions about it. Unless politicians can be pressurized to bring about the necessary changes in the Constitution and the law of the country, there will be an important area of prejudice and injustice that would not be remedied. As in the overall question of social justice, communal justice requires active participation in the processes of political decision making. Failure to do so, would make us guilty of the evils of racial conflicts due to our negligence. Unfortunately much of Christian spirituality is still rather unrelated to the need

of active participation in public life. How far is the sacramental life of the Christian communities related to the resolving of racial tensions: e. g. our confessions, masses, communions? How seldom do spiritual writers refer to growth in personal sanctity by such dedicated action in public issues? How few are the parishes which take a long term interest in such issues—beyond immediate help to those in need? The building of neighbourhood groups on an inter communal basis can be a foundation for such action.

Christians have generally been inward looking in the past, concerning political issues. The Church agencies busied themselves on a long term basis primarily for the promotion of their self interest, specially the defence of their rights or privileges. There is hardly a tradition of large scale Christian institutional involvement in Sri Lanka on issues which concerned the good of others or the common good as such. The dedication to communal justice can therefore have a salutary influence on the entire Christian community by teaching it to be more other—centered and less self centered. This is true for the Christian groups of the minority races also. They have generally tended to isolate themselves from the mainstream of the peoples struggles in the country. It is only their own consciousness of their suffering racial oppression that has now awakened quite a few among them to a concern with the cause of their people. Action for communal justice can have the impact of making all committed Christians aware of the wider struggle for liberation that the oppressed masses of our country, belonging to all races are trying to wage against the forces of injustice that dominate them. Adversity may teach us this lesson.

Perseverance

Spirituality has to be concerned with the objective building of the values of the Kingdom of God on earth. Justice, truth, freedom and peace must be the basis of human realtions. Racism and racial prejudice militate against these values. Hence one concerned with spiritual growth must, in the Christian perspective, work assiduously for the promotion of these values. It is not enough that our concern be active only when the social relations erupt in violence. This is only the tip of the iceberg. Its roots and substance are far more insidious than the visible top. Hence our dedication to this cause must be serious and persevering. We must keep on working even when most people are only busy about their day to day affairs and like to forget August 1977 like a bad

dream or a nightmare. We have to create interest in positive solutions. Goodwill needs to be generated on all sides for peace with justice.

This is often a *thankless task*. Extremists on different sides may argue against any attempts at peaceful solutions in terms of one nation. Others may be frustrated and despondent and unwilling to lend any support to such a cause. Efforts at good will require an endeavour to understand different points of view. This will mean trying to explain the problems of different points of view. This will mean trying to explain the problems of one group to another which may be strongly prejudiced. Others will regard this as a fruitless search as the roots of distrust are so deep. While some others will argue that only a radical social revolution can create the environment for racial harmony, and hence any other concern for resolving issues is likely to be counter-productive. It will be necessary to be able to listen to all these points of view patiently and still push ahead towards inter-racial understanding and solutions acceptable to all. Communal justice cannot mean merely giving into one pressure group. Generally it is the minority who are more oppressed, however from certain points of view the majority may also be more disadvantaged. It is part of the growth in our special sensitivity to try to develop a sense of justice and fair play through all these issues, and sometimes under trying circumstances.

A Pastoral Challenge to the Churches

Resolving the problems of race present a definite pastoral challenge to the Churches. They meet a few lakhs of persons weekly at the Sunday and other Church services. They have thousands of dedicated full timers committed to the apostolic ministry. They have access to the mass media of communication and contacts with governmental and voluntary organizations. Given the long standing nature of our racial problems and the calamitous situation to which the country was recently brought to, should not the Churches decide on this issue as one of their more immediate and intensive short term priorities of pastoral action? If they do so a conscious policy of mass education must be undertaken. A programme of activity for mobilizing public opinion should be elaborated and perseveringly carried through. *An ecumenical action programme* of all Christians is likely to bear more fruit, than if each Church were to work separately. Such action can and has to be at different levels. At the National level the Bishops Conferences, Conference of Religious

Superiors, National Agencies like the Catechetical and liturgical Commlssions, lay apostolate organizations, Schools, the mass media etc, should work out certain targets and policies concerning the issues of race. If this is done it will be easier at the grass root levels to work in a systematic manner. The Bishops Conferences have a very great moral influence in the country. They should use it for national issues preferably in conjunction with leaders of others religions. A joint pastoral by all the Bishops with spiritual orientations and guidelines of action can be a very significant contribution by them to the cause. What a significant grace it would be if the Sinhala and Tamil Bishops of all Christian denominations would meet to dialogue on this issue and give a Joint leadership to all their fellow believers in Christ? The *religious superiors Conference* in Sri Lanka is gradually evolving towards being an agency of reflection and action. Yet given the gravity of these issues this is still far too slow. After all, it is the religious congregations that have the most full timers in the churches. Woman religious number about 2,500; men religious are about 500 or so. These are more than any diocese can dispose of. True, they have already many commitments. Yet if the religious give conscious priority to these issues much more can be done. They are doing excellent work in rehabilitation. But a much deeper analysis of the situation and a programme of action that is nationwide, including political impact, needs to be undertaken urgently, seriously and perseveringly. This can be a call to the religious families to look beyond their present preoccupations and apostolic horizons to respond to a national challenge. In doing so they are also likely to find an even more meaningful mission in Sri Lanka. The presence of members of the same religious congregation in several provinces of the country and with members of different races can be a particular grace for and a call to this mission of reconciliation and justice. The demands of love of neighbour to which the religious are committed could inspire them to more active engagement in work for communal justice at a basic level of changing mentalities and relationships among the races.

What is said of religious congregations can be applied within limits to lay *apostolic groups*, specially the larger and more organized ones. If they accept such an orientation they can be a catalytic presence in localities and work places. In the heart of the crisis some, like the charismatic movement groups, were particularly active. It is highly desirable that this concern has a systematic long term orientation and thrust. In the process they would also develop their methodologies of analysis, action and evaluation. They would learn to make alliances with groups of different faiths and ideologies in order to work for the common

taks of national integration. This will naturally influence their spirituality also.

The parishes can be very powerful bases of consciousness raising and action for communal justice. They cover many areas of the country, specially in the towns in which the races are mixed. This will require a thinking out by the parish clergy and lay leaders how the activities of the parish could be geared to this goal. Here too, the occasion of troubles bring out much self sacrifice and organizational skill. Perhaps the dioceses should take their orientations at the level of deaneries and other councils. How the liturgy, novenas, church feasts, parish visitations can help remove racial prejudice, build harmony and influence public policy would have to be worked out at parish level in the concrete situations. Art, music, drama and the mass media can also carry more powerfully than at present the religious motivation towards communal justice.

A most important type of action is the consolidation of friendly relationships among the *leaders of religions at the grass root level*. If the leaders from the temple, kovil, mosque and church get together in a village, or an urban area, they can be the most portent in influence for communal harmony and justice. This will however require much persistent effort; an overcoming of certain inbuilt prejudices and also the consequent evolution of a spirituality, of the widest ecumenical dimension. This will, we are confident, bring out what is best in each religious tradition and help purify all of any narrowness and deficiencies. In the coming months and years an immense effort may have to be made in this direction. It can also be a means of helping the present Government to persevere in its promise to set up a free and just society on the basis of ritheousness and morality.

The *socio-economic development activities* of the church need to further consider orientation towards these fundamental issues at national level. They have now moved from immediate relief to long term rehabilitation of some of the victims of the August incidents. They have also geared their activities to community building on a micro level. It is necessary that community building at a wider and more national level be the framework within which micro communities are formed and activated. It is important to realize that the broader relationship of social groups are also practical problems in the country. Not to take the national issues seriously and directly may be a form of escapism from the more difficult challenges. Social development workers too have to ask themselves whether they give in too easily to the temptation

to opt for the path of less resistance, by neglecting such issues. The programmes of groups such as the Y.M.C.A. leadership training, Sister Formation Institute, Social Animation, etc. need to be evaluated in this perspective also. The cause of social development today is closely related to the struggles of liberation of oppressed classes, marginalized races, and neglected cultures. Social Development has to relate meaningfully to their struggles at national level also.

Race relations are a spiritual challenge to all of us and to all our religions. If racial prejudice persists from generation to generation, is it not an indication of the failure of the religious to communicate the best in their message to the masses of their followers? We are challenged by our present situation to accept other persons, all persons, as fellow human beings equal in dignity and in rights. As peoples and as a nation we are still far from this ideal. Our present trials may help us to go closer to it. In responding to this we can all grow spiritually. The religions themselves can thus come closer to their original and core message of other centeredness and service.

If the Christian churches merely continue their traditional activities without an effort to meet the grave issues that deeply threaten our national life, would it be surprising that many will leave aside Church activities as not only irrelevant but also a holy distraction from our basic human responsibilities today? If on the other hand the Churches as a body respond in an enlightened and courageous manner to these challenges not only will the nation be well served by them, but Christianity itself would in the process leave its self built ghettos and enter the mainstream of national life and of the aspirations of our peoples. All this will require a deep and profound reflection by individuals, small groups and organizations on the situation today, the gospel imperatives, the strategies for change, and the shift in priorities among these groups themselves.

NATIONAL INTEGRATION IN AUSTRALIA

LORNA WRIGHT

Australia was a racist country, that pursued racist policies. But the Racial Discrimination Act 1975 of Australia, deals with the current policy of national integration, with a view to ensuring racial harmony in a multi-cultural and pluralistic society.

Australia has recognised the fact that as a Nation she would present a very sad and sorry spectacle to the world of today, if in matters of race, colour, and creed she permitted the eclipse of reason by passion or hatred or through the perversion of judgement she failed to distinguish between what is right and wrong. She knew she could not by the creation of a false ideal of nationalism or patriotism delude herself into a belief that wrong was right.

The elders of a majority community must and should realise that conflict and disharmony in a country, in the final count negates the strength of numbers in racial supremacy. Oppression of minority groups is dangerous to the community at large.

For a developing nation, where social tensions reach the point of open clashes, the resulting chaos could disrupt economic measures taken to alleviate poverty and unemployment, two very basic requirements for political stability.

Colonial legislation in Australia was blatantly racist. The Australian Federation inherited this colonial law, which for instance expressly disqualified every Asian from ever becoming an Australian citizen. These offensive laws were abolished in 1971.

Social Justice

Today to my knowledge, laws that are racist are operative only in South Africa and Rhodesia. But that does not preclude the fact that in societies particularly with minority groups there is no racial discrimination. The relative strength of a majority group, may lead and has led to the adoption of policies of affirmative discrimination.

Nobody of education and goodwill in the world would dispute the desirability of social justice or equality. But conflict does arise in Sri Lanka as it does elsewhere over the means adopted to achieve it.

The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination asserts that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. It also states that any doctrine of superiority based on racial differentiation is scientifically false, morally condemnable and what is very important, it is socially unjust and dangerous. It has no justification.

Unlawful

So far 81 countries have ratified the Convention. In 1971 the General Assembly of the UN urging further ratifications was carried with 101 votes in favour, none against, and 5 abstentions.

Australia intent on providing an effective means of combating racial prejudice in the country introduced a Bill in 1973 to make racial discrimination unlawful in the country. This was an essential step to her ratifying the Convention. Thus Australia adopted laws that outlawed discrimination. The Racial Discrimination Act 1975 introduced into Australian law for the first time obligations in the convention.

It was firmly believed by both the Labour Government that introduced the Bill and the Liberal Government that made it law, that legislation had a vital and fundamental role to play in the elimination of racial discrimination. For it was seen that the common law provided few effective remedies against racial discrimination.

The Prime Minister of Australia, it is reported, has initiated an Asian Regional Conference for February this year. The call undoubtedly will be for co-operation and action for mutual economic development in the area. This could now be appreciatively viewed by Asians in a setting which serves the cause of human rights as well.

The Racial Discrimination Act is on the statute books—the work of the Community Relations Council in actively propagating the principles and objectives of the International Convention and has fulfilled to a great extent Australia's obligation to the elimination of all forms of Racial discrimination. The ramifications of these initiatives are such that the rejection and isolation of Australia in the region is no longer logically tenable.

Consequences

As in most matters there is debate, there was argument in discussing the desirability of law to outlaw discrimination. On the

one hand it was insisted that the proscribing of racial discrimination by law would make people more aware of the hurtful consequences of discrimination. It would take the undesirable and unsociable consequences of discrimination and make them more obvious and conspicuous.

The formal administrative machinery performed an important educative role in the promotion of greater understanding and tolerance among all racial groups in Australian Society. The fact that racial discrimination was unlawful made it simpler for people to resist the constant onslaught of social pressures that cause discrimination.

The very existence of the law ensured positive results in the alleviation of oppression of minority groups. Legislation also provided the legal background on which to rest changes reflecting basic community attitudes. In brief the community Relations Council of Australia contributes to validating:

- * the community's sense of obligation to obey the law;
- * Government rejection of discrimination and prejudice;
- * the commitment by Governments and public administration to create equality of opportunity;
- * the development and dissemination of heightened community standards and, the use of procedures aimed at resolving conflict.

Healthier

The opposite view was that it would be better to sweep all acts of discrimination under the carpet, that it was healthier for the community at large (presumably the majority community) to ignore what they term isolated and individual cases.

Laws apparently cannot change the attitudes of man. They also argue that to give publicity to discrimination of minority groups is to cause chain reactions that aggravate situations within a country. It is far simpler to insist that we do not have laws that discriminate, therefore there is not merely a negative attitude, it is an ignorant one. For it refuses to take into account, for instance, that in spite of the advances in transportation and communication, and the shrinking of the world the trend in the world today is not to-wards cosmopolitanism.

AUSTRALIA'S RACIAL DISCRIMINATION ACT

In the Racial Discrimination Act of 1975 of Australia there are four principles underlying the policy of the Australian Government.

1. that racial discrimination should be proscribed by appropriate legislation,
2. that clear legal remedies should be provided.
3. that formal administrative machinery should be established to supplement the legal and judicial measures by mediation and conciliation.
4. that steps should be taken — in such fields as research, education, and public information — to combat racial prejudice and promote tolerance and understanding.

Establishing the fact that a negative or ignorant attitude to discrimination is to shirk the very task of unity and amity within a nation, it is necessary to identify the dimensions of discrimination. They have been classified either as overt or institutional.

Time and again it has been demonstrated very forcibly the need for greater community relations programs directed towards the education of the whole community. Cultural and educational programs bring an understanding and appreciation of cultural differences.

For prejudice is a form of pre-judgment, ignorance is often a total lack of understanding — insensitivity arises from intolerance and disregard.

Institutional discrimination by definition implies the lack of positive policies in administration which places at a disadvantage people of different, cultural and language backgrounds. Every member of a community has a right to equal opportunity in obtaining services provided by the government.

If the lack of facilities to particular racial groups prevent or impede this right it undoubtedly contributes an act of racial discrimination.

In Australia the sphere where discrimination is blatantly operative is in industry where a high percentage of the workforce is

non-English speaking. A survey in Sydney established the fact that migrants, because of the inadequacy of bilingual warnings and instructions, suffered most from industrial accidents. After injury they had to weave their way through incomprehensible procedures before redress was made.

Discrimination in the Law and injustice in procedures are these that fail to take into account linguistic and cultural differences. The need for competent interpreters both at police stations and courts has been repeatedly stressed. Discrimination in mental Health and the breakdown in communication brings tragedies.

In education, discrimination could bring a letter of the following content to the Community Relations office 'Who is to blame for the fact that our children still cannot read and write with fluency? Are we to blame for bringing them to this land of "equal opportunities?" Should we have known that we would be treated as second-class citizens? Or was the propaganda not meant to be taken seriously? Of course we all believe in "equal opportunities for all students". What we want to know is when our children will receive their equal opportunities!

The Schools Commission identified discrimination in the curriculum. School text-books have been found to be extremely colonial in attitude. They indicate bias, foster bias and appeal to bias. The content takes the distinct form of racial pride, totally ignoring fact and colouring and investing argument with specious sophistry.

Other areas of discrimination arise in the pursuance of the inexorable personal law of self-interest — hotel and boarding house accommodation — sport — the public service etc. The media often ignores, inadequately realises or pays scant attention, while grossly offending racial groups. The nature and presentation of material often by story, joke or cartoon does nothing to develop understanding or promote tolerance.

It will thus be seen that the Community Relations Council in Australia which administers the Act does so, not from inconclusive deduction from false or 'coloured' premises but on a solid foundation of reason and fact. The stern logic of facts in the world to-day — recognised in Australia — proclaims that no nation swayed by, and concerned primarily in the promotion of narrow, selfish racial interests of the majority group operating by means of exploitation of minority groups can claim a just and fair nationhood. Neither do narrow considerations of this nature in the long term bring progress.

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