

Saturday Review

SRI LANKA

MOURNERS' DAY

Jaffna's planning to make the 24th of this month a day of mourning

Vol. 4 No. 29

5th October 1985

Its' UN Day

SETTLEMENT WITHIN 90 DAYS: BHANDARI

IMMEDIATE POLLS: DELHI ACCORD

This accord is reached at the forthcoming talks in New Delhi on the ethnic issue. President Jayewardene is "prepared to hold elections almost immediately as in Punjab".

The most the government is prepared to concede is Provincial Councils with Chief Ministers as their head.

The government will never agree to the linkage of the Northern and

Eastern Provinces to form an Administrative Unit, as demanded by the Eelam National Liberation Front. The President said this when the Editor met him at his residence recently in connection with another

matter - the release of the Tamil political detenus at Welikade and elsewhere.

The Indian Foreign Secretary Mr. Romesh Bhandari is reported to have told certain Tamil leaders in Colombo during his visit last week that he was hopeful that a settlement of the ethnic problem would be achieved "within 90 days."

MOHAMED Vs. SR EDITOR

The following is the text of a letter dated 4th October, 1985, sent by the Editor of SATURDAY REVIEW to Mr. M. H. Mohamed, Minister of Transport and Commercial Security:

ASSALAM ALAI KUM

Dear Mr. Mohamed,

I regret that under cover of Parliamentary privilege you have made some damning "comments" in Parliament about my work as a journalist. (Vide—Hansard, 19th September, 1985, columns 675, 676 and 677.)

The biting words in your "commentary" are: In my view, the articles he writes are anti-Sinhala, anti-government and supporting the Tamil Eelam...It is so shocking. I am surprised that the Sinhala name could write such articles.."

You spoke about the need for "investigation" but said that your officers had no time for it.

You ended your "commentary" by saying: "The Minister of Information can look after that matter."

Because I am the Editor of the SATURDAY REVIEW, your "comments" apply to the newspaper as well.

I wish I also was qualified with Parliamentary privilege to give you a fitting reply.

Denied such an advantage I am writing this letter to you to say a few things that needs be said.

I shall also be publishing this letter in the SATURDAY REVIEW, the only forum available to me to clear my name.

At the time you made your "commentary" the house was considering a request for a supplementary vote not exceeding Rupees Six million to spend on the security on commercial and industrial establishments.

How my name got into the debate is one of the modern mysteries of Sri Lanka.

None of the members who took part in the debate earlier had made any reference to me or to my writing.

In your reply, you took the opportunity to present by a reference by Mr. Lakshman Jayakody, M. P. for Divulupitiya, to some articles in a felicitation form to Mr. Thondaman, Minister of Rural Industries, Development, to launch what Mr. Sarath Muttetuwegama, M. P., for Kalawana described as an "attack" on me.

You replied: "I am not attacking him" (I am not attacking him).

Then Mr. Norman Vaidyaratne, Deputy Speaker, who presided agreed with you saying "He is not attacking. He is only commenting."

Parliament is the repository of the peoples' sovereignty, is supreme but that does not give members the right to malign persons outside hiding under cover of parliamentary privilege.

In the British Parliament, by convention, critical reference to outsiders are generally not allowed.

Complimentary copies of the SATURDAY REVIEW are sent to most M.P.s, including yourself. If you have read the paper regularly — and

diligently, you would not have made the "comments" referred to.

In your reply, at one point you have got the name of the paper wrong calling it the SUNDAY REVIEW.

I was born a Sinhalese Buddhist and I am proud of that fact though, under trying circumstances prevailing, I sometimes pray to ALLAH and other GODS as well.

As a Sinhalese, I believe I had done more than my share to find a way out of the tangled web that Sri Lanka has got into over the ethnic problem and bring about a national reconciliation.

Some of the highest Sinhala Army heads in Colombo and Jaffna as well as leaders of the Tamil militant groups are aware — and appreciative — of the role I have been playing.

I have written articles critical of the United National Party government policies and activities, but that does not make me "anti-government".

I have written in similar vein during the previous regimes too,

(Continued over to page 8)

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SRI LANKA

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Palestinian Poster Competition

The Sri Lanka Committee for Solidarity with Palestine has organised a poster and cartoon competition in connection with the U. N. declared international solidarity day with Palestine (29th November).

The theme of this competition is "Palestine Liberation Struggle."

Cash prizes will be awarded to the best 15 creations selected by a panel of judges. The first prize will be Rs. 1500. The second prize Rs. 1000/-, and the third prize Rs. 500/-. There will 10 consolation prizes. Special prizes will be awarded to creations from school children.

The closing date for the competition is 1st November. For further details contact :

Friendship House,
Palestine Cartoon and Poster
Competition,
No. 4, Cooray Mawatha,
Parliament Road,
Rajagiriya.

GANDHI DAY IN JAFFNA

A meeting chaired by Mr. K. Nesiiah, Emeritus Professor, was held at the YMCA, Jaffna, to mark Gandhi's 116th birthday on 2 Oct.

Opening the meeting the Chairman said, "it was to me, whose special subject has been History, including the French revolution, a wonderful spectacle to behold, so often by visits since Dec. 1920, Gandhi's India. And to one who believes that God rules and sends the right leader to a people who pray to him for guidance and succour, it was a privilege to witness Gandhi as leader, and around him in every part of India a galaxy of men such as history has seldom thrown up and a whole people following! Now India is the key power in Asia and with a leadership standing in the world."

Quoting from Gandhi he said:
"Whatever may be true of other

countries, in India at least political murder can only harm the country. This is much more true whilst an experiment on the largest scale yet known to the world is being made to win liberty through strictly peaceful methods" and, "India's greatest glory will consist in not regarding Englishmen as her implacable enemies fit only to be turned out of India at the first available opportunity but in turning them into friends and partners in a new commonwealth of nations, in place of an Empire (1922)".

Quoting from Lord Pethick-Lawrence he said, "Gandhi has sometimes been spoken as the interpreter of India to the outside world, but even more significant, that he was the interpreter of India to herself.

His central doctrine of ahimsa belonged to the great tradition of India.....It awakened the soul of India. It sapped the will of the British people to maintain their rule. It prevented a blood-stained rebellion."

Turning to Sri Lanka he spoke of the ideals of Justice, Equality and Fraternity in an era of human rights being utterly disregarded and of a reign of terror being unleashed especially on the Tamil people. He quoted the late Bishop Lakshman Wickremasinghe saying to him in a letter, "My prayers and agony for you and yours, and your Island torn asunder by hatred, carnage and violence I know that you also grieve and look beyond to the silver lining behind the clouds for yet the resources of God to act within our lives, and for sanity out of travail".

Referring to the late Mr. S. J. V. Chelvanayakam he said, "his feeble frame enshrined the dedication to Truth and Ahimsa. His achievement was to have implanted in the Tamil

people a deep national consciousness of their identity as a people; with a language and cultural inheritance of their own, the territorial identity of their homeland, and their right to self-determination (or autonomy). And like the Mahatma, the Thanthai taught us that self-determination cannot be a gift from one people to another; it is a people's own self-expression."

Paying tribute to the late Mr. Dharmalingam, he described him as a personification of what is best in Tamil culture and that it is a reflection on our present state that violence should destroy such a man. He went on to describe some of our tasks as being the rehabilitation of our youth and students through programmes involving education and development. He also touched on an area of discrimination resulting in the gross inadequacy of facilities provided for the blind, the deaf and the handicapped amongst Tamils.

It was decided to form a non-violent action committee with Mr. Jeevadas as convenor.

One of the speakers, Mr. Rasiiah, who described himself as Hindu, quoted the following verses from the Bible, "Thy grace is my sufficiency in all things" and "All things work together for the good of them that love God." He commended these verses as those which he used in his daily prayers.

HOUSE SEARCHED

The House of the President of the Trincomalee Citizens Committee was reported to have been under siege for nearly 2 hours from 10p.m. on 27.9.85 by security forces. In the meanwhile security forces at Huskisson Street were reported arrested 2 people and taken them into custody.

FOR CLEAR PHOTOSTAT COPIES AND TYPING

Contact:

KLEEN KHUT

"KLEEN KHUT"
239, Power House Road,
Jaffna.

Tel. No. 22823

REINSTATEMENT

The Government Clerical Service Union has sent a memorandum to the Cabinet of Ministers demanding the reinstatement of the remaining 4,000 July 1980 strikers and the cessation of the victimisation and penalisation of the already reinstated strikers.

S R. Refugees Relief Fund

We acknowledge with thanks the following contributions to the SATURDAY REVIEW RELIEF FUND :

	Rupees
Mr. B. C. Balasingam ..	500.00
Mr. R. Somalingam ..	50.00
Dr. S. Ponnambalam ..	2000.00
Anonymous ..	500.00
Dr. P. Chelliah ..	85.00
Well-wisher ..	100.00
Welfare Society ..	1000.00
Anonymous ..	100.00
In memory of Dr. S. Visagesan ..	500.00

THE THIRD WORLD AND NEO - COLONIALISM

by R. W. C. THAMBAH

Price Rs. 20.

"Throughout this book, like a continuous thread, runs the theme that the poor people of Asia, Africa and Latin America (lumped together as the third World) can never get out of their poverty till dedicated men and women live with their workers and peasants and convince them it is their destiny, and theirs only, to break out of neo-colonialism and become master in their own land—"

Available at: POOBALASINGAM BOOK DEPOT,
JAFFNA,
LAKE HOUSE BOOK SHOP,
COLOMBO.

The Medical Students Union of the University of Jaffna, has sent us the following communique regarding the private Medical College:

We, the Medical Students of the University of Jaffna, are compelled to analyse and advise on the proposal to set up a Private Medical Institute having in view the studies and welfare of all those who are aspiring to follow medical studies.

Let us first and foremost make it clear that we whole-heartedly welcome any attempts aimed at increasing the number of Doctors working in Tamil-speaking people's areas so as to meet the acute shortage of Doctors and provide adequate services to the people. This will also reduce the extended work-burden on medical staff already employed in those places and of course, valuable remedy to overwhelm the postulated grave of the intelligentsia of our community by means of the respected selection of our students for higher education with standardization.

But such attempts should always be meaningful and practical as it involves not only organization to teach but also the hope of students who will be staking their future. If something goes wrong sometimes, then the future and hope of those students are completely dashed. To support this clarification, we note that the constitution of the North Lanka College of Medical Practitioners does not mention what happens to the future of their School and the students in the event of a dissolution of the College itself and in the statement 'if and when there

is a real doctor under under-employment the intake, of the students curtailed the Private Medical College should be closed down and its assets could be transferred to the University, made by a member of the college.

Practical problems in starting a Private Medical School:

Medical Students' Union Raises Queries About Private Medical College In North

★ Foundation of the block with adequate capacity, establishment of a laboratory with adequate facility needed for the essential subjects and creation of a proper teaching hospital are essential for any medical institution.

★ On conduction of studies the teaching staff has to be adequate to fulfil the academic credentials and proper, adequate training by sufficient consultants are the predominating factors which carry the responsibility of life saving programmes, concerned and expected of the medical field.

Why did not or could not this organisation display its schemes

to meet the above-mentioned necessities?

We are not going into it in detail as the above problems have already been discussed by a Doctor in the 10th August 1985 issue of the SATURDAY REVIEW, titled 'what goes on?' and by the Jaffna Medical

Association (a wide institution concerned with the Medical Society in our region), In the 21st September 1985 issue of SATURDAY REVIEW.

Association (a wide institution concerned with the Medical Society in our region), In the 21st September 1985 issue of SATURDAY REVIEW.

The Scheme is something that should be produced for all who wish to join, as this private school is something new.

In comparison, the North Colombo Medical College obviously enjoy the support of the Government with provision of an adequate Hospital which could meet the needs of an essential training programme and both encouragement as well as co-opera-

tion of many medical professionals in Colombo which ensure the feasibility of organising such an institute.

The Jaffna Medical Faculty itself is experiencing a shortage of Teaching staff and consultants which obviously implies that staffs have to be recruited from outside the peninsula. How many consultants who can work here are remaining in this Island and of those how many are willing to come over here especially considering the present uncertain, unsettled political situation here? In common sense can anyone cherish same kind of hopeless thought?

Three years ago the Rotary Club also abandoned a proposal to establish a Private Medical School in Jaffna after analysing the feasibilities with medical professionals and considering the future of the community. One should however observe that the times were more stable in Jaffna at that time than at present.

One fails to understand why men of such high reputation and integrity want to start an institution with so many problems and difficulties at such an unstable juncture which may endanger the pupils' future.

We only wish to leave all these thoughts, to the mature, capable students who like to join the Private Medical School, to make his final decision.

K. Senthil Kumaran
Secretary
Medical Students Union,
University of Jaffna

NEWS BRIEFS

FOR SALE

A mother who was discharged from the maternity ward of the Jaffna Hospital after eight days, is reported to have sold her baby boy 'Senthuran' for Rs. 300/-. She attributed the sale of her baby to abject poverty.

OXFORD UNION PRESIDENT

Jeya Wilson, 23 year old Sri Lankan Tamil, now a naturalised New Zealander, was elected President of the Oxford Union Debating Society for 1985-1986. This is the 6th time in the 162 year history of the Union that a woman has been elected President.

HOSTILE PRESS

Mr. Ananda Tissa de Alwis, Minister of State (according to the State Controlled Daily News of 23.9.85) is reported to have stated that the International Press was hostile to the national interests of

the country. Newsmen from foreign countries 'were blind to the atrocities committed by the terrorists and saw only army violence. B. B. C, London Times, and Guardian were all of the same mould. But who said we are not all for Lankapuwath, Rupavahini and SLBC which always say the truth and nothing but the truth to safeguard the fair name of Lanka and its most disciplined Armed Forces.

FIRST PRIORITY FOR SOLUTION

At the opening of a People's Bank Branch at Beruwala on 21st September, Finance Minister Ronnie de Mel is reported to have stated that the continuing ethnic disturbances were likely to plunge the country into dire straits. He had started that the Defence Expenditure had increased ten-fold since 1977 which a small country like ours can ill-afford.

IF TALKS FAIL

At a public meeting at Polgahawela the National Security Minister, Mr. Lalith Athulath Mudali, is alleged to have stated that he would have to increase the strength of the armed forces to a million men, if the present peace talks fail.

NALLANAYAGAM CASE

Mr. Paul Nallanayagam, President of the Kalmunai Citizens' Committee who was in remand from May 22nd was released on bail. He is now a Canadian citizen. His trial has been fixed for 8.1.86 and he has been debarred from leaving the country.

PROCESSIONS

A two-mile long procession composed of common people, students and others was in Jaffna town inspite of the persistent rain from early morning which did not dampen the enthusiasm. The procession was to show solidarity with the fasting Tamil political detenus, at Welikade. 'Release or produce in courts' was the main slogan. A petition was reported to have been handed over to the

Additional Government Agent. Black flags were seen in most of the commercial establishments and business was slack. There were no incidents.

3 MAN TEAM

A three man-team composed of Dr. Godfrey Gunatileke, Mr. Abdul Cader, retired judge and Mr. M. Sivanathan, retired Secretary Lands Ministry has been nominated to monitor the cease-fire.

RAPED AND SHOT

A young wife at Mudalikulam in Trincomalee district is alleged to have been raped and shot before her husband.

The aggrieved and stricken husband is said to have complained that a 'goon squad' composed of 'home guards' was responsible for this bestial conduct.

86 MISSING

The whereabouts of 86 youths taken into custody at Vadamanai in Kalkudah district are still not known. The parents and relatives of these youths are stated to be under severe pain of mind.

Decline of the Open Society

We have a moral choice between rationalism and irrationalism. The first leads to a recognition of the unity of human reason, equality before the law and democracy. The latter leads to mysticism, dreams and tribalism. This is the conclusion expressed in Karl Popper's seminal book 'The open society and its enemies'. This passionate plea for rationality is what Popper termed his "war effort." It was completed in 1944 and was a reflection of Popper's experiences in Austria during the inter-war years. Irrationalism and its consequent tribalism which was given the respectability of a philosophic creed by Hegel dominated the political and intellectual life of Europe since early in the nineteenth century in the form of Racialism, Nationalism and Class-ism. With the advent of Fascism and Nazism during the inter war years matters had come to a boil.

In Sri Lanka too we have been witnessing a crescendo of irrationalism and tribalism under the aegis of a government which has lost control and whose imagination does not permit any other creed. The effect of state power has been to use brute force to create and amplify tribalism amongst Tamils (into Muslims, Christians, Catholics, high caste Hindu, low caste Hindu etc.) while attempting to prevent the emergence of symptoms of tribalism amongst Sinhalese.

Critical rationalism in the Popperian sense involves both reason and experience in the form of scientific activity. This means that we learn from the ideas, thoughts and mistakes of others and improve our own ideas by having them criticised by others. It means the existence of indivisible truth which we may never know. But towards which we move by trial and error. Truth is indivisible as opposed to the Hegelian heresy that there is a different truth for each nation (class or race). Popper says, "I believe the only attitude which I can consider to be morally right is one which recognises that we owe it to other men to treat them and ourselves as rational." Rationality is a moral decision because there is no rational reason for rationality. The choice is rather based on what consequences would follow from the different alternatives — as is the case in choosing between different scientific hypothesis.

The Hegelian roots of tribalism in Sri Lanka are not far to seek. Sinhala Nationalism/Racialism owed its origins to the Aryan Theory which spoke of a common origin for the non-Semitic peoples of Europe. Hegel

spoke of "dispersion of these people starting from Asia and their distinct evolution beginning with the same ancestry" being irrefutable facts and this found its most effective propagandist in Max Muller (see the article by Leslie Gunawardene in 'Ethnicity and social change in Sri Lanka'). Fichte provided the theory that a nation was based on language. The 'scientific' (meta-biological) element of racialism can be traced back to Haeckel—leading to 'blood and soil myth.'

The Tamil counterpart of this development can be traced back to the same sources and has more recently been infused by Hegelianism through a Marxian conduit.

Popper has argued that any battle (where possible non-violent) for the change of the political order should aim at the establishment of democracy and no more. It suffices here to quote Popper. "In a democracy, the rulers can be dismissed by the ruled without bloodshed. If the men in power

of men united by a common error in regard to their history". It is of little wonder that nations of nation and race make weak arguments except when supported by brute force.

One important consequence of irrationalism is moral irresponsibility. It is not that irrational men do not use reason when it suits them. But they do so as, Popper points out, without any moral commitment. Indeed, the Minister for National Security is an expert at this game. And there are others from both sides catching on fast. After all what are truth and morality when these are only relative and each tribe has its own? (The History of the World is the World's court of justice — Hegel, i. e. might is right). Hegel's dialectical method derived from Heraditus (described by Hegel as thesis, antithesis and synthesis) can be used to argue for any desired result. To give an example we use this to justify dictatorship. We take as first impression or thesis that 'freedom is good'. The antithesis will be 'if each man has unlimited freedom to do as he pleases, no

To give an example from the SR, the statement issued by a person grievously and intimately affected by a certain murder reads, 'without proper understanding of the objective and subjective conditions of a liberation struggle, these two senior leaders were brutally murdered'. A statement by the Jaffna University Students' Assembly resorts to even more elaborate circumlocution. It has become unfashionable and even 'retrogressive' to mention the old fashioned virtue, that plain murder is wrong.

The alternative to democracy is the 'law of the jungle', however dazzling its verbose Hegelian packaging.

Any criticism expressed here is with the sole aim that we should learn from past mistakes.

As for this country, it has effectively lost its independence as a consequence of the mismanagement of its economy and of purchasing weaponry on an extravagant scale. The choice left to its people as I see it, is to become third class Americans like the Philippines. Or to become first class citizens of a democratic India.

by

Rajan Hoole

do not safeguard those institutions which secure to the minority the possibility of working for a peaceful change, then their rule is a tyranny."

In Sri Lanka, the first is in doubt and the second is violated by new restrictive laws and by the forced colonisation of Tamil areas.

The present plight of the Tamils illustrates the dangers of phrasing our struggle as a demand for national (tribal) rather than democratic rights. The argument dwindled into inconclusive verbalism about whether Muslims are Tamils or not. And what's more, the government attempts to defeat us splintering us into several tribes (e.g. Muslims vs. Tamils) using their powerful state machinery.

It is of interest to quote Popper again, "it has been said that a race is a collection of men united not by their origin but by a common error in regard to their origin. In a similar way, we can say that a nation in Hegel's sense is a number

one will have freedom'. A synthesis will be 'hence one man (a dictator) should be given the power to decree each man his natural place ensuring freedom for all'. This crude illustration gives the kind of nonsense that runs through most dialectical arguments. Little wonder that Schopenhauer described Hegel's success as the beginning of the 'age of dishonesty'.

The adoption of the 'notion, motif has had tragic consequences for the Tamils. As far back as the early seventies, from the platforms of men with impeccable democratic credentials, others had spoken in the vein' ... are traitors (to the Tamil nation). They do not deserve a natural death... If the motif had been democracy, the speaker would probably have said, ... have been dishonest for these reasons. And they must be exposed'.

The effect of this change of emphasis on the moral perception of a generation of youth need not be elaborated.

Northern Province Cancer Society Appeals

The Northern Province Cancer Society held its Annual General Meeting last month. Dr. M. Jehanathan, Deputy Regional Director of Health Services, Jaffna, was elected the President for 1985/86.

Dr. V. Krishnarajah and Mr. K. Aiyadurai were elected as vice presidents. Mr. K. Arulambalam and Mr. E. Seevaratnam, Attorney-at-Law will be the Secretary and Treasurer respectively.

Steps to be taken for the appointment of a Radiotherapist for the cancer treatment were discussed. Several members expressed concern over the plight of patients who are unable to go to Maharagama for treatment. The establishment of a Cancer Home (for the incurables) was agreed upon. It was decided to appeal to philanthropists, to lease or donate, land or building or finance towards this project. The Society has been declared as a charitable organisation. Those who are willing to help the society are kindly requested to contact Mr. E. Seevaratnam (Hony. Treasurer), Attorney-at-Law, 32, 4th Cross Street, Jaffna.

Sri Lanka's 2 Years of Bloodshed: What Next? — 1

This article, written before the commencement of Thimpu Talks on Sri Lanka's ethnic problem, is reproduced with kind permission from the "Asian Exchange," the quarterly bulletin of the Asian Regional Exchange for New Alternatives, A4,2/F, G-Block, Hung Hom Bay Centre, 104, Baker St., Kowloon, Hong Kong.

The opinions expressed in it do not necessarily reflect the viewpoints of the SATURDAY REVIEW.

Also, it contains no "brief characterisation" of the EPRLF, unlike in the case of the LTTE, TELO, and EROS.

THE NEW BALANCE OF FORCES WITHIN SRI LANKA

There are several new trends in the balance of forces since the communal carnage of 1983, the most significant of which are the political weakening of the Government in Sri Lanka, the steady decline in the military position in the Northern and Eastern Provinces and the big brother role of India. A new dimension is the evolving relationships between the different Tamil liberation movements and their own relationships to India in particular the post—Mrs. Gandhi era or the Rajiv era.

The Government of President J. R. Jayewardene has earned itself the epithet of "lame-duck administration" because of its inability to hold back Tamil guerilla moves, assert its control over the Army which is running amok or hold the economy on course. In the Northern Province most police stations have been closed and the police force withdrawn to three or four key stations. Even these stations are under pressure and the principal one, Jaffna police station, was wiped out by guerillas and over a hundred men, including senior officers, forced to surrender in early 1985.

The Army only moves around in large convoys by day and fortifies itself within well-protected enclaves at other times. Most branches of banks have closed down, the civil administration is partially paralysed, the railway does not function in the Northern Province and the economy in the Tamil areas has modified itself into a crisis mode of existence. For example, the role of money has in certain respects been replaced by barter, the fishing industry has gone into a crisis because the so-called "surveillance zone" has disrupted activity and shortages of provincial "imports" and gluts of provincial "exports" are manifesting themselves.

It would be truthful to say that the Government has significantly lost control in the Northern Province of the country.

The same trend is now slowly spreading to the Eastern Province. Even the brutality of the Army and street thugs allegedly close to the ruling United National Party of Jayewardene—organised into the so-called "Home Guards"—has not slowed the process down in the Eastern Province. The reason lies in the mixed composition of the population of this province—40% Tamil, 40% Muslim and 20% Sinhalese. * The Muslim population of the Eastern Province although Tamil-speaking is deeply divided on the ethnic issue. The younger more militant sections have contributed important elements to some of the liberation groups, especially Eelam Revolutionary Organisations of students (EROS). However their awareness is probably more affected by factors such as social oppression and class struggle concepts than by linguistic or ethnic matters.

by

Kumar David

The bulk of the Muslim population is deeply suspicious of the "Eelam" or Tamil homeland separatist demand. While Eastern Province Muslims have indeed suffered many deprivations similar to those the Tamils have suffered and although by and large they constitute a poor and often landless peasantry or a class of petty traders, their group consciousness has evolved in a way that finds "Eelam" unacceptable.

While at the superficial level it may be perfectly true that instigation by the Home Guards and UNP elements explains in part the recent outbreaks of Tamil-Muslim rioting in the Eastern Province, the deeper issues cannot be overlooked. As the lame-duck administration of Jayewardene stumbles and the dismembering of Sri Lanka becomes a real possibility, the Muslim people face a stark reality no longer are the issues at stake just slogans from some over-enthusiastic youth which they can continue to treat lightly.

The balance of power in the South, too, has undergone major shifts. The monolithic power of the Jayewardene bonapartism has been shattered. Power in the South has become diversified, scattered and multi-centered. Part of the reason for this is that the progressive and democratic forces, particularly of the left, have failed to pose a viable alternative and failed to make a bridge to the Tamil liberation groups.

FOUR CURRENTS

The diversified structure of power in the South has evolved into the following currents:

a) At least two and probably three divisions within the ruling UNP. First, an elitist bourgeois wing identifiable with Jayewardene, National Security Minister Lalith Athulathmudali and western Imperialism is prepared to do a deal with India, Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) and if necessary, even with "the boys" as the Tamil militants are known.

Second is a broad grouping consisting of the UNP's petty-bourgeois and trader base and the majority of MPs and loosely identifiable with Prime Minister Premadasa has no clear political vision and simply wants to hang on to the spoils of power and attendant graft.

Thirdly, there is the racist-chauvinist group mentality, so deeply ingrained in the UNP, which is popularly identified with former Industries Minister Cyril Mathew and cuts across other divisions within the UNP—a part of Jayewardene's own psyche does and has always belonged here. The "Home Guards" are nothing more than Mathew's lumpen hoodlums.

The Army is similarly fractured but the tension is far more acute because of defeat, fear and indiscipline.

b) The trade union and left movement who are not in a position to seize the opportunity provided by this power vacuum and project itself before the nation as a viable political alternative. The reasons for this are partly subjective. The parties of the old left see their first priority as stopping the inroads being made by the newer left parties into their trade union and regional bases,

Partial left unity, in parliamentary terms, of the Sri Lanka Mahajana Party (SLMP), the Communist Party (CP) and the Lanka Sama Samaja Party (LSSP) lacks convictions sans the Nava Sama Samaja Party (NSSP), the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP), and Tamil militants. The NSSP is excluded by LSSP sectarianism, the JVP by its own short-sightedness and sectarianism and as for the question of the failure of the left to link up with the Tamil groups it is a sad commentary on the state of the Sinhala left.

c) Powerful political currents closely allied with leading sections of the Buddhist clergy have emerged recently. These movements have accelerated with the military setbacks the Government suffered and especially so after the massacre of Sinhalese civilians at Anuradhapura (on 14th May 1985) and the extension of guerilla activity to the South.

Although the Buddhist clergy has been a powerful force in politics since 1956, this influence has mainly been channelled through the UNP and the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP). The autonomous councils that are now being set up, some under the leadership of the nations high priests, and the self-appointed advisory roles they are attempting to play to the nation and the Government are indicative of the power vacuum in the country.

d) The SLFP and ex-Prime Minister Mrs. Bandaranaike have been weakened by the family-cum-political split out of which the SLMP emerged. The latter has carried away with it the younger militants, the bulk of the trade unions and the SLFP's more left-wing base in urban and semi-urban areas. The SLFP has retained its strength as the alternative party in rural areas and Mrs. Bandaranaike remains the alternative personality as a national leader, albeit a rather stale alternative. Because of her isolation she is trying to manipulate Sinhalese chauvinist and Buddhist forces for opportunistic political advantage and is developing links with the Buddhist councils mentioned previously. Chauvinist opportunism is the traditional practice of both the SLFP and UNP when in opposition.

The political actors in the South have become mesmerized by events in the North and the political initiative has passed out of their hands much quicker than anyone thought possible two years ago. Even the most radical parties of the left have been caught flat footed by the pace of events.

(To be continued)

TRU(C)E SUPERVISORS?

Editor
SATURDAY REVIEW

The Sri Lankan government is reported to be averse to any international body supervising the truce. The reason being Lanka's sovereignty would be infringed. In mind-ing Lanka's military matters, Mossad of Israel and S.A.S. of Britain are good enough. When it comes to seeking peace, the Red Cross and the Amnesty International are not found to be acceptable to supervise the truce.

Whereas the Red Cross and the Amnesty International have the necessary expertise in such matters, the locals are inexperienced and the one or two names mentioned are those who have been living in ivory towers in Colombo. How could these persons supervise the truce in the North and East?

Jaffna R. J. Solomon

PROVINCIAL COUNCILS

Editor
SATURDAY REVIEW

The Mahanayake of Asgiriya has issued a statement which as reported in the press says, 'It appears that it is proposed to set up provincial councils with enhanced powers, with the Northern and Eastern provinces functioning as independent UNITS (emphasis mine) and appointing their own ministers. The Sinhalese will be in a minority in these provinces and the powers of the Central Government are to be distributed notwithstanding the harm that will be done to the Sinhalese Buddhists. Therefore we give notice that any such decision taken without first presenting them to the mass of the people shall be opposed.' It will be noted that the Mahanayake does not envisage any link between the Northern and Eastern Provinces.

The proposed Provincial Councils will be set up in all the provinces of Sri Lanka, not only in the Northern and the Eastern provinces. Every province will have its minorities and any responsible majority will see that the minorities living in their midst have their special needs provided. If the numbers warrant it, a separate school for the minority children will be provided and every assistance given to develop their own language, religion and culture. Any discrimination against them in crucial examinations like Varsity entrance, in employment both in the public and private sectors will be rigidly prohibited. This will be done not only in the interests

of the minorities but, more so, in the interest of the majority, who will prosper only when the minorities living with them also prosper.

Such conduct will stabilise society and help Sri Lanka to break out of Third World poverty. The 1984 World Development Report issued by the World Bank says, "15 out of every 100 children born in the Third World countries will die before the age of 5 and hundreds of thousands of survivors

earlier he has to submit the extract from the last electoral register in which his father's name appears. A copying fees of fifteen rupees is levied and a stamp of the value of ten rupees has to be submitted in respect of every extract desired. If the extract is issued in the Tamil language a few more rupees will have to be spent to get the required translation in either Sinhala or English.

Extracts from electoral registers are expected to be submitted only when it is not possible to submit

is obtained with such difficulty it becomes unacceptable to the Immigration Department if it is in the Tamil language. Translations are expected to be submitted in respect of every birth, marriage, death and character certificates issued in the Tamil language.

This, in spite of the fact that there is an Honourable Minister to ensure that the Tamil Language (Special Provisions) Act is implemented. Leave alone receiving a reply in the Tamil language, we are not in a position to make an application in this language. So much for the language rights we enjoy.

Although there is provision for the appointment of Tamil Translators, the Immigration Department expects the applicants for passports to bear all the expense for the required translation work themselves while it levies a fee as high as Two Hundred Rupees for each passport.

We shall be very grateful if the Hon. Minister concerned or the Controller of Immigration and Emigration takes early action to make things easy for us by restricting the documents expected to be submitted by us to the barest minimum and also by accepting documents in the Tamil language.

Jaffna K. Kanagasabapathy

LETTERS

will be 'stunted physically or mentally'. Recent surveys have shown malnutrition is increasing in Sri Lanka and it is now estimated 40% of the population are malnourished. It is not enough to increase paddy yield. It must be available at a pace the poor can afford.

It is the duty of all Sri Lankans-Sinhalese, Tamils, Muslims, Burghers, everybody, to get together and work together to produce adequate food for everybody - the first requirement for Development.

Nallur Dr. R. W. C. Thambiah.

PASSPORT TRAVAILS

Editor
SATURDAY REVIEW

The Department of Immigration and Emigration imposes several disabilities on members of the minority communities applying for passports and also expects them to submit many documents in support of their applications. This results in much inconvenience, travelling and expenditure for most members of the minority communities living far away from Colombo, in the Northern and the Eastern Provinces and elsewhere.

If a Tamil or a Muslim has the letter 'X' at the end of the number of his Identity Card he is expected to submit a certified extract from the last certified electoral register containing his name. If a person belonging to either of these communities is unable to submit his father's birth certificate he is expected to submit the certified extract in respect of his father too. If, however his father had died several years

birth certificates. But in some instances even when birth certificates are submitted applicants for passports are called upon to submit these certified extracts as well.

Getting a copy of a birth certificate is not an easy task in most District Registries and this takes much time and also involves expenditure. Even when a birth certificate

ROOTS

*In the scorching heat
Weary and tired
In the desert
I looked into my past
Glory passed fast
I've heard and learnt.*

*Oh! where are my roots?
Trapped insignificantly between
Gun and life
Where are I heading to?*

*In search of money
In search of power
In hunt of trivials
That don't reflect lofty ideals.*

*The ground is covered with dust
I long to see a weed
Emptiness in the vast desert
I'm too low to count
Loneliness captures me in and out*

*When the torch is out
The light inside lies dead
Life becomes meaningless
Terrifies without expression.*

*Life scores me with the hollowness
Void of culture and ideals
Realisation penetrates deep inside
Where are my roots?*

— Renuka Thanaskanda

GIVE PEACE A CHANCE

This is the text of a Press release issued by the Committee for Rational Development (CRD).

When the Thimpu talks began in haste in June 1985, a cautious optimism seemed to prevail throughout the country. There was an increasing realisation that the human cost of this conflict required a speedy and effective political solution. After the dismal failure of Thimpu 2 we remain even more confused and uncertain. The ceasefire violations and the inability to negotiate in good faith may lead to an even greater sense of despair and disillusionment.

It is CRD's contention, that whatever the reasons for the militants presence at Thimpu, they have a good faith obligation to negotiate seriously for a peaceful resolution of the present conflict. They owe this not only to the process itself but also to the people of the North and the East. It is they who will ultimately have to bear the brunt of renewed violence and any guerrilla group which truly has the interest of its people at heart must give peace, with Justice, a chance. Ceasefire violations by some of the groups, killings of Tamil moderates and increased violence directed at the Sinhalese civilian population has displayed an ugly face of the Tamil nationalist movement. It has also provided the government with a justification for increased militarisation and political inaction.

CRD cannot comprehend why, after all these months of violent conflict the government of Sri Lanka should go to the Thimpu talks with the same set of proposals which were rejected in January 1985. This "dilly-dally" approach makes a mockery of the peace process and casts aspersions at the good faith willingness of the government to negotiate a settlement. A new set of proposals along the lines of regional councils must be presented at the new round of talks. Only speedy, effective and decisive action can break the present deadlock. Thimpu is not a law court. We are not in search of technical alterations to the present law. What is needed is far-reaching statesmanship along the lines of the Punjab/Assam accords. CRD however acknowledges that the government of Sri Lanka has come a long way by recognising that the militants are de facto representatives of the aspirations of some sections of the Tamil people. The quantum leap made by both the government of Sri Lanka and the mili-

tant groups in facing each other at the negotiating table should be capitalised upon to discuss the substantive issues of the devolution of power, the societal role of the various communities, security and regional development.

Given the importance of these negotiations and the possibilities for a peaceful resolution of the ethnic conflict, case-fire violations by both sides are. Only counter-productive for they will only serve to harden attitudes towards a negotiated settlement. Cease-fire violations by Tamil militant groups taking the form of the murder of Tamil parliamentarians and attacks on the Sinhalese civilian population sending many of them fleeing from their homes into refugee camps is a particularly disturbing phenomenon. These violations are the responsibility of the militant groups as a whole and it is not sufficient for the major groups to claim that they are the result of actions taken by breakaway factions. It is the duty of the large groups to contain these operations and to ensure that peace is maintained during the times of the negotiations. In addition, attacks on Police Stations and on security services only serves to inflame passions and to fuel the cycle of violence.

As for the state security forces, one cannot forget that the August incidents in Vavuniya in particular were the reasons given for the suspension of Thimpu 2. The killing of innocent civilians including the Vavuniya Sarvodaya workers served only to accentuate the conflict and to provide an easy excuse for those who wished to walk away from the negotiating table. This strategy of retribution on the civilian population engaged in by section of the security services has been one of the important reasons contributing to the intensification of conflict and the radicalisation of the Tamil civilian population. Given its failure in the past and given the fact that Sri Lanka stands condemned in the eyes of the world for the excesses of its security forces, we can only hope that these incidents will be contained and not be allowed to recur.

The refugee problem in Sri Lanka and the diaspora of Sri Lankans through out the globe is a sad reflection of our shame and inhumanity. No ethnic community has been spared this human tragedy. The cumulative bitterness of these people will fester like sores for many years to come. The greater societal cost and the psychological damage to indi-

DETENUS AT WELIKADE

One of the conditions set by the Tamil militant groups for sitting down at the negotiation table with representatives of the Sri Lanka Government was the release of All the youths held in detention under the Prevention of Terrorism Act.

The Government responded by releasing around 600 youths, most of whom had been found innocent of any offence under the PTA.

But there are estimated to be well over 1,000 youths still in custody, mainly at the Welikade, Galle, Tangalle and Negombo Prisons and the Boosa Army Camp.

The number at Welikade Prison is stated to be 187, of whom 68 have been remanded after indictments were served on them.

Many of those at Welikade are said to have been held for over 18 months without trial—contrary to even the draconian provisions of the PTA.

The fast which began at Welikade on 8th August demanding that they be either brought to trial or released was said to have been called off two weeks ago.

The sympathy relay fast at the Jaffna University has also been called off, though **padayatras** continue.

viduals cannot be remedied so easily. It will take at least two generations of peace to erase the scars of this war. In the mean time, special policy measures and should be formulated and emergency aid must be requested to meet this growing problem. It must also be understood, however that in the end, only a just peace can truly stem this flow of embittered refugees.

Unless a meaningful settlement is negotiated, Sri Lanka will slide into a war of attrition, at the end of which there may be an imposed peace in which no Sri Lankan - whether Sinhalese or Tamil will have a say. No side can win this war. The battle currently waging in Trincomalee is only further evidence that prolonging this war can only lead to national devastation. The urgent need is to extend and observe the cease-fire. In addition, the Government must produce a realistic set of proposals which is acceptable to moderate Tamil opinion. The militants, in return, have an obligation to make a good faith commitment to negotiate for a just and peaceful resolution of the present conflict.

The newly-formed Jaffna People's Committee has taken up the cause of the youths still in custody with the authorities in Colombo.

The Jaffna People's Committee is demanding the release of ALL political detenus in Sri Lanka's jails - as a measure of solidarity with progressive elements in the South.

This is the fourth list of Tamil political detenus at Welikade that we have received.

64. M. Balakumar, Siruvilan, Ilavalai (Jaffna).

65. A. Yogarajah, Kerniyaddy, Kokuvil west, Kokuvil (Jaffna).

66. M. Nagulendran, Vathiry, Karaveddi (Jaffna).

67. S. Sundaralingam, Ward 7, Urativu, Pungudutivu, (Jaffna).

68. Lawrence Surendran, 70/3 Nayanmarkadu, Nallur, Jaffna

69. P. Jeevarajasingam, Ward 12, Punkudutivu, (Jaffna).

70. N.S. Sivakolunthu, c/o N. Balasingam, Kurumankadu, Mannar Road, Vavuniya.

71. S. Thirusethukavalar, 'Siri-Aham' Mannar Road, Vavuniya.

72. V. Subramaniam, c/o Vaithilingam, Kulaveerasingam Valavu, Velikulam, Vavuniya

73. E. Mutturajah, U.C. Quarters, 27 D, Mannar Road, Vavuniya

74. J. Vivekananthan, Jeevan Stores, 1st Cross Street, Vavuniya

75. R. Rajakumar, c/o K. M. Rajathurai, Samanankulam, Vavuniya

76. T. Thavarajah, Poonthiddam, Vavuniya

77. S. Nagalingam, Soosai Pillaiar Kulam, Vavuniya

78. K. Kulendrakumar, Kanagarayankulam, Mankulam, (Mullaitivu)

79. K. Thevarajah, Thevapuram, Omanthai, (Vavuniya)

80. V. Selliah c/o K. Navaratnam (Court Interpreter), Pandarakulam, Vavuniya.

81. G. R. Gnanarajah, 27, Kumarapuram, Paranthan (Kilinochchi).

82. J. Joseph Jeevaratnam, Silavathi, Mullaitivu.

83. S. Manmatharajah, Kumarapuram, Mulliyawalai, (Mullaitivu).

84. K. Navaratnam, Iyanar Veethi, Mulliyawalai, (Mullaitivu).

85. A. Jeyamanie, Irarapalai, Puthukudieruppu, (Mullaitivu).

86. Thirunavukkarasu Thananesan, ward No. 4, Mulliyawalai.

87. Thirunavukkarasu Sooriyakumar, Wattapalai, Mulliyawalai (Mullaitivu).

88. Kandiah Kanagalingam, Kokilai, Mullaitivu.

Saturday Review

SRI LANKA

MH On Tunisia

Transport Minister Al Haj Mohamed severely censured the attack by Israeli planes on the P.L.O. Headquarters in Tunisia. He said Sri Lanka Muslims are grieved over the unprovoked attack on the Headquarters of P.L.O. Chief Yassar Arafat. About 150 Palestinians were reported dead and many others injured.

News Briefs

(Continued)

FROM NEGOMBO TO WELIKADE

Mr. K. Vicknarajah, High Court Judge, Colombo transferred Appapillai Vilvarajah, a suspected 'terrorist' from Negombo to Welikade on a complaint made by him through his Counsel, Mr. Motilal Nehru that prison officials threatened to torture and kill him following the Anuradhapura killing. When the case was taken up on 16.9.85, the Judge deferred serving the indictment as it was not made available in Tamil.

MAVILLACHCHI POLICE

Mavillachchi Police station in the Anuradhapura district was said to have been attacked by 'Tamil guerillas' on 27.9.85. 2 policemen were reported to have been injured and 5 guerillas killed. Army was reported to have been conducting search operations. The operation was reportedly done by a new group.

MENTAL PATIENT

Mohamed Ismail of Muttur is reported to have died 'in camp' on 30.9.85. He was taken into custody while moving in a suspicious manner. He is alleged to be a 'Mental patient'. At the inquest held by JMO Dr. Miss K. Subadrathevi his death was stated to be 'accidental' and the body directed to be handed over to the relatives of the deceased.

Lanka: Israel's Best Pupil

The Israelis have taught their lesson only too well to their eager pupils—the Sri Lankan Government.

What is happening and what has happened at Vavuniya, Trincomalee and Batticaloa clearly show that the pupils have learnt their *Guru's* lessons well.

The Israelis drove out the Palestinians from their traditional homelands in a concerted and determined manner.

The Sri Lankan Government is following the same strategy.

Vavuniya is a vital border area. Trincomalee is a strategic location. Batticaloa has to be Sinhalised because it once housed Digavapi.

This programme has been going on from D S. Senanayake's time.

The Muslims in Batticaloa are the next in line for the chop.

Quite a few of them were evicted earlier from fertile paddy lands because these lands were once supposed to have belonged to the Digavapi.

Today hundreds of Tamils from Trincomalee have come by boat to Mullaitivu as refugees.

There are several hundreds of refugees at Vavuniya. Mannar too has become a refugee camp.

The Government's version is that all these people have become

refugees because of the irresponsible actions of the Tamil militants. According to this version, the militants strike the security forces and they carry out massive reprisals. So the vicious cycle goes on.

It is quite evident that, quite apart from any attacks of the militants, the Government is determined to drive the Tamils out of Vavuniya, Trincomalee and Batticaloa.

While all this goes on, Romesh Bhandari, the Indian Foreign Secretary, carries on a shuttlecock and bull-diplomacy and the Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi will meet President Jayewardene at Bahamas to find a solution to the ethnic problem in Sri Lanka.

What are the thousands of Tamils in Sri Lanka who have lost everything and become homeless wanderers supposed to do?

LAUGH? CRY? OR FIGHT ON?

MOHAMED...

(Continued from page 1)

especially during the last Sri Lanka Freedom Party regime.

I think your memory is too short, as most politicians' memories are, whereas journalists' memories are usually too long — much to the embarrassment of power drunk politicians who like to forget their tarnished past.

Since 1947, I have been a close observer of the local political scene here and I have known politicians who are brilliant, upright and dedicated - politicians who put the nation's interest before theirs but I have also known politicians worse than mediocre who are nincompoops in fact, and sometimes, even plain thieves.

Of course nothing can be said of the latter category while they were in power because of parliamentary

privilege. The sacred privilege should not be abused by anyone.

SATURDAY REVIEW is a free forum, indeed, the only independent newspaper in Sri Lanka—has endeavoured to accommodate, with the limited space available, to shades of opinion besides news and events in the North which do not receive adequate or any publicity at all in Colombo based media.

In the process SATURDAY REVIEW is giving publicity to news and views concerning the Tamil militant groups as well.

This we have done as a public duty, because we believe the people of Sri Lanka are entitled to be informed of the thinking and activities of the militant groups who are engaged in a struggle to obtain a place under the sun to the Tamil people.

This does not make me or the paper or the Editor pro-Eelam as alleged by you.

Gross accusation on any issue can be made on inadequate or false information — accepted by the public by some of the Colombo based media — on baseless assumptions as an independent perception of the national interest may not always coincide with the thinking of politicians in power.

As I have put down in the SATURDAY REVIEW before, neither pelf nor position, nor threats of any kind can deter me from writing the way I write.

If an investigation on the articles published by me in the SATURDAY REVIEW is necessary, the machinery is there and I am ready. Are you, Mr. Minister?

Sri Lanka passenger transport service, both public and private are

in a mess. In fact, your Transport Ministry has been at the butt end of more criticism than most other Ministries. Why not do something about it at least now — eight years after you were put in charge?

Surely, there are more things in Sri Lanka that need urgent investigation than my work as journalist.

I wish to conclude by saying that the columns of the SATURDAY REVIEW are open to you - if you care to reply.

May the blessings of ALLAH be on you, great champion of the Sinhalese (Buddhist) people.

INSHA ALLAH
Gamini Navaratne
Editor

4th October, 1985.