

Saturday Review

SRI LANKA

Vol. 3 No. 8

7th April 1984

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE SINHALESE

My dear Sinhalese Sisters and Brothers,

I am addressing you from Sri Lanka's northern capital of Jaffna.

I can assure that Jaffna even now is a very different place from the general image of it in the Sinhalese mind—an image to whose creation politicians on both sides and the Colombo-based media, especially the Sinhalese newspapers, have contributed not a little.

I suggest that more of you visit Jaffna more often and get acquainted with the land and its people; that is, if you are keen to ensure that Sri Lanka remains a unitary state.

Again I assure you, there is nothing against your coming than the mental image of Jaffna transfixed in most Sinhalese minds.

The Tamil people are also made of flesh and blood, like other human beings; they also have similar desires and aspirations, like other human beings.

Despite all that has happened so far, the bulk of them want to live in peace and amity with the Sinhalese.

Many of you my friends, may have read the "India Today" article reproduced in

the Colombo newspapers recently about the military training that is reportedly being given to Jaffna Tamil youths in South India.

But did these newspapers—or any one of you—sit down and ponder why Tamil youths in such large numbers as reported in "India Today" should go across the Palk Strait and engage in such activity?

What is the cause of it all?

THE JAYEWARDENE GOVERNMENT HAS ACKNOWLEDGED THAT "THE SEPARATIST SLOGAN DID NOT ENTER SRI LANKA'S POLITICAL LEXICON UNTIL 1976".

TOO TRUE THIS FACT STANDS TO THE CREDIT OF THE TAMIL PEOPLE.

Until 28 years after independence, large sections of them did not even dream of separation; now, some sections of them are more than dreaming of separation.

Again, what is the cause?

We cannot go on living on a diet of past history and various collections of statistics.

We have to accept modern reality. The Tamil people are with us. We cannot kill all of them or push them into the sea.

Which means that we must learn to live with them—not on our terms but on mutually acceptable terms.

We should not even think of inviting any foreign power to help resolve the National Question. It could mean a

CENSORED

All news and views appearing in the SATURDAY REVIEW have been subjected to censorship by the Government Agent of Jaffna, Mr. D. Nesiah, who has been appointed Competent Authority for this purpose by the Secretary to the Ministry of State, Mr. Douglas Liyanage, acting under Emergency regulations.

This is a special censorship that applies only to the SATURDAY REVIEW of all news, papers in Sri Lanka.

In addition to the constraints imposed by the censorship, the Sixth Amendment to the Constitution, approved by Parliament on 6th August 1983, states under Article 157 A (1): "No person shall, directly or indirectly, in or outside Sri Lanka, support, espouse, promote, finance, encourage or advocate the establishment of a Separate State within the territory of Sri Lanka."

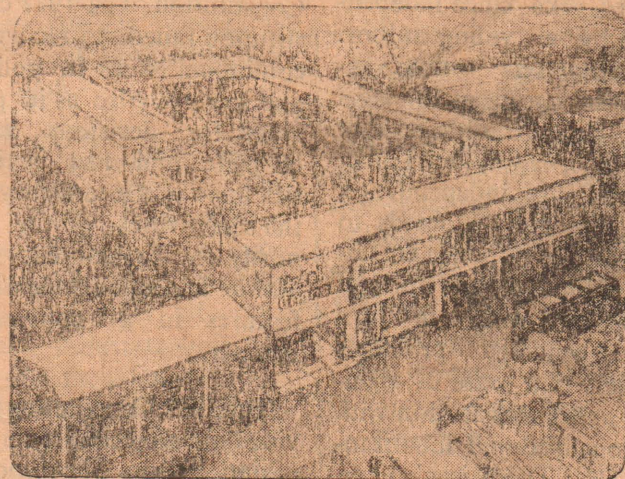
The coming New Year, which is traditional to both the Sinhalese and the Tamil people, is a particularly good time to reflect.

Yours Sincerely,
GAMINI NAVARATNE.

Probe on

Parliament on 3rd April appointed a Select Committee to inquire into the speech made by the Chief Justice, Mr. Neville Samarasoon at a private tutory in Colombo recently (extracts of which were published in the SATURDAY REVIEW of 24th March).

HOTEL GNANAMS



A TASTE WITH A DIFFERENCE
A REALLY GOOD TASTE!

ENJOY

- ★ SAVOURY RICE OR NOODLES
- ★ CHOP—SUEY NOODLES OR RICE
- ★ MIXED GRILL
- ★ CHEF'S SPECIAL

Any Item Rs. 40/- only.

Situated in the heart of the City. Clean Comfortable Rooms with A/C or Non A/C and Banqueting Hall.

- FOR (a) WEDDINGS
(b) CONFERENCES
(c) SEMINARS

For more information Contact:

MANAGER

299, CLOCK TOWER ROAD,
JAFFNA.

Tele. 22082

ESTATE STRIKE CONTINUES

At the time of going to press, the strike started by plantation workers on 2nd April in support of higher wage demands was still on.

The ruling United National Party's Lanka Jathika Estate Workers' Union (President Mr. Gamini Dissanaike, Minister of Lands and Mahaweli Development) was the only major

plantation workers' union not on strike.

The Ceylon Workers Congress, whose President, Mr. S. Thondaman is Minister of Rural Industrial Development, is playing a key role in the strike.

The Colombo-based newspapers have carried varied and divergent reports of the

strike, some of the state-controlled media resorting to their usual role of strike-breakers.

Over 500,000 workers, the majority of them of Indian origin, are reported to be out.

The daily loss to the economy as a result of the strike has been estimated at Rs. 60 million.

Saturday Review

SRI LANKA

No. 118, 4th Cross Street,
P. O. Box 122
JAFFNA

Telegrams : SATVIEW

EDITOR

GAMINI NAVARATNE

Subscription Rates in-
clusive of local postage
and foreign Air Mail Rate

Sri Lanka

Annual Rs. 170/-

Half-year Rs. 85/-

India

Annual Rs. 200/-

(Indian Rupees)

Singapore / Malaysia—

U. S. \$ 30

All other Countries

Annual U.S. \$ 50 or

Cross rate of Exchange
in Sri Lanka currency

Cheques payable to

New Era Publications
Ltd.

Advertising Rates

Contracts Rs. 15/-

per col. centimetre

Casual — Rs. 20/- per
col. centimetre

A MOMENT — WITH DOGENES

"Master", asked his friend from Diogenes. "why is there so much tension in the world over and why has man become a hater of man and why is man out to destroy man?"

"My dear friend" said the philosopher, "it is not so. Man is not a hater of man. Man is powerless. Money is powerful. Money it is that hates man. It is a conflict between the power of money and the power of the people. Money is today possessed not in hundreds, thousands or tens of thousands. It is not possessed in lakhs. It is not possessed in millions. It is possessed in billions. It is the possession of vast Business Combines like the Military Industrial Complex in the States. The workers of the world have not united.

"On the other hand, the Capitalists of the World have united. The Capitalists of the World have joined each other as multi-nationals. They have spread their deadly tentacles into all parts of the Developing World.

"They talk of Democracy and Development. Their survival, however, depends on the exploitation of cheap labour, the building of markets to dump their waste good and the pilfering of the national resources of the developing world. How else do you explain that countries so rich in national resources like Indonesia, Namibia, Nigeria, Uganda, Zambia, Kenya, Sri Lanka, Ghana, and not to speak of so many other countries in the Third world, are so poor despite their riches and natural wealth, which is so unequally distributed with the people living below starvation level.

"Foreign hands come to the rescue of the rich to keep the poor in a perpetual state of increasing poverty. The countries with the richest natural resources have the poorest living standards within the network of a flourishing business empires.

"The pattern in every developing country is the same. The comparadors and commission agents have made huge fortunes at the expense of the people to the ruinati-

on of the countries. There is a remote foreign control of the economy and finances of the Third World. This is the age of the business empires and Neo-colonialism as they call it. The fortunes of a few grow to immense proportions and their deposits in Swiss banks keep swelling while the impoverishment and economic collapse of the developing countries go on.

"The internal uprisings are kept suppressed by the arms supplied by foreign powers. It is not unusual to witness the same foreign power supplying arms to both parties in a conflict and that foreign power, while playing the role of the fox, protecting the business empires and the interests of the multinationals. The pattern is the same. The picture is clear.

"I see the writing on the wall. The power of Money and the power of the people are in a mortal combat. This may be the end of the world and the end of Mankind. Man will destroy Man when money makes the money-makers stark mad.

"Love of money will destroy the love of man. The power of money speaks in many tongues. It speaks loudest about Democracy and is most eloquent about religions: The dogs are free to bark as the caravan moves. If the caravan can keep moving in all its glory, why should it not move to the accompaniment of the barking of dogs and the lamentations of the people?"

"Do you know that armaments are being turned out every minute at a cost of a million dollars or more. It is the highest private profit generator. Next comes the manufacture of drugs, some of them most dangerous to human life which are being dumped with the Third World countries. Can't you now at least identify who causes wars and conditions of War.

"The C. I. A. looks after the interests of the moneyed forces and the K. G. B. looks after the interests of the People's forces. The manipulations of those two agencies determine the politics of the nations. It is the moneyed forces, however, that exploit and oppress the people.

"I see the Third World in a debt trap. In 1983, the aggregate foreign debt to the World Bank and the I.M.F., reached the staggering figure of 810 billion dollars. The Third World had to pay in old loans and interest about 96 billion dollars.

"I see the whole world in a Death Trap. I see the younger generation destroying themselves with drugs and heroin. I see the drug traffickers churning out billions of dollars by way of profits. I see their agents in the Third World, along with the corrupt compradors and commission agents. I see so many suffering from neurosis and needing psychiatry. I see religious organisations compromising with all these destructive forces.

"The youth are restless and find happiness only in drugs and the sons are rioting while their fathers are racketing. I see this senseless pursuit of money. See the pattern Society is sick and it must die. The noble indomitable spirit of man, however, will overcome Man."

"Are you a Naxalite?" asked his friend from Diogenes.

"I am not", replied the Master.

"Are you a Socialist?" asked his friend.

"I am not", repeated Diogenes.

"Then what are you, Master?"

"I am Diogenes", was the reply. "Look at the facts yourself and don't call me names. I am Diogenes and I am no other than Diogenes."

So saying, the Master closed his eyes and went into deep contemplation.

BOOK REVIEW

POLITICS AND LAW IN SRI LANKA

Sri Lanka—The Crisis of the Anglo-American Constitutional Traditions in a Developing Society—By Radhika Coomaraswamy Vikas Publishing House Pvt Ltd., (New Delhi, 1984) pp. 192.

This study is an interesting analysis of politics and law in Sri Lanka since independence by a young author. The writer sets out to explore the nature of the legal and political traditions that were inherited by Sri Lanka on attaining independence. Then the study proceeds to find out the response to underdevelopment and cultural nationalism which in turn had engendered problems that led to a sense of alienation and dissatisfaction with the constitutional inheritance itself. There is also an attempt to analyse and evaluate the innovations that were made by the policy makers to counter this crisis of legitimacy. Ultimately, the author endeavours to delineate the emerging transformative values that could inspire a different type of political process. Briefly, the study concentrates on analysing the three constitutions of 1947, 1972, 1978 and in abstracting conclusions.

The 1947 Constitution provided an instrument for making quick decisions, and yet keeping it accountable

so that there would be no abuse of power. However, there were transparent deficiencies such as, for instance, a bill of rights. There were no doubt other provisions to safeguard the interests of the different communities, but such safeguards sadly disappeared with the 1972 Constitution. The 1947 constitution failed to recognize communal issues in politics and society. Also as it provided for decisions based on mere numerical majorities there was a tendency for the sensitivities of the minority to be ignored. The author has highlighted these features in a convincing manner.

The 1972 Constitution provided a symbolic assertion of nationalism. The responsibility for policy forming lay with the cabinet which grew at the cost of the legislature. An important feature was the Public Security Ordinance because it was used liberally to exercise State power arbitrarily. Compared with the 1947 political set-up, the 1972 set-up denied independence and neutrality to the administrative services and thereby brought the administrative machine within the manipulations of politicians. A serious flaw that emerges, according to the study, is the powerlessness of the citizen and the judi-

ciary in the island. The 1972 Constitution also failed in that it did not provide for quick economic growth. On the other hand, the economy really declined which was of course a serious matter in a developing country.

The 1978 Constitution according to the author, has provided for the emergence of a strong executive. In fact, the single personality gets thoroughly emphasised. Such concentration of power in one person could be ominous as the author has warned. Another of the other cardinal features of recent times that has been indicated is the system of proportional representation which would end the landslide victories at elections that had been characteristic in the earlier post-independent years. Thus major changes which could have been carried out before in the legislature cannot now be carried out.

Although there is an Ombudsman, the act that created such an officer did not give much strength to this figure, and he has no chance to play a significant role.

The writer points out a need for democratising the

party structure is Sri Lanka. A serious consequence of the proportional representation system is that left parties, who have played a major role in post-independent Sri Lanka, now get erased because of the prescribed cut off point. Also even though there had been in recent time moves towards decentralisation the writer indicates how ethnic rivalry had been an obstacle to meaningful decentralization.

Some other valuable points that are made are, for instance, that the Criminal Justice Act and the Prevention of Terrorism Act have not actually made the political situation less trouble-free. The writer very validly asserts that developing countries do not require draconian legislation. A lack of consciousness about rights in Sri Lankan society and politics is emphasised in this study. In fact this study cannot but end in a forlorn note emphasising the political powerlessness against the issues that seem to be cropping up in a developing society.

The epilogue refers to the riots of July 1983 which the author feels killed liberal consciousness in the political

(Continued on Page 12)

Lalith speaks a mouthful

Instead of the usual political column, we reproduce today a very revealing interview given by Mr. Lalith Athulathmudali, holder of the newly-created post of Minister of National Security, to "The Island" on 1st April.

At one point, he says that "according to the information I have received" a certain event occurred in a certain way in Jaffna last month.

However, the "information" the Minister has "received" is at variance with the facts (which we were not allowed to publish by the Censor)

The consequence is that the readers of "The Island", especially the Sinhalese readers, would have formed a wrong impression about one of the most tragic events in the peninsula in recent times - thereby contributing to make the resolution of the National Question that much more difficult.

- EDITOR

Ten days since being appointed Minister of National Security, Mr. Lalith Athulathmudali is a man in a hurry. With incidents of violence registering a marked increase last week and with Sinhala civilians being attacked and killed for the first time in the North, the situation is becoming more serious.

The fact that three policemen were gunned down when they went to a boutique near the Point Pedro police station the same afternoon that Mr. Athulathmudali visited Jaffna and other Northern areas is an indication that the "terrorists" are taking his appointment seriously.

Yesterday, we asked Mr. Athulathmudali some questions on the issues involved in national security.

Q. What are your plans to eradicate terrorism?

A. I cannot tell you our detailed plans, because the terrorists will then be forewarned. But the last few days have given me an opportunity to assess and look at our capabilities and I am satisfied that we are on the correct track to deal with terrorists.

Q. But how can you prevent the excesses committed by the Armed Forces in Jaffna and the Northern Province?

A. This is part of the problem. Most journalists do not go to the North but get news of excesses committed by the Armed Forces from people who phone you. They are often victims of the very propaganda carried out by the terrorists and anything which is said by them is true while the Go-

vernment's statements are viewed with suspicions.

Q. But the incidents in Chunnakam in the North..?

A. According to the information I have received, the Air Force men were fired on by terrorists who were on the roofs of some buildings. The servicemen fired back. Unfortunately, while terrorists were killed, there was also the death of a lady who had been marketing. She had been accidentally hit by a stray bullet. But the first reports to the media were that the Air Force had shot at the crowd because they panicked.

Q. What about the pregnant woman who was shot?

A. No pregnant woman was shot. This is like the story of the raping of some girls in Jaffna in July 1983. It was not true but it went round like wild fire. But even Prabakaran has now admitted in a recent interview that there was no such incident. The events in Jaffna last week were blown out of all proportions. Some reports in Canada had spoken of 300 people being massacred and many girls raped!

Q. There are said to be plans to cordon off the North and to stop all sea-bound traffic, including fishermen?

A. I cannot answer that question for security reasons.

Q. What about the purchase of patrol boats and more versatile craft, as well as combined sea and air operations?

A. Once again, I cannot answer due to security reasons. This is in one way the dilemma I face. People

want quick action, but when you are fighting a battle there are no quick victories against terrorism. It must be specific, cold and calculated. But more than anything else, one must have the element of surprise and secrecy, absolute secrecy. It is because of this that we were able to arrest 40 persons in Point Pedro some of whom have now been found to be associated with terrorists.

Q. What about air patrols, like in the time of the British?

A. Yes, that is important. But once again, I cannot go into details because of security.

Q. Can you tell me one country where tough measures have arrested terrorist activities?

A. One of the best examples is Malaysia, where there was a fight against Communist infiltrators and commandos. The Malaysians won.

Q. But that was against Communists?

A. Yes, but the majority of these terrorists are trained in Marxist ideology. So it is the same format.

Q. What is your greatest fear?

A. The acts of provocation in the North are testing the limits of patience of the people in the South. Another black July must not be allowed to happen. The patience exhibited so far shows that those in the South are not willing to dance to the tune of terrorists anymore. The wounds of last July must be allowed to heal and we must show we can work together. That is the challenge which the terrorists cannot ignore, for if we succeed, then they would have been defeated. This is where the ordinary man can help by doing his duty. Those who want to live peacefully must realise that those who gain the upperhand by terrorist activities then use terrorism against their own people to maintain power. The history of the world is filled with such instances.

Q. You are the spokesman for the Round Table Conference. Mr. A. Amirthalingam, General Secre-

tary of the Tamil United Liberation Front has been making statements in South India, saying that India must put pressure on Sri Lanka to reconvene the RTC quickly, instead of having a long recess till May?

A. People like Mr. Amirthalingam can if they want to, exert pressure to prevent by appealing to people whom they speak on behalf of to reveal details of the terrorists. We have made some progress, but understandably a problem that has existed for thousands of years cannot be solved in a few weeks. Lasting solutions must be found by consensus, rather than the majority trying to impress on others. Mr. Amirthalingam would do better to return to Sri Lanka and spend his energy in trying to eradicate terrorism, which is a threat not merely to the Government, but also to the very existence of the TULF.

Q. Some say there should be a military solution. Some say there should be a political solution. What is your view?

A. Military action is necessary in two instances.

1. To meet direct challenges from terrorists as at the present time.

2. Even if a political solution is found it will reduce the support of the terrorists. But there will still be some who will believe in violence. They will need a violent solution, and therefore the military will have a limited role.

But the major thrust must be on the political side, like through Round Table Conferences and other initiatives. I believe in a political solution. I believe that every man, woman and child must believe and work for a political solution through non-violent means.

Q. One last question. "The Island" reproduced the article from "India Today", stating the terrorists camps exist in Tamil Nadu. Have you any comment on this?

A. Whether you believe terrorist camps exist or not, the matter must be investigated. Those who say it is false will be laughing if it is true. Those who believe it is true must examine and find rational ways of bringing pressure on the Indian Government to take action. Building up relationships between countries is a long and arduous task and it must not be quickly and needlessly destroyed.

THIRU SENTHURAN TRADING COMPANY

163, (315) K. K. S. ROAD, JAFFNA.

ALPHA STEEL OFFICE & SAFETY EQUIPMENTS

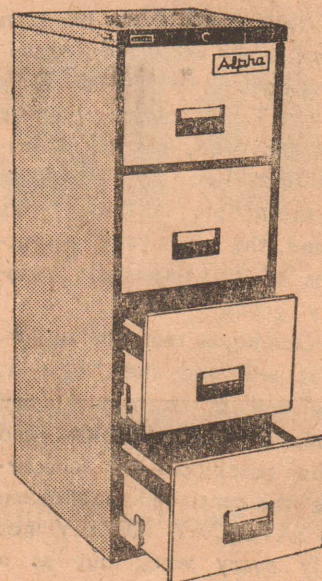
ALPEX FIRE PROTECTION EQUIPMENTS
Middleway Steel Tables

T. G. INDUSTRIES

10, Pirappamkulam Road, JAFFNA.

FOR

Wooden Furniture
Electroplating &
Modern Iron Gates
& Grills



DIAL: 24139 JAFFNA

Carry on.. Carry on.. Carry on...

The Editor,
Saturday Review.

The lead story in your issue of 24th March 1984 about the possibility of SATURDAY REVIEW closing down due to official harassment came as a rude shock to hundreds of your readers.

Our immediate reaction was that the publishers had not shown sufficient courage and conviction to carry on with the publication even if the entire copy of a particular issue has been censored. How else can you fight the cruelty of censorship except by releasing blacked out columns and blank pages? The world must know that the Tamil speaking people have no freedom of speech, writing or thinking. This can never be demonstrated except by releasing censored pages of the paper.

Although "SATURDAY REVIEW" a regional English language paper, published from Jaffna, yet all sectors of the Sri Lankan society runs to buy it because educated people want to know the truth of what is going on in the Northern and Eastern Provinces of this country and are not willing to be led by the national English Language dailies published from Colombo.

As everyone knows, the Colombo papers have lost their credibility vis-a-vis the real situation in the neglected and frustrated society of the Tamil speaking areas, except perhaps the doings of the faceless angry youths of the same society, labelled as "terrorists".

The economic backwardness of the Northern and Eastern provinces had not been the concern of successive governments since independence. Long years of neglect has now snowballed to deep resentment, frustration and the violence one hears happening daily from this part of the country.

There is no doubt that a paper like SATURDAY REVIEW could have been an ideal safety valve and a 'sounding board' to the stirrings of the Tamil speaking peoples and conveyed, in a language understood by all sections of the people inhabiting this island, the needs and aspirations of this important minority group.

One hopes that the authorities will see the "light at the end of the tunnel" and remove all restrictions and other roadblocks and encourage the continued publication of SATURDAY REVIEW not only every week but as a daily paper.

It is also essential for those treasure FREEDOM of the

PRESS and DEMOCRATIC WAY of life to finance the publication without expecting huge profits. Then, they would have served the cause of national unity and progress, although one is witnessing a disintegration of these objectives,

Dr. C. P. Pillai
Colombo-7

The Editor,
Saturday Review

I am regular reader of SATURDAY REVIEW, I learn that you are considering the suspension of publication until the special censorship on the paper is removed.

I am aware of the difficulties under which SATURDAY REVIEW functions. Still, this is the moment when people need an independent press.

Therefore I earnestly appeal to you not to starve the news-hungry public by suspending publication.

Y. Yoheswaran
Colombo-6

The Editor,
Saturday Review

We call upon all Trade Unions and Democratic Organisations to compel the Government to lift the press censorship imposed on the SATURDAY REVIEW the English weekly which has always stood on the side of the rights of Tamil People and against all anti-democratic activities of this Government.

H. N. Fernando,
General Secretary,
Ceylon Teacher's Union.

The Editor,
Saturday Review.

One should not think of committing suicide just because one is being throttled. Let the throttling go on and the murder take place. But one should not commit suicide.

Banish your thought of suspending the publication of the SATURDAY REVIEW. You just appear scantily dressed or even fully naked. That will expose the nakedness of the Government that had imposed a special censorship on you.

Arul
Colombo-13

The Editor,
Saturday Review

The proposed self imposed ban on the publication of the SATURDAY REVIEW is rather premature and I feel rather sad that you should contemplate committing Hara kiri, when we are actually enjoying reading your paper with the contents as it appears, with extracts of valuable articles reflecting interesting intellectual reading material for the consumption of the various public, who are really enjoying

LETTERS

your paper. So, please do not impose a self ban. Please do continue publishing your valuable Review.

Further more, I wish to raise my hat to the Chief Justice for the unbiased views expressed by him, particularly in relation to the Public Servants and their pathetic condition in the face of the rising cost of living.

K. Ponnappah
K. K. S. Road, Jaffna.

Oh, Mr. Kelaart!

The Editor,

SATURDAY REVIEW.

You are aware that the present Government was brought into existence by a caesarean operation called the Referendum, in a daring did to prevent some imaginary Naxalites running away with the baby, for all time from the delivery room at the appointed hour.

And now, to save the protein-starved baby, the compassionate parents are parents are administering over-doses of religion and truth in a new form and shape hitherto unheard of.

In this tranquil atmosphere, the ordinary mortals are racking their heads as to where the next meal is going to come from while, on the other hand, the ever so busy contractors are making hay by the bundles, the enterprising businessmen and their dough and the poor in their turn looking askance at them in awe and wonder.

Why, you may ask our intellectuals are silent today? Definitely they are not playing safe. Nothing is safe in our country today, not even the safest places (our gaols). However, they know by instinct that they can get much further with the Lord, if they try and not offend his ears.

As for Mr. Kelaart, I know of no art that can sooth his melancholy. Unfortunately, the remedy of Karl Marx is for the masses the world over, not for diehard singletons.

P. Ramachandra.
Kasturiar Road,
Jaffna.

Stop Transfer

The Editor,

Saturday Review.

I write to add further to your column "Let's be courteous" which appeared in the Saturday Review of 31st March.

I travel very often to Colombo by train and I have noted extreme courtesy prevailing at the Jaffna Railway Station. However I am not so well acquainted with the Railway Staff to know even their names. But I must mention of a handsome, dashing, young man - curly-haired, always with a smile, ever-ready to help any traveller in difficulty.

Rumour is afloat that this sweet person is due for transfer soon. What a pity! Your esteemed journal took up the case of Mr. D. Nesiiah our respected G. A. and his transfer was put off.

Please Mr. Editor, do something, to have this young man at the Jaffna Railway Station.

Yogeswary Kandiah
Manipay.

A second letter to the Editor by Mr. M. Sivasithamparam has been held up because we have been asked to obtain clearance from Colombo to publish it.

PROBE CAUSES

The Editor,

Saturday Review.

Now that the American State Department has absolved the Sri Lankan Government of responsibility for the July disturbances. It will be a wise step to avoid wild speculations if an independent commission is appointed to inquire and report on the causes and cure for such disturbances. Various opinions have been expressed.

The Minister of State gave a dramatic descriptions on how foreign Governments were behind the troubles. The Prime Minister also seems to share the same view. He even went to the extent of saying that foreign elements are using narcotics to ruin the country, especially school

boys. The part played by students from leading schools is known to the public.

Some have blamed the Tamil militants for attacking some members of the Armed Forces. What they are doing in Jaffna in such large numbers is a mystery to the Tamil public. The latest of the pronouncements is from no less a person than the Chief Justice. He is entitled to his views. The occasion was not fortunately a judicial one. As he himself stated, he is an odd man out. He thinks the killings were not communal.

But the fact is that only Tamils and that, too, innocent Tamils who supported the Government and were living as hostages among the Sinhalese were killed.

Some want the President to kill the Tamils to stop terrorism. He has refused to do so as a practising Buddhist. Some are not happy about it.

The Chief Justice has stated that the murder gangs that killed the Tamils said that "what the terrorists can do, they can do better". They also told the Establishment, specially, one man in the Establishment, "if you can't stop it, we will stop it."

If the killings were due to Tamil terrorists, why were the Tamils killed in 1958 when there were no terrorists, and during some subsequent riots.

Under these circumstances, can anything assure the security of the Tamil minority in Sri Lanka. May God save the Tamils.

Sri La Sri

Uduvil.

2 SHIP LOADS

The Editor,

Saturday Review,

All are searching for a solution to the ethnic problem in Sri Lanka. I am reminded of a solution that a Swami (I forget his name) invited to Nuwara Eliya by the late Mr. William Fernando offered. Said he, "Give me two ships and I shall solve it overnight". "How Swami?" we asked: said he, "I will put all the politicians and religious leaders in the ships and send them off the island and there will be lasting peace". How true!

N. Puththi man
Arasady Road,
Jaffna.

'Let's face the Reality'

(Continued from last week)

These observations appear to be equally valid today as they were nearly twenty years ago.

In this connection, it is interesting to note that while the PTA requires the forfeiture of all property owned by an offender, the British Act gives the Court a discretion to order the forfeiture of any money or other property which, at the time of the offence, the offender had in his possession or under his control, and which, at that time, he intended should be applied or used for or in connection with the commission, preparation or instigation of acts of terrorism 17. The latter is an example of a law drafted in moderation, and with due regard to both to individual rights and to the evil sought to be curbed.

6. Press Censorship

The PTA empowers the Minister to require that the publication of certain matter be submitted for prior censorship to a competent authority. These matters relate to.

(a) the commission of an offence under the Act and the investigation of such offence;

(b) incitement to violence, or that which is likely to cause religious, racial or communal disharmony or feelings of ill-will or hostility between different communities or racial or religious groups.

The distribution, without the approval of the competent authority, even of a foreign newspaper containing any such matter, is prohibited.

The Constitution guarantees the freedom of speech and expression, including publication 18. This freedom extends beyond the liberty to express one's own opinions and includes the "freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of his choice 19." It is a two-way flow, both outbound and inbound. The European Court of Human Rights had held that this freedom is applicable "not only to information and ideas that are favourably received or regarded as inoffensive or as a matter of indifference, but also to those that offend, shock or disturb the State or any sector of the population 20". Douglas J of the United States Supreme

Court thought that a function of free speech under a democratic system of government is to invite dispute. He explained.

It may indeed best serve its high purpose when it induces a condition of unrest, create dissatisfaction with conditions as they are, or even stirs people to anger. Speech is often provocative and challenging. It may strike at prejudices and preconceptions and have profound unsettling effects as it presses for acceptance of an idea 21.

It would appear, therefore, that the censorship imposed by the PTA is also inconsistent with the constitutional guarantee of free speech.

7. An Assessment

If the objective of the PTA is, as stated in the preamble, the prevention of acts of terrorism in Sri Lanka, it is evident that that objective has not yet been realised. On the contrary, terrorism has not only intensified, but has also become more widespread and manifested itself in several different forms since the PTA was first enacted in July 1979. Some of the defects in that law have already been examined; notably, the fact that it is primarily directed at protecting "specified persons", i.e. high government functionaries, the military, and law enforcement officers, as well as public property, from a particular category of terrorists who probably posed the most serious threat to security in mid-1979. Consequently, when July 1983 was reached, the PTA was unable to accord any protection to homes, businesses, cinemas, factories, vehicles, and hundreds of private citizens who fell victim to terrorism with a different face. At the same time, the PTA has also been singularly ineffective in certain respects. For instance, its prohibition, with draconian penalties, of acts which cause racial disharmony could not prevent a strange and unusual parliamentary motion of no-confidence being moved by Government backbenchers on the Leader of the Opposition, and the subsequent widespread distribution throughout Sinhalese areas of inflammatory speeches made on that occasion, which, in turn, led to an eruption of terrorism in August 1981 in areas hitherto considered safe. Indeed, on that occasion, a person no less than President Jayewardene himself expressed publicly his "regret

that some members of my party have spoken in Parliament and outside, words that encourage violence and the murders, rapes and arson that have been committed 22."

It cannot be disputed that special legislation may be necessary to deal with special problems such as terrorism. In 1970 the Ministry of Defence caused a bill, described as the Prevention of Violent Insurrection Bill, to be prepared in order that the military and the police may be better equipped to deal with what was seen as a rapidly swelling insurgent movement. The provisions of that bill were not very dissimilar to those of the PTA. In March 1971, the Cabinet, after having deliberated on it for several weeks, finally rejected that bill. In April, like a whiplash in all its fury, the Insurgency struck. Whether that bill, if enacted in time, would have enabled the security forces to have nipped the rebel movement is a matter on which one can only speculate now. But a lesson of history which ought not to be dismissed lightly is that laws made in *terrorem*, or legislative terrorism can often be counter-productive. The effectiveness of a law depends largely upon its acceptance by the community. The community, in turn, will only accept a law that is just. And a law which violates individual rights and freedoms indiscriminately, as the PTA appears to do in many respects, can hardly claim to be just. The IRA still survives in Northern Ireland, and the liberation movements in Southern Africa have yet to be subdued, despite volumes of repressive and smothering legislation. In this connection, it is interesting to reflect on the view expressed by Mr. J.R. Jayewardene, the Leader of the Opposition, in 1972, when the government of the day moved the Criminal Justice Commissions Bill:

We have in our statute books a piece of legislation, the Public Security Ordinance, which can deal with any widespread breakdown of law and order with widespread offences of destruction and damage. Even an Insurgency can be dealt with under the Public Security Ordinance which vests the Prime Minister and Government with all the necessary powers through the Government apparatus to deal with any type of emergency..

I cannot understand what particular types of mishaps can occur in this country which cannot be dealt with effectively and promptly under the Public Security Ordinance... but which requires the provisions of the Criminal Justice Commissions Bill 23.

Whether it be the Public Security Ordinance or a special law, its effectiveness also depends on the manner of its implementation. President Jayewardene have recently reminded the country that troops were first sent to Jaffna in March 1961 by the then Prime Minister, Mrs. Bandaranaike. She did so, under the provisions of the Public Security Ordinance, to deal, not with terrorism, but with a campaign of civil disobedience organised by the Federal Party to protest against the failure of the Government to provide for the reasonable use of Tamil language while seeking to implement the Official Language Act. How did the military conduct itself on that pioneering foray among people who then demanded only the right to use their own

ism and lawlessness the result of any orders given to the Army to strike terror into the inhabitants of Jaffna so that they might give up their agitation for their language rights? 24

Finally, it need hardly be stressed that final solution of the problem of terrorism can only be achieved within the much broader framework of an enduring political solution to the ethnic problem in Sri Lanka. If one day, regionalism becomes a reality, and genuine devolution of power takes place, terrorism in the North, which is said to be the reason for terrorism in the South, will, in whatever form it chooses to survive, be a problem primarily for the regional administrations of the North. If that problem and the responsibility for dealing with it can be thus localised, a first step, but a great leap nevertheless, would surely have been taken towards the restoration of ethnic peace and harmony. The sooner our political leadership, in all its varied hues, faces the reality

by Dr. Nihal Jayewickreme

language? In the Senate, Mr. S. Nadesan, Q. C., ventured to describe it in his own inimitable way:

Why are the farmers of Jaffna, who ordinarily go to their fields in these hot days at 4 o' Clock in the morning prevented from doing so till well after 6 a. m.? Why have the military been beating and thrashing innocent passers-by on the streets of Jaffna? Why have some of them been helping themselves to goods and articles in shops and asking the owners to send the bills to the F. P. leader? Why have cars been commandeered as if a great military campaign was afoot? Why has petrol been issued on permits in Jaffna when there is enough petrol for everybody? Why have car owners been made to queue up for petrol at the Kachcheri and subjected to humiliating remarks by army sentries? Why have the military prevented people from having their lights on at night? Because they have been asked not to shoot, why have they indulged in the pastime of throwing stones at houses? Why have they set fire to fences and [madam and put the blame on the people? Are these Acts of organised terror-

that human dignity is not based on tolerance alone, but no recognition of, and respect for, each others rights as well, the further would this country have advanced towards that goal.

NOTES

17. S. 10 (4)
18. Article 14 (1) (a)
19. ICCPR, Article 19.
20. Handyside v. United Kingdom, 1 EHRR 737.
21. Termilillo v. City of Chicago, 337 US 1.
22. Address to the UNP All-Island Executive Committee, reported in the Sun 5 September 1981.
23. National State Assembly Debates, 5 April 1972.
24. Parliamentary Debates (Senate), 2 May 1961, c. 1188.

'TAMILARAM'

A Volume of tributes and reminiscences dedicated to the memory of FATHER THANI-NAYAGAM.

Rs. 50/- per copy.

Available at:

SATURDAY REVIEW OFFICE,
118, 4th Cross Street,
JAFNA

Regional Autonomy

The proposed Satyagraha campaign of the Federal Party and the agitation of the Bhasa Perumuna against the Government honouring the solemn pledge contained in the Sri Lanka Freedom Party Manifesto to give due recognition to the reasonable use of the Tamil language, on the strength of which Tamils in several electorates in the Sinhalese areas cast their votes for the Mahajana Eksath Peramuna of the 1956 general election, focussed attention once again on the real nature of the conflict between the Sinhalese and Tamil nationalities inhabiting Sri Lanka.

These two nationalities speak different languages, profess in the main different religions and cherish different historical memories and traditions. This is a demographic reality which we have to face.

Today, the children of these two different nationalities study in different schools in their respective languages and while remembering the conflicts and wars between their kings and chieftains in the past, are growing up ignorant of one another's culture, language and achievements. In such a state of affairs, conflicts are bound to arise. This is not a feature peculiar to Sri Lanka. Such conflicts have arisen in practically every multi-national country in the world.

These conflicts can be eliminated or reduced only if one appreciates the real nature of the problem confronting a multi-national state such as ours. The problem is that of reconciling the predominance of the majority nationality with the liberty of the minority nationality. The solution of this problem depends on the proper application of democratic principles to the peculiar circumstances of each country and a survey of the history of the world would reveal that various methods have been adopted by multi-national states in this connection.

Ever since the nineteenth century, when nationalism became a live factor in the affairs of men and the world witnessed the crisis of the doctrine "One Nation, One State" on which Western democracy was based, no multi-national state has succeeded in solving the problem by suppressing or ignoring the right of its national minorities. Political thinkers and statesmen have devoted considerable attention to this problem and there is available today a vast literature on the subject. A careful

study of this literature cannot but be of assistance to us in solving this problem and it is desirable that our policy-makers should familiarise themselves with at least some of this literature.

The language conflict that has arisen in Ceylon is only one of the difficulties that can arise in a multi-national state. Unless the fundamental problem is radically solved, acute conflicts are bound to arise in practically every field of social, economic and political activity.

The problem cannot be solved by relying on the principle of majority rule. While no doubt in a democratic state the will of the majority should prevail, the principle of majority rule can operate fully only in those states which have a homogeneous population. In multi-national states, this principle cannot apply in determining matters relating to the rights of national minorities. If this principle is applied to such questions then it would amount to the rule of the national minorities by the national majority. The minorities will thus be denied their ordinary human rights of self-expression and self-determination and will be subject to the tyranny of an impersonal majority.

A country which is true to the democratic ideal cannot countenance the rule of its national minorities by its national majority. The democratic solution to the problem can therefore only be found through direct negotiations between the leaders of the majority and minority nationalities.

If one were to read the literature on this problem for the purpose of ascertaining the various methods suggested for its solution, one would find that only three approaches have been adopted, namely those of bilingualism, federalism and regional autonomy. In addition to these methods there are often constitutional provisions made safeguarding the fundamental rights of national minorities.

Until the time of the last general election, the policy of the Ceylon Government was bilingualism. But during the last election, the Sinhalese only issue was placed before the Sinhalese electorates who naturally voted for Sinhalese only to be the official language.

A considerable amount of feeling and emotion on this issue has been whipped up both before and after the elections. The signal success of the Federal Party in the Northern and Eastern Pro-

vinces has in no small measure been due to the "Sinhalese Only" cry raised in the South. "Sinhalese Only" is not a solution of any problem arrived at as a result of negotiation between the leaders of the two nationalities, but a unilateral act imposed by the will of the majority nationality and its allies in respect of a matter in which their self-interest was involved.

However this may be, one has to face facts as they exist. As a result of all that has happened, the adoption of bilingualism (i.e. the recognition of both Sinhalese and Tamil as official languages on the basis of complete equality) does not appear to be a feasible solution in the political climate prevailing in Ceylon today.

The only other available solutions are federalism and regional autonomy. As for federalism, this is a method which several thinkers have suggested as the ideal way of solving the problem. It is a method which has been



By S. Nadesan

adopted in recent times in communist countries like the U.S.S.R. and Yugoslavia and, earlier, in capitalist countries such as Canada and Switzerland.

In the Soviet Union, the principle has been given effect to on the widest possible scale by the creation of autonomous republics even within individual union republics. For instance, within the Union Republic of Uzbekistan there is an autonomous republic consisting of 500,000 people with their own language and institutions. Soviet National Federalism recognises national differences and encourages the national languages, customs and administrative and other institutions. "It acknowledges the fact that the composite character of the population should be reflected in the States on the basis of complete equality and it grants a wide latitude in regional self-government".

In Ceylon, the solution of

federalism cannot be achieved without the consent of the Sinhalese people. These people have to be persuaded to accept that this principle is a sound and equitable method of solving our problems. Above all, they must be satisfied that such a solution does not affect their legitimate rights.

One step in convincing the Sinhalese people is to convince their leadership that this is a sound and feasible method and that the Sinhalese people have nothing to lose by consenting to this demand. This can only be done through discussion, through propaganda in the Press and from public platforms but, not through threats. However reasonable may be, one cannot make people see it as such by resort to threats.

Though the Federal Party itself has never officially defined in clear and unambiguous terms the geographical limits of the Tamil federal unit, yet some of its members have made fantastic claims demanding that Tamil cantons should be established in parts of the Uva and Central Provinces. Such extravagant demands have been interpreted as an attempt on the part of the Tamil people to dominate Ceylon and have naturally roused the fears and antagonisms of the Sinhalese people.

Under these circumstances it is not surprising that the

REGIONAL AUTONOMY is from an article published in the *Sunday Observer* 27 years ago, just before the signing of the Bandaranaike Chelvanayakam pact.

merits of the federal principle and its applicability to Ceylon within proper limits and subject to proper safeguards have never been seriously considered or examined by responsible Sinhalese leaders. It must be remembered that extravagant demands not only prevent the acceptance of what is in principle a sound principle but also provide ammunition for reactionary Sinhalese politicians who desire to inflame the passions of the Sinhalese masses for their own purposes.

It is however very desirable that the Government should seriously consider applying the federal principle for the solution of our national problems.

Two objections have been raised against it, one is, that the Tamil people will suffer, but if the Tamils as a result of a plebiscite in the Tamil areas opt for a federal constitution, they will be exercising their right of self-determination and it is not

for somebody else to say "nay".

The other objection is that federalism will promote disunity and lead to a separatist movement. It is rare, to find in the pages of history instances of separatist movements in federal unions. The general experience has been that federal constitutions have increased and cemented unity, friendship and understanding between different nationalities. On the other hand, it is in unitary states with national minorities that irredentist and separatist movements have taken root.

Besides, as the majority of members representing Tamil electorates have been returned on the Federal ticket, it is the duty of the Prime Minister to meet these representatives, obtain their views, get his own experts to report on their proposals and thereafter consider the matter dispassionately. If after such discussion and consideration it is found that no agreement can be reached, the duty of the Government does not end there. It is for the Government to solve the problem. The mere fact that they find it impossible to accept the federal principle does not entitle them to sit with folded arms and allow the situation to deteriorate.

The only remaining solution known to political science

since the nineteenth century is regional autonomy with constitutional provisions for fundamental rights. Regional autonomy is one of the methods of ensuring the "reasonable use" of the Tamil language ("reasonable use" was an unhappy phrase to have been used in this connection).

Eminent writers like Dr. Cobban have stated that the powers granted to these autonomous regions established to solve multi-national problems should be as wide as possible. The powers of such autonomous regions should not be confused with the powers of local authorities if such autonomous regions are to serve any useful purpose (Czechoslovakia and Italy have in respect of Slovakia and Sicily, respectively, adopted the principle of regional autonomy). The powers of the autonomous region must naturally be the subject of discussion between the

Only Solution

representatives of the Tamil national minority and the Government, which for all practical purposes represents today the Sinhalese nationality.

As it is clear that any solution must be the result of discussion between the Government and the representatives of the Tamils and not the result of a unilateral decision of the representatives of the Sinhalese nationality, it is the paramount duty of the Government to take the initiative in respect of this matter.

In the course of such negotiations, while the parties should no doubt pay due regard to correct principles it must be remembered that in a democracy one has to take the majority of the people along with one.

A spirit of compromise and tolerance is essential for the successful working of democratic institutions and if negotiations take place with due appreciation of the difficulties inherent in the functioning of democracy in a semi-feudal country such as ours, it may yet be possible to work out a satisfactory solution which of course may fall short of the ideal solution.

The Prime Minister has fulfilled one part of the M.E.P. election pledge to the voters to make Sinhalese the sole official language. As to the other part of the election pledge, to recognise the "reasonable use" of the Tamil language, he has delayed the implementation of this part for over a year though his party obtained the votes of the Tamil in the South on the strength of this pledge.

The significance of this delay has not escaped the notice of the Tamil people who rightly consider that in the eyes of the Government a pledge given to the Sinhalese voters is more important than a pledge given to the Tamil voters.

However, this may be, the Prime Minister has not yet discussed his plans with the accredited representatives of the Tamil people so that he may acquaint himself with their views before finally formulating proposals which vitally affect them. Moreover, there is the federal demand, which it is his duty as Prime Minister not only of the Sinhalese but also of Ceylon, to consider after hearing the views of members of the Federal Party.

It is the failure to discuss with the Tamil representatives their problems and difficulties, without laying down prior conditions for such discussion, that is partly

responsible for the mounting sense of frustration and resentment among the Tamil people today. They are surprised that proposals regarding their future are formulated by the representatives of the Sinhalese people as if what these representatives decide has to be meekly accepted without question by the Tamil people. This impossible situation must be ended and ended soon.

The initiative in this matter must naturally come from the Government but the Federal Party can assist considerably if it calls off the satyagraha movement contemplated by it. Its leaders must not forget that satyagraha is a spiritual weapon and that it can easily become a weapon of suicide the moment there is an outbreak of violence. The Tamil people have neither been trained in the spirit of non-violence nor adequately prepared morally and spiritually for the sacrifice and suffering entailed. Even Mahatma Gandhi who launched the famous Bardoli Satyagraha Campaign after months of preparation, was compelled to call it off in a few days on account of the outbreak of violence. The recent happenings in Jaffna and Mannar should be sufficient indication as to whether or not violence is likely to take place.

There is no Tamil worthy of the name who approved of the imposition of the "Sinhalese Only Act" upon the Tamils, against their will, by a national majority. It is the solemn duty of every Tamil to resist this imposition.

But resistance in the form of civil disobedience can be justified only if one can in all conscience say that all preliminary steps for a settlement have been taken and every avenue has been explored and exhausted. Even then however, no responsible leader will launch such a movement unless he is certain that the masses are imbued with an abiding spirit of non-violence.

Judged by any criterion the present is not the time for a movement of this nature. Though the Tamil people have been subject to acts of discrimination, pinpricks and humiliation on a number of occasions during the past year, still nothing is lost by their being patient and exploring all avenues to a peaceful settlement. Moreover, calling off the civil disobedience movement will assist in creating the right atmosphere for any discussions that may take place.

The language conflict in Ceylon can be ended only if

the problem of reconciling the predominance of the majority nationality with the liberty minority nationality is satisfactorily solved.

The problem reduces itself to discovering a method by which people belonging to different races, languages and nationalities may live peacefully together within the confines of one political state.

It is generally agreed that such living together depends upon the existence of a regime of genuine equality within the state.

P. de Ascarate, former Director of the Minorities Section of the League of Nations, gave expression to practically the unanimous view of all thinkers and writers on this subject when he said:

"Ordinary common sense will tell us that this peaceful living together will not be possible unless there is real and effective equality within the state between the majority and the minority."

The cornerstone of democracy is equality. It has however to be noted that equality does not mean that the influence of the majority in the affairs of the country is equal to that of the minority, or that the minority and the majority should be equally represented in the public and the other services, or that revenue should equally be spent on the majority and minority nationalities, or that all government records should be kept in both the minority and majority languages.

It only means that a citizen who belongs to a minority nationality has in his dealings with the State *qua* citizen the identical rights and duties that a member of the majority nationality has does not suffer any disabilities which are not shared by such member.

To take an illustration, it is obvious that a Tamil citizen has the right to correspond with the state in his own language and that it is for the state to provide the necessary facilities for this purpose. If such facilities are not provided, the Tamil citizen will suffer a disability which does not attach to a Sinhalese citizen.

It will be noticed that giving effect to this principle only requires the creation of a small translation section in the government department concerned. It has nothing to do with the maintenance of the records of government.

There has been some discussion recently regarding the language in which local bodies in Tamil areas should corres-

pond with the centre. The members of these local bodies will be mostly people who know only Tamil and the proceedings of these local bodies will be conducted in Tamil language. The Chairman who is the chief executive officer of such local bodies, will not know any Sinhalese and his correspondence with others can only be in the Tamil language. If this local body is to be treated on a basis of equality with similar local bodies in a Sinhalese area, then both local bodies should be able to transact their business with the centre in their respective languages.

This can be ensured if at the stage of receipt and despatch of letters from and to a Tamil body, the translation section attached to the central government office does the Sinhalese and Tamil translations. Thereby effect is given to the principle of equal treatment of local bodies and citizens, as the state spends money on the translation of the letters instead of casting the burden of such expenditure on Tamil local bodies and citizens and thereby discriminating between them and their Sinhalese counterparts. This does not mean that the records of the local government department should be maintained in Tamil. These instances can be multiplied.

A Tamil citizen has the same right of access to a minister as a Sinhalese citizen. This means that a minister should put up his name board and other particulars outside his office not only in Sinhalese but also in Tamil, in order to facilitate the exercise of this right by the Tamil citizen.

The amount of confusion that prevails in this matter may be seen from the fact that the Commissioner appointed to implement the "Sinhalese Only" Act has thought that this Act required that in forms sent out for use by the public the Tamil equivalent should be only in footnotes and that after 1961 even those footnotes should be done away with so that the entire form would be in Sinhalese. If such action is carried to its logical conclusion, it would mean that a Tamil citizen will not be able to purchase a ticket at a railway station unless he has learnt Sinhalese.

The state exists for the protection of its citizens and for the provision of certain services to them. While the state may conduct its internal business exclusively in Sinhalese, it cannot

tell its citizens who speak one of the indigenous languages of the country that the condition precedent to its affording such protection or rendering such services is that such citizens should speak to the state in the Sinhalese language. If this is permitted there will be discrimination between one citizen and another and the principle of equality of citizens irrespective of race or nationality will be undermined. Besides, one cannot see how the relegation of Tamil to footnotes in government forms meant to be issued to or filled in by the Tamil people helps the Sinhalese people to promote their language and culture.

It has to be remembered that the passing of the "Sinhalese Only" Act does not necessarily mean the abrogation of the democratic principle of equality in Ceylon. Neither does it mean a licence to officials to indulge in petty pinpricks and acts of humiliation at the expense of the Tamil nationality. Equality before the law — equality of civil and political rights, and equal treatment in law and in fact. A solution to the nationalities problem cannot be achieved without adhering to this principle of equality.

In recent times, the socialist countries have given serious attention to this problem. For instance, in the U. S. S. R., the devices of federalism and of regional autonomy have been adopted, and the principle of equality proclaimed in the Soviet Constitution.

Article 123:

Equality of rights of citizens of the U. S. S. R., irrespective of their nationality or race in all spheres of economic government, cultural, political and other public activity is an inalienable law.

Any direct or indirect restriction of the rights of, or conversely, the establishment of any direct or indirect privileges for, citizens on account of their race or nationality, as well as any advocacy of racial or national exclusiveness or hatred and contempt, are punishable by law.

Czechoslovakia in attempting to solve its nationality problem has adopted the principle of regional autonomy in a unitary state, while Yugoslavia had adopted the federal principle. Both these countries have constitutional provisions similar to Article 123 of the Soviet Constitution.

The most recent and useful example for us in Ceylon is (Continued on page 8)

(Continued from page 7)

China which is an Asian country. China has a population of over 600 million, more than 90 percent of this population belong to the Han nationality, (or "Chinese" as we call them). The rest of the population of less than 10 percent comprise more than 60 different nationalities.

It would have been the easiest thing for the Han majority to have ignored the right of these national minorities for the reason that the Hans constituted more than 90 percent of the population. But they did not so because their leaders accepted the truth of Lenin's dictum that, identifying a particular nation as being dominant, over if warranted by numbers and influence, would stir up resentment and ferment national strife, and that therefore national sensibilities should be taken into account.

The Chinese did not adopt the principle of federalism. Instead they adopted the device of regional autonomy in a unitary state, coupled with other safeguards for scattered minorities.

In the report made in December 1951, Li Wei-Han, Chairman of the Commission of Nationalities Affairs stated:

"Any national minority living in a compact community is entitled to regional autonomy for nationalities and has the right to establish an autonomous region and autonomous organ, in accordance with this general principle and major prerequisite. Any national minority has the right to administer its own internal affairs in conformity with the wishes of the great majority of its own people and leaders in touch with the people. It is the right of every national minority to be the master of its own affairs. Assistance must be given to each national minority in order to facilitate the exercise of this right. This principle, too, must be adhered to strictly."

Regional autonomy has been established in China in accordance with the general line of the Common Programme of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference.

Article 9, 50 and 51 of this programme provide inter alia that all nationalities within the boundaries of the people's Republic of China shall have equal rights and duties, that all these nationalities are equal, that they shall establish unity and mutual aid among themselves so that the People's Republic of China will become a big fraternal and co-operative family comprising all its nationalities and that actions involving discrimination, oppression and splitting the unity of the various nationalities shall be prohibited and that regional autonomy

Regional Autonomy...

shall be exercised in areas where national minorities are concentrated.

In August 1922, the Central People's Government promulgated its detailed programme for implementations of regional autonomy for its national minorities. Some of the articles of this Programme are reproduced below.

Article 4

"In areas where national minorities are concentrated, the following types of autonomous regions may be established according to the relations obtaining between the nationalities of the localities and to the condition of local economic developments, with due consideration of the historical background:

1. Autonomous regions established on the basis of an area inhabited by one national minority.

2. Autonomous regions establish on the basis of an area inhabited by one large national minority, including certain areas inhabited by other national minorities with very small populations who, likewise, shall enjoy regional autonomy.

3. Autonomous regions jointly established on the basis of two or more areas, each inhabited by a different national minority. Whether a separate national autonomous region will be established in each of these areas depends on the actual conditions in the respective areas and on the wishes of the nationalities concerned.

Article 8

"In designating a national autonomous region, the name of the nationality shall be prefixed with the geographical denomination. Exceptions are permitted in special cases.

Article 10

"The autonomous organ of a national autonomous region is the organ of state power of the people in that region.

Article 12

"The people's Government in a national autonomous region shall be composed mainly of members from the nationality or nationalities exercising regional autonomy, with the participation of an appropriate number of members from other national minorities and the Hans inhabiting the same region.

Article 14

"The actual form which the autonomous organ of a national autonomous region is to take shall be determined in accordance with the wishes of the majority of the nationality or nationalities exercising regional autonomy and the wishes of the local leaders who are associated with the people.

Article 15

"The autonomous organ of a national autonomous region may adopt the language most commonly used in the region as the chief medium of intercourse in the exercise of its authority. But where the autonomous organ exercises its authority over a nationality to whom this language is unfamiliar the language of the latter nationality also shall be adopted.

Article 19

"The autonomous organ of a national autonomous region may, subject to the unified financial control of the state, administer the region's finances within a sphere prescribed by the Central People's Government and the local people's government above its level."

Article 20

"The autonomous organ of a national autonomous region may freely develop the region's economy in accordance with the unified economic system and plan for economic construction of the state."

Article 21

"The autonomous organ of a national autonomous region may take necessary and appropriate steps to develop the culture, education, arts, and health services of the various nationalities inhabiting the region."

Article 25

"The autonomous organ of a national autonomous region shall protect the right to national equality of all nationalities in the region educate the people of different nationalities to respect each other's language, both spoken and written, customs, traditions and religions beliefs, and prohibit national discrimination and oppression, and all acts liable to provide disputes between nationalities.

Article 27

"The autonomous organ of a national autonomous region shall in accordance with the provisions of Article 4 of this General Programme, help the other national minority or minorities concentrated in the regions to practise regional autonomy.

Article 28

"The autonomous organ of a national autonomous region shall enter into full consultation with representatives of other nationality or nationalities living in the region on all problems relating particularly to that nationality or nationalities.

Article 29

"The autonomous organ of national autonomous region shall educate and guide the people living in the region towards unity and mutual assistance between all nationalities of the country and

towards love for the People's Republic of China, in which all nationalities live together in a spirit of fraternity and co-operation like one big family.

Article 30

"The People's governments of higher levels shall respect the rights of autonomy of the national autonomous regions and help to them into practice."

Article 35

"The people's governments of higher levels shall educate and assist the people of all nationalities in observing an attitude of equality, fraternity, unity, and mutual assistance among the nationalities and in overcoming all tendencies to domination by the majority nationality or to narrow nationalism."

When questioned about the advisability of adopting regional autonomy as a solution to China's nationality problem, Ulanfu, the Vice Chairman of the Commission of Nationalities Affairs, stated:

"It is just because we want all nationalities to go forward together into a future where all mankind shall live in peace, because we want to eliminate narrow nationalism and because we want to hasten and enhance the political, cultural and economic development of areas inhabited by national minorities that we must establish regional autonomy for nationalities."

China's example is an inspiring one, not only with regard to the spirit that should animate any government which desires to solve its problem, but also with regard to the steps that such a government should take if it is to justify its claim to have taken the road to socialism.

Despite the acute controversy that has raged over the language issue it is significant that no Sinhalese leader of note has questioned the right of Tamil people to cherish and for foster their own language and culture. Every successive government in this country since we attained independence has expressed its concern for the rich cultural heritage of the Tamils.

The Prime Minister and his colleagues, have on no more than one occasion proclaimed that the right of the Tamil people to their language and culture will not be denied to them. The recent action of the Government in resisting all attempts to make Sinhalese the sole medium of instruction at the University show not only its recognition of a sound educational principle but also its genuine regard for the preservation of the

Tamil language and culture in this country.

This is an indication that the passing of the "Sinhala Only" Act was motivated not by a desire to throttle the Tamil language but because of a general feeling that it was necessary step for the protection of the Sinhalese language. Apart from this, economic factors also played an important part in the agitation for making Sinhalese the sole official language.

With a rapidly increasing population and a stagnant economy unable to provide employment for all citizens it was easy to persuade the Sinhalese people that the Tamils were taking the bread out of their mouths.

Though the number of Tamils in all white-collared jobs in the Public Services including Civil List jobs, does not exceed 30 per cent of the total number and in the other services is less than 10 per cent, yet an erroneous impression has been gaining ground than the percentage of Tamils in the Public Service is as high as 60 or 70 per cent.

This erroneous impression is partly due to the fact that there is a concentration of Tamil Public Officers in Colombo. Both during and after the elections, the Sinhalese people have been persuaded to believe not only this exaggerated percentage but also that the Tamils have obtained their position in the Public Services as a result of unfair competition.

Several ministers of government have stated from public platforms that the passing of the Sinhala Only Act will reduce the number of Tamils in the Public Service and thereby solve to some extent the problems of Sinhalese unemployment.

Though the estimate of the percentage of Tamils in the Public Service is highly exaggerated yet there is considerable substance in the statement that as a result of the "Sinhala Only" Act there is bound to be a reduction in the number of Tamil officers. Even if a Tamil citizen learns Sinhalese as a second language he will find it very difficult to compete successfully with a Sinhalese educated in his mother tongue. Besides, at the rate at which unemployment is increasing it will not be unnatural if the Sinhalese are first absorbed into the Public Service before the Tamils are considered for such employment.

Apart from electoral pressure which the Government will find difficult to resist, it may be rightly considered that a person proficient in the official language will prove more useful as a

(To be continued next week)

'SOLUTION ONLY IN CONTEXT OF EXPANDING SOCIALIST ECONOMY'

(Continued from last issue)

During this period, the tactics of this Tamil bourgeois leadership was to hope that the Sinhalese voters would divide more or less equally between the two main Sinhala parties, the United National Party and the Sri Lanka Freedom Party and that they could opportunistically bargain with party that offered them the best concessions. Such an occasion did come about in 1965 when Mr. M. Thiruchelvam entered the cabinet on the basis of the secret Dudley-Chelvanayakam pact. But it did not last because the opposition and the U.N.P. ranks themselves rebelled against the proposals of Mr. Dudley Senanayake to introduce district Councils. The 1970 election results, which gave the SLFP-led United Front a two third majority in Parliament, prevented any possibility for opportunistic bargaining.

The Tamil leadership retreated to the North, united their forces and formed a new organisation called the TULF. In the meantime, Tamil sentiment has been hurt by the assault by thugs on peaceful satyagrahis in Galle Face Green in 1956 and by the armed dispersal of non-violent satyagrahis in Jaffna in 1961. On the other hand by opposing along with the UNP, every progressive measure, like the nationalisation of the buses, the school take over, a mild paddy land bills etc., the Tamil leaders estranged even progressive Sinhala opinion which was a potential base of goodwill for them. When they formed the TULF, they even had Mr. S. Thondaman with them for a short time, i. e. till Mr. Thondaman's friend Mr. J. R. Jayewardene won the 1977 election.

In 1976 the TULF held a convention in which they put forward the extreme demand for a separate state of Eelam. It was a cry born out of frustration and desperation.

The demand for Eelam was unrealistic not only because there was no probability of any section of the Sinhalese people (even from among non-communal sections) supporting it but also because the leadership that had put it forward had not studied the viability of such a proposal and whether it could sustain an economy without the danger of being absorbed by expansionist India, like Bhutan or Sikkim. With the demand for Eelam,

the confrontation between the Tamils and the Sinhalese had now become complete.

On the side of the Tamils, it radicalised many sections of them, particularly the youth, who gradually started questioning non-violent methods of struggle advocated by the leadership of the TULF for the achievement of Eelam. A crucial situation arose when the militant Tamil youth decided that they could have no faith in bourgeois parliamentary democracy for achieving their ends and that the only way out was armed struggle.

Actually both these points of view had been actively propagated since 1964 by the Marxist-Leninists who had split from the revisionist Communist Party about that period. There can be no doubt that this propaganda must have influenced the Tamil youth.

They, somehow or other, obtained military training for their cadres and indulged in action against government institutions in the north, like police stations, banks and post offices. They blew up the only Avro plane of Air Ceylon at Ratmalana Airport and killed several policemen, informants and traitors. They gathered arms by attacking police stations and removing weapons and ammunition. They collected money by daring robberies of state banks. Their popularity with the people was a result of their reprisals against the military whose brutal harassment had made them hated by the people.

On the other side, in the South, for well over a decade there was a highly-orchestrated campaign against the Tamils. Its chief high-priest was the Minister of Industries, Mr. Cyril Methew, ably assisted by monks like Ven. Ella Gunawansa. This propaganda was fed by myths and fantasies about the dominant position occupied by the Tamils in government service, the profession, trade and business. Most of these myths have been exposed by the report of the Committee for Rational Development, which was published in the Lanka Guardian of 1st November 1983, and was tabled in parliament by Mr. Thondaman.

Ruling of North

Another aspect of this sinister campaign was that there were the ruins of 276 Buddhist places of worship in the North and East

which had been desecrated by the Tamils and which should be repaired and maintained by sending Buddhist priests to those places along with 200 dayakas to support each place of worship.

But earlier in 1950, when S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike came to power on the basis of his populist policies, he introduced the Sinhala Only Act, thus going back on a principle that was accepted by all political parties till

to preserve its language and culture from being absorbed by the majority. In Sri Lanka, it has been the reverse. There are many historical reasons for this.

The first is the memory of the early South Indian Tamil invasions of Sri Lanka. Which school boy has not read or heard the story of the epic, single combat on elephant back in which Dutugemunu defeated the Tamil King, Elara. The Sinhalese

by N. Sanmugathasan

1955 that Sinhalese and Tamil should replace English as official languages. Bandaranaike himself had stood for the replacement of English by both Sinhalese and Tamil when he moved the reforms resolution in the latter half of the second State Council.

Now, newly awakened nationalism of the Sinhalese was directed against the Tamils instead of against the economical and cultural oppression of foreign imperialism.

The subsequent SLFP government made the situation worse by introducing the standardisation of marks by which Tamil students seeking admission to the university would have to obtain more marks than his Sinhalese or Muslim counterpart. When the UNP came to power, it introduced the system of giving employment through chits from Government members of Parliament. This, too, weighted the question of employment heavily against the Tamils.

Straightaway, two features of this conflict between these two communities must be observed. The first that is these conflicts are centred round the question of which racial group would have more places in the government and corporation sectors, the professions, trade and business.

These are basically economic issues which naturally cannot be solved to any measure of satisfaction to either party in the context of restrictive neo-colonial economy like ours. The solution acceptable to both parties can only be found in the context of an expanding socialist economy.

The other feature is that, despite being a majority in Sri Lanka, the Sinhalese think and act like a minority. Normally in any country, it is the minority which fights

who visits the ruined cities of Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa they are reminded that these glories of ancient Sinhala civilisation were destroyed by South Indian Tamil invasions.

Secondly, in the middle of the last century, when the British colonialist opened up their plantations in the hill country, they brought over nearly a million South Indian plantation workers and dumped them in the midst of Kandyan areas and thereby worsened the Sinhala-Tamil conflict.

Thirdly, across the Palk Straits, in Tamil Nadu, there live 53 million people who speak Tamil and share the same culture with the Sri Lankan Tamils. This has created a inferiority complex among the Sinhalese on the basis that in this region (bracketing Tamilnadu with Sri Lanka) there are many more millions speaking Tamil than Sinhalese. Hence, arises the fear of cultural absorption.

Fourth, Tamil happened to be an older language than the Sinhalese—thus giving rise to further inferiority complex.

These, then, are the reasons that make the Sinhalese behave like an aggrieved minority. This represented itself in the fact that despite the fact that it was the Tamils who suffered heavily during the recent communal violence, it is the Sinhalese who are demanding further concessions, like the demands to colonise the Tamil areas, the demand to abolish the Thesavalamai law of the Jaffna Tamils. There is even an incipient demand to change the name of Sri Lanka to Sinhala Dipa and even to propagandise the theory that Sri Lanka belongs to the Sinhalese only and that the Tamils must go to Tamil Nadu while the Muslims must go to Arab state. This is a dangerous trend that must be fought back. Otherwise it bodes ill for our future.

Let us now see what are the demands of the Tamil people. Basically,

(1) they want Tamil to enjoy the same status as Sinhalese, both as a national language and a language of administration. This incidentally, was the accepted policy of all the political parties before 1955.

(2) They want their children to be educated in Tamil;

(3) They desire cultural autonomy;

(4) They want the economic development of the north and east so that the Tamils can have ample job opportunities and thus minimise the necessity for the Tamils to go South in search of employment;

(5) They do not want forcible state colonisation of their traditional homelands in the north and east which would alter the ethnic character of those areas.

(Continued Next Week)

CHESTO

the Sweet

that relieves coughs and colds

An excellent mouth freshener

Available at all good stores.

Personalisation of political power in Sri Lanka

This is the introduction to the book "Recent Politics in Sri Lanka: The Presidential Election and the Referendum of 1982", which is a study of electoral practice and behaviour in an Asian democracy by Prof. W. A. Wiswa Warnapala and Dr. L. Dias Hewagama, both of the University of Peradeniya. (Published by Navrang, New Delhi, 1983.)

Since the constitutional and political changes in Sri Lanka in the past six years have revolved round the office of the President, it is relevant to examine briefly its importance in the constitutional and political system in order to place this study in its correct perspective.

The Executive President was created in February 1978 through an amendment to the Constitution of 1972, and the entire constitutional system was transformed in August 1978 to suit the Presidential system by the introduction of the Constitution of the Second Republic in August 1978.

The Executive Presidency has been fashioned on the basis of the Gaullist model, and some features of the Ghanaian model which operated in the period of Kwame Nkrumah, too, have had some influence on certain aspects of the Presidential system.

The most important consideration which guided the introduction of the Executive Presidency was the need for a stable executive which could not be dislodged at the whim of an elected legislature, and certain other features of the Executive Presidency, therefore, showed that the institution had been created to suit the personal ambitions of the present incumbent of the office of President.

A number of constitutional changes, which followed the establishment of the Executive Presidency, showed a remarkable relationship to the fact of personal ambitions for power. The President is elected for a period of six years and, according to the Constitution, he may not be elected for more than two terms.

The President is the Head of State, the Head of the Executive and of the Government, Commander-in-Chief of the Armed forces, and it is in these fields that he wields a great variety of

important powers which make him a near dictator.

He is immune from suit in respect of anything done or omitted to be done by him in his official or private capacity.

The re-election of the President in October, 1972 helped to strengthen his powers and political authority.

Yet another feature which strengthened his office was the ability of the present incumbent of the office of the President in focussing Sri Lankan politics on himself.

In other words, there was a personal conception of Presidential power that is unique to President J. R. Jayewardene. He is not answerable to the elected legislature and the Prime Minister and the members of the Cabinet of Ministers are his creatures, and they are therefore totally dependent upon the President.

The construction of the Cabinet and the allocation of subjects and portfolios are done entirely at the choice and will of the President; there is no provision in the Constitution according to which the President is expected to consult the Prime Minister in the arrangement of the composition and in the construction of the Cabinet of Ministers.

This, in effect, means that the President can dismiss the Prime Minister, and he can assign to himself any subject or function in his discretion.

On the basis of such powers, he can become a virtual dictator, and the only safeguard against such an eventuality is the fact that, as the Head of the Cabinet of Ministers, he is responsible to Parliament. This responsibility—not answerability—is a farce in the context of the powers which President Jayewardene exercised in relation to the Members of Parliament who, through a variety of constitutional and political means, have been transformed into a group of "yes" men. Another feature is the continuity of the "Presidential sector" of Government, and the changes in the legislature cannot upset this sector.

The possibility of a clash between the President and Parliament is likely to arise with the election of a majority hostile to the President.

The Presidential manipulations in regard to the present Parliament show that, conscious of the possibility of this kind of a confrontation, he has been looking for means to bring about harmony between the two institutions.

In fact, all moves and calculation which President Jayewardene made after his election as President in October 1982, strengthened this view that he was looking for avenues to prevent the emergence of a hostile majority in Parliament. He, therefore, wanted to make the necessary constitutional changes to retain a two-thirds majority for his party, and the avowed purpose was to avoid the development of this confrontation between the President and Parliament.

Mr. Jayewardene openly declared that he did not want to see a "hostile group" elected to Parliament and the referendum was ordered to achieve this objective.

As Prof. A. J. Wilson has noted the development of this conflict, based on the emergence of a hostile legislature, could weaken the position of the President and, sometimes, it was likely to get itself transformed into a nominal executive leadership in the context of a powerful legislature and an assertive Prime Minister.

The amendments to the Constitution—the second, the third, the fourth and the fifth amendments—were guided by the need to maintain stability in the legislature, extension of the life of the present Parliament, therefore, became a necessity. Though he came to be elected in October 1982, he also needed a Parliament with a two-thirds majority, and the constitutional changes, which the Government introduced, demonstrated the need to strengthen the President vis-à-vis Parliament.

The Constitution empowers the President to use the referendum as a safeguard against a hostile Parliament. Referenda in themselves, are an expensive device for an undeveloped country, and it above all could be used only on an important issue.

The power to order the referendum invests the President with an enormous amount of power. The President, in his own discretion can submit a bill which has been rejected by Parliament to a referendum, it is very unlikely that a President would want to make use of referenda on all matters on which he

comes into conflict with the Parliament.

The Constitution of 1978 brought into existence a number of changes which devalued the institution of Parliament in the country. Mr. Jayewardene, with his own style of party leadership, successfully converted his own party majority in Parliament into a docile group of men who could do nothing except to show absolute loyalty to the leader of the party—who, in this case, is the incumbent President.

He went to the extent of obtaining "undated letters of resignation" from his elected Members of Parliament who constitute the Parliamentary Group of the United National Party.

The reason attributed to this decision of the President was his desire to re-constitute the Parliamentary Group, and it, therefore, showed that the legislature needs to be constituted according to the choice and will of the President.

In the context of the growing influence of the President, the Parliament, as an elected legislature has progressively declined, political power is derived not by Parliament but by one man. It is this aspect, in our view, which is certain to create problems in the arena of Government in Sri Lanka.

Today, the President conducts political, Parliamentary, economic, administrative and foreign affairs of the nation, and thereby an indivisible authority has been entrusted to the President elected by the nation. He is in sole charge of the nation, and all other institutions, whether ministerial, civil, military or judicial, are made subordinate to him and subject to power.

It was this vast power that made him make the ridiculous assertion that he was above both Parliament and the judiciary. This shows that Mr. Jayewardene sees no limit in his freedom of action and the use of his all-powerful political authority.

The most important character which has emerged out of the Constitution and political changes is the personalisation of power; it is the chief feature of the regime of the UNP in the last six years. Everyone in Sri Lanka is now aware that the Sri

Lankan Government is conducted from President's House and all state business, important or unimportant is within his domain.

The main feature is that absolute power has become the rule and democratic use of power is only an exception. The main beneficiary of the new system of Government is the President himself because it has given him a plenitude of power. He, in reality, can do anything under the system and Mr. Jayewardene often gives public expression to this of the post which he occupies.

In this set up, the UNP becomes a key to power and the President, as its most powerful leader, has successfully converted the party into another appendage of the Presidential sector. The working committee of the party has been transformed into a major decision-making centre.

Yet another factor is the personal image of the incumbent of the office of the President and the Presidential styles in many matters show that a deliberate attempt is being made at image-building: covert and overt manifestations of an emerging "Jayewardeneism" is currently seen in Sri Lanka-like Gaullism and Giscardism in France.

As an astute strategist and one who wants to give a personal stamp to his period of office, Mr. Jayewardene seeks and invokes the importance of the rules of legitimacy; his oft repeated appeals to Buddhism and his association with such activities are part of the legitimisation process and tactics, often pleads for national confidence and faith in the future, and he does this to justify and legitimise his claim that he is on the road to a "Dharmista Society" the nature and practice of which can lead to a new brand of Government.

(The book, which is priced at Rs. 275, is available from Hettiarachi Enterprises, 26, Castle Hill Street, Kandy).

Women with appeal

By S. Kamaluddin in Dhaka

Begum Khaleda Zia and Sheikh Hasina Wajed, the two women who are currently dominating opposition politics in Bangladesh, are making life increasingly diffi-

cult for President H. M. Ershad's military regime with their attacks on Ershad's programme for restoring democracy in the country.

Hasina, eldest daughter of the murdered president She-

ikh Mujibur Rahman, spent six years following her father's death in self-imposed exile in India—with her nuclear-scientist husband—before returning to Dhaka in 1981, when her father's colleagues asked her to lead the Awami League (Hasina group). At the same time, Khaleda almost immediately was thrust into the political arena by the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP-Sattar group) following the May 1981 assassination of her husband President Ziaur Rahman.

The two women have a lot in common. Both are young and in politics only because of their close relationship to the two former Presidents, who were murdered, six years apart, by two groups of army rebels. Both were persuaded to accept the leadership of their respective political parties, both of which were facing serious leadership crises.

Hasina's accession as leader of the Awami League saved it from an imminent split in 1981, and Khaleda decided to become the acting chairman of the BNP in late 1983 after the illness of chairman Abdus Sattar, 78, who was toppled as President 10 months after Zia's assassination by the present military regime.

Many still question the two women's ability to lead such large political parties and guide the two parties' movement for restoring democracy in the country to its logical conclusion.

Khaleda had been thought of only as Zia's wife until his death and had not been looked upon as a potential political leader. But following the popular outcry after Zia's assassination, a group of MPs and officials of the then ruling BNP began promoting her, in June 1981, as a presidential candidate.

There was, perhaps, another reason for this development—the sudden rise to prominence of Hasina, who was elected Awami League president in February 1981 while in exile in new Delhi. She returned in Dhaka in May, but did not contest the November 1981 presidential polls because she was under 35 years old, the minimum age for a presidential candidate.

Although Khaleda did not agree to become a presidential nominee, she was later persuaded to try for the BNP chairmanship in direct competition with Sattar, who

also became acting BNP chairman following Zia's death and wanted to be elected to that post. After intensive backstage manoeuvring, Khaleda withdrew her candidature and supported Sattar.

However realising her considerable popular appeal, the BNP government invited Khaleda to attend important government functions—a privilege denied her during Zia's lifetime—and she was frequently seen on the dais along with the acting President and other dignitaries. Even after the military takeover, Ershad called on her on several occasions, events which were publicised the media.

When open political activity was allowed briefly in November last year, Khaleda when out on an organisational tour of the country and began to attract huge, enthusiastic crowds wherever she went. Hasina, along with other alliance party leaders, also drew large crowds in a similar swing through the countryside.

Unlike Hasina, who had been involved in student politics during her college days and thus was used to public speaking, it took Khaleda a while before she was able to switch from reading a written text to delivering an extemporaneous speech. Her main theme was, and still is, that the military regime had unnecessarily and illegally ousted the BNP government, and she intends to implement the late Zia's programme of establishing a "happy Bangladesh."

Khaleda is bitter about the regime she told the Far Eastern Economic Review: "The Sattar government was ousted because the law-and-order situation was bad, ministers were corrupt and the administration had mismanaged the whole thing... But what is happening now? Why can't journalists point out to Ershad that the situation is even worse than before?"

After overcoming her shyness, Khaleda gradually became an effective party chairman, conducting committee meetings with a firm hand and guiding the course of the democratisation movement. It is difficult to say whether any single person or group of people is influencing Khaleda's decisions. A large number of BNP leaders, especially those who had earlier supported her candidature for the party

chairmanship, have always urged her to assert herself when taking important decisions.

However, one insider says that Badurddoza Chowdhury, a BNP official and a former prime minister, has some influence on her. Chowdhury, an eye surgeon and a good speaker, was very close to Khaleda's father, perhaps explaining why she chooses to discuss things with him more than with anybody else.

Hasina's situation is different. Most of the senior Awami League leaders had known her as a child, and she treats them with respect calling them "Uncle." She has proved to have a mind of her own, though former foreign minister Komal Hossain and former information minister Korban Ali appear to have considerable influence on her. Since her 1981 return from New Delhi, she has matured as a politician.

Hasina says that her chief aim is to re-establish democracy in the country and try those responsible for killing her father and other members of her family. She told the REVIEW: "Ever since the elected government was forced out of power following the killing of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, no stable government could be installed in the country. There is no democracy, and political stability in the country persists."

(Courtesy "Far Eastern Economic Review" 22nd March)

SPORTS

by Victor Kiruparaj

Cricketer of the North 1983

Jaffna Central's Skipper V. Sutharshanan, "Cricketer of the North 1983," has proved himself to be the best all-rounder among North's schoolboy cricketers this season with his brilliant performance with both bat and ball. He collected a grand 607 runs in 9 innings, four of which were unbeaten knocks, averaging a flattering 121.4 in the process. His three unbeaten centuries against St. Patricks, Mahajana and Manipay Hindu speaks volumes of this dashing wielder of the whispering willow.

His cautious, unbeaten 129 against St. Patricks when odds were against Jaffna Central was indeed a captain's innings which not only made Central retrieve from a precarious perch but also helped them wind up on a very respectable note at close of play. His two unbeaten knocks of 112 against Mahajana and 111 against Manipay Hindu showed flashes of Caribbean brilliance.

In the prestigious battle against St. John's, he collected a patient 54 in the first innings when odds were against him and hoisted a breezy 59 in the second when Central had taken a commanding first innings

lead of 79 runs. He punched a bright 52 against Jaffna College, a grand 38 and 25 on a rain-soaked wicket against Hartley and a quick-fire 26 versus Kokuvil Hindu.

As a paceman of no mean repute, Sutharshanan has claimed 40 wickets this season. His best efforts have been 7 for 44 against Mahajana, a match bag of 8 for 60 against Jaffna College, another match bag of 9 for 45 against Manipay Hindu and a first innings haul of 6 for 38 against Kokuvil Hindu.

The other centurians from among the Jaffna Schools cricketers are Patricians Skipper Ariyaratnam and Kingsley, Johnian Y. Muraledaran, Centralite N. Mathivathanan and Senthilnathan from Union College.

Jaffna Central's cricket coach V. K. Geneswaran seems quite pleased with Central's overall performance this season and the individual brilliance of Skipper Sutharshanan. He feels that even a person in blinkers would not hesitate to pick Sutharshanan as the Best Batsman among North's schoolboy cricketers, leave alone his bowling performance.

TENNIS OPEN CHAMPIONSHIPS

The following are the winners of the North Sri Lanka School of Tennis Open Championships held on 18th March.

Men Singles-Frank Sebaratnam Challenge Cup: S. Kandasamy **Runner-up**-K. Ranjababu.

Man's Doubles-Manoharan & Vettivel Challenge Shield: S. Kandasamy & N. Balasundaram, **Runner-up** T. Kirubaitilakan and W. S. Alexander.

Women's Singles-Promoter's Challenge cup Jayanthi Mahadeva, **Runner-up** Viyanee Sebaratnam.

Women's Doubles Romella Thambyrajah & Kajani Rajendira. **Runner-up** Jayanthi Mahadeva & Keshi Daas.

Mixed Doubles - T. Kirupaitilakan Romella Thambyrajah. **Runner-up**-S. Kandasamy & Vanajah Ariaratnam.

Boy's Singles under 18-Mrs. Udayaluxmi Memorial shield D. A. Susantha. **Runner-up**-P. M. T. Nishanthan.

Boy's Doubles under 18-P. M. T. Nishanthan & A. M. Nirmalaraj. **Runner-up**-A. R. Rajkumar & Sudarshan Thambyrajah.

Boy's Singles - under 16 Magana Group Challenge cup: P. M. T. Nishanthan **Runner-up**-A. M. Nirmalaraj.

Boy's Singles - under 14 Ganeshans Chunnakam Challenge Cup: A. M. Nirmalaraj. **Runner-up**-Preethi-ban Jayaweerasingham.

Men's Singles (Consolation) A. R. Rajakumar. **Runner-up**-Tohy Sebaratnam.

WANTED AGENTS FOR

SATURDAY REVIEW all parts of Sri Lanka, except Jaffna District.

Those who were appointed agents prior to July 1983 are kindly requested to apply again to:-

The Circulation Manager
Saturday Review
P.O. Box 122
JAFFNA

With best compliments

VIJAYA PRESS

OFFSET, LETTER PRESS AND COLOUR PRINTERS

551, K. K. S. Road, JAFFNA.

T'phone: 23045

IMF TERMS SUICIDAL, SAYS NIGERIA

Nigeria's military leader, Maj. General Mohammad Buhari, says the International Monetary Fund's conditions for a \$ two-billion loan to rescue the economy would destroy the country.

In an interview in the current issue of the monthly magazine 'Africa' published in London, Gen. Buhari said the IMF's demand for a devaluation of the Nigerian naira 'does not make sense to Nigerians at all'. Other officials have argued it would be intolerably inflationary.

"None of the developing countries that have taken IMF loans have come out of it well. So if we are to go by historical indications, to take an IMF loan on the terms they want us to will be tantamount to virtually destroying our own country", Gen. Buhari was quoted as saying.

He said the country's internal and external debt totalled over \$ 30 billion.

Nigerians are trapped in tightening economic decline and the country's two-month-old military regime can promise only austerity for the months ahead.

Signs of the downward slide, caused mainly by Nigeria's over-dependence on oil for revenues, are virtually everywhere.

Inflation last year was put conservatively at 25-50 per cent and unemployment "is reaching astronomical proportions," Nigeria Television has said.

Much of the economic dislocation can be traced to a far-too-optimistic projection of world demand for crude oil Nigeria's principal money-maker.

When the five-year development plan was published a few years ago, Nigeria was awash in foreign exchange, pumping two million barrels a day, which sold at 40 dollars a barrel.

These days Nigeria's oil production is fixed by the organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries at 1.3 million barrels a day. The price per barrel is 30 dollars.

The cumulative effect of the decline in oil prices was disruptive, leading to the downfall of an elected civilian government which had projected little sense of urgency in confronting the economic crisis.

Calling Nigeria "a debtor nation living beyond (its) means", the finance minister, Mr. O. O. Soleye said in February that "the nation will have to pass through a period of belt-tightening before we can see better days."

(The Times of India, 5th March)

(Continued from Page 2)

Politics and ...

atmosphere of the country. It is indeed a pessimistic conclusion, but apparently inevitable.

The whole study is important and valuable. The work is certainly a learned one and makes a good and clear analysis. The important points are discussed in a very concise manner. The brevity of the study with the use of difficult language makes this study not easy reading. More simple language and less jargon would have made this book easier to the average reader. Yet, it is a topical study and needs to be read by citizens and students alike.

— Bertram Bastiampillai

OPPOSITION FRONT FOR NEW ORDER

The six-party opposition united front is likely to express its commitment to democratic and federal polity, secular ideals, egalitarian economy and socialist society rooted in Gandhian values.

The draft policy statement of the front is understood to have stressed that such a commitment will provide the basis for a

broad consolidation of the forces of democracy, secularism and socialism to defeat authoritarianism and status quo and usher in a new socio-economic order based on justice and equality.

The statement criticises the planning process for taking aggregate growth as the plan objective without

spelling out the precise manner in which the fruits of enhanced wealth incomes will be shared.

This has led to a "phenomenal growth of prosperity for few and continuation of appalling misery for the overwhelming Indian poor", the policy statement says.

It rejects the 'trickle down theory' of development that rich should grow richer to generate savings for the welfare of the poor. Planning has to be designed for the benefit of the poor and not for making the rich richer.

UNJUST TAXES

The draft policy statement stresses the need for an effective devolution of the political and economic power to preserve the spirit of the country's federal policy.

The Centre-state relations must be reviewed and necessary constitutional amendments effected so that states can enjoy more powers and obtain their due share in financial and other resources.

(The Times of India)

Saturday Review

SRI LANKA

Was 'India Today' story a plant?

Opposition spokesmen in Parliament were on the right track, when they raised the question whether the sensational "India Today" article regarding terrorist activities and training camps in India was a "plant."

For everything indicates that it is a pre-meditated provocation intended to serve several ends.

"India Today" is one of 400 odd magazines and newspapers in India. Slickly produced and eminently readable, it is better known for sensationalism than hard fact. It is edited by a Punjabi, Arun Pourie, and the US advertising firm, J. Walter Thompson & Co., is said to have a major financial stake in it.

In July-August 1983, the Sri Lanka Government

was so annoyed with its reportage of events here that it banned its issue of 31st August from being imported or sold in Sri Lanka. Now it has placed orders for several thousands of copies, to be distributed abroad through our Embassies. And our Prime Minister, claiming to speak "on behalf of the Government", now says categorically that "India Today" is "one hundred per cent correct".

Mr. Anandatissa de Alwis, Minister of State briefing newspapers after the Cabinet meeting on 22nd March told them: "We have been trying to tell the world this and the world has not listened..... Now the truth has been revealed by Indian journalism." (Reproduced from Forward—1st April.)

Denial by Indian Government

Charges made by Sri Lanka that the island's separatist Tamil guerrillas are being trained in camps in South India were totally false, India's Minister of State for External Affairs, Mr. A. A. Rahim, said on Wednesday.

He told Parliament that New Delhi had assured Colombo there were no arms caches or training camps on Indian territory.

"We have nothing but goodwill for Sri Lanka and have done nothing to warrant the campaign being directed against us in recent days," Mr. Rahim said.

He said such allegations were harming bilateral relations and did not help in solving the island's ethnic problem in a rational and constructive manner.

The Sri Lankan Prime Minister, Mr. R. Premadasa said last month he had

"positive evidence" the Tamil guerrillas fighting for a separate state in the island's North and East were being trained in South India.

(Daily News, 5th April)

Frozen Foods

& Farm Products

79, MAIN STREET,

JAFFNA.



For all your requirements

of

GOLDI PRODUCTS

FROZEN FOODS

GROCERIES AND

QUALITY TEA

AND COFFEE.

KANESAN TEXTILES

A Prestigious Establishment
FOR QUALITY TEXTILES

IN

JAFFNA

63, 78, K. K. S. Road,

JAFFNA

T'phone: 7169, 8025

Exam. Postponed

Rambewe Maha Vidyalaya, in the Anuradhapura district, has been chosen by the Department of Examinations as one of the centres for the examination to be held on Monday for the selection of clerks and assistant cashiers to the Central Bank, the Bank of Ceylon, the People's Bank and the National Savings Bank.

All students from the North have been called upon to sit for the examination at this centre.

For obvious reasons most of the students from

the North have decided not to travel to Rambewe.

The examination has now been postponed, according to a radio announcement.

DEMONSTRATION

The Peoples Action Committee, formed at a meeting of a group of concerned citizens on 29th March, has decided to hold a demonstration in Colombo on 10th April to demand the lifting of the proscription of political parties.

Printed at Kalanilaya Atchakam, 303, K. K. S. Road, Jaffna, and published by New Era Publications Ltd, 118, 4th Cross Street, Jaffna, on 7th April 1984. Registered as a newspaper at the General Post Office, Sri Lanka under QJ/101.