

Saturday Review

SRI LANKA

Vol. 3 No. 16.

2nd June 1984

Israel-through the backdoor

When one's nose itches, the sensible thing is to scratch it directly, using the right hand or the left, depending on one's preference. But there are some people in this world who would like to take their hand right round their head to touch their nose!

We are reminded of this aberration when we look upon many of the things that the Jayewardene Government has done since it assumed office in 1977.

For instance, when it became necessary to carry out the IMF-dictated devaluation of the rupee with the first Budget, our Minister of Finance spoke of the "equalisation of exchange rates."

Whenever the prices of goods and services had to be upped, for valid reasons or not, Government leaders referred to the "revision" of prices, never increases.

Almost always euphemisms, when direct talk could not have had any more worse consequences.

The plain fact is that, in most instances, the Government had not dared or bothered to take the people into its confidence. It's been double-think and double-speaks, so to say.

BUT THERE IS NOTHING TO BEAT THE WAY THE ISRAELIS HAVE BEEN ALLOWED TO COME BACK TO SRI LANKA.

The Israelis had a legation in Colombo until they were asked to leave by Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike's first Sri Lanka Freedom Party regime in pursuance of its policy of support for the Palestinian cause.

The successor UNP regime led by Mr. Dudley Senanayake allowed the Israelis back in 1965.

UN RESOLUTIONS

But in July 1970, Mrs. Bandaranaike's second regime suspended ties with Israel "until such time as Israel either conforms to the resolutions of the United Nations Security Council of

22nd November 1967 and subsequent dates, and withdraws its armed forces from the territory of the United Arab Republic, Syria and Jordan, which they occupied by force after 4th June 1967, or arrives at any solution acceptable to the Arab States concerned".

After the return of the UNP to power in 1977, the Israelis again began making overtures and there were a number of contacts between Colombo and Tel Aviv at both official and unofficial levels.

However, it has taken seven years for the UNP Government to finally decide to allow the Israelis back—through the backdoor and with the blessing of the US Government.

An Israeli "Interests section" is to be established in the U. S. Embassy in Colombo, which will enable it to supply certain, "specialised services" to Sri Lanka reportedly in accordance with a request made by the Jayewardene Government.

Why the hell could not the Government ask Israel to come in straight away and establish an embassy, instead of all this subterfuge?

And to hell with the consequences. As the Minister for National Security told Parliament, he would even talk with the devil, not merely the Israelis, to maintain Sri Lanka's integrity.

(Also see page 10 for comment by Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike)

What is biting our good old Prime Minister? Patriotism? The latest salvo he fired from his Big Mouth must have shaken the ramparts of the Red Fort in Delhi to their foundations.

We are reminded of King Gajabahu who in the 2nd century A.D. invaded South India and came back with 6,000 captives. Our latest "Ranakami" appears to be ready, if need be, to take the whole of India, even single-handed.

Unfortunately for Ranasinha Premadasa, there seems to be "traitors" within his own camp.

One of them is reported to have said that there was a conspiracy to divide Sri Lanka by inciting India. The aim was to bring the two countries into conflict so that the Indian Army would come in here, resulting in the division of the country.

Mr. Premadasa's ministerial colleague is reported to have added: "Sri Lanka is perched in a precarious position in current times and we have to be cautious about what we said and how we acted so that we would not drag in India".

What cowardly words, in contrast to Mr. Premadasa's challenge to India to invade Sri Lanka, if it dared.

"If India will invade us from Trivandrum, then we will face it", he is reported to have said.

Bravo! Mr. Prime Minister.

But to move the bulk of our crack Armed Forces to the Northern shores to face an Indian invasion, if it does materialise, good roads are necessary.

So, Sir, why not begin by filling in the pot-holes on the road from Colombo to Kankasanturai first?

And allow our Minister of Foreign Affairs to do all the talking to keep the "enemy" confused until our war preparations get into top gear?

JR OFF AGAIN

President J.R. Jayewardene, who returned to the Island on 31st May after State visits to China, Japan and South Korea, will leave on a state visit to the United States on 14th June.

This will be the eight visit abroad by Mr. Jayewardene as President, the very person who once taunted Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike, when Prime Minister-for gallivanting abroad when

there were problems at home needing urgent attention.

He even said during the 1977 election campaign that if the UNP were installed in power, he would prefer to remain at home and attend to the people's problems, leaving it to Mrs. Bandaranaike, who was described by her admirers as Leader of two-thirds of the world' to attend to foreign affairs!

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

In addition to the constraints imposed on us 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."

TORTURE... TORTURE... TORTURE... TORTURE...

BEATINGS IN POLICE STATIONS

(Based on Amnesty International's Newsletter for May 1984)

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Although most of the allegations of torture received by Amnesty International concern political detainees, it does occasionally receive reports of ordinary criminal suspect being tortured in order to elicit confessions, and information received over many years strongly suggests that the torture of ordinary criminal suspects is routine in Turkish police stations: most of these reports describe beatings.

However, all the detailed information on torture in Amnesty International's possession relates to political prisoners, the majority of whom are reportedly ill-treated in some way during the detention period. Some well-known detainees — notably those detained in connection with the Turkish peace Association and former members of Parliament held immediately after the coup—have apparently not been tortured, but they constitute a small minority of such cases known in Amnesty International.

In most instances, torture was allegedly inflicted by the police and took place in police stations, but AI has received detailed allegations that torture has been inflicted in military establishments in Diyarbakir in Diyarbakir Military prison and Mamak Military prison, near Ankara. Reports have been received, too, of prisoners having been tortured and ill-treated in a number of other military establishments, including Metris

Military prison in Istanbul and Erzurum Military prison in eastern Turkey.

Following the death in custody of the detainee Bhan Erdost on 7th November 1980, the Commander of Mamak Military prison, Col. Raci Tetik, made this statement to the Ankara Martial Law prosecutor:

DECLARATIONS ON TORTURE

"No State may permit or tolerate torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. Exceptional circumstances such as a state of war or a threat of war, internal political instability or any other public emergency may not be invoked as a justification of torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment." (Article 3 of the United Nations Declaration on the Protection of All Persons from Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.)

"No person shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment." (Article II of the Constitution of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka.)

"I had given orders that after the preliminaries were completed all prisoners with the exception

of the aged, women and children, the lame and the diseased, should be struck with a truncheon once or twice each below the waist in their rude places (buttocks) and on the palms of their hands and they should be warned not to come to prison again. I am not going to deny my order. My aim is to ensure discipline."

Methods of torture have included electric shocks, burning with cigarettes, hanging from the ceiling by hands or feet for prolonged periods and beating and assaults on all parts of the body, including the sexual organs.

The most severe torture has usually taken place during the detention period (when the detainee is held incommunicado). Prisoners may by law be detained for up to 45 days before having to be brought before a court to be charged or released. The main purpose of the torture appeared to be the extraction of information and confessions, although intimidation was also an important element.

The routine beatings which took place in military prisons, where people were sent after being charged or convicted seem to have been for the sole purpose of maintaining discipline. AI knows, however, of some instances of prisoners having been taken again for interrogation and tortured again, even after several years in prison.

Torture in Turkey

Torture of political detainees in Turkey was already a major concern of Amnesty International before the military coup of September 1980. An increasing number of torture allegations had led the organisation to send a research mission to Turkey in May that year, when AI concluded that torture was widespread and systematic and that most people detained by police and martial law authorities were tortured and in some cases tortured to death.

The number of torture allegations and reports of deaths in custody increased after the coup - this was undoubtedly related to the

increased number of people detained and the lengthening the incommunicado detention period since September 1980 by amendments to the martial law regulations.

The following extracts from the introductions to the country entries on Turkey in the last four AI annual reports illustrate how the Turkish authorities have persisted in the torture of prisoners during the present decade.

1980 - The concerns of AI were prisoners of conscience and the legislation which leads to their imprisonment; cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment of prisoners...

1981 - The main concerns of AI were torture, executions and...

1982 - Turkey remained under martial law throughout 1981. AI was concerned that thousands of people were imprisoned, many for non-violent political activities; torture was widely used...

1983 - AI concerns were large numbers of prisoners of conscience, widespread and systematic torture and ill-treatment of political prisoners...

Allegations of widespread and systematic torture of political prisoners continued throughout 1983 and the pattern has shown no significant change during 1984.

Appeal by AI Sri Lanka Section

Amnesty International's Campaign for the Abolition of Torture (CAT) was begun in 1973. This campaign helped provide the vital impetus for the Declaration on the Protection of all persons from torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading treatment or Punishment, (Declaration on Torture"), adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1975.

Beginning in April 1984, AI initiated a renewed worldwide campaign, and we of the Sri Lanka section would greatly appreciate your co-operation in conducting the campaign in our country.

We are anxious to work with various organisations. Therefore feel free to write and help us get in touch with any organisation which may be interested in working with us. We also welcome any suggestions as to the conduct of the campaign.

Please address all your correspondence to: JAGATH SENARATNE,

Campaign Organiser,
AI - CAT
21, Chitra Lane,
COLOMBO 5.

Words of Wisdom

"Cooperate with your fellowmen for common welfare and prosperity."

—Sri Swami Sivananda

"The craving for knowledge, for undiminishing happiness and abiding peace is inherent in every human being. The unceasing struggle, consciously or unconsciously, to attain the above state is part and parcel of life."

—Sri Swami Sivananda

"The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil, is for good men to do nothing."

—Edmund Burke

"We must learn to live together as brothers, or we will perish together as fools."

—Martin Luther King

(Compiled by Jupiter)

President's U. S. visit

The planned visit to the United States of America by President Jayewardene this month reminds me of a visit to that country undertaken by another Sri Lankan leader.

That was exactly 30 years ago, when the U. S., guided by President Eisenhower and Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, was very keen to draw Sri Lanka also into the Western system of military alliances, as part of its overall policy to prevent the spread of Communism in Asia.

The visitor was the militantly Anti-Communist Sir John Kotelawala, a great admirer of the West, especially America, just like Mr. Jayewardene and most other United National Party leaders, past and present.

No sooner the visit was confirmed, fears were voiced about the possibility that while in Washington, the impetuous Sir John might indulge in a grand gesture, such as agreeing to join the South-East Asia Treaty Organisation (SEATO) or to give up the trade with China, in order to induce the resumption of American aid.

One of those who sounded a warning was his former Minister of Trade, Mr. R. G. Senanayake: "We do not know what treaty or alliance he will sign. His secret ambition is to join SEATO. If this happens, the country will run the risk of becoming a target for atom bombs. I challenge the Prime Minister to state in public whether he would join SEATO, or not..."

He doubted whether "America, which once wanted to starve Sri Lanka when it was in dire need of good prices for its rubber, would like to help it now without condition".

OPEN MIND

The fact that the Prime Minister insisted on keeping an "open mind" on SEATO, despite repeated calls by Mr. Senanayake and others to denounce it, only served to heighten these fears.

That the US was keen on getting a firm foothold in the island became clearer with the offer, made on the eve of Sir John's planned departure, to sign a treaty of friendship, commerce and navigation. If the UNP Government had consented it would have had the effect of drawing the country inexorably into the US sphere, an objective which Washington had tried, and failed, to achieve with its earlier offer of aid with strings.

Under the proposed treaty, America sought from Sri Lanka, among other things, for its nationals and enterprises in which its nationals would have interests, treatment not less than "national treatment" and "most favoured nation treatment" in all matters relating to

adversary of Communism in Asia". Sir John considered the refusal of aid "as a form of political blackmail which is hardly worthy of a great country like America".

Now the situation is vastly different; Sri Lanka under President Jayewardene, has moved closer to

opment of its national resources and a foreign policy of non-alignment.

However, the fate of little countries like ours are determined more by international development, than by events in Sri Lanka itself.

It is for the rulers to ensure that we do not get too

POLITICAL CAUSERIE

by Gamini Navaratne

all types of commercial, industrial, financial and other business activities. The matter was not pursued because the majority of the Minister were of the opinion that "a treaty of this type would be economically harmless to Sri Lanka if the two countries were on an equal footing in regard to finance, commerce, trade and banking but would be disadvantageous because of the country's under-development".

A JUGGERNAUT

The Times of Ceylon, which had campaigned against the attempt to abrogate the trade agreement with China in return for US aid, said of the proposed treaty: "It seek to encourage mutually beneficial investment. In each other's territories But the gulf of disparity that separates the economies of the two countries will give the behemoth of American finance-capital and its industrial juggernaut the crushing edge over Sri Lanka's pigmy under-development... Any benefit to this country must seem negligible and temporary in relation to the complete ascendancy that the US can gain over us—without actually having to call Sri Lanka a colony".

As expected, the possibility of entering into a military alliance and the abrogation of the China pact loomed large in the discussions in Washington. But public opinion at home on both these issues was so strong at the time that Sir John had to disappoint Dulles and Co.

Result: no aid. As the Prime Minister lamented on his return: Sri Lanka has not been offered a red cent of American aid although Sri Lanka is the staunchest

the U.S. than any previous UNP regime. In fact, it has been said by political opponents that the major decisions concerning both Sri Lanka's internal and external affairs are now made not in Colombo but in Washington.

Internally, Sri Lanka has been forced to adopt the American model of capitalist development. It is "Open Sesame" for Western multinationals, to the detriment of our vital national interests. The pervasive and pernicious repercussions of the Government's new economic policies were evident to the discerning long before the July 1983 holocaust. The Government had opened a veritable Pandora's box.

The events in the North have provided a convenient cover for the Government, through the Gobbelsian manipulation of the media, to distract people's mind from the economic disaster that threatens to engulf them. But the Government would do well to remember that not all the people could be fooled all the time. The situation in the South is now as dangerous as in the North.

Externally, Sri Lanka has been forced to support western, that is, mainly American, positions on most important international issues.

More, Sri Lanka has now virtually become a base for the US.

In return, Sri Lanka has been the recipient of massive doses of economic aid.

But have the policies followed by the Jayewardene Government been in the larger interests of the nation?

The best policy for a little country like Sri Lanka with a prolonged and bitter colonial past, is greater self-reliance in the devr-

embroiled in super-power politics and put all our eggs in one basket, as it were.

A policy of friendship with all the owners—and this includes India—is the best guarantee of the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Sri Lanka.

It is in this context that President Jayewardene's US visit raises so many issues.

Will he be able to assure the people of this country before he leaves for his meeting with President Reagan, that he will not agree to anything that would further jeopardise Sri Lanka's tenuous link as a member of the non-aligned Movement?

The Devil's Advocate!

The Minister of National Security, Mr. Lalith Athulathmudali said in Parliament on 24th May that he would even talk with the devil, not merely the Israelis, to maintain Sri Lanka's integrity.

He was answering opposition charges that the opening of the Israeli interests section at the US Embassy in Colombo jeopardised Sri Lanka's foreign policy in relation to the Arab world and Palestinian cause in particular.

"What is important is not the politics of a third country but the security of our own", Mr. Athulathmudali said, charging that while the SLFP labelled the Israelis as outcasts of the international community they did not see fit to sever all relations with Israel in 1971, but merely suspended diplomatic relations.

Explaining why it was decided to set up an Israeli interests section in Sri Lanka, the Minister said that countries established such sections when there was a breach in diplomatic relations. This was also done when there was a need for dialogue between the two countries India, the leader of the Nonaligned Movement, also had an Israeli consulate.

(Sun, 26th May)

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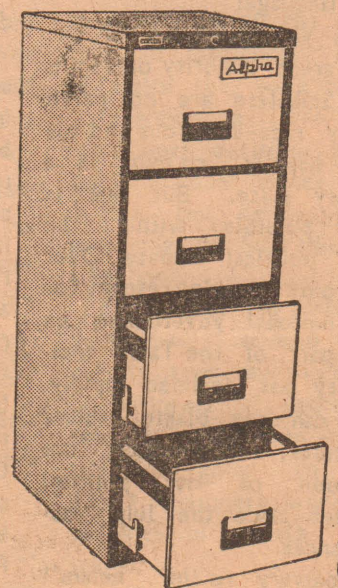
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AN OPEN LETTER TO VEN RAHULA

Dear Ven. Dr. Rahula,

I have read with interest your appeal to the nation, in which you urge us not to be provoked by the "criminal activities" of the terrorists in the North and the East, and to seek instead peace and the rule of law in our land.

Your appeal is indeed commendable, and I respect the sincerity with which it was delivered. What bothers me, however, is not so much what you said as what you have left unsaid. It is to the latter that I humbly wish to draw your attention, and I make the following comments as one who shares your concern for peace and security but understands these terms from a very different perspective.

First, "provocation" is a two-way process. In the interests of national amity, you should invite the Sinhala people and especially our political leaders to visit Jaffna, Trincomalee and Batticaloa and see for themselves the continual harassment and provocation that these citizens of Sri Lanka experience at the hand of the agents of "National Security". In the latest incidents which occurred just prior to the New Year weekend, several shops and business premises in the heart of Jaffna were deliberately set ablaze, and literally scores of unarmed civilians shot dead or crippled for life. What word of regret, sympathy or comfort have you or any leader in the south offered the widows, the orphans and the childless of Jaffna? Are they so fundamentally different to the people of the south that only the latter need to be cautioned against "provocation" and the desire for revenge; Are we so imprisoned in our ethno-centric vision that we cannot enter into the thoughts and feeling of those who live in another part of the country or speak a different language?

As you have noted, sir, the great majority of Tamils and Sinhalese are not particularly race-conscious and can very happily co-exist in a unitary state. But this is only possible within the right political climate. Over the past decade, respect for the national government on the part of the Tamil community has declined rapidly. And can one blame them? Consider, for instance, the attitude of our political leaders since the July disturbances.

Contrary to the "eelam" propagandists abroad, there were several Sinhalese peo-

ple who risked their lives and property on behalf of Tamils (strangers and neighbours) last July, or who expressed their revulsion and shame at the orgy of bloodshed that swept the south. Yet, not one word of regret or condolence (leave alone denunciation) was forthcoming from the elected representatives of our people in government, until long afterwards when the rehabilitation of Lanka's foreign image became the top priority. In fact, insult was added to injury when several politicians condemned the Tamil political leaders as "traitors", refused to talk with them, and even went to the extent of re-litigating that Sri Lanka would always be a "Sinhala nation". Even today, it seems that what sympathy is shown for the Tamil community is motivated more by a concern for the tourist industry and foreign investment than by the moral demands of justice and compassion. And, sadly, this same attitude is conveyed in the opening remarks of your article.

Consequently, I submit that the real crisis in our country is caused not by political violence—whether Tamil or Sinhala—but by a lack of political statesmanship. Apathy and/or self-seeking seems to be the order of the day. Every government has persistently shut its ears to the deteriorating ethnic situation hoping that it would somehow disappear, or else inflaming it in order to make political capital out of it. The same childish game is being played today, with the SLFP boycotting the round-table conference and the rest 'stalling' the proceedings to give the world the semblance of serious dialogue. For how much longer must we endure this charade?

Secondly, I note that you consistently use the word "terrorism" to describe the criminal actions of militant youth in the north. This is an emotive word, often ill-defined in the mass media. What I gather is that if an act of violence is perpetrated in the Tamil speaking area it becomes an act of "political terrorism", while if the same act is committed elsewhere it is an ordinary 'crime'. In recent weeks there has been a spate of kidnappings, armed robberies, arson, murder in the south, including a parcel-bomb in Colombo (the archetypal terrorist weapon) could these be greater threats to our security than supposed invasions from across the Palk Straits? Is 'terrorism' in danger of becoming a propaganda word used to

whip up nationalistic instincts and so divert our gaze away from the moral, economic and political bankruptcy in our midst?

Since, Dr. Rahula, you have quoted Northern Ireland as a parallel situation, may I be permitted to point out some serious fallacies in the comparison?

- The army in Northern Ireland is not only 'flushing out' terrorists but also fulfilling a peace-keeping role. If it were to withdraw, the two communities they would be at each other's throats. This is not the case in Jaffna or the east coast.
- The Army in Northern Ireland have made mistakes and used torture on suspected terrorists, but they have never set fire to public buildings or residential areas nor turned their guns on passers-by.
- The IRA and other terror-groups have shown a shocking contempt for life in their indiscriminate bombing of public places and assassination of ordinary men, women and even children. They have assassinated ordinary men, women and children. They have sown anguish and terror in many civilians, not only in Northern Ireland but as far afield as the heart of London. They thus merit the label 'terrorist'. In contrast, the Tamil Tigers and other clandestine organizations in our country have not resorted to terror bombing of Sinhala civilians, their violence being directed at the security forces and government politicians in those areas. It would be more accurate to call them "rebels or anti-government 'guerillas' or 'insurgents'".

Please do not misunderstand me. I abhor the shortsightedness, the arrogance and criminality of these actions. I do not condone these assassinations. But, unlike you, I am more concerned to understand why these youth espousing violence than to just condemn them.

Finally, you have raised the important question of the 'guilt of silence' on the part of moderate Tamils in this country. May I take this a few steps further?

Many in the so-called intellectual community have forfeited the right to speak on moral or policy issues because they have prostituted their intellectual freedom for private, sectarian or party (right and left-wing) interests. But there are several people, Sinhala as well as Tamil, with no political axes to grind,

who are reluctant to speak out about what is happening in the country for fear of reprisals at the hands of the police or the private 'goonda' squads that some UNP and SLFP politicians have nurtured over the years. I would suggest, sir, that this is the real terror in our midst. There is both a contempt for moral law and a hatred of criticism in all parts of the island, not least in the corridors of power. Is not the encouragement of free expression the best antidote to terror? Will not even a moderate man turn (or, at least, sympathize with) violence when all other channels of communication are shut in his face?

As an intellectual and religious leader yourself, you would agree with me that

there is nothing more precious in the world than Truth. We shall never have peace and security if we seek these at the cost of Truth, either by diluting it or being indifferent to it. For some time now, an oppressive pall of mindless conformity has been settling on the religious institutions, the universities and the mass media in Sri Lanka. May I recommend that your next appeal to the nation be addressed to this very issue: can we create a social and political climate in our country which encourages an openness to Truth, beginning with the truth about ourselves irrespective of racial or social identity—and however painful it may be?

Dr. Vinoth Ramachandra

'Reagan Administration messing up world'

The Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Organisation, at an Asian regional consultative meeting held in Kabul, Afghanistan, from 17th to 19th April, in its final communique, stated that "the Reagan Administration has aggravated the tensions all over the world and is pursuing a policy of intervention, pressure, blackmail and destabilisation in Asia.

"The growing militarisation of the Indian Ocean and the Gulf and the linkage of the Ocean strategy with the Pacific region pose a grave threat to the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the countries of Asia.

machinations of US imperialism, transnational corporations and neo-colonialist forces."

Most of the delegates expressed confidence that the victory of the April Revolution of 1978 brought great welfare and prosperity to the Afghan people. "These successes were achieved with the support of the socialist countries and all progressive and democratic forces of the world, headed by the Soviet Union.

by T. Duraisingam

"The revival of militarization in Japan and the Washington-Tokyo-Seoul military alliance and the deployment of varieties of nuclear weapons in the Far East as an extension of the strategy of deploying Pershing II and Cruise missiles in Europe have further perpetuated the crisis."

The communique also stated that "the participants decided to intensify their activities on the national level, to mobilise opinion in the individual countries against the

Mr. T. Duraisingam, who represented Sri Lanka, in his speech referred to the increasing neo-colonialist penetration of the imperialist powers in Sri Lanka and the consistent struggle of the progressive sections of the people to resist it.

He also referred to the initiatives taken in 1964 by Sri Lanka, at the second conference of the Non-aligned countries in Cairo, to turn the Indian Ocean into a non-nuclear zone.

The Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Organisation is now holding its sixth congress in Algeria.

ANTI - WESTERN RHETORIC & THE TAMILS

Editor,
Saturday Review.

An inadvertent trap into which some Tamil activists have fallen is to indulge in anti-western rhetoric simply because the United National Party is seen to be pro-Western and because "anti-imperialist" flag waving has become the hallmark of many revolutionary movements which have little else in common.

This does us no good except to enable the U.N.P. Government to brand us as anti-Western terrorists and communists in the hope of securing Western finance to shore up a ramshackle economy and deploy wasteful military power against us.

Such rhetoric from us may not result in more support for the Government from the West, whose embassies in Colombo must be keeping them well-informed. (A New York Times correspondent quoted a Western diplomat describing the minister for National security as "aggressive" and "mean". But it would rather sustain for the Government an illusion that it has unconditional Western backing for a disastrous policy against the Tamils and in defiance of Indian interests. Such an illusion can mean only prolonged suffering for the people of Sri Lanka and even worse, for the Tamils.

There is no evidence, apart from polite diplomatic clichés which mean nothing, that there is unconditional Western support for Sri Lanka's Government. There are good grounds to believe that the West and the US have been sensitive to the Tamil problem and to Indian prerogatives on Sri Lanka.

Our effort is more fruitfully directed at securing the goodwill of the common man in the West. This purpose is not served by kidnappings and killings of policemen and politicians associated with UNP.

This made a strong impression on the Australian MP, Tim Moore who reported on the human rights question on behalf of the International Communion of Jurists, though he had much more to say adversely on the behaviour of the security forces. But what he had to say about our violence was good fodder for Government propaganda. Rather than criticise Tim Moore, as some have done we must treat what he has said as the impression we make on an impartial, but well-meaning Westerner.

We must not form conclusions about US policies in

Sri Lanka based on abominable US policies elsewhere. The US has no historical strategic interests here and there is every indication that the US respects the preponderance of Indian interests in the region, as pointed out by David Selbourne.

Another important factor is the Tamils' historic ties with American Christian educational missions which form an active lobby, whose hidden influence we must not underestimate.

One will do well to keep in mind that, imprudent words which serve no purpose, while possibly rendering transient satisfaction to the source, may mean for many others needless suffering.

R & R

Kent Ridge,
Singapore.

G. G.'S STANCE

The Editor,
Saturday Review,

Please forgive the delay in replying to the letter that appeared in your issue of 28th April under the heading, "Shan is wrong";

In that letter, Mr. A. Vinayagamoorthy takes me to task for my criticism of Mr. G. G. Ponnambalam's attitude to the Citizenship Acts.

It is true that there were two acts. The first was the Ceylon Citizenship Act which defined who could be a Ceylon citizen. Mr. Ponnambalam, then in the Opposition, naturally voted against the Act. Those who became citizens by virtue of this Act are referred to as citizens by descent.

The second Act was the Indian and Pakistani Residents Act. This Act was intended to register as citizens those people of Indian and Pakistani origin who were obviously not caught up by the first Act. But, this Act prescribed such severe tests for Sri Lankan citizenship that most people of Indian and Pakistani origin failed to pass them. As a result, the overwhelming majority of people of Indian origin particularly, the bulk of the Tamil plantation workers, were deprived of their citizenship and, therefore, of their voting rights and became stateless.

The injustice of this Act was later vindicated when, in 1964, the Sri Lanka Government agreed to grant citizenship to another 300,000. It is in support of this reactionary bill that Mr. Ponnambalam by then a Minister, voted in Parliament. Incidentally, those who obtained citizenship under the second Act are

referred to as "citizens by registration."

It is true that G. G. P. attended the Yamuna conference. But, that was not an exercise at reaching unity with the leftists. There were apart from 20 leftists, 20 Independents along with the representatives of the Tamil Congress and the Ceylon Indian Congress. The conference was an attempt to explore the possibility of an alternative government to that of Senanayake who had failed to obtain an absolute majority. But it failed.

Let us also not forget that G.G.P. heralded his impending entry into the Cabinet with a virulent anti-Communist speech delivered in the Eastern Province to placate Senanayake and ease his way into the Government.

I stand by what I wrote.

N. Sanmugathasan

23/7, Schofield Place,
Colombo-8

CAUSE FOR SHAME

The Editor,
Saturday Review.

The London Correspondent of the Sunday Observer reports that his telephone was inundated with congratulatory calls from Sri Lankans in London who had read the interview with President Jayewardene which had been widely published in the British Press.

I wonder whether it was the same interview in which the President said, among other things, "that if India were to invade Sri Lanka, then the Tamils will all be killed."

If one were to analyse this statement further, one would come to the conclusion that India's anticipated invasion of this country would only be to protect the Tamils. But the Sinhala masses would thwart India's intentions by exterminating the Tamils even before the invasion?

If I were living in London, I would have been ashamed to have read the interview reported in the British Press but some of my countrymen appear to be delighted, even if they be ignorant and therefore need to be forgiven.

It must be remembered that the British Press generally gives publicity to Afro-Asian countries only when the material published is degrading and far from complimentary.

S. Vengadasalam

Thunnalai South,
Karavaddy.

LETTERS

FROM ZAMBIA

My dear
Mr. Kanagarajanayagam,

Director,

New Era Publications.

We are in good health and hope the same with you.

An old-time friend of yours from Kandy, Mr. Sivanandan met me recently. He wished to subscribe to the **Saturday Review**. His address is: Mr Justice A. Sivananthan, High Court, P. O. Box 50067, Lusaka, Zambia.

You may enrol him for one year subscription and send the bill direct to him.

With kind regards,

Yours affectionate
K. Varatharajah

Zambia National Energy Ltd.
Lusaka, Zambia.

THE REAL PROBLEM

The Editor,
Saturday Review.

Please permit me to thank Mr. Jehan Perera through your columns for his convincing and best thought out analysis that I have come across on the subject of ethnic conflict. He has upstaged all the political cabaret artistes and Marga Institute whizkids in his in depth study couched in elegant prose. In fact, I thought I was listening to the S.J.V Chelvanayakam memorial lecture at Veerasingham Hall. What raises Jehan's article above the level of journalism is the background of constitutional history and of social and political analysis against which the narrative proceeds.

Jehan could go a step further to present a copy of the research paper to his senior colleague at Harvard the new Minister of National Security. He has an open sesame as both of them wear the same distinguished neckwear. From the little that I have seen of the Minister on TV, there isn't a streak of the Struthonian complex that Jehan complains of in his epilogue. From his TV appearance during the past few weeks, the Minister appears to be ready, willing and able to face up to a situation with his histrionic and rhetorical flourish. With the Royal-Jesus College-Gray's Inn-Ivy League background, he should be able to evolve

a viable solution to the ethnic problem with the help of Jehan's sharp intellect.

Time is running out and we must attune ourselves to the sense of urgency of Yeats "I will arise and go now and go to Innisfree".

Tamils, as a race, can sometimes lose their perspective. In the midst of a hostage crisis, they would opt to celebrate the diamond jubilee of a midewed academic rather than give the freedom of the city to a brilliant scholar of the calibre of Jehan Perera for his splendid contribution.

What the Tamils want is security, justice and equal opportunities in education and employment. If this is granted, the ethnic problem may be expected to disappear from the negotiating table at the BMICH and the cover page of India Today.

The present moment is a moment of no return; "no return", that is, to the political aberrations of the past. The real problem is to contain the legitimate tyranny of the majority within the limits of reasonableness. What a blessed relief. Let us keep our fingers crossed, Mr. Editor.

Mrs. Abhirami
Thiagarajah

Amman Road,
Jaffna

GOOD WISHES

Editor.

Saturday Review.

Dear Mr. Gamini Navratne,
As a Dutch Journalist, I visited your place hoping I could be able to meet the Editor of a censored newspaper (the only one in your country), but unfortunately you were out.

One of your colleagues was so kind enough to give several copies of your paper, which I shall study over the next few days.

When I return to my country, I hope to report on the facts the way I perceived them during my visit.

I wish you good hope for the future and good luck.

Duco van Weerke
NRC Mandelsblad
(Z-Bijvoegsel)

Westblaak 180,
3012 Kn Rotterdam.

(Another letter
on page 7)

Let Switzerland

Mr. Jehan Perera has made an impartial, objective and scientific exploration to find a viable solution to the communal problem in Sri Lanka. It is realistic and based on a deep understanding of similar ethnic problems in other parts of the world. It is of great importance and relevance during present crisis and it would promote the right understanding of the problem. I hope it would be translated into Sinhalese and Tamil soon and publicised among a wider public.

The solution suggested by Mr. Perera is similar to that suggested by Mr. Paul Verges, the Chairman of the nine-member European Parliament delegation, who visited Sri Lanka recently, that it should be political, as opposed to military, peaceful as opposed to violent and democratic by the recognition of minority rights. According to Mr. Perera also there is only a political solution that takes the fact of strong communal identities into account, and the 'front' is not the military battlefield but the mass rally and the negotiating table.

I would like to add that in addition the media play a vital role in promoting democratic dialogue and discussions to enable truth and justice to prevail for the benefit of all. The political or religious leaders cannot arrive at an amicable, viable and beneficial solution to all at the negotiating table, if the public is misinformed or misguided by chauvinist prejudiced opportunistic leaders, or kept in the dark about the success, failures and experiences of other countries with similar ethnic problems.

FEDERATION

As a Sinhalese, Mr. Jehan Perera appears to be careful in not being too critical about the misunderstanding and mistakes of the Tamil leadership, which is the mark of a wise scholar. If one's child has a quarrel with the neighbour's child, though one's own child's fault may be minor compared to the fault of the neighbour's child, the wise parent would always correct the fault of only his own child, leaving the neighbour to correct his child. It is with such a spirit, as a Tamil I would like to be more openly critical about Tamil leadership on points which Mr. Perera has hinted.

It is not at all with the aim of apportioning blame or finding who was wrong

but what was wrong, to learn from past experience. No political leader, even the great ones have been perfect, but the wise leader learns from his own and other's mistakes and successes.

The Federal Party did not explain precisely to the Sinhalese and Tamil masses through Parliament, media or through meetings, that federation would not divide the country and that it would satisfy genuine aspirations of the Tamil people without in any way endangering the Sinhalese desire for national unity and integration. Federation was explained in a partly chauvinistic manner to the Tamils for the purpose of electoral success, which caused anxiety and prejudices among the Sinhalese masses, who were also similarly misled by their leaders for similar electoral success. As mentioned by Mr. Perera because the demand for Federalism lacked precision opponents of Federalism were left a free hand to play upon the fears of the Sinhalese and claim it would be the first step towards secession.

After 28 years of negotiations, satyagraha and pacts or agreements which were not implemented, the Tamil leaders were compelled to demand for Separation. But very few even among the political leaders really believed that real separation was practicable or beneficial in a small island. It was mainly a bargaining strategy to obtain federation or autonomy though some of the youth who listened to election propaganda seriously believed it.

Similar propaganda is common among the Sinhalese leaders also, such as the "Sinhalese Only in Twenty-Four Hours" slogan, though even after twenty-four years we are not having Sinhalese. Only but English and Tamil also in practice. But meanwhile this slogan has done much damage.

Similarly, the demand for separation, though adopted as a bargaining strategy by the well informed leaders is causing much damage today. It caused fear among the Sinhalese that the country would be divided causing further infiltration by Tamils from South India who may overwhelm them. The Tamil youth who seriously believed in separation and who erroneously thought that India would fully support separation like Bangladesh, took to violence even aga-

inst the elected leaders of the Tamils.

But those who were better informed about the present international situation and that India would never intervene militarily unless there is mass genocide in which case a mercy mission is internationally acceptable realised even when the TULF was formed that the demand for separation was not a wise strategy.

COMPROMISE

Even then those who were familiar with Sinhalese attitudes realised that to demand for separation would make the realisation of autonomy more difficult. As mentioned by Mr. Perera, the hostility and suspicion which existed 20 years ago between the Christians and Buddhists after the schools take-over, was overcome because of the willingness of the Christians to compromise which evoked a generous response from the Buddhists. A similar compromising attitude without sacrificing the fundamental demand for freedom, justice, security and equality, would have created a better response from the Sinhalese masses and leaders.

The mass of the people, whether Sinhalese, Tamils or any other ethnic group are not seriously concerned about politics or national problems. They are mainly concerned with making their living and realising their individual desires and aspirations and the welfare of their family, relations and friends. On national issues their opinion is influenced by the political, religious, intellectual and social leaders in their society. Such leaders are broadly of two types.

The first category of genuine leaders who are mainly concerned with the welfare of all human beings or if confined to the welfare of their own limited group, have a wider compassion in not harming others in any way, are the enlightened leaders who only create good for their people. The second category are those who are mainly concerned with their personal success, fame and glory and they are prepared to adopt even debious methods achieve their egoistic aim.

In a climate of peace, harmony and amity, the enlightened leaders have a greater influence on the people and can promote development for the welfare of all, but in a climate of fear, anxiety and prejudices the second category of sel-

fish extremist leaders can sway public opinion and mislead the people to indulge in destructive action. Therefore any action which increases fear and anxiety among any people is liable to lead to violence and destruction. Specially minority leaders should attempt to influence the opinion of all to decrease fear, prejudices and anxieties and convince the justice and reasonableness of their cause not only to their community but the majority and to the outside impartial observers. Then the moral strength their cause would gain widespread support and it would be easy to realise their aims non-violently without much cost.

Some say that it is because of the demand for separation, the violent action by the terrorists and the destruction of the July disturbances, that there are serious consideration for a political solution. But much better results with much lesser cost could have been achieved through non-violent agitations. As Mr. Perera

A completely non-violent satyagraha would gain the sympathy of the Sinhalese people if violence is used to suppress it. But the demand should be reasonable and acceptable to all enlightened and informed opinion and not separation.

The main reason that the demand for separation has some support in the North is mainly because of the lack of elementary security which any state should provide to its innocent citizens as long as they do not participate in criminal activities. Any Tamil in any part of the country suddenly, faced unexpected risks if someone does any rash act somewhere. In 1956 and 1958 even without any terrorist among the Tamils, innocent Tamils faced destruction. Increase of violence against the innocent Tamils only increases the sympathy and support for the terrorists and the demand for separation.

ANTAGONISM

Fortunately during the recent spate of violence in the

by **C. Sivanesan**

mentions, mass rally and negotiations, are better than violence. I presume that under mass rally Mr. Perera would include non-violent Satyagraha, non-violent demonstrations, peaceful marches, sit-ins and any type of non-violent protests. It is said that the Tamil leaders tried non-violent satyagraha which was ineffective. The first peaceful Satyagraha on the Galle Face green in 1956 against the Sinhalese Language Act was violently suppressed followed by attacks on innocent Tamils who did not even participate in the Satyagraha. Again satyagraha was tried at the Jaffna Kachcheri which was also suppressed, but not so violently and the leaders arrested.

When Satyagraha was tried in India under Gandhi's leadership and later in the US under the leadership of Martin Luther King, initially they were violently attacked. But they did not give up. Satyagraha needs more courage than violent protests and the participants should be prepared to sacrifice their lives if necessary. Definitely it would cause much less destruction and would cost much less to the Tamils in terms of life and property than violent means.

North full precautions were taken to prevent the spread of violence to other parts of the country and the Tamils. In other areas were fully protected. Mr. Perera's emphasis that terrorism can never be controlled without the support of the people of the area. Attacking innocent people in the process of fighting with the terrorists, such as shooting curfew breakers, which may be legally justified, would only antagonise the people of the area against the armed forces and secure the support and sympathy for the terrorists, though the public may be badly affected by terrorist action. The will of the armed forces to fight the real terrorists is also dissipated in the process. As Mr. Perera mentions the support of the people can be gained by a political solution, which should include genuine autonomy and secondly by the armed forces being extra careful not to hurt innocent people in any way while combating terrorism. Indiscriminate violence would harden feelings and the increase of fear and anxiety which may lead to further drastic and destructive action leading to disintegration.

I cannot fully agree with Mr. Perera's repetition of

be the model

the traditional prejudiced view which is propagated by several scholars and repeated or exaggerated by politicians, that there had been a traditional antagonism between the Sinhalese and Tamils. If that was true how can the Sinhalese aristocrats of Kandy invite the last four Tamil speaking kings of Kandy to rule them. Then why did so many ousted kings or usurpers go to South India to bring Tamil soldiers to regain or capture the kingdom here? How can the Buddhist and Hindu temples exist peacefully side by side, with the devotees mostly going to both temples in Kataragama, Kandy, Nagadipa and even in the ruins of Polonnaruwa. There might have been fraternal quarrels, which happened even within the same royal families, but on the whole the Sinhalese and Tamils lived peacefully with intermarriage, intermixture and mutually beneficial interactions which enhanced the culture of both communities. Even today, if the inevitable conflicts in any human society or family can be made completely non-violent and civilised, it would not be merely management of the conflicts, but there can be a mutually beneficial cooperation with friendly competition which promote the development of the country economically, politically, socially and culturally with every-

one contributing his best according to his talents in an environment of equal opportunity freedom and justice.

CONCENSUS

Sudan or any Third World country which has solved ethnic conflicts is not the best example for Sri Lanka. With a longer period of experience in universal franchise and democracy, with better education and health services, and generally a higher quality of life comparable to the highly developed democracies of the West, we should learn from the highly successful solution in Switzerland, Belgium, Canada, Finland and other developed democracies. Some of these democracies have a consensus or consociational democracy where the aspirations of the minorities are fully accommodated in the centre and with devolution or autonomy or even federation. Some of the countries have sometimes conflicts, even ethnic conflicts as in Belgium or Canada, but it is mostly expressed non-violent and very rarely violently.

Among the developed democratic countries; North Ireland or Ulster is an exception, but even there it is only the illegal terrorist who take part in indiscriminate violence and the police and armed forces and the general public

are extremely careful in not hurting the non-involved innocent citizens in any manner. With such a policy violence is contained, limited and managed. With such a long history of Buddhist civilization and a comparatively long experience in modern democracy we should emulate the example of the highly developed democratic countries. Then our image would rise in the eyes of the world.

SWITZERLAND

Switzerland is a very good example of a highly developed democratic country, with a very high quality of life for its people, which has solved its ethnic problems admirable for the enhancement and enrichment of cultural life of all with unity in diversity. Switzerland has approximately 70% German, 20% French and 10% Italians. There is also a very small minority comprising about 10% of the population speaking Roman. All four languages including Romans, have been recognised as official languages.

Switzerland with only 6 million population is divided into 23 cantons with much power for cantons. Switzerland is actually a confederation which is more decentralised than a federation.

Still the Germans, French or Italians never think of

joining Germany, France or Italy which surround Switzerland. Full autonomy or federation, has actually strengthened unity and integration. Even Hitler who was trying to assimilate all the German areas in Austria, Czechoslovakia and Poland never thought of invading Switzerland. As rightly emphasised by Mr. Jehan Perera, it is the denial of the aspiration for autonomy which led to the separation of Eire, Bangladesh and Turkish Cyprus. The Sinhalese politicians and the Buddhist Sangha should learn the correct lessons from these examples.

CONFEDERATION

The Tamil leaders can also learn a valuable lesson from Switzerland. With only 6 million population, Switzerland has about 23 cantons. They are integrated separately as German, French, and Italian regions. What is important is the powers and responsibilities of the regions to determine their own local problems for which it is not essential that the whole Tamil area including North and East should be in one regional council. If any regional

or provincial council is allowed to cooperate on common problems with a neighbouring council, it would be sufficient.

Knowledge of local politics or our universal religions alone is inadequate to arrive at a correct solution to our ethnic conflicts. One must be aware of the predominant trends in the world and learn from the experience of the successes and failures of the advanced and backward countries. Today assimilation, subordination or suppression of any group on the basis of language, religion, colour, race, caste, class, sex or even age is impossible.

Everyone wants to be treated as equals with freedom, justice and fairplay. Researchers, social scientists, academicians, theoreticians and scholars have a vital role to play in analysing the problems intelligently and impartially, so that enlightenment would prevail over the dark and dangerous forces of egoistic or opportunistic extremists from any side.

Mr. Jehan Perera is one of the few who has done his part admirably and may others who are competent do their duty in saving the country from destructive elements from any side and helping us to enhance the quality of life of all with freedom, justice and unity in diversity.

(Reproduced from *The Island* of 12th May).

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE COIN

The Editor,
Saturday Review.

The problem, as I see it, needs sympathy on the part of the majority community in arriving at a long lasting solution. It is extremely difficult for a person enjoying the advantages of being in the majority community to understand the fears and frustrations of a member of the minority community. After all the basic issue that stems from all this is a question of identity. As long as there are Sri Lankans with privileges and others without, this problem will remain. For the Sri Lankan Tamil to identify himself as one who belongs to this nation and its rich culture and heritage, he must first be given a rightful place as regards language, education, employment and development. This is what we should all realise and learn to accept, for if there is no equality then there will be no loyalty.

If one follows the sequence of events from the

first communal riot of 1956 to the pogrom of 1983, it is clear that the once docile Tamil who was repeatedly humiliated, insulted and attacked has now turned to revanchism, in desperation.

We must realise that it is our society that has made the Tamil youth turn to terrorism. If as the Sinhala chauvinists in our midst argue that "the Tamils have had it too good for too long"—why then should these very same people resort to a very dangerous means of almost annihilation to achieve their rights. I believe that due to repeated frustration by the inability of successive governments to solve their problems, the Tamil youth took it upon themselves to sort out their grievances and this they are now doing in the language which all including the deaf can understand—terrorism.

We must accept that it was the unabated terrorism in the North that sparked off the July problem and this in turn to the round

table conference. It is obvious that although successive Governments were aware of the problems of the minority Tamils, all attempts at solving the problem by way of the Bandaranaike-Chelvanayakam and the Dudley-Chelvanayakam Pact were never allowed to materialise. Some of those who placed spokes in the wheel are now looking out for solutions at this late hour.

Even at this stage, when the all-party talks were summoned the Tamil leadership attended reluctantly. Knowing very well the past performances of the policy makers, the SLFP and MEP true to form sabotaged the talks. This manoeuvre conveniently introduced the Buddhist hierarchy recently and hence of necessity religious leaders of other denominations. The all-party talks then became a round table conference.

As I see it, the Maha Sangha has never been anxious to solve the problem of the minorities. This fact is highlighted by several

points which are obvious even to the uninitiated.

Never did the Maha Sangha or any other group of responsible Buddhists publicly denounce the carnage that took place in July, 1983. The influence that the clergy have over the politicians and the masses is tremendous and therefore a word of advice either during or after the July troubles would have been a shining example to all the Buddhists in this country. This is aptly described by Rajmohan Gandhi in the "Statesman" as follows—If some Buddhist monks condemned the killing in July, 1983, their voice did not travel across the Palk Straits."

The worst offenders have been the educated politicians, who have at various times incited the ignorant masses. This, I believe is due to either poverty of thought or instability of position.

If we hope for a permanent solution and peace, clear-thinking and far-sightedness

are imperative, believe that the terrorists will lay down their arms is the minority community is given its due place in Sri Lankan society. By this I mean that the Sri Lankan Tamil must be made to feel that he, too, is a Sri Lankan in the truest sense, i. e.

(a) by giving Tamil language the same status as the Sinhala language.

(b) By removing all discriminations in the form of ethnic quotas for education, and employment.

With these removed, the Sri Lankan Tamils will emerge devoid of revanchism walking side by side with his Sinhala counterparts as members of humanity and look forward to a share in the total heritage of mankind.

Frank
Colombo.

TRINCO OIL FARM DEAL

How safe are the safeguards

The Minister of Industries and Scientific Affairs placed before Parliament on 5th April the draft agreement on the Trincomalee Tank Farm Development Project. It is necessary to critically study and analyse this agreement with all the implications that flow from it to see whether it in any way affects our sovereignty and whether it will have any foreign policy implications.

The Minister himself made no secret about the fear regarding this project. He said, "No one need have any fear that operation of a Tank Farm with the safeguards mentioned would affect any security interests of either Sri Lanka or any other country."

They make it clear that the Minister is aware about the impact that this project will have on the security interests of Sri Lanka as well as any other country, no doubt meaning India.

According to the Minister's speech, the security interests of Sri Lanka (leaving aside any other country) is protected by the safeguards that he has mentioned:

1. The Government of Sri Lanka is empowered to issue binding directives to the foreign investor.

2. The foreign investor is obliged to take all reasonable steps to ensure that no oil is supplied for military purposes [clause 23 (a)]

3. The Ceylon Petroleum Corporation has been empowered to direct the foreign investor not to store or rent or supply oil for military purposes [clauses 23 (b)]

4. The Security service in the area of operation and in the tank farm are in the hands CPC - [clause 26 (a)]

5. The foreign investor cannot sublet, lease or assign the premises - (clause 15)

6. CPC as a 16% joint venture shareholder, will have a director on the board of directors - (clause 67)

7. The project will be handled by a Sri Lanka company incorporated in Sri Lanka (clause 26 (a) and 83 and clause 76)

8. CPC has an exclusive option to increase its share holding in the Sri Lanka company from 16 percent to 51 percent and be a majority shareholder - [clauses 26 (a) and 66 (a)]

9. The foreign investor has been obliged to keep records, names and movements of products, vessels customers - (clauses 35 and 37)

10. CPC has a right, independent of the Sri Lanka company and the foreign investor, to handle bunker

sales in all parts of Sri Lanka - [clause 54 (b)]

Our security interests will be safeguarded only if we have a control on the working and management of this project. As one of the safeguards and, as the writer sees it, the most important of the safeguards mentioned, is that the project will be handled by a Sri Lankan company incorporated in Sri Lanka, which will be governed by the law of Sri Lanka.

Further, as another important safeguard, the Minister states that CPC as a 16 percent joint venture shareholder will have a director on the board of directors.

The writer's view is that even if these two safeguards are real it is inadequate to have any control of the working and management of the project, but a careful study of the draft agreement shows that this is an eye-wash in the context of this agreement.

Though clause 2 (a) speaks about a company that is to be formed where the foreign investor shall take 84 percent equity shares and CPC shall take 16 percent equity shares, the company is not in existence at the moment and the agreement that is binding on us is between the CPC as one party and the group consisting of three companies, namely, Oroleum (Pvt) Ltd, Singapore, Oil Tanking of West Germany and Tradingft of Switzerland as foreign investors as the other party.

As far as this agreement is concerned all rights and obligations are cast on the group of companies as foreign investors and it is important to note that these obligations are owed to the CPC as the other party to the agreement. Therefore, the Government has to enforce its rights, if any, through the CPC as the Government is directly not a party to this agreement.

The situation would have been different if a company, as mentioned by the Minister was formed in Sri Lanka and registered in Sri Lanka with the CPC and the foreign investors as shareholders and there was an agreement between the company and the Government of Sri Lanka.

In such a situation, the Government would have had two fold hold in the working management of the company. On the one hand, the company would have been controlled by the terms of the agreement with the Government and on the other, and more important, the Government through the CPC which

would have been a shareholder would have had a say in the management and decision-making of the company and above all would have had access to all the information regarding the working, management and financial control, etc., of the company.

Clause 4 of the Agreement states, "On a consideration of the monies payable to CPC as hereinafter set out and subject to the terms and conditions herein contained, CPC does hereby allow and permit foreign investor, subject to paragraph (b) of Clause 50, to carry on the business herein described in paragraph (a) and paragraph (b) of this paragraph hereinafter called and referred to as Trincomalee Intre-pot Project in the area of operation. Paragraph (a) and paragraph (b) lays down a wider range of business that can be carried on. It is important to note that under clause 4 it is the foreign investor who is entitled to carry on the business.

in this agreement shall and hold, occupy and enjoy the demised premises and carry on business the rein during the said term without any interruption or disturbance from or by the CPC or its agents and servants or any person or authority deriving title or interest from the CPC and to the best of the CPC's ability from any other person".

The very limited rights retained by the CPC is further shown on a reading of clause 12 of the agreement. Clause 12 deals with the right to the CPC to enter the premises. Here premises mean an area of 676 acres in extent described in the schedule to the agreement. Under Clause 12 "the CPC and/or its servants and/or its agents or any such authority with the sanction of the CPC shall have the right to enter upon the said premises or part thereof for the purpose of performing its functions under the agreement including the pro-

of the area for the purpose mentioned in the agreement. Under Clause 22, the CPC has retained a limited right of access to a limited area to examine, test and inspect the condition of the tanks, pipe lines, jetties, piers and to confer with the foreign investor regarding any necessary maintenance and/or repair. This shows that the right of access granted to the CPC is will defined and very limited.

The provision in the agreement to provide for the security services in the area of operation and in the tank farm by the CPC has been cited as one of the ten safeguards. The relevant provision that is Clause 26(a), is interesting it states, "The CPC, consideration of the monies payable under Clause 7 and 42, shall provide security services mutually acceptable to the foreign investor and the CPC in the area of operation and in particular in the tank farm area. The CPC shall keep the project and surrounding area in peaceful condition. The CPC shall be liable for all direct losses or damages incurred by the foreign investor and indemnify the foreign investor against losses or damages claimed and sustained against the foreign investor by third parties, provided that such losses or damages arise from the negligence of the CPC or its employees in the functioning of their business".

This is clearly another of the numerous services that the CPC had undertaken to provide and will be paid for. This is really an indemnity clause where the CPC has undertaken to indemnify from losses caused through its negligence in performing their service.

It is significant that the providing of security services under this clause is not exclusively vested with the CPC. The foreign investor can have its own security service, in addition to that which will be provided by the CPC. The working and mode of the security services that would be provided will have to be mutually agreed between the CPC and the foreign investor. Therefore, it is obvious that providing of the security services under clause 26 (a) will not be a substitute for the rights of supervision of the project and the area itself.

(Continued on page 9)

by Lal Wijenayake

Clause 5(a) which deals with the lease of the property clearly states that the lease of the onshore areas and premises described in the first schedule of the agreement for a period of 20 years is given to the foreign investor for carrying out of all or any of the business mentioned in clause 4 of the agreement.

Therefore it is clear that the lease is not granted to the company but to the foreign investor. Clause 5(a) states that the CPC shall further make available to the foreign investor during the continuation of this agreement, but subject to Clause 31(d) adequate water front and offshore area at the North side of Sober Island for alongside jetty facilities and/or at Round Island for SPM facilities; the exact location of such facility shall be determined by mutual agreement between the CPC and the foreign investor with the concurrence of the appropriate authorities".

Clause 6 enables the foreign investor to ask for additional onshore and offshore areas and/or facilities other than those mentioned in Clause 5.

Clause 8 is very revealing, it states "The foreign investor duly observing and performing the several covenants and conditions contained

vision of amenities, utilities, power supply and telecommunications in the said premises, provided however, that the said entry shall not interfere with the business of the foreign investor and shall be exercised in a reasonable manner".

First, this shows that even the right of even a state authority to enter is restricted in two ways: (1) it has to be with the sanction of the CPC and (2) it has to be for the purpose of performing its functions under the agreement.

Secondly it is seen that the right of entry is really for the purpose of providing the facilities undertaken by the CPC under the agreement as mentioned in the clause.

Thirdly the entry of the state authority as well as the CPC has to be such that it will not interfere with the business of the foreign investor.

LIMITED RIGHTS

This is a wide clause which in reality completely shuts out the CPC and the state from any supervision of the area leased out. It is needless to say that without any adequate supervision of the area, its equipments, buildings, etc., it is not possible to guarantee the use

How safe are the safeguards?

(Continued from Page 8)

Clause 19 of the Agreement further goes to show the hold that the foreign investor has against the CPC in this project. It states, "The foreign investor shall, if it so decides, have the right, with notice to the CPC, to build and construct the infrastructure, implants, equipment, additional tanks and facilities and to maintain and operate the same". This shows that even the consent of the CPC is not required but only notice of it should be given to the CPC.

The exclusive right to use and/or hire the Tanks is vested in the foreign investor under clause 23 (a) of the agreement.

It is clearly seen that under this clause the CPC has no say whatsoever in the choice of customers and cannot in any way control the business that will be carried on in the tank farm.

It is specifically stated that the foreign investor shall have the exclusive right to use/rent out or hire the tanks and this provision is made clear beyond doubt by stating that "The foreign investor should have the power and authority to select its own customers".

Though the clause states that in the selection of customers the foreign investor should ensure that it is made strictly on commercial competitive and non-discriminatory basis, the CPC has not reserved the right to check the implementation of this agreed policy. The proviso to this clause is as vague and unenforceable on the first part of the clause.

The phrase "military purposes" is not defined. Who is going to decide as to what is "military purposes" and what is not. "Military purpose" for one may be a "peace mission" for another. It is no secret that all military purposes are carried on in the name of peace missions. It is clearly seen that this proviso is just an eye-wash and has no validity in its practical implication. The proviso is almost shadowed by the very language in the main clause granting the foreign investor in the most clearest terms the absolute right to carry on its business and select its customers.

It is surprising that under Clause 29 of the agreement the full responsibility of a technical survey and evaluation of the project is vested on the foreign investor

without any participation by the state or the CPC.

The sole right to maintain books and records is with the foreign investor under Clause 35 of the agreement. The limited right to information required by the CPC is retained but what is important is that it is the exclusive right of the foreign investor to keep books and records. This right, of course, flows from the exclusive right that is given to the foreign investor to manage and run the project.

Similarly, under Clause 39, the exclusive right to selection of personnel to be employed in the project is retained by the foreign investor. The foreign investor has the discretion regarding training of personnel and it specifically states that it is the exclusive right of the foreign investor to employ expatriate or other employees and/or consultants and to engage the services of foreign contractors for the project.

UNFORSEEN HANDS

Therefore, again it is seen that the state or the CPC has no control over the selection of employees or contractors. The whole project can go into unforeseen hands by manipulation of expatriate employees and contractors for working the project.

To cap it all Clause 41 deals with the maintenance of secrecy clause 41 (a), which states; "The parties hereto (CPC and the foreign investors) their agents and servants shall maintain utmost secrecy in respect of all such information and data furnished from time to time by any one of them to the other". And Clause 41 (b) states: "The CPC undertakes that the provisions of Clause 40 and 41 (a) shall mutatis mutandis apply to the Central Bank and Exchange Control Department

How the CPC could bind the Central Bank and the Exchange Control Department in an agreement to which these two institutions are not parties is unthinkable. Further, how the CPC can bind the Central Bank and the Exchange Control Department outside the laws of the country regarding such matters of maintaining secrecy is unthinkable.

The most important question would be as to why there should be such a stringent clause on maintenance of secrecy, specially if it is only a commercial venture, as proclaimed by the Government.

The right of the CPC to increase its equity shares to 51% from 16% in the intended company was seriously mentioned as a safeguard. Clause 66 (a) and the appendix which are relevant to this matter is interesting. Clause 66 (a) states: "The CPC, in addition to the 16% equity shareholding, shall have the sole and exclusive right to opt to take a further 35% (not more not less of the equity shareholdings) in the said Company subject to the terms and conditions indicated in Appendix A in this agreement except to the extent varied".

Appendix A lays down the terms and conditions that apply if the CPC opts to buy a further 35% of equity shares.

Para 3 of Appendix A speaks of a "A separate exclusive management contract with a management company to be formed by Oroleum, Trandiraft and Oil Tanking for the management, financial control and marketing of the Trincomalee Tank Farm".

That would mean not only the management but also financial control and marketing would continue to be in the hands of the foreign investor even if the CPC opts to be the major shareholder with 51% of the charge.

It is obvious that the dominating position of the foreign investor has been guaranteed under this agreement even if the CPC opts to be the major shareholder. It is unthinkable why a major shareholder should surrender its rights completely regarding the management, financial control and marketing to a minor shareholder. The reasons cannot be commercial in any way.

ALL EYE - WASH

The foregoing shows that the foreign investor is vested with all the rights and privileges to run the project, and that the CPC or the State will have no control whatsoever. If it is, therefore clearly seen that the talk about the Sri Lankan company with the CPC having 16% equity shares running the project is an eye-wash.

The Minister gave his reasons for the Government entering into this agreement when he said: "The CPC by itself is not equipped to handle a project of this nature and foreign expertise is absolutely necessary. The CPC does not have the international Marketing contacts to make the tank farm

a successful project nor does it have the engineering or marketing experience".

We cannot agree that the CPC is by itself not equipped to handle a project of this nature. Even if the CPC by itself is not equipped to handle this project we have no doubt that Sri Lanka can handle this project. A project of this nature does not involve any advanced technology.

Even if any advanced technology that is beyond our engineers and scientists is required, we could have easily hired the necessary expertise.

Even if what the Minister said was true, that the

CPC by itself is not in a position to handle this project, then the CPC should have handled it in collaboration with the necessary partners.

But what we see under this agreement is a complete sell-out of the project to the foreign investor.

It was always open to the Government to have set up a statutory body, such as the Mahaveli Development Authority, to handle this project.

As in the case of Mahaveli project, the necessary foreign expertise would have been obtained from foreign governments or foreign companies on a commercial basis.

All past History!

Editor,

SATURDAY REVIEW.

I refer to Mr. T. Subramaniam's letter in the SATURDAY REVIEW of 5th May through which he exhorts me to face facts instead of narrating history. Isn't history a record of past facts? It is because it is so that persons experience discomfiture when events gone by are recounted.

Whatever may be the present political situation in the country, a sweeping statement such as the one made by Mr. Subramaniam against the LSSP cannot be allowed to go unchallenged, particularly by those who have been closely following the zig-zags of the Tamil political leadership vis-a-vis the Left in the country.

What I sought to do in my letter to you was to set the record straight in respect of this matter and place facts, yes facts in their proper context.

In his reply, Mr. Subramaniam does not refute what I state but attempts to substantiate the misleading statement he made about the LSSP by turning to history and cite Dr. Colvin R. de Silva's role in the making of the Republican Constitution of 1972 and the "arrogance of power by Mrs. Bandaranaike" in failing to respond to the "moderate demands" put forward by the late Mr. S. J. V. Chelvanayakam. I speak for neither. But it would be interesting to know what these "moderate demands" are.

Will Mr. Subramaniam make known to lesser mortals like me and to your readers

the contents of the letter the late Mr. Chelvanayakam is said to have written to Mrs. Bandaranaike embodying the "moderate demands"

MANSOOR RASSEEDIN

Colombo 2

EXECUTIONS IN USA

Seven prisoners have been executed in the USA between January and mid-April this year - more than in any full year since the death penalty was reinstated in 1976 - and many more executions are expected this year.

Twelve of the 18 executions carried out since 1976 have taken place within the past 13 months, including the first executions since the early 1960s in the states of Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi and North Carolina.

These statistics follow predictions made last year by US lawyers that the number of executions in the USA would increase significantly once the appeals of prisoners sentenced in the 1970s were exhausted.

In 1972 the US Supreme Court vacated (nullified) all existing death penalty laws violated the US Constitution because of the arbitrary and capricious manner in which they were applied.

However, a 1976 Supreme Court decision; permitted individual states to reinstate the death penalty according to Supreme Court guidelines.

Since then 38 states have introduced revised death penalty laws and the number of prisoners of death row has steadily risen - at the time of going to press 1,311 prisoners were under sentence of death in 33 states.

(Amnesty International, May 1984).

Sirima Condemns Move to Bring in Israel

The Sri Lanka President Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike has described the move to open an "Israeli Interests" section in Colombo at the US Embassy as "a slap in the face of the Arab and Islamic community."

Mrs. Bandaranaike states, "When Mr. Lakshman Jayakody, SLFP Member of Parliament for Attanagalla, asked a question about Israel recently, the Minister of National Security gave an answer that was vague and evasive. Now an official of the US Embassy has confirmed that an "Israeli Interests"

section will be established soon in Colombo under what he described as "the protecting power" of the US.

"Whatever the explanations and whichever the quarter they come from, it is clear that the UNP Government has given a slap in the face of the Arab and Islamic community, and the Non-Aligned world.

Open Violation

"Only a very small number of non-aligned member states have diplomatic relations with Israel—a country which has

time and time again violated decisions of the Security Council of the United Nations and has shown scant respect for world opinion or humanitarian considerations. In any event, what the people of Sri Lanka must fully understand is that this step is an open repudiation of a policy adopted by the United Front Government in 1970 and followed for more than 13 years.

The correctness of the decision taken by my Government is manifestly evident in the large benefits that have accrued to the people of this country, especially in recent years. Now this opportunistic and desperate Government is wantonly risking the loss of those benefits and choosing to insult the countries whose friendship and gratitude, earned by our principled support

for the Palestinian and Arab cause against Zionism, brought Sri Lanka those benefits.

Jobs in M. E.

Ministers of this Government, particularly those who claim to be champions of the Sinhala Buddhists, often complain that the Sinhala Buddhist youth have few opportunities for working abroad. It is precisely because of our pro-Arab, anti-Zionist policy that well over a lakh of Sri Lankans, the vast majority of them Sinhala Buddhists, have found employment in these Arab-Islamic countries.

The Arab world is our main oil supplier and this fact is all the more important at a time when there is a war in the Gulf. Our

Arab oil suppliers have often given us concessions. The Arab world is the biggest buyer of our tea. It has been a source of aid.

As leader of the SLFP and head of the Government which ordered the closure of the Israeli Mission, I denounce this decision which may only lead to bringing the Arab-Israeli conflict and all its violence to our homeland at a time when this Island itself is threatened with so much violence.

I call on all patriotic forces, regardless of race, creed and political affiliations, to oppose this step which is a blatant attack on the national interests of Sri Lanka and its people.

Dastardly Episode of vandalism

To mark the opening of the third stage of the reconstruction of the Jaffna Public Library, on 4th June, we are reproducing a letter written by Mr. H. A. I. Goonetilleke, distinguished biographer and librarian to the President of the Movement for Inter-Racial Justice and harmony after the burning of the Jaffna Public Library.

17, Wijerama Lane,
Nawinna,
Maharagama.
4th July 1981.

Fr. Paul Caspersz
President, Movement for Inter-Racial Justice and Equality, (Mirje),

6, Aloe Avenue,
Colombo 3.

Dear Paul,

Knowing you as I do, I can well imagine how totally grieved and depressed you must be over the loathsome tragedy of a month ago, and I can see, from your reports of May and June 1981, the concerned and resolute determination with which you have pursued your unhappy investigations, and written of them with a clinical and clinical and cleansing passion and perception.

In the entire catalogue of carnage, arson, pillage and murder which you have so courageously documented, the complete destruction by an act of calculated and cold-blooded incendiarism of the splendid Jaffna Public Library is the

most wounding to the sensibility of our brethren in the North, and must outrage the humane feelings of every person in the land, whatever his political, racial or religious persuasion.

Containing over 90,000 volumes, this notable library was the second largest public library in the island, and possessed a rich and diverse collection of valuable literary material, some of them irreplaceable. It was a distinct cultural landmark in the Peninsula, and served the purposes of an intellectual resource centre.

The wanton and senseless despoliation of a major repository of knowledge and learning is a national calamity and, perhaps, the most dastardly episode of vandalism in the modern history of Sri Lanka.

The gutted building is a grim testimonial to savage and bestial tendencies of communal hate, and even more saddening and shocking is the knowledge that the blindly chauvinist exponents of this cultural incineration were apparently operating under the sinister patronage of public sector terrorism. No level of official explanation (and, curiously enough, none has been forthcoming so far), or far-fetched apologies conjured up to suit each face-saving speculation can excuse this irrational atrocity.

State-sponsored fanaticism was let loose in the city of

Jaffna between May 31st and June 4th 1981, and mayhem and terror stalked the streets, but with an implacable resolution and unmatched courage the Jaffna voter, brushing the ashes off his stricken face, administered a fitting coup-de-grace to his faceless enemy. In the indomitable spirit of this unquenched ardour, the library will surely rise again to light the way and shine like a brighter beacon. May the restitution of this gap in the national heritage become a symbolic cornerstone of amity, concord and unity between

the people of the South and the North.

MIRJE has a vital and valuable role to play as a catalyst and healing agent in the long-drawn-out process of recovery of faith, hope and trust, remembering all the while that the most significant ingredient in any prescription for communal harmony is understanding, enlivened by love and steeled by fortitude in the face of continuing adversity.

Yours sincerely,

H. A. I. Goonetilleke.

DOUBTS ABOUT LIBRARY FUNDS

The Editor,
Saturday Review.

With reference to your lead news in the last issue, about the Jaffna Public Library, there is a certain amount of doubt on the funds received.

We all know that there is a President's Fund, out of which monies are voted for charitable causes as well. If I remember right, Rs. One million was transferred from the President's Fund to what is called the Jaffna Public Library Trust (or Reconstruction Fund).

From this, Rs. 9 Lakhs were given as relief to the Jaffna Public Library. A balance of Rs. One lakh was left in the President's Library Trust or Reconstruction Fund.

Even members of the public were requested to contribute to this Fund,

According to you, Rs. two million was donated from the President's Fund. If that be so, was it from the President's Jaffna Public Library Trust (Reconstruction Fund) or the President's Fund? If it is the former, then it should have been contributions made by the public, because the public contributed to this fund.

The Lionel Fernando Committee appointed by the Government recommended Rs. 10.2 Million as compensation to the Jaffna Public Library. What has happened to this recommendation? Has it been shelved?

Will any of your readers or the authorities please clarify these doubts?

T. Arumugam
Puloly East.

CTU Condemns 'Israeli Invasion'

The Ceylon Teachers Union, a meeting held on 22nd May, vehemently condemned the decision taken by the UNP Government to allow the Israelis to open a co-ordinating office in the American Embassy.

A resolution adopted by it stated: "Day by day, under the guise of crushing terrorism, the UNP Government is openly working towards a military alliance with the Western powers led by America."

"The UNP and the news-media which carried a vicious campaign against the Indian Government and its people, has openly joined hands with the well-known international terrorists like Ronald Reagan and Shamir. The decision to open the doors to the Israeli proves this beyond any doubt."

The CTU also appealed to the Government to find a permanent political solution to the National Question, "which threatens the independence of this small island".

It urged the Government to remove the military rule in Jaffna and to establish civil administration there. "Military tactics can never solve the National Question. The recent killings of unarmed innocent men, women and children has only helped to aggravate the situation."

The CTU also appealed to the Minister of education to reinstate forthwith those teachers who participated in the 1980 July public servants' strike.

RELIGION & NATIONALISM IN INDIA

I must say at the very outset that the subject "Religion, secularism and nationalism" is too complex for me to be able to do justice to it. The problem is not just want of time and space. It is much more basic. I do not know of anyone who has *thought* through the subject and I cannot and do not claim to have done so either. So all I can possibly attempt is to indicate as dispassionately as possible my broad approach, hoping that the reader will bear it in his mind that my "conclusions", if any, are tentative and subject to revision.

My first difficulty is that I cannot define a Hindu in "positive" terms. I can only describe him, as the Upanishads define God, in terms of *neti, neti, neti* (He is not this, not this, not this and so on). All I can say is that a Hindu is an Indian or a person of Indian descent who is not a Muslim, Christian, Jew or Zoroastrian.

This raises two more difficulties at once. First, having defined the Hindu in this 'negative' way, I cannot proceed further in relation to the subject. I get stuck. Secondly, very few people accept my definition. So it is pointless for me to go on pressing it. More often than not, I have to argue as if I do not accept my own description of the Hindu.

INFERENCES

Two propositions hold the field. That the Hindus are a community despite the linguistic, caste and other divisions among them. And that the Hindus are a nation potentially, if not actually. Two inferences follow from these two propositions.

First, since the Hindus are the majority community, they must be generous towards the others if the country is to achieve peace and stability (Nehru and other self-proclaimed secularists).

Secondly, since the Hindus are a nation, the others must adjust to their ethos and culture if India is not to face the threat of another upheaval and even partition (the RSS and other advocates of the concept of Hindu Rashtra).

These two propositions are not as contradictory as their proponents would have us believe, though, of course the difference in emphasis is obvious enough. For if the Hindus are a community, that is a "people" capable of collective action on a sustained basis, they are bound

to become the Indian by virtue of their overwhelming majority, economic power and control of the state machinery. Whether the others like it or not, they will in effect have little choice but to conform to the culture of this vast majority and define their own religious identities accordingly.

The concept of a culturally neutral Indian nationalism and state has prevailed to the extent that it has precisely because the Hindus do not constitute a community. And the Rashtra Sevak Sangham and other proponents of Hindu Rashtra have not been able to challenge it effectively for the same reason.

NEW CONCEPT

It is generally not realised that the concept of nationalism is relatively new to India—one hundred or so years old. It is even less generally realised that the concept of pan-Indian community cannot be older for the simple reason that both were products of the same forces—the political and administrative unification of the peninsula for the first time in history by the British, the introduction of Western values and thought processes through Western education with English as the medium of instruction, and the establishment of an extensive rail-road and communication system.

The Muslims were doubtless "better off" than the Hindus even before the arrival of the British. They inevitably believed in the unity of God, in the Koran being the word of God and the prophecy of Mohammad; and they accepted the concept of *ummah*. But they too were not an all-India community. They could not be, because India as one country did not exist. As we know, Aurangzeb had failed to bring the whole peninsula under his control; after him the empire rapidly disintegrated. Surprising though it may appear, the Indian Muslim community is the result largely of the British Raj.

A great deal has been written on the British government's policy of "divide and rule", their decision to favour the Muslims after 1880 and the two culminating in partition in 1947. On factual ground there is much merit in all this criticism of the British government. It is also possible that without the British encouragement the Muslim community would have come

to terms with the Hindu reality, that is, made common cause with the Hindus and reconciled itself to their pre-eminent position in India.

But there is an aspect of the issue which deserves to be noted. Once the necessary conditions came in to existence the Muslims could and did become a community in the all-India context. A number of Hindu intellectuals have tried to evade this issue by referring to the fact that the Muslims too speak regional languages. But what is relevant is the Muslim self-awareness as a distinct religious cultural entity on an all-India basis; it cannot be denied that such an awareness arose towards the end of the 19th century and grew as the 20th century progressed, resulting in the country's partition in 1947.

The self-awareness among the Muslims and its consequent expression in greater Muslim self-assertion and aggressiveness inevitably produced a response among the Hindus. For a time between the partition of Bengal in 1905 and the

this article. The relevant point is that though Gandhiji's following was mainly Hindu, he did not work for what can be called a Hindu political order. It is even more significant that such an order did not arise even after the country was partitioned on a religious basis, with Muslim majority areas opting out both in the west and in the east.

The credit or discredit (depending on one's predilection) for the new secular order has been assigned to Nehru. He was certainly a great leader by any yardstick and his task was greatly facilitated by the death of Sardar Patel who alone could possibly have challenged his leadership. But Nehru had defeated the Sardar in the latter's lifetime except within the framework of the Congress party organisation; there could be little doubt that Nehru was the more popular of the two even in the wake of partition and the holocaust accompanying it; Gandhiji's martyrdom further strengthened his position. And above all, Nehru was able to carry the people

to reform their own society as of their tolerance of other religious and ways of life.

Nehru's leadership was, of course, not quite unchallenged. In no general election held during his prime ministership (1952, 1957 and 1962) did the Congress get a majority of the votes polled. And to the extent we can judge in view of the secrecy of the vote, one-half of it came from the minorities and scheduled castes and tribes. On this calculation, only about one-third of caste Hindus voted for the Congress under Nehru's leadership. This is an intriguing facet of the Indian political scene which it is not possible for me to explain. But most of those Hindus who withheld support from the Congress voted for other secular parties. Thus as far as the secular nature of the caste Hindu society is concerned, the limited nature of support for Nehru's Congress and subsequently for Indira Gandhi's Congress cannot cast doubt on it.

by GIRILAL JAIN
Editor
THE TIMES OF INDIA

ANTI-HINDI

A different logic has operated among the Muslims from the dawn of Islam in India. Though most of them are converts from Hinduism, their attempt has been to move away from the Hindu ways. This attempt could not have been and has not been wholly successful. But it has been ceaseless. Its history can be traced without a break from the 16th century. The attempt continues today. The Tabligh movement remains pretty vigorous. The resistance to the proposal for a uniform civil code is only one expression of the refusal to accept the Indian environment.

It is not pertinent for me in the present context to join the debate on whether a distinctly *Indian* Islam has emerged as a result of the interaction between the religious-cultural (including the Arabic and Persian languages) import and the Indian environment (of which the Hindus are an essential part). Nor is it pertinent for me to go into the cause of the failure of men such as Maulana Abul Kalam Azad on the one hand and Sir Saiyed Ahmad Khan on the other to reinterpret Islam to bring it into accord with the modern world.

emergence of Mahatma Gandhi as the leader of the Indian National Congress in 1919, it appeared as if a distinct Hindu personality was emerging and imposing itself on the country's political scene. Aurobindo Ghosh and Tilak were the most articulate spokesmen of Indian nationalism and they clearly thought in Hindu terms. But this response petered out and Gandhiji with his message of Hindu-Muslim unity (as if the two 'communities' were equal partners in a common enterprise) seized the leadership. He was to dominate the Indian political scene for the next three decades.

RAM RAJYA

It is hardly necessary for me to recall that Gandhiji was often represented as a Hindu leader not only by his Muslim League opponents but by Hindu 'progressives' (Marxists and liberals) who could not stomach his talk of *ramrajya* at his prayer meetings, his fastings and his 'medieval' personality traits and economic programmes. This is an issue in itself which cannot be and, more important, need not be debated in

with him in his attempt to establish a secular polity in India.

This acceptance by the Hindus of Nehru's leadership has been attributed mainly to the famed Hindu tolerance of other faiths. Since the time of Raja Rammohan Roy educated Hindus have also been trying to bring their own society into accord with Western values which derive from the acceptance of reason (as distinct from faith) as being the source of knowledge. In plain terms, secularism has been inherent in the Hindu reform movement. Since Nehru can be said to have been in the direct line of succession to Raja Rammohan Roy, this could have been another reason for his easy ascendancy in Indian politics.

Two inferences emerge from this narration. First, that Nehru's leadership was as much the result of personal qualities and close association with Gandhiji as of impersonal factors (the reform movement among the Hindus.) Secondly, the acceptance of the concept of a secular polity by the Hindus is at least as much an expression of their desire

(To be continued next week)

Saturday Review

SRI LANKA

PILGRIMAGE TO JAFFNA

TERROR & WOE

We were the children of another era, that of the British Raj. The imperial

BY DR. NISSANKA SENEVIRATNE

boot had not been laid heavy upon us; indeed, we were the beneficiaries of blessings showered upon a subject people by their colonial masters—language and literature, music and art, educational advancement and professional skills, and the love of dedicated men of great human stature who came to serve us, Foster and Hayman among others. Our associations and friendships were not dictated by the language of our parents or determined by the region of our traditional homes. We grew up together, friends and brothers.

So when my "Tamil" friend and brother arrived from Jaffna and said that he had a message from his wife, I was shaken. Tell Nissanka to come, she had said. It seemed a pointless exercise. I knew what could be expected—tales of woe, an outpouring of grief, accounts of experiences caused by our unresolved "National Question" and the army of occupation, of broken homes and shattered lives, of dreams that have crashed with the savagery and atrocities of July 1983.

Yet, it was a summons from Mano, "dream girl" of my friend and brother, and I could not ignore her call. A long weekend was due, Wesak, and Saturday 12th May was fixed for the journey North. The seat on the bus was booked. Then the "terrorists" struck again—this time they had kidnapped an American couple and the sensational news was flashed on Friday night, 11th May.

To go or not to go—to Jaffna! A respected elder cautioned that the trip North as planned was risky. Despite the damper, to change course now was unacceptable. I said that I would go, whatever the uncertainties generated by the kidnapping; also, that I did not fear the terrorists.

For who are they—these terrorists? Who are the insurgents of the 70s or the arsonists and looters of July 1983? Are they not, for the most part, children of social and economic oppression, the creations of an unjust social order? Are they not the victims of lack of opportunity, of frustration and poverty? (True, there are intellectuals among the terrorists who have lost faith in "negotiations"; but let it be remembered that Frantz Fanon, psychiatrist, or Che Guevara, doctor, did not

become rebels and revolutionaries through mere frivolity but after an agonising appraisal of their observations and experiences.)

Are they not the missiles that are fired by seekers of power and players on the political chess board? Are not the terrorists committed and dedicated to their cause, however much I depreciate their cause and deplore their actions, with a zeal and passion unmatched in the privileged and the well-to-do?

I would face without bitterness the terrorists' firing squad, if they could convict me of crimes against the oppressed. (But I would retaliate with vengeance the barbs of those "expatriate nationals" of the Eelam associations and the Sinhala mandalayas who make loud noises from their comfortable bases in America, Europe and elsewhere.

They are the real terrorists, who have secured the privileges offered by their citizenship of this poor Third World country, and having plundered every benefit from this country migrated to greener pastures abroad from where they ferment troubles in Sri Lanka. The terrorists did not frighten me off — so I went to Jaffna.

I saw. I felt, if only as a visitor. The armoured car near the market was a grim reminder of the presence of military might. Yet, the army was trapped in a situation which they did not relish. To the temples, kovils desecrated and destroyed in the South was added one more shameful demonstration of the crisis of civilization in our country—the ruins of the Jaffna Public Library, symbolic of the Jaffna man's respect for books and his desire for learning.

The pot-holes on the roads provided ample evidence that an administrative, financial and technical capability was essential at the district level so that local needs could be quickly and effectively met.

4th Opening

The Rehabilitated Building of the JAFFNA PUBLIC LIBRARY will be opened by former, MP for Kankesanthurai and Leader of the Opposition, at 11.50 a.m. on Monday, 4th June 1984.

POLYTEX WOMEN ON THE MARCH

The second strike by women workers at the Polytex Garments Ltd. within the Greater Colombo Economic Commission area, which began on 17th February, is still on, with no indications of an early settlement.

Polytex Garments, set up in collaboration with a Honk Kong firm, is the biggest garment sewing enterprise in the G.C.E.C. area, producing high quality garments for markets in Western Europe and the USA.

It employs nearly 2000 workers.

Nearly 95% of the work force consists of women. Their daily wage at the start was only Rs. 18.50 (less than one US dollar).

To improve their working conditions, the employees formed a branch of the Industrial Transport and General Worker's Union.

In December 1982, seven workers were suspended on the ground that they were not acceding to the company's overtime requirements.

FIRST STRIKE

This sparked off the first strike at the factory, beginning on 13th December.

The workers demands included reinstatement of the suspended workers, a bonus equivalent to three months wages, a festival advance, a daily wage of Rs. 25, 42 days leave per year and medical facilities and transport facilities in case of illness.

The management and the branch Union were able to reach a settlement on these issues after one month during which period the workers were subjected to intimidation, arrests and thuggery, aided by the police.

Despite the memorandum of settlement signed on 20th May, other disputes cropped up, particularly relating to production targets and wage increases.

For example, the management sought a written guarantee that if any worker did not reach the agreed production target in the

future, it should have the power to take disciplinary action against such a worker, and the union should not take counter action against the company. This position was unacceptable to the union.

On 15th January 7 workers, including committee members of the branch union, were suspended from work. One month later they were dismissed from work, which action triggered off the second strike at Polytex Garments, with the union putting forward the following demands:

Withdrawal of the suspension of the seven workers, payment of Rs. 100 a month owing to them since July 1983, four months wages as bonus for 1983, 42 days leave facilities, and a wage increase up to 30 a day.

Attempts have been made since January by the parent union to get the Department of Labour to intervene but without any success.

As Mr. W. L. D. Anton Markus, Secretary of the present union states: 'The Polytex women workers' strike is also an important one for the entire labour movement, not only in Sri Lanka but all over the world. The results of Polytex could be the make or the break of the labour movement. It is our responsibility to understand and place the strike of the Polytex workers within the historic perspective of the entire labour movement'.

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