

Saturday Review

SRI LANKA

Vol. 3 No. 25

4th August 1984



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JOURNALISTS ON THE 'HI-JACK' LIST

AN APPEAL TO THE PRESIDENT

So, despite all criticism and opposition, President Jayewardene's UNP Government is going ahead with the amendment to the Press Council Law of 1975 which would make it an offence to publish anything in a Sri Lankan newspaper under pseudonyms: "Any proprietor, printer, publisher or Editor of any newspaper who acts in contravention of this provision," the amendment seeks to stipulate, "shall be guilty of an offence and shall on conviction be liable to be punished with a fine not exceeding

Rs. 2000 or with imprisonment of either description for a term not exceeding one year, or with both such fine and imprisonment."

It certainly requires courage of an exceptional nature for any government to go on to implement such an unpopular amendment as this.

But it is this kind of courage that Mr. Jayewardene had in mind when he originally advocated an institution of a strong executive:

seated in power for a fixed number of years, not subject to the whims and fancies of the legislature elected by the people, not afraid to take correct, popular decisions.

Imagine what about it?

I certainly cannot imagine that the amending bill can be the handiwork of a government whose head is the Jayewardene I knew and admired between 1970 and 1977.

Those were dangerous days when the tentacles of autocracy were gradually tightening their hold on Sri Lanka.

And there was Mr. Jayewardene leading the people in a valiant struggle to preserve their fundamental rights, freedom of assembly and speech and the freedom of the press. Remember the submissions made by Mr. Jayewardene in the Constitutional Court challenging the Press Council Bill in 1973?

"THE FREEDOM OF THE PRESS IS THE ESSENCE OF LIBERTY AND THIS IS THE SOURCE OF ALL OTHER LIBERTIES. IF THIS FREEDOM IS SUPPRESSED, RESTRAINED OR CONTROLLED, THEN THE FOUNDATIONS FOR AUTOCRACY IS LAID..." he said.

If the Press Council Law needs amendment, I say that it should be to make it compulsory for all politicians, especially politicians in power, and for all journalists to read these submissions.

Never perhaps where finer and braver words uttered by any politician anywhere in defence of

press freedom? In contrast the amendment now proposed by the UNP government is unjustifiable on any ground.

As a journalist who has been a keen observer of the national scene since independence, I can say that it would only benefit crooked politicians and those who cavort round them, including certain ladies of dubious report.

The story going round in journalistic circles is that it was a complaint by a certain lady against the unkind reference to her in the gossip column of a popular Sunday newspaper that made the

government sit up and think of the amendment!

I simply cannot believe this story, but the fact is that the amendment is there, ready for enactment shortly.

The amendment if approved by Parliament, would amount to a vote of no confidence in Sri Lanka's journalistic fraternity.

For Sri Lanka and its people it would indeed be a sad day when this happens.

I earnestly appeal to His Excellency to act in the true and fine spirit displayed by him in the 1970-77 era—when I knew and admired him—and drop the amendment.

GAMINI NAVARATNE



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CONGRESS PROBE

The U. S. Congress Subcommittee on human rights and the South Asia section of the U. S. Congress Subcommittee on Foreign Affairs have begun joint sessional hearings at Washington on the human rights situation in Sri Lanka.

NO, NO, NO!

TULF Secretary-General Mr. A. Amirthalingam was quoted in THE ISLAND of 3rd Aug. as saying that in his view the proposal regarding the setting-up of a second Chamber did not satisfy the aspirations of the Tamil people.

A QUANDARY

The failure of the Pandaruppu Post Office to pay July pensions of nearly 400 pensioners has put them in a quandary

Human Rights Violation

The Tamil Nadu, Chief Minister, M.G. Ramachandran, has stated that there has been violation of human rights in Sri Lanka. He has indicated that emasculation of basic human rights is continuing unabated, with foreign aid.

Skeletons Found

T. Kanagarajah has claimed that the skeletal remains found in the debris of the Jaffna Co-operative Stores Ltd. are that of his brother Navaratnarajah who was missing after the disturbances on 10-4-84. He has requested the Police to hand over the bones to him to perform the last rites. Police sources have indicated that a decision will be taken within a fortnight.

Saturday Review

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EDITOR

GAMINI NAVARATNE

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A FATAL BLOW

The law proposed by the Government to prohibit publication of views and news without stating the author's names or such publications under pseudonyms are a fatal blow to the already curtailed freedom of the press in Sri Lanka.

This is stated by H. A. Seneviratne, Secretary of the Reader-Listener-Spectator-Organization (RLSO) in a press statement issued on the proposed "Pseudonym Law". The statement adds:

Freedom of the press is curtailed in this country in so many ways. The government in power controls two of the major newspaper organizations directly besides controlling the radio and the television. Emergency regulations that have become almost a permanent feature in the body politic of this country further curtail the freedom of the press. Besides on specific matters censorship is imposed from time to time—as is today in the case of

news and comment on matters relating to the National Question, the introduction of an Israeli Interests section and the affairs of the University and other educational institutions.

Now, the Press Council law is to be amended in such a way so as to make publications under pseudonyms or without names an offence punishable with fine and imprisonment. Once this law is passed it will act as a deterrent against exposing corruption, malpractices and injustices of public and private bodies or persons since the risk involved if one's name is made known in such cases is extremely great in this country. The RLSO considers that the proposed law emanates from the fear of criticism and public exposure of corruption in a context where corruption is the order of the day. There could be no other reason for the preparation of such a law since under the existing law, editors, authors and publishers are mainly responsible for whatever appears in their newspapers and other publications.

The RLSO is fully aware of the fact that even in regard to the independent press, large or small, the situation is far from satisfactory as far as the freedom of expression is concerned. More often than not, newspapers and other publications impose their own "censorships" to serve their parochial ends. The cultural levels maintained by most of the newspapers and publications are also unsatisfactory. Nevertheless we are prepared to unconditionally support any campaign conducted by the newspapers for the purpose of opposing the proposed press law. We believe that the freedom of expression is something which should be protected and expanded in the larger interest of society. It is only on the basis of that freedom of expression that the existing levels of newspapers and other publications can be enhanced.

We call upon all newspapers and other publications that are prepared to save the democratic rights of the people to open their columns without restrictions, other than those im-

posed by the existing law, for the freest possible expression of view regarding the proposed press law. It is only through such a process that the people can be called upon to safeguard and fight for the freedom of the press which is part and parcel of their democratic rights.

The RLSO also calls upon all genuine writers of this country to carry out a campaign within and outside Sri Lanka and oppose the proposed press law.

'SUN' SHUNNED

The 'SUN' group of newspapers is not available in the Jaffna district from 1st August.

SATURDAY REVIEW learns that newspaper agents have been warned by militant youths not to sell this Group's newspapers.

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TEACHERS' UNION CONDEMNS GOVT.

The Central Committee of the Ceylon Teachers' Union vehemently condemned the arrests of the General Secretary of the Ceylon Teachers' Union and the Sri Lanka Jathikaya Guru Sangamaya who went to the Ministry of Education, with due permission, on teachers' matters.

This is disclosed in a press statement issued by the General Secretary of the CTU Mr. H. N. Fernando.

The CTU has also demanded that Circular No. 6/18/04/15, which hinders students from sitting their examinations though they are in no way connected with any alleged offence connected with that examination, to be withdrawn.

The Committee has also asked that all strikers, including teachers, who have by now been four years without re-instatement since July 1980 be re-instated immediately. They have also pressed that re-instated employees be paid their back wages.

The Committee has also demanded that all teachers living beyond three miles from their service stations be paid travelling expenses, especially as permission has been granted to Secretaries and "A" Grade Officers to use official vehicles for travelling including their personal trips.

The following were elected office bearers of the CTU for the current year. President: Ariyadasa Jayasekera; General Secretary: H. N. Fernando; Assistant Secretaries: V. Sivarajah and P. B. Ranaweera.

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Priorities mixed up

The Jayewardene regime has always got its priorities wrong. With its emphasis on super expenditure and highly visible schemes - like the new parliament, the housing and the Mahaweli projects - the money left welfarist measures, public health and education being slashed. Sri Lanka has always been proud of its high literacy rate, unique among developing countries, due in the main to its extensive system of free education. Things have changed after Jayewardene and his belief in free enterprises which resulted in education not being free enough; budgetary allocations to the schools and Universities have not kept pace with inflation, averaging over 30% in the last seven years.

Things in the schools have generally been quiet. School children are not known, usually, to protest over their grievances; they are usually not even aware of them. With undergraduates, things are different. Every generation enters the University with starry eyes and high hopes - and then goes through the gradual process of disillusionment, especially in the non professional faculties, when faced with teacher apathy, paltry, library and other facilities and a totally unintellectual environment. Add to this the fact that student loans (the government cannot afford grants) have remained static in the last five years, despite tremendous increases in living costs, and you have a simmering and frustrated student populace.

The policy of all governments has been to look upon students at potential seditionists, to be crushed firmly whenever they "get out of hand." No thorough investigation has been made of their problems; the reports of the many commissions who have inquired into various aspects of the problem have been shelved. It is now reported that the government is planning to revise the Universities Act. The present one is liberal, somewhat, on paper; but has never really been implemented. Given the tendencies of the government towards greater and greater authoritarianism, the nature of the proposed Act can easily be imagined. Whatever little academic freedom that now exists is bound to be taken away.

It is in this context that the present situation must be viewed. The establishment of a police station in the middle of a University is, from any point of view, a

profoundly stupid act. Students and police have always been "traditional" enemies and trouble is bound to erupt. Besides, if things have got so rotten within an academic community that it actually needs to be permanently policed, then steps must be taken to investigate the rot - and try and solve the problem at its root. But this, of course, has never been Jayewardene's style. Otherwise, for instance, the Tamil problem would have long been solved. His Policy has always been to suppress any dissent - in the hope that it would go away.

It is, therefore, not surprising that the decision by the government to set up a police post in Peradeniya, the country's premier university went without much protest. Nobody likes it; everybody remembered what happened in 1976 when the police killed a student; but everybody was also quite scared. Students in Peradeniya came for lectures without a murmur. The staff said not a word. 'The Island', the country's only really independent newspaper, student outside Peradeniya and one or two public interests groups did warn of the consequences. The government did not listen.

So the Police station existed for six months, with no incidents to report. They were hooted by undergrads almost every day - an occurrence also at every cricket and rugby match - but nothing untoward happened. The police maintained a low and also courteous profile and the everyday security was handled by the marshalls. Still, the calm was uneasy. There was dissatisfaction all over the country, especially over the ethnic and economic issues, and the campus was not immune.

The actual incident that led to the killing was so trivial that one wonders what the police were there for in the first place. The 2nd MBBS results were out on the 19th they were the best in the history of the Faculty. A group of students, slightly the worse for liquor, were going back to their rooms after a celebration. Some of them had taunted the Police and one had actually banged on the door of the staffer. In retaliation, two students were taken in. A group of their friends had them collected and asked for their release. This was done, but then it appeared that the police had assaulted these two while in custody - and they threatened

the same, if not worse, treatment to the rest if they did not behave. The enraged students had started hooting at the police and a crowd, angered by the happenings, soon gathered; they continued to hoot, taunt and throw stones at the police. Then, without warning, they were fired upon. Thinking these

by a
Special Correspondent,
Peradeniya
University

to be rubber bullets, the students did not retreat. It was only when one of their number fell bleeding to the ground that they ran in a panic, chased by the police firing sub-machine guns.

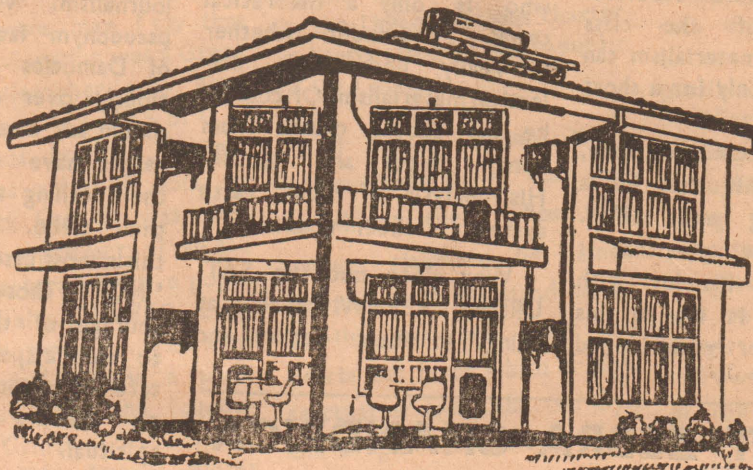
This, however, was not what the Officer-in-Charge of the station to the Magistrate at the inquiry. He said he fired tear-gas first. Naturally, the tear-gas arrived only

with the reinforcements, more than an hour later - after the killing. In any case, the question arises as to why the police could not control the initial crowd of 40 to 200 students, if one believes the OIC's testimony, with tear gas. Or, if one does not, why was there no tear gas! - but sub-machine guns! - in a police station where the maximum to be expected is a riot. More importantly, he said he had just five men with him, all inexperienced. Whether this is true or not, is debatable; but one wonders who was the fool who sent five inexperienced cops to a University, when they should actually have had special training in crowd and riot control and so on. It is unbelievable that the police fired, as the OIC tried to make out, in self-defence. That would not have warranted something he forgot to tell the magistrate - that they chased the students, then ran up to the

Senate building and fired many rounds at them from a height. But then according to his version, only one sub-machine gun and one service revolver were fired that night.

This was probably why the Minister for National Security and Acting Minister of Defence Lalith Athulathmudali, decided to immediately impose a press censorship on the incidents. The public has always viewed the undergraduate with disfavour; letting the story out that an innocent medical student was killed would have led to public sympathy for the students. With the truth hidden, the public would be amenable to anything the government concocts. Athulathmudali has already spoken of a link between these events and the "terrorists" in the north. The Prime Minister has gone one step better - outlining a three phased plot to get rid of the government. The Sri Lankan public has heard of so many conspiracies (Continued on page 10)

A chalet



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'S. R. hiding the truth'

Editor,
SATURDAY REVIEW.

I have read your paper regularly for quite some time. I have also read your tirade against the special censorship imposed on you. However, it is not discriminatory as you want the people to believe. The SATURDAY REVIEW was closed and sealed but was later allowed to be published under certain conditions. But you try to make people believe it is a special type of censorship imposed on your paper.

You claim that this paper was penalised for telling the truth. But how much of the truth are you revealing? In fact, the real truth never comes out in any newspaper anywhere in the world. The SATURDAY REVIEW is no exception.

Secondly, it is quite evident that you are espousing the cause of separatism in the guise of printing the truth. That is why the Government imposed those restrictions.

People are free to believe in any philosophy they choose but they should not be dogmatic about it. Marxism is so full of loopholes that it will soon become obsolete. The theory of the class struggle and materialism can dupe people only for a short time.

Coming to the Jaffna man, you must admit that he is crafty, cunning and selfish. He is not the type that is ready to cast his lot with others unless it is to his advantage. For years he had

no truck with the Indians and Batticaloa Tamils.

An old Tamil proverb cautions people not to trust a stomach ache and an Indian. The Batticaloa Tamils were treated as his inferiors and anyone who married there was an outcast.

The Jaffna man had such despicable traits that there were associations in Vavuniya and Batticaloa to drive them out. The move to settle displaced Indian families in Vavuniya, Trincomalee and Batticaloa areas is to create a buffer area against Sinhalese attacks.

The Tamil politicians have been duping the people. While asking the people not to study, they employed private tutors for their children.

Incidentally, the Ven. Dr. Hevenpola Ratnasara Thero was attached to the staff of Jaffna Central College as the Sinhalese teacher in the 1940's. He left Jaffna to enter the University of Ceylon in 1948 or 1949.

If the Sinhalese built a vihara in Tamil areas it is imperialism. But what about the numerous Hindu temples in Sinhalese areas?

You give a lot of publicity to Mr. N. Shanmugathan, who is only a theoretical crank. I wonder whether he really understands dialectical materialism. Of course, he can quote chunks from Lenin, Engel and so on. His analysis of the caste system is sheer nonsense.

Why does not the SATURDAY REVIEW look at things in their reality and

not theoretically clothed in Marxian verbiage like chauvinism, imperialism, reactionary, class struggle, etc. These are all fallacies of communism.

Separation will be economic suicide and politically we will be swallowed by South India. It is a diabolical plan to form Eelam with Tamil Nadu. Even now, Indian businessmen continue to drain our resources by devious methods and a union with Tamil Nadu will seal our fate.

Look at the problem objectively and the truth will emerge.

S. Kanagasabai
Chunnakam.

the Brahmins relaxing their hold on their rights to officiate in Hindu temples nor the Siamese sect of the Buddhist priesthood allowing inferior castes to enter their fold.

The facts being so, to apportion caste consciousness to the Jaffna Tamil community is not the one thing for journalists to indulge in, for they know clearly well that even Cabinet posts are divided on caste lines among the Sinhala community.

We do condemn violence in all its forms, but the media personnel select inst-

country would have kept him away for another 2 or 3 days.

To enable the people to judge the action of their leaders, when the people are in the midst of Death and Misery, I can do no better than reproduce the following extract from one of the sayings of Swami Vivekananda quoted by your reader A. Gitanjali in your issue of the same date. It is;

"... Are you seized with that one idea of the misery of ruin and have you forgotten all about your name, your fame, your wives, your children, your property, even your own bodies. Have you done that? That is the first step to become a patriot the very first step."

K. Sivanandasundaram
Pt. Pedro

WHO IS SANE?

The Editor,
SATURDAY REVIEW.

At a time when Sri Lanka is facing a disastrous situation and is heading for a complete collapse of the administrative machinery, I think it would be good to reflect over some of the realities of human existence by quoting a passage from "Krishnamurti's Journal", which I am sure would instill a sense of sanity in the prevailing confusion.

"What is sanity and insanity? Who is sane and who is insane? Are the politicians sane? The priests, sane? Those who are committed to ideologies, are they sane? We are controlled, shaped, pushed around by them. Are we sane?"

"What is sanity? To be whole non - fragmented in action, in life, in every kind of relationship; that is the very essence of sanity. Sanity means to be whole, healthy and holy (and pure in our hearts with a sense of compassion - Love). To be insane, neurotic, psychotic, unbalanced, schizophrenic - whatever name you might give to it - is to be fragmented, broken up in action and in the movement of relationship which is existence, "to breed antagonism and division, which is the trade of the politicians who represents you, is to cultivate and sustain insanity, whether they are dictators or those in power in the name of peace or some form of ideology...."

P. Kandiah

Jaffna.
(More letters on page 9)

LETTERS

MEDIA MANIA

The Editor,
SATURDAY REVIEW.

The need of the hour in Sri Lanka is for courageous journalism. With the anti-pseudonym law - the sword of Damocles - hanging precariously over our heads, we should ask whether our journalists have been true to their calling and honest to their tribe. The answer to this in most cases is an emphatic "NO". Those who lack the courage of their conviction to call a spade never hesitate to pontificate to others on matters mundane and spiritual.

The media in Sri Lanka has its set standard to judge the same criminal act when it is committed by different people DIFFERENTLY. As responsible people, we are expected to be above board, but do we see this in practice? Cowardice and irresponsibility in places less suspected of them is the sad and sorry spectre in Sri Lanka.

Those who report revulsive murders through caste-coloured glasses should be able to explain whether earlier murders in similar manner were committed to make the other castes submissive.

In a country where caste is protected as a holy instrument of priesthood, especially among the Buddhist and Hindus, for over 2500 years, it would take a reasonably long time to disappear. We see no signs of either

ances that suit their fancy, may be on their personal predilections or on instructions from above.

Dr. E. S. Mahendrarajah
Matale.

"WE NEVER DESERTED THE PEOPLE"

The Editor,
SATURDAY REVIEW

Reference the letter by the T. U. L. F. President under the above caption in your issue of 21-7-84, according to news reports in a Tamil Daily (Virakesari) two reasons have been adduced by Mr. Sivasithamparam and Mr. Amirthalingam on different occasions for the leadership's frequent sojourn in Tamil Nadu.

The former had stated that they had to go to India to escape attempts to make them "LATE M.P.s" as against their present status of being EX-M.P.s. The latter has stated that, with their wives and children living in Tamil Nadu, the leaders cannot be expected to lead nomadic lives and live in separation from their families. I have heard this reason from him about 20 years ago, when he declined to accede to my request made to him in my capacity as an official of his Party's Plantation Trade Union (Ilankai Thozhilar Kazhakam) to address a Trade Union meeting, when he had been away from his family in Jaffna for a mere 4 or 5 days and his visit to the up-

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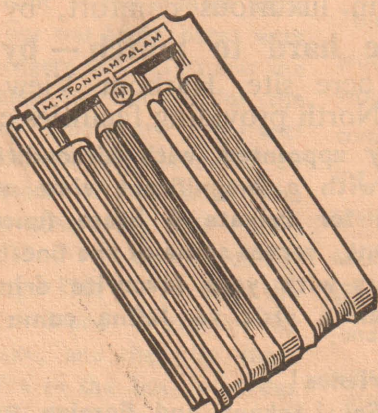
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THEN AND NOW!

With reference to the notice of the Chairman of the National Council of Higher Education, which appeared in the Ceylon Daily News of 11th December 1969, there are certain submissions which we jointly wish to make on the proposal embodied in that notice.

Before proceeding to our submissions, we would like to clarify our view of what the proposal implies. The notice of 11 December 1969 very laudably refers to the proposed university in terms that suggest that it is a national university that is envisaged. There are practical reasons for feeling, however, that whatever optimism may be entertained on this count is unjustified. One of these relates to the location of the university. The notice is very specific in placing the University in what is more than likely to be a Tamil-speaking area. This does not necessarily make the proposed University sectarian, even though, in the recent history of the island, hardly any truly national institution had got established and subsequently continued to thrive in a predominantly Tamil area. However, the special emphasis the notice places on the north or the east of Sri Lanka appears to be significant. This is confirmed by the discussions that have taken place since the appearance of the notice in such public forums as the newspapers (see, for example, the news items entitled 'NCHE Head to Report on Tamil Varsity Move' which appeared on page 1 of the Ceylon Daily News on 13th December 1969) and more especially by the extraordinary interest that the leading Tamil parties have shown in it. None of the other parties, it must be noted, have shown anything of the

same kind or degree of interest. It is significant, too, that no governmental authority has felt it necessary to contradict the assumptions these parties have made in considering the matter. All this seems to suggest that while what is envisaged is a nationally structured university, what will in fact result will be a non-national university in which Tamil studies and Tamil students and staff will predominate.

Other practical considerations relating to the available material resources will contribute towards ensuring this. Sri Lanka's economy as it is cannot bear the luxury of yet another fully national university incorporating all the faculties. The chances of the new University becoming a national scientific and technological university are also slim, for if this university is to be equipped to teach the sciences in any way that comes close to satisfying university standards, expenditure will have to be incurred which our economy is unable to bear. Any realistic view of the proposal, therefore, will lead to the realization that the new University is most likely to be a Tamil-based institution, emphasising primarily Tamil (and perhaps also Hindu) studies and this, indeed, is how the notice of 11th December has been interpreted by the public. It is with this in mind that we wish to make our submissions.

As already mentioned, the notice of 11th December has brought forth various comments on the proposal it embodies. The most frequently encountered of these relate to (a) whether the proposed University is to be a Tamil University or a Hindu University, and (b) whether it is to be in the North or in the East. We feel, how-

ever, that such issues are far from relevant. Before we proceed any further, let us put out of the way one possibility, namely that the proposed University will be a Hindu University. Considerations relating to the country's essential needs have made the N. C. H. E. refuse to consider such a possibility in the past, and we are confident that the same good sense will prevail when the matter is now taken up. We are, then, confronted with the prospect of a Tamil University, and in this matter we would like to draw attention to matters which have received very little consideration. We draw attention to these matters in all sincerity and seriousness, for we are deeply convinced that they are of vital importance both to the nation and to the Tamil community.

The University of Jaffna has become the focus of public attention in recent times.

We reproduce here, for the record, a memorandum submitted in 1969 by Dr. K. Indrapala, Professor of History, University of Jaffna, ex-Dean, Faculty of Arts and potential Vice-Chancellor, and Dr. Tiru Kandiah of the University of Peradeniya.

Our comments, it will be observed relate to the Arts and Oriental Studies. This is because it appears that the proposed University will lay emphasis on these. The sciences in any case confront us with different problems which we do not at all take into consideration.

It is our considered opinion that to start a Tamil University which places emphasis on the Arts and on Oriental Studies is quite unwise. The country needs more people trained in the sciences for essential development, and such a university will take no account of these needs. Indeed it might even wean away potential scientists at school level, for the existence of a Tamil university might itself be sufficient incentive to many Tamil school children to go into arts. We hasten, at this point, to add that we are not opposed to the arts; we do not by any means contribute to the increasingly fashionable philistine notion that the sciences are all that is needed to live in a civilized way. We are among the dwindling minority who feel that the arts have a crucial

and indispensable role to play in society, making it truly civilized and humane. Nevertheless, we cannot endorse an excessive emphasis on the arts in Sri Lanka today. All four universities in existence today cater to the essential need of developing the arts and considering that the country needs more scientists, it would be unwise to use limited resources that could otherwise be used to develop the sciences, to start yet another arts stream.

Among the effects of such a policy would be the increase of the numbers of the educated unemployed - our economy would be quite unable to absorb the arts graduates produced by the proposed University. It could always be argued, of course, that if for reasons of ill-health the economy cannot absorb all the arts graduates produced, the solution lies in curing the economy and not in penalising the students who show an aptitude for the arts by depriving them of the means of pursuing their inclinations. The fact is, however, that as far as the Tamil students go, there is absolutely no necessity at all to provide more universities for the study of the arts. For the academic year 1969/70, only the University of Ceylon Peradeniya, took in arts students in the Tamil Medium. Here, too, in order to take in the full quota of 250 allowed, the pass mark (aggregate) had to be set at about 190.

This compares unfavourably with the lowest mark secured by a student in the Sinhalese medium, which was about 200, for admission to the same university. That is to say, to man the Tamil stream in Peradeniya, it was necessary to considerably lower the standard. If a second Tamil arts stream is created in the proposed University, the only results will be a very damaging depletion of the number of Tamil students coming to Peradeniya and a further appalling lowering of standards.

Aggravating the situation further would be the fact that the available resources of staff would be quite inadequate in the case of some departments to provide another Tamil stream. As it is there are some departments in Peradeniya which cannot find suitably qualified people to fill its Tamil posts. For example, the Department of History has three unfilled vacancies. (It is to be noted that the number is as low as three mainly because the N.

C. H. E. has made cuts in the cadres which the department would wish to have if it is to carry out its teaching work satisfactorily). Two of these posts have been advertised for two years running, but have not been filled owing to the non-availability of suitable applicants. At present, temporary hands who have no prospects of being made permanent with their present qualifications are being used by the Department, but this is felt to be very unsatisfactory. In the Department of Economics, various subjects (e.g. Business Administration, Commerce, International Relations) are not taught at all in the Tamil medium because there is no one suitable for appointment for the purpose. Moreover, in some subjects like Accountancy, people from outside who are engaged in other jobs are brought in as visiting lecturers. A similar situation prevails in the Department of Philosophy, which brings down a visiting assistant lecturer once a week all the way from Jaffna to lecture on Logic. In the Department of English, at least three Tamil instructors are required to handle the English classes for Arts and Oriental students who are weak in the language. One of these three posts had been filled by a temporary hand during the past year, for no suitable person was available for permanent appointment. Now, with the resignation of one of the permanent Tamil instructors, a new problem has cropped up. Certainly, the last test held for the selection of instructors about four months back does not give reason for optimism that the problem will be solved in the near future.

If, as these facts show, it is not possible to find adequate staff to handle the Tamil stream in Peradeniya

(Continued on page 8)

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Over the last three and a half decades, the United States role in South Asia has been at best of benign neglect and at worst of malign intervention. Interludes of intervention have, however, been both more frequent and more prolonged. Like all generalisations this one is a slight oversimplification of the inevitably complex reality. But this is the heart of the matter. The record speaks for itself.

The US interest in this part of the world is of relatively recent origin but it has by now become one of the most important factors in the international power play in the area. Earlier, through nearly a century of *Pax Britannica*, Britain's sway over Asia was complete. India was then, as the 15 hour TV film in Britain on Paul Scott's *Raj Quartet* has once again underscored, the "brightest jewel in the British crown". It was also both the bastion and the pivot of Britain's farflung empire on which the sun was supposed never to set. It was from Calcutta and New Delhi, not from London, that the Great Game was played with the Czarist, and later Soviet, empire then expanding into Central Asia.

The Indian army maintained the peace from Suez to Singapore and was, in fact, used as easily in Beijing as in Baghdad or Basra.

The Indian Ocean remained a British lake until this cosy belief was shattered by the Japanese during the second world war. The redoubtable Admiral Nagumo using carrier based aircraft audaciously bombarded even Visakhapatnam, Kakinada and Madras.

The end of the second world war changed the situation drastically, *Pax Britannica* began to be replaced by *Pax Americana*.

Two developments which were to influence the course of history profoundly followed almost immediately. The first was the independence and partition of India which coincided, by accident or design, with the second anniversary of Japan's surrender after the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

The second landmark was the eruption of the cold war between the erstwhile allies, the emergence of two solid and rival power blocs, frozen in mutual hostility, and the eventual though inevitable acceptance by Britain of a junior position in the US-led Western alliance.

India under the leadership of Mr. Jawaharlal Nehru, chose the policy of nonalignment, of staying away from big-power rivalries, of judging every issue on merits and of doing business with both the super powers on a mutually advantageous basis. This policy was later to be denounced as "immoral" by Mr. John Foster Dulles. He may

have spoken more harshly than others but the irritation with Indian refusal to join the US in its global crusade against world communism, led by the Soviet Union, was the dominant American mood.

And it was against this flawed background that the US embarked in South Asia on policies which have consistently accentuated conflicts in the region, propped up military dictatorships and, ironically, created anti-American feelings while offering the Soviet Union opportunities to extend its influence. With the second cold war in full blast and the Reaganites in Washington DC, out doing the Dulles brothers, we are witnessing in South Asia a repetition of the old and dismal tragedy. But it is necessary to go over the course of events, as far as possible, in chronological order.

Roosevelt's Role

During the era when the Indian subcontinent was Britain's close preserve and the US had little to do with it, Mr. Franklin D. Roosevelt earned much goodwill of the Indian people by sympathising with the freedom movement. Once or twice he interceded with Sir Winston Churchill, especially during the second world war, to urge that India be governed by Indians. But despite Britain's desperate dependence on US help in its struggle for survival, the old imperialist rebuffed the great US President. The only concession Churchill made to Roosevelt was to allow him to send to India as his personal envoy, Col Louis Johnson later to become US Defence Secretary. Until the US had no entree in New Delhi though a US consul had been in Calcutta since the early part of the last century.

By the time of Indian independence and partitions, Britain's slide into a position where it had to play second fiddle to the US was complete. But in relation to the Indian subcontinent, or South Asia as it was now called, the British continued to be treated as indispensable experts. Whatever the British said went with the Americans. Thus it was that Sir Olaf Caroe's "wells of power" thesis found ready acceptance in Washington at least partly because the US strategic thinking around this time was on the same wavelength.

Sir Olaf had been political secretary in India's British government before becoming Governor of the North West Frontier province (NWFP), now in Pakistan, during the climatic days preceding independence and partition. His thesis was that Muslim Pakistan, ruled by those traditionally friendly to Britain was a much better bet for

the defence of the West's vital stakes in the oil wealth of West Asia than the predominantly Hindu but secular India, inclined to be non-aligned. What Sir Olaf was advocating publicly was being endorsed privately by Field-Marshal Claude Auchinleck, the last commander-in-chief in British India who was briefly supreme commander of both Indian and Pakistani armies. This can be verified from the Auchinleck papers, now available to the public.

However, the Americans though fully inclined to go along with the British recommendation — and indeed doing so over the Kashmir issue in the UN — took their time to go the whole hog. For one thing, Pakistan was still an unknown quantity in Washington. As late as early 1950, the late Liaquat Ali Khan, Pakistan's first prime minister, visited the United States. Nehru had preceded him there. At a lunch meeting with America's top tycoons in New York, Liaquat was infuriated when his hosts told him in their welcoming speech; "Sir, the prime minister of your country was here sometime ago."

then having two wings on either flank of India — to further US policies of encircling the Soviet Union with military and intelligence bases. A very big such base was established near Peshawar. It was from this base that Gerry Power's U-2 that eventually wrecked the East-West summit in Paris took off. American military aid to Pakistan began in 1954. Four years later the military took over and, under Field-Marshal Ayub Khan, Pakistan became America's "most allied ally." Tension in South Asia inevitably grew and eventually erupted into the 1965 war between India and Pakistan.

New Alliance

Here the chronological story may be interrupted so that some of the salient features of US-Pakistan alliance, now sought to be revised under the new label of "strategic consensus," may be noted.

In the first place, whatever the US objective in building up Pakistan's military prowess in the 1950s and 1960s, the Pakistanis

evidently attached to their strategic stakes in Pakistan, led even to the bizarre situation that the US support to Pakistan, far from diminishing increased even after Pakistan, out of animus against India, embraced China, at that time America's bugbear. It is true that the US did restrain Pakistan from embarking on any military misadventure during the Himalayan war between India and China in 1962. But in the aftermath of the brief fighting, the US secretary of state, Dean Rusk, and the British Commonwealth secretary, Duncan Sandys, in one of the most vulgar displays of international arm-twisting tried hard to force India to make major concessions to Pakistan over Kashmir. These efforts continued sporadically at least until the 1965 war. And neither this war nor America's deepening involvement in Vietnam where China was still seen by the Americans to be the villain of the piece, made much difference to the American decision to live with Sino-Pakistani collaboration with against India.

America &

For another, the Americans were not daft. Some of the then policy-makers, though their number was small recognised that India, with its enormous size and potential, could not only not be ignored but would be a much safer anchor for American policies and a much more powerful dartner in the crusade against world communism if only it could be wooed to play this role. The urgency to do so was vastly increased by the trauma of what the Americans were then calling the "loss of China."

Nehru Attacked

It is no more coincidence that the US Press which had begun by lionising Mr. Nehru as the light of Asia and the "free world's hope" in this turbulent continent suddenly started denouncing him as soon as he let it be known that free India, determined to be nonaligned and to judge all issues on merit, would under no circumstances accept the role assigned to it by the cold-warrior of Washington. The rulers of the US had meanwhile convinced themselves that whoever was not with them was against them.

Inevitably, the US policy in South Asia became one of offering military aid and other inducements to Pakistan —

had only one purpose in mind and this they tried to achieve in 1965. President Eisenhower had, of course, given written assurances to India that the US arms, supplied to Pakistan would not be allowed to be used against it. But even he could not have been so innocent as to believe this to be a practical proposition. In any case, when the crunch came the Pattons and the Starfighters, the Sabres and the Sidewinders were gleefully used to rain death and destruction on India and there was nothing that Eisenhower's successors could or would do. They did impose an arms embargo — on both India and Pakistan! — as if this was fulfilment enough of the undertaking that the US arms would not be allowed to be used against India.

Secondly, the US may or may not have liked Pakistani invasion of India. But the American rulers were quite happy to see the balance of power in the region artificially disturbed to India's disfavour. They did not want India to fulfil its power potential to the full and for this purpose the building up of Pakistan as a counterpoise to India made sense to them.

This, combined with the importance the Americans

Ironic Twist

Indeed, the situation went through an ironic twist which brings us to the third significant feature of the US role in South Asia. Whether there was any disillusionment in the US with Pakistan's behaviour in 1965, disappointment with the US in Pakistan was extremely sharp. The Pakistanis felt badly let down. They had, they argued, gone along with the US even at the risk of forfeiting the respect of the third world and annoying the Soviet Union but the US had failed to stand by them when their own testing time came. A strong anti-American feeling thus grew in Pakistan. This feeling continues to be sharp even today despite the renewed military relationship between the US and Pakistan and the loud American protestation that Pakistan is now a "frontline" state and therefore high in US calculations. Witness the burning of the US embassy in Islamabad and that of the Stars and Stripes in more recent times.

It can also be argued that besides promoting anti-Americanism in Pakistan (there is no such feeling in India even though American actions have time and again impinged on Indian security and strategic interests) the US policies

In the region have been counterproductive also in the sense of actively promoting an increase in the Soviet influence. The Soviet military presence in Afghanistan today would not have been possible had Pakistan not felt encouraged, all through the 1950s and 60s, to shut the frontier with land-locked Afghanistan and thus drive it more deeply into the Soviet Union's arms. In the late 1970s, the Shah of Iran, then the main pillar of US grand design in the region, through his intrigues with the Daud regime, contributed a hell of a lot to precipitating the Saur Revolution of April 28, 1978 in Afghanistan which the Russians did not expect and the Afghan leftists themselves were wholly unprepared for.

Nor was it purely accidental that in the wake of the 1965 war, only the Soviet Union, and not the US was in a position to mediate between India and Pakistan. Hence the Tashkent talks at which the two countries reached an agreement to end the State of war though the Tashkent spirit itself proved to be sadly shortlived.

that they are once again being smothered by the hawks of the Pentagon and the White House to whom the US strategic interests in the area, as they perceive them, are more important than all the rhetoric about commitment to democracy, human rights and so on.

Indian Elite

A glaring misreading of the situation has not been an American monopoly by any means. The Indian elite, too, has from time to time indulged in the luxury of deluding itself.

For instance, in the 1960s, especially after 1962, two illusions has taken deep roots in New Delhi. The first was that whatever else may be wrong with Indo-US relations or the American role in South Asia generally, in the event of India being threatened by China again, the US would readily and massively come to India's aid. The second such belief was that long-range missiles and spy satellites having rendered earth-bound military and intelligence bases obsolete and the Dullesian

tary and Intelligence bases, all one can say is that the US has set up only recently two centres for electronic eavesdropping in the Sinkiang region of China, that the RDF is looking for "operational facilities" in the Gulf region as well as in Pakistan, that Diego Garcia is also a base and that because there are a few things the spy satellites simply cannot do, the tragedy of KAL 007 took place.

During the Bangladesh war, the misguided US policies can be said to have reached their nadir. It was not merely that the American government was seen to be deeply committed to the side which was morally in the wrong and militarily bound to lose. No less alarming was the brazen US decision to despatch the Seventh Fleet task force to the Bay of Bengal in bid to bully and bamboozle India. The attempt did not succeed. But its grim implications must not be lost sight of, especially in today's environment when the oceans close to Indian shores are chockful of American navy,

years the Pakistani armed forces were vastly expanded, modernised and re-equipped. All this was noted in India but not objected to because this was something Pakistan was doing on its own. No outside power was arming Pakistan in order to embroil it and through it the entire region into its own conflicts and rivalries.

Martial Law

The situation changed almost simultaneously with the return of martial law in Pakistan, now in its seventh year. It is fashionable to argue that the renewed military relationship between the US and Pakistan, which has once again plunged South Asia into tension and trouble, is the outcome exclusively of the Soviet military intervention in Afghanistan. This is true only to the extent that the \$3.2 billion package of US military supplies and economic aid to Pakistan was tied up well after the Soviet troops had established themselves in Kabul. But the basic US policies such as the one for the establishment of the Rapid Deployment Force predate the arrival of the Soviet military in Afghanistan. It is at least arguable, if not evident, that the RDF would have needed Pakistani cooperation whether or not the Russian tanks had rolled into Kabul. More over, after the Shah of Iran's collapse, the US needed someone to take his place in the region on its behalf. And who could have been a more suitable replacement for the Shah than the military ruler of Pakistan? In other words, the Afghan crisis became both the catalyst and the justification for something which was slowly taking place anyhow.

In any case, an in the 1950s, so now, the US sophisticated weaponry which is being pumped into Pakistan has little to do with its declared purpose. Then the objective was to fight communism; today it is to counter the threat Pakistan faces from the Soviet military presence in Afghanistan. Can the Russian helicopter gunships be countered only by F-16 aircraft which have introduced into South Asia an altogether new level of technology in aerial warfare? How will the redesigned and souped up M-48 or new M-60 tanks be deployed across the Khyber? And does one take it that Afghanistan has secretly developed a navy necessitating the supply by the US of Harpoon missiles to Pakistan?

President Eisenhower's assurances about the US military hardware supplied to Pakistan in the 1950s may not have been worth the paper they were written

on. But they were at least given. This time there is not even a pretence of any such assurance. Moreover, responsible officials of both the US and Pakistan have spoken of widening the 1959 executive understanding on mutual security between the two countries to cover all "threats" to Pakistan. The original document referred only to the "communist threat". The meaning of the change in the wording ought to be clear even to a mentally retarded child.

No one, unless he is wholly divorced from reality, can believe that considerations of human right or qualms about offending the Pakistani people craving for the restoration of democracy would deflect the US administration from its chosen course of buttressing the military regime in Pakistan with both guns and gold. But nuclear non-proliferation is supposed to be a major and new US concern. And yet this too has been given a go-by, judging from the fatuous argument that the F-16s, M-60s and the Harpoons would dissuade the Pakistani military rulers from exercising the nuclear option.

Negative Effect

It is not in relation to Pakistan alone that US policy has a negative effect on South Asia and India's legitimate position in it. In other countries of the region also, US attitudes have not been exactly helpful. After the liberation of Bangladesh, America's name was mud in that country. This situation has since changed and the US has considerable presence. It cannot be said that the Americans in Dhaka are motivated by a desire to promote amity in the region. The US administration utilised the recent visit of the King of Nepal to Washington to endorse the 'Nepal-as-a-zone-of-peace' concept knowing fully what all this means.

It is in Sri Lanka, however, that things seem to have become even worse. Obviously, the prize of the highly strategic Trincomalee port dazzles the American policymakers and dictates their moves. Even so, what has been happening of late is distressing. Despite the horrendous carnage of the Tamils in Sri Lanka in August last, India has been bending over backwards to help President Jayewardene solve the vexed Tamil issue within the framework of a united Sri Lanka. To say that the process is not exactly being helped by the US would be to make the understatement of the decade.

Both the US defence secretary, Caspar Weinberger, (Continued on page 8)

South Asia

Despite all this, notice needs to be taken of one crucial fact; No matter how zealously successive US governments might have been devoted to a policy of meddling with South Asia to the detriment of peace and stability in the region, there has been at all times strong dissent in America, even

by Inder
Malhotra

Resident Editor,

The Times of India,

New Delhi.

within the ruling establishment, on this score. In his book, *The American Role in Pakistan*, Professor Venkatramani has quoted chapter and verse to indicate how hard sensible men in the state department and elsewhere and liberals in the academia and the media fought the eventually losing battle of trying to prevent Washington from embarking on the disastrous course. Even today these impulses are not missing in the US policy-making processes. The trouble, however, is

pactomania having therefore become a thing of the past, a more even-handed American policy towards India and Pakistan could be expected. The anti-Ayub democratic upsurge that had in the meantime started in Pakistan further fed these hopes. But both the illusions came shattering down during the crisis created by the brutal repression in East Bengal by the Pakistani military junta, then led by Gen. Yahya Khan, which was eventually to lead to the war for the liberation of Bangladesh.

Henry Kissinger, in India and Pakistan in the summer of 1971, ostensibly to discuss the Bangladesh crisis but actually for his secret dash to Beijing, blandly warned the Indian leaders that should an India-Pakistan war develop over Bangladesh and should the Chinese then decide to intervene on behalf of Pakistan, the US would do nothing.

And the blatant manner in which the Nixon-Kissinger team "tilted" towards the Yahya regime all through the Bangladesh crisis and war, in flagrant disregard of the outraged American public opinion itself, is too recent and too indelibly impressed on memory to need recounting. As for the expert talk of obsolescence of mili-

the Iran-Iraq war, with dangerous potentialities of escalation is on and the whole *raison d'être* of American policies in the area is that through them alone can Pakistan be persuaded to partake in the defence of US strategic interests.

How distant from this ominous scenario look the few short years immediately after the liberation of Bangladesh! These years indeed constitute the only period of relative calm and stability in the region. It was during this period alone that the US can be said to have pursued a policy of benign neglect of South Asia.

The era began with two beneficial developments. The signing of the Simla agreement laying down the parameters of a new relationship of peace and bilateralism between India and Pakistan and an acceptance even by the redoubtable Kissinger that India was the pre-eminent power of South Asia and needed to be treated as such. Soon after the Simla accord, Bhutto, the only elected prime minister to have ruled Pakistan in its entire history so far, went back on some of the understandings he had reached with India. It is also noteworthy that during the Bhutto

Youth Shall Not Falter

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru writing from jail his "Autobiography", refers to one "little incident" which lingered in his memory during his first visit to Sri Lanka on a holiday with his wife Kamala and daughter Indira, (late in the twenties, we believe).

It was, he says, by all standards a memorable visit. It was the first holiday he had since his return from Europe in 1927 and it was the first occasion in his life when he had "holidayed" with his wife and daughter, an occasion which he notes with poignancy was not repeated or likely to be repeated.

The "Incident" he refers to, took place in Jaffna. The teachers and boys of a school who had gathered at a junction stopped his car and said a few words of greeting. Their ardent, eager faces stood out, says the author, and one of the boys came to him, shook hands and without question or argument said, "I will not falter".

Pandit Nehru concludes the account of this memorable and touching incident in these equally memorable and touching words.

"That bright young face with shining eyes, full of determination is imprinted in my mind. I do not know

who he was. I have lost trace of him. But somehow I have the conviction that he will remain true to his word and will not falter when he has to face life's difficult problems".

To a modern reader, reading the account in chapter 36 of the "Autobiography", a contemporary resonance is given by a full page photograph of Indira (as she appeared then) looking sideways as if scanning carefully the account of the incident on the opposite page of the book. Under the picture is her full name "Indira Priyadarshini, Jawaharlal's daughter".

The Jaffna Youth, by and large, have always been

among the most progressive of their kind in any part of Sri Lanka. Cast in storms and tempests in contemporary Sri Lanka, and branded often in terms of which they never dreamt, they are today "strangers and afraid in a world they never made".

We are happy that President Jayewardene has publicly expressed the view that he does not now associate "terrorism" with the youth of the North or the youth of the South. "When we have second thoughts", says a writer, "our first thoughts don't seem to be thoughts at all. They are just feelings".

It is our considered view that while a peace settlement is being pursued assiduously, the "button" of repression of the youth in any part of the country should be used warily.

In the meanwhile let not the youth of the land in the midst of political tempests and turbulence forget the impromptu words of the school lad "with an ardent face and eager eyes" who more than fifty years ago looked at the face of an Indian leader of world stature and told him "I will not falter". (Courtesy "Morning Star".)

THEN AND NOW

(Continued from page 5)

alone, it is not too difficult to see how disastrous an attempt to start another Tamil stream in the North or the East of Ceylon is bound to be. Unqualified and underqualified staff will inevitably have to be chosen, and standards cannot but be lowered sharply.

The difficulty of providing adequate library and other facilities for the students will further contribute to the deterioration in standards. It must be pointed out that library votes are far from adequate in the existing universities, and that there have recently been substantial cuts in them. It is difficult in the circumstances to see an adequate library developing in the proposed university. In the University of Ceylon, Colombo, despite the emphasis on developing the institution, very little progress has been achieved with the library. To quote from Denzil Pleris' article "Revolutionaries or the Blind?" in the Ceylon Observer of 16 December 1969. "In one section in European History there are only three books between 350 to 400 students. Contemporary journals are not available." These words refer to the library in Colombo. One cannot be so optimistic as to hope that the library of the proposed University will be any better.

The factors listed will all lead definitely to one end the deterioration of standards in Tamil education. The results of this deterioration are not such as will be immediately perceptible; but those who refuse to be shortsighted will see how over a period of time it will gradually erode the quality of thinking

and feeling within the Tamil community and bring death to its vital springs of life. Already it may be seen in so very many aspects Tamil life is atrophied. In the arts, academic standards are shockingly low, and the academic community must be blamed for offering to those who come to them for creative leadership a sterile and shabby substitute for a humane education.

There is one further point we wish to make. Once a Tamil University or a University in which Tamil studies predominate is established in the North or the East of Ceylon, the temptation will be great to discontinue the Tamil streams in the other Universities and to concentrate them in this one University. Indeed, many of the very points we have made above, as well as other considerations relating to wasteful duplication and so on, might lead to the conclusion that such a step should be taken. We wish to emphasise in the strongest possible terms, however, that such a step would be as foolish as it is dangerous. The result of such a step would be the creation of narrowly sectarian and communal universities - not just one such University, but many, for once the Tamils have been isolated in one University, the Sinhalese will be isolated from the Tamils in the others. The opportunity for creative interaction among the communities at the academic, social and personal levels will thereby be denied our intellectuals, and an opportunity will be lost for the development of a truly national and constructive outlook on the basis of the under-

standing that this kind of contact necessarily fosters. Again, the adverse results on national life of encouraging sectarian and parochial tendencies are not such as will be immediately perceptible; but if it is necessary to find evidence of the kind of adverse results here referred to, one has only to turn to the example of Benares Hindu University and Aligarh University in India. The places spawned and nurtured race hate, and helped develop an intellectual base (insofar as intellectualism could go along with racial prejudice) for it.

We do not want an Aligarh University or a Benares Hindu University. We want a National University which makes a creative contribution to national life. As is evident from what we have stated, we are not against the establishment of new Universities—but we are very definite that any new University must satisfy certain conditions or it has no right to come into being. Our own conviction is that if the proposed University turns out to be what we fear it will be, a Tamil University emphasising the arts, it is in the interests of the nation and more directly of the Tamil community not to establish such a University at all, but to expand the resources available on the development of whatever facilities there are in the existing Universities for Tamil studies. This will certainly benefit the Tamil community in a much more real way than a mere dead symbol, and what benefits any one community in this way will surely benefit the entire nation.

America and South Asia

(Continued from page 7)

and the extremely influential ambassador at large, Gen. Vernon Walters, at one time the number two man in the CIA, visited Colombo in somewhat mysterious circumstances. And one of them at least made a public statement not calculated to be friendly to India or to help the delicate process of finding an amicable settlement of the problem in Sri Lanka.

This discussion could have been ended here. But, perhaps by way of a footnote, a quotation from Prof. John Kenneth Galbraith—relating to the days when he was US ambassador to India—is called for. For it both gives a flavour of the basic US stance towards South Asia and underscores not merely its intricacies but also its continuity.

As he records in *Ambassador's Journal*. Prof Galbraith wrote to President Kennedy on 15th August 1961:

A few weeks ago one of our aircraft carriers brought twelve supersonic jets to Karachi where they were unloaded in all the secrecy that would attend mass sodomy on the B.M. T. at rush hour. Rumours plus Indian intelligence raised the number to 30, then 50, then 75. (This, I learn, is escalation). The Pakistanis asked that the number not be released in order to keep the Indians in doubt and the department agreed over my protests. When the thing promised to get out of hand here the department cabled me sympathy. Even-

tually, I wrung authority to release the number out of Talbot more or less by physical violence. That then double-crossed the (Pakistanis) who had been promised we would not tell.

It seems during more than two decades since then the position has not changed except that in place of F-104s there are now F-16s.

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Noses & 'Dravidian Kissingers'

They are at it again.

Some months ago a Cabinet Minister made a pronouncement in Parliament on the ticklish topic of noses. He declared that the President's nose is like Mrs. Indira Gandhi's and that Mr. Amirthalingam does not have that kind of nose. He made this assertion in order to illustrate the difference in ethnic origins between the two communities they represent. Obviously, the honourable Minister had failed to take a close look at the noses of some of his ministerial colleagues.

The study of noses can be very interesting, and I am obliged to make it on my trips to Jaffna by bus and (more often by) minibus, as I am brought into closer proximity to noses than ever before in my life. (What's your preference in noses, Dear Reader: that hook-nosed fellow of Rome's or the Serpent of the Nile's or Indira Gandhi's or... or... or...?)

It can indeed be claimed that never before in the history of human transport

sence in various positions in Malaysia and Singapore. Reading an article in the May issue of the Readers Digest on 'Malaysia's Magnificent East-West Highway', I came across four Tamil names: Datuk Samy Vellu, Malaysia's Minister of Works and Public Utilities, and Mr. C.S. Maniam, Mr. A. Narayanan and Mr. S.S. Siddhu, all chief engineers on various sections of the project. **Ignored Land**

There is hardly any foreign element in this environment. Limited to the missionary and the seniormost Government servant during European rule, it has now completely disappeared. Nor is the North on the tourist or the hippie itinerary. This is in marked contrast to the North-Western sector, wide open as it is to all-comers from the four corners of the earth. The North is not over-rich in the things that nourish or invite. In any consideration of quotas and percentages, the environment has hardly ever been taken into account.

And now come two scribbles, one with his "Dravidi-

words. You recognise it also when you see a lone brown face among the few other faces on a late train in the London "Tube", but now you studiously look away. Cultural and other links make the identity a deeper and meaningful one. But it is also a composite identity which becomes all the richer when each component has its due place in it.

Re-orientation

But some would deny this identity, for reasons of their own (e.g. "Are you Jayaratne or Jeyaratnam?"). And those who pontificate on noses and ethnic origins seem to be blind to the physical identity. Very well. The Presidential proboscis is like Indira Gandhi's, and 75 per cent of the people are of Indo-Aryan origin. Hooray! So, why worry? Why all this pother in the highest quarters?

The solution to the problem facing us calls for a re-orientation in the people's thinking and far greater statesmanship on the part of those at the top than has so far been in evidence.

To many the history of our country begins with the legend of Vijaya and Kuveni, itself a parallel, according to John Still, to the tale of Ulysses and Circe. Some declare there can be no Tamil homelands since the ruins of Buddhist shrines have been unearthed in areas considered to be Tamil and because some Tamil places have Sinhala origins. But the burial mounds of Anaikoddal and the megalithic artefacts of Pomparippu and other places in the North-Western sector may well tell a different story. It is reasonable to

assume that some of the earliest settlers in the North came from the South-Eastern part of the adjoining sub-continent.

How far back in time do we go with claim and counter-claim? They are really irrelevant to the issue.

In the midst of our controversies, the words of a poet come to us like the breath of heaven (I will not say "paradise" as the word has recently acquired a rather different connotation locally):

Very old are we men,
Our dreams are tales
Told in Eden

By Eve's nightingales.
We make and whisper awhile,

But the day gone by,
Silence and sleep like fields
of Amaranth lie.

SEEING STARS

The Editor,
SATURDAY REVIEW.

The President has, as quoted in some of the dailies said that Sri Lankan democracy as "Five Star Democracy", but sincere citizens will agree with me if I say that the democracy in Sri Lanka is a "See Star Democracy".

All those who govern and those who are governed, irrespective of caste, creed, race or religion, are made to see stars as often as possible.

Offerings at the sites of worship are condemned as "slaughtering" whereas human beings are either shot or slaughtered, or shot and slaughtered by Government and anti-Government elements.

Power-hungry politicians, in the North and the South are the founders of the problems of Sri Lanka. Irrespective of caste, creed, race or religion, they have been united.

K.C. Kanapathipillai
Karaveddi.

DIOGENES

The Editor,
SATURDAY REVIEW.

Under the headline "A Moment with Diogenes" we read in every issue of the "SATURDAY REVIEW" reports of very interesting interviews conducted by your readers and reporters with a local Diogenes.

To those of your readers who do not know about the real Diogenes, may I say that Diogenes Laertius was a Greek cynic philosopher who lived in the years 412-323 B.C.

He was born in Sinope, which was a Turkish port on the Black Sea. It was then the most important of all the Greek colonies with a population of about 15,700. Early in life Diogenes emigrated to Athens and became a pupil of Antisthenes, the founder of the Cynics.

One of his famous quotes was: There is only one good, namely knowledge; and one only evil, namely ignorance.

Asked what was the proper time for supper the philosopher answered: "If you are a rich man whenever you please; if you are a poor man, whenever you can."

Diogenes told a youth, "Courage my boy; that is the complexion of virtue."

Augustine Saverimuttu
Jaffna.

HUMAN APPROACH

The Editor,
SATURDAY REVIEW.

Practically every native of Sri Lanka has come to consider himself a Sinhalese, Tamil or Muslim (or a Buddhist, Hindu, or Muslim), as the case may be, rather than a Sri Lankan.

LETTERS

Such communal consideration is both the cause and effect of violence that has repeatedly shaken the island since 1918.

The Tamils are agitating not for exclusive privileges but for such fundamental human rights as proclaimed by the United Nations charter and recognised by the Republic of Sri Lanka.

If Tamils do not enjoy human rights, or if they fail to achieve them, then they cannot claim to be human beings. As things stand now, Tamils can only envy the beasts and birds which occupy sanctuaries and Yala, Gal Oya and Wilpattu and enjoy, comparatively, a better existence under the Fauna and Flora Protection Ordinance.

V. S. Mani

Karaveddy.

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by S. K. Gnanamuttu

have so many individuals been crammed with so much discomfort into so few cubic feet of space.

Another subject of recent study has been the Northern student's English, which I am making after forty-seven years of teaching the language elsewhere. The result of the studies is the discovery that in neither nose nor English is the Northern inferior to (or should I say, different from?) other citizens of Sri Lanka.

The finding on noses is not surprising, for anthropologists now believe we are all for the most part of the same stock. Differences there are, but they are largely proof of the effect of environment. The acres of arid land and the harsh conditions of life in the North must leave their impress on character and temperament; and this, rather than the Britisher's policy of "divide and rule", a facile over-simplification, used by many accounts for the Tamil's presence in the South—the percentage was never as high as some have made it out to be—as Government servant, trader and schoolmaster.

The earth, so bountiful in so many other parts of the country, has been an ungentle step-mother to the sons of the North. It also accounts for the Tamil's pre-

an Kissinger" and the other with his "Indo-Aryan" kinships. A politician can, and very often does, get away with ill-advised utterances, but one would expect commentators on men and matters to be better informed, to have at least a nodding acquaintance with modern research and thinking on matters like race, and to be aware that an "Aryan", if you want to use the term, is merely one who speaks an Aryan tongue. But it has been said that Sri Lanka has become the last refuge of the Aryan Myth.

In my year at the Institute of Education, London, I found that the majority of North Indian students did not noticeably conform to the Aryan stereotype, while the two in one of my groups were of the darker shades of brown. If a Sri Lankan is mistaken for an Indian it will, in all probability, be for one of the duskier sons of Bharat.

Speakers and writers have often deployed the absence of a Sri Lanka identity. But there is as the hoodlums and goons of July 1983 with their "Sinhala-yada Demalada?" recognised. As you yourself do on seeing a darker face amidst the pale ones on a street in Copenhagen or the Hague, and you cross over to exchange a few friendly

Racial question in India

"The term race is a mental product, a concept having no objective existence, apart from man's mind. Only individuals are real" Topinard.

"After all races" says Spillar "show but skin-deep differences. Differences of language, of manners, and customs are nothing but accidental modalities, attendant on the respective historical evolution in the past, in no way powerful to efface the sub-stratum common to all humanity and in no way tending to hinder any co-operative effort in the fulfilment of the mission common to mankind in general".

A great Tamil Sangam poet sang centuries ago; "All the

world is one and all mankind is kin; good and evil are of one's own making and not caused by others", a fact which politicians may refuse to concede.

There are a lot of misconceptions about "race" which have existed in the minds of men since the dawn of history. These misconceptions have caused a lot of misery to mankind.

"In its anthropological sense the word 'race' should be reserved for groups of mankind possessing well-developed and primarily heritable physical differences from other groups". This definition, too has been of late subject to criticism by scientists. There-

fore, difficulties occur in any discussion on "race" or "race"-relations. But one fact is obvious, viz. strong prejudices, discriminations and inter-group rivalries are present and urgent evils and tension and friction have mounted menacingly in our own generation on account of these wrong conceptions about 'race'.

Here are a few:-

(1) Such phrases in common use as "the Tamil race", "the Sinhalese race", "the Malayali race", "the Hindi race" etc. have no warrant at all. Even "the Jewish race" has been declared a myth "Today, however, anti-semitism has resorted to the

myth of a 'Jewish race' in an attempt to justify itself and to provide a pseudo-scientific cloak for its political and economic motives" (according to the UNESCO pamphlet "Racial Myths").

"National, religious, geographical, linguistic and cultural groups do not necessarily coincide with racial groups; and the cultural traits of such groups have no demonstrated connection with racial traits". "Americans are not a race, nor are Frenchmen, nor Germans; nor ipso facto is any other national group. Muslims and Jews are no more races than are Roman Catholics and Protestants..... nor are people who live in Iceland or Britain or India or who speak English or any other language (whether Tamil or Sinhalese) or who are culturally

spite of the fact that the Tamil-speaking group has a cultural and religious tradition common to all the linguistic groups in India.

This does not mean that there is "a Tamil race" or "a Dravidian race". The "Dravidian race" is an utter swindle, a pseudo-scientific cloak for political and economic exploitation.

"Unfortunately, however, when most people use the term 'race' they do not do in the sense above defined. To most people, a 'race' is a group of people whom they choose to describe as a 'race'. Thus many national, religious, geographical linguistic or cultural groups have, in such loose usage, been called

Priorities mixed up

(Continued from page 3)

of late - the Naxalites during the presidential election, the leftists during the anti-Tamil riots of July '83 - that they are likely to be sceptical this time. Especially since it would take the ingenuity of a total idiot to believe that a medical student would volunteer to kill himself just after getting through his exams! But without the truth being publicised, the government may well get more repressive. Athulathmudali has promised an "impartial" inquiry into the events; does this mean, one wonders, whether the usual inquiry is partial.

But what the inquiry will reveal is moot. Students are scared to testify against the police, for fear of retribution. Especially since the police are now killing, let alone maiming with absolutely no justification. A second student was shot dead in Colombo on the 21st when all the Universities went on

protest against the killing in Peradeniya. Nearly every student in Kelaniya and in Colombo, went on the streets shouting slogans, holding placards and painting graffiti on official vehicles (private vehicles were not touched). Student anger was at its extreme since the killing of the medical student in Peradeniya had no provocation or excuse. The killing in Colombo resulted when one group of demonstrating students were cornered into a hostel by police firing tear gas. Thereupon, for some inexplicable reason, they opened fire and two students were shot; one succumbed to his injuries. What is amazing about this is that the police fired not into the air, or, as usual, into the knees but into the chest.

The enraged students then stormed a bus, threw out the passengers and set fire to it - while all the time the police watched without doing anything. The reason for this became apparent later, when the police claimed, at the magisterial inquiry, that they had shot at the student while the bus was being burnt with passengers in it. This was the primary justification for the killing. There are eye-witnesses, not only students by residents of the area, who could controvert this claim before a proper judicial inquiry. That is to say, the police killed a student by mistake, and then let them set fire to the bus in order to give themselves an excuse. That they should then go on and lie before a magistrate, and then have the government back them up, is quite a terrifying thing to contemplate. What will probably happen after the "inquiry"

is that the constables responsible will be promoted - after all, the government has done similar things before.

But then, the Opposition is likely to take up the cause. (This is exactly what Jayewardene did in 1976, as Leader of the Opposition, when a student was killed in Peradeniya. The government has appealed to the Opposition not to capitalise on the situation, a warning the opposition is not likely to heed, fortunately. It has now come to a stage where the government is trying to cover-up what is basically the murder of two students. If this is allowed to happen, the consequences for the country are disastrous.

What the students demand, as an absolute minimum, is the removal of the police station from Peradeniya, and a full inquiry into all the events - where eye-witnesses which could include conscientious police officers who had expressed shock at the way things were handled, could be subpoenaed to give evidence. This is what we owe the two students who died. But this would be useless without comprehensive end far-reaching reform of the University system in general - with the accent being on greater academic freedom and proper funding, without which it would be meaningless. The trouble began because there was not enough of it. Otherwise, Jayewardene may as well follow up his gift of a police station with that of a crematorium - to all Universities.

by **M. Vaitialingam**

Turkish or Chinese and the like, thereby describable as 'races'. (vide UNESCO pamphlet "Race myths").

An Englishman travelling in the U.S.A. finds that he is commonly recognised as English and the American in Europe is also recognised as such but that does not mean that there is an "English race" or an "American race", style of dress, type of gesture, habits of hygiene, turns of speech—all these things dependent on social environment and not on biological heredity—combine to facilitate recognition.

Easily Recognised

A Tamil from South India or Sri Lanka travelling in North India may be easily recognised as a Tamil, in

'race'. The biological fact of race and the myth of 'race' should be distinguished.

For all practical social purposes 'race' is not so much a biological phenomenon as a social myth. The myth 'race' has created an enormous amount of human and social damage" (vide "race concept").

(To be Continued Next Week)

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Some refugees don't want to go

(by Kendall Hopman)

Around 5,600 refugees are still in the welfare centres run by the Rehabilitation Ministry despite steady increases in financial incentives by the government, international aid agencies and other non-governmental organisations.

The outright grant provided to each family which leaves the camp has been increased from the initial Rs. 3,000 to Rs. 11,000 but neither this nor other schemes launched by the ministry have succeeded in resettling what rehabilitation officials call a "hard-core" group of refugees.

Meanwhile the exodus of repatriate refugees has also slowed down ministry sources said.

This has prompted the authorities to transfer the inmates of the 'mini' refugee camp at the Saraswathie Hall in Bambalapiliya to the largest camp—

the 2149 strong Ratmalana welfare centre. This is scheduled for August 5.

This the sources said, is expected to induce some families to return to their homes, as many are reluctant to go to Ratmalana which is comparatively crowded.

Outlining the increased financial incentive package the sources said each family was provided with Rs.6,000 for a house lease, Rs. 3,000 to start a commercial venture, Rs. 1,000 as a settling in allowance, and Rs. 150 to each adult as a ration allowance. This scheme has now been extended to the outstations too.

The breakdown of the number of refugees in the outstations is, Jaffna 484, Kilinochchi 1,662, Vavuniya 490, Mullaitivu 110, Mannar 254 and Batticaloa 52.

(Sun, 28th July)

G. C. S. U. DEPUTATION

This is the text of a press statement released by Gunasena Mahanama, the General Secretary of the G.C.S.U:

A deputation from the Government Clerical Service Union met Mr. D. B. I. P. S. Siriwardana, Secretary of Public Administration, on 17th July to discuss the Public Administration Circular No. 254 issued on promotion regarding officers who participated in the July 1980 strike and since reinstated.

They also discussed the conflicting policies adopted by various Ministries in calling back strikers and impediments placed on their promotions.

The General Secretary, Mr. Gunasena Mahanama, the General Treasurer, Mr. Gamini Jayasekera and Assistant Treasurer Mr. Stanley Wimalasiri de Silva participated in the discussion on behalf of the Union.

When the deputation pointed out that by attempt-

ing to safeguard the rights of those falling under 4 (1) and 7 (1) of the Cabinet memorandum, those who have actually taken part in the strike have been deprived of their rights, the Secretary of Public Administration replied that the circular was issued as a solution to the queries raised by various departments and ministries to avoid any injustice that would occur in respect of those categorised under 4 (1) and 7 (1) namely those who submitted medical certificates and those who did not come to work due to pressure. He added that there was no intention to

deprive others of their rights.

When the deputation explained that some heads of departments adopted a wrong notion regarding the applications of the members for supra grade examination which close on 26th July, the Secretary said that it would be re-investigated.

Mr. Siriwardana also said that authority for reinstatement of strikers is left to the discretion of each Minister and as there are no instructions to prevent any inconsistency in the policy of reinstatement, he cannot intervene in the matter.

News Briefs

Mandativu Relay Station Closed

Mandativu Relay Station has been closed. The accessories connected with the transmitter have been transported to Colombo under heavy military guard. This followed the hi-jacking of the 6 Kilowatts transmitter. It is now reported that this transmitter has since been confiscated by Indian Customs officials and investigations are proceeding.

UNICEF DEVELOPMENT

U.N.I.C.E.F. officials will visit Jaffna on 10-8-84 to get first hand knowledge of Development Projects. U.N. I.C.E.F. Head-Quarters have requested the Municipal Commissioner, C. T. Sivagnanam to re-start these projects.

World Buddhist Council

The World Buddhist Council was inaugurated by the President, J. R. Jayewardene on 2-8-84 at the Bandaranaike Memorial Hall. The session will end on 7-8-84.

Explosions at Jaffna Railway Station

Bombs were hurled at the Jaffna Railway Station when the Inter-city Express came into the Station on 30-7-84. Payments were being made to the staff at that time. A security cordon was immediately thrown around the station and there was tension amongst passengers and railway staff. There was no damage and no one was injured. The scheduled time of departure of the 'Inter-city' is 1 p. m. but on that day it left at 12-40 p. m. As a result many passengers were stranded. TULF President, M. Sivasithamparam, and Secretary-General, A. Amir-

thalingam, were scheduled to travel on this train.

Israeli Interests Section

Informed sources say that the Israeli Interests Section 'Mossad' may leave this country by October this year. This branch was here at the invitation of the Government for advice on methods to combat 'terrorism'. Pressure has been brought to bear on the Government for sometime from the Arab countries for its removal.

Festivals

The Annual Festival of Nallur Sri Kandasamy Kovil commenced on 2.8.84 at 10 a.m. with the ceremonial Flag hoisting Ceremony.

The Sandilipay Madurai Meenachchi Amman Kovil Festival started on 1. 8. 84 and will go on till 9. 8. 84.

Arrangements have been made to conduct the Vel Festival at Kathir Velayuthan Sivan Kovil at Chetty Street, Colombo from 9.8.84

The Sinna Madhu Festival of Our Lady of the Rosary will be celebrated on 5.8.84. A Novena preparatory to the Feast has already started.

The annual Festival of the Church of South India (Jaffna Branch) for children will be conducted at the Girls' High School, Uduvil today. Bishop Ambalavanar will inaugurate the Festival which will be preceded by a procession and exhibition.

The Esala Perahera in Kandy started on 2.8.84 and will go on till 11.8.84. Nearly 3000 police personnel will stand-by on security duties.

SPORTS

by
Victor
Kiruparaj



Jeyanthi Somasegaram

The Northern athletic firmament has of late produced a new "star" in the form of Jeyanthi Somasegaram whose brilliance had eclipsed the brightness of some of the dazzling ones in the wider national canopy.

Jeyanthi, Vembadi's up and coming star, did proud to her school when she grabbed with nonchalant ease the Under 19 'High' and the 100 metres Hurdles events at the Junior National Championships concluded recently establishing a new mark of 4' 10" in the former and clocking 17.8 seconds in the latter.

Her performance would have been much better if the conditions under foot had been far more ideal. In this context, it must be borne in mind that she had to compete under unfavourable conditions, least conducive to record-breaking

performance. Had the conditions under foot been favourable, Jeyanthi would certainly have gone over the 5 foot mark in the 'High' and clipped a good second off in the Hurdles event.

Jeyanthi first shot into the limelight of Sri Lankan athletics in 1982 when she lifted the under 17 'High' and the 100 metres Hurdles events at the Junior Nationals that year. She did 4'8" in the former and registered 17.5 seconds in the latter.

It was as a Junior athletic at Vembadi Girls' High School that Jeyanthi's athletic talent was spotted out. She soon came under the tutelage and expert guidance of K. Wimalarajah, knowledgeable sports officer, Jaffna Town, and athletic coach, Jaffna and

Mannar districts. He took her under his charge and in his own inimitable way worked on her 'style' and "take off" in the 'High'. He made her change her old and outmoded 'Scissors' style to the more modern 'straddle'. She took up to this change as a duck takes to water, and gradually 'soared' higher and higher till she established a new Jaffna mark of 4' 11 1/2" in the 'High' at the Jaffna District Inter A.G.A. Divisions' Track and Field Meet held in April this year.

It was in the 100 metres Hurdles event that coach Vimalarajah, himself a high hurdler of national class made Jeyanthi go through her arduous paces, instilling in her not only an awareness of the speed rhythm and technique involved but also a natural flare for the event.

Jeyanthi is also a sprinter of no mean repute. She will participate in the 'High' 100 metres hurdles and the metric "furlong" at the All-Island Women's Athletic Championship's to be held this weekend in Colombo. It is very likely that she would go all out to make certain of her pet events.

By the time the Saturday Review is out on the newspaper stands, who knows, Jeyanthi might have hit the headlines with her grand performance. We wish this young star all the best.

Saturday Review

SRI LANKA

SUGAR BARONS ON THE PROWL

by a Special Correspondent

Opposition is steadily growing in Monaragala to the United National Party Government's plan to develop the sugar industry in the district in collaboration with three foreign multi-national companies.

This is because of the fear of the farmers in the district that they would not only lose their traditional properties but also would become vassals of the sugar barons.

The Government has already declared three districts—Monaragala, Mannar and Vavuniya—as 'Agricultural Promotion Zones'. These areas have been made open to foreign companies for export-oriented agriculture and agro-based industries. Companies investing have been offered tax concessions and other incentives, similar to those offered to investors in the Free Trade Zone at Katunayake.

Three big foreign companies have come to Monaragala for sugar cane growing and sugar industry. They are *Meta International* (an Indian-African joint venture), *Buckers Agriculture* (a British Company) and a Dutch company named *RVA*.

Monaragala Sugar Company Ltd. is a joint venture between *Meta International* and the Government of Sri Lanka. A decision has been taken to completely evacuate people from 12,000 acres of land that forms the central area for sugar cultivation by the company and to make it compulsory for farmers in 42,000 acres of land that surround this area to cultivate sugar cane. These farmers would be compelled to sell their only product—sugar cane—to this company.

A sugar producing factory would be built at the centre of this central area.

A sugar cane nursery has already been started for this purpose. Land clearing to demarcate the borders of the central area has already begun, and in certain places trees have been cut down in land owned by farmers.

The farmers have expressed their opposition to these activities.

There are about 500 families living within this central area. Some of them occupy Government land as encroachers, some others have Government permits, while still others have legal ownership to their land. Over the years the people have grown permanent crops such as coconuts, jak, lime, and also short-term crops such as bananas, indicating that they have made these lands their permanent residence. There is a large number of permanent houses too.

Neither the Company nor the Government has said anything, so far, about the future of these people. It is difficult to see who would take the responsibility for their future. The people have, therefore, decided that they will not leave their land.

Once this whole area is covered with sugar cane, the sole buyer of the product would be the company, and it will be able to offer extremely low prices. The farmers will then lose their present ability to grow a few selected crops that would ensure their day-to-day food needs at a minimum subsistence level.

Those who would be evacuated from their lands, and those who would be cultivating sugar cane in the peripheral area would become enslaved by the company.

The only forest reserve in this whole area, known as Haddawa, is also a part of the acreage given to the company.

Contracts have been already given to clear this reserve and to take away the valuable timber. This could easily lead to environmental problems and the risk of losing the water resources.

The farmers have formed organisations in their areas in association with the All Lanka Peasants' Congress to resist the Government's plan.

Strikers' suicide toll up

The suicide toll of the 1980 July strikers has reached 20, while 7000 strikers still remain jobless.

This is stated in a memorandum by the Sri Lanka Government Clerical Union

Palawatte Sugar Company, a joint venture between *Buckers Agriculture Co.*, and the Government of Sri Lanka, is going ahead with the clearing of agricultural land for another sugar project.

Nakkala Sugar Co., to which 6000 acres have been allocated in Nakkala area for a similar project initiated by the RVA has not yet started work.

to commemorate the 4th "anniversary" of the strike.

The memorandum points out that President Jayewardene had on four occasions promised to reinstate the strikers but to date he had failed to do so. Two of the occasions when these promises were made coincided with the President's birthday. Even Cabinet decisions were taken to reinstate the July 1980 strikers.

It also states that one of the conditions sought by Mr. Maithripala Senanayake if he were to support the government at the last Referendum was the reinstatement of all the 1980 strikers and the government had given him an assurance to take them back.

atement of all the 1980 strikers and the government had given him an assurance to take them back.

The memorandum states that at a recent strike of private bus operators a Minister, his son and even his relations supported that strike.

The memorandum also observed that while the Rural Industrial Development Minister Mr. S. Thondaman was permitted to stage a successful strike, public servants have been victimised for exercising a workers' democratic right, (*The Island*, 19th July 1984)

NEW BUILDING FOR JAFFNA CO-OP. STORES

Arrangements are under way to construct a new building for the Jaffna Co-operatives Stores Ltd., whose old building at No. 420, Hospital Road, was gutted by fire on 9th April this year, along with many other shops and offices in the area.

The loss suffered in the fire is estimated at nearly Rs. 15 million, the Managing Director, Dr. V. Yoganathan told the Saturday Review.

An institution well known in the North, the Jaffna Co-operative Stores Ltd., was founded in 1918 by a few prominent citizens of Jaffna under the initiative of the late Mr. V. Arumugampillai.

It was registered as a limited liability company under the Joint Stock Companies Ordinance as there were certain restrictions under the Co-operative Societies Ordinance which prohibited the operation of a business of the kind mooted on co-operative lines.

The first meeting of the pioneers of the Company

was held on 21st July 1918. Mr. A. Sabapathy, a member of the then Legislative Council, was chosen Chairman, while Mr. Arumugampillai served as its first Manager.

At the start, the Company traded only in paddy, rice, cereals and pulses.

But progress, though steady, was rather slow. This has been attributed in to a Company publication the fact that "the average Jaffna citizen is cautious to invest in any new ventures, and, therefore, it was a difficult task at the start to raise the required share capital. An examination of the Company's balance sheets of the early years reveal that the paid up share capital of the Company has been increasing year by year at a slow rate. Door to door canvassing had been made by the pioneers to collect and increase the Company's share capital."

The accounts submitted at the first annual general meeting, covering the first nine months of operation reflected a capital of Rs. 8,663 and a net profit of Rs. 1,833.

From these modest beginnings, the Company gradually extended its activities to include the sale of cigarettes (as the distributors for Ceylon Tobacco Co. in the Jaffna district), the sale and servicing of motor vehicles and the supply of petrol.

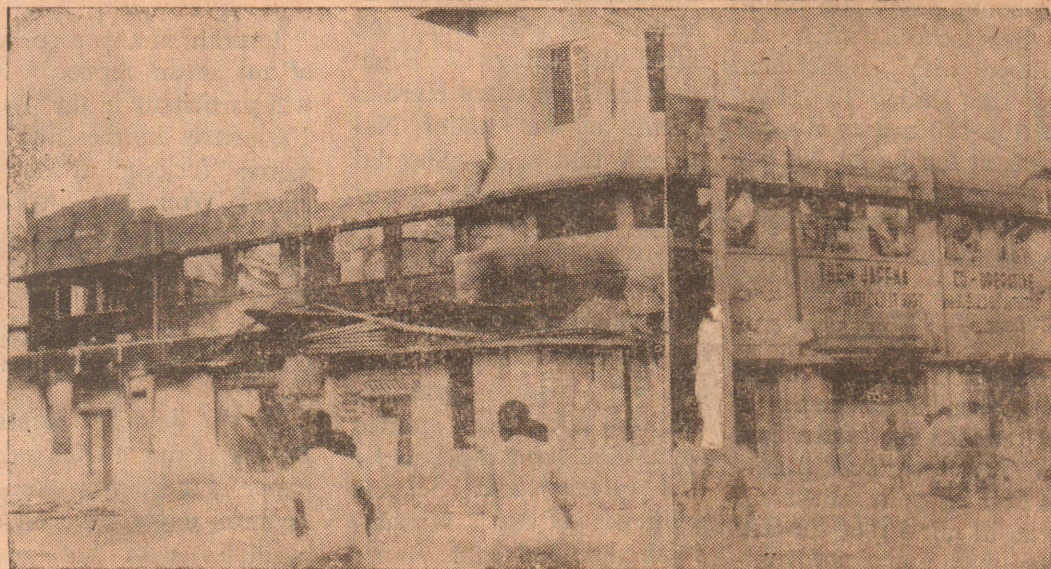
By 1983 it was in a flourishing condition, the accounts for the year ending 31st March, 1983 reflecting a net profit (before taxation) of Rs. 1,260,907.

The Company has had a record of ensuring an equitable distribution of essential consumer items at controlled and fair prices, especially during times of emergencies.

Then came the fire, which destroyed years of effort and achievement.

Until the new building comes up, the Company is carrying on its retail business from the branch establishment at Hospital Street, Jaffna.

Both Dr. Yoganathan and Mr. S. Sivagnanam, the present Chairman, are confident that before long the Company would bounce back to its former position as the premier business house in Sri Lanka which is operating on a company basis.



The old Co-op. building: a burnt-out case