

# Saturday Review

## SRI LANKA

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### Editorial

## "Double Standards"

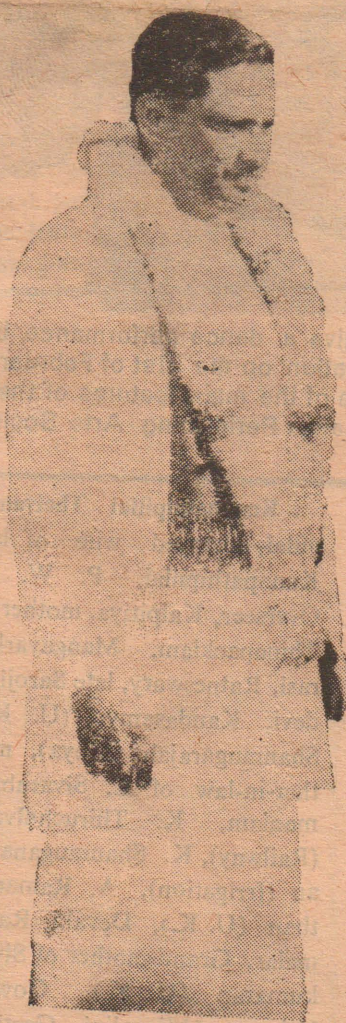
There is no use pretending that the White Paper on Education has got anywhere near the top of the popularity list in the country. From an objective assessment of the reactions so far, one must certainly grant this much: that FOUR Democratic Forces are solidly behind this virgin white document—the Police, the Army, the Air Force and the Fire Brigade! All four of these were poised to go into action on the drop of a helmet on behalf of the much-talked of White Paper. Much-talked of, yes, but how many who dare protest against this, have read the White Paper?—asks a Government spokesman. Apart from the possibility that even those who dare defend it have probably not read it (not to mention the worthy members of the Army, Fire Brigade etc.), the argument may seem logical. After all, it was said of a more renowned publication: Tolstoy's "War and Peace"—that practically everybody had heard of it, some even owned copies, but none had read it through!

But our concern today is really not on the White Paper. Our concern is over the kind of falsetto Government reaction against popular protests and demonstrations. The "Daily News" wrote a brave editorial on this subject last Thursday under the headline "Rejection of Hooliganism". It said, inter alia, "..... Our way of life permits of no surrender to thuggery... There have been instances where men holding commanding positions have accommodated rowdies and so lent their patronage to smalltime thugs..... The rule of law admits of no double standards..... It has been a point of honour with the U. N. P. under President Jayawardene to enforce discipline on his own followers....."

Brave words! Courageous journalism! Inspiring sentiments! But alas coming from a Government-kept newspaper, challenging the very right of democratic dissent and demonstration, the words sound like heavy artillery directed at a few buzzing mosquitoes. After all, what had the White Paper demonstrators done? Have they burnt down Public Libraries? Newspaper offices? Houses of Members of Parliament?

We invite the readers to go over again the quoted words of the "Daily News". We invite them to imagine (fondly of course) that the premier English National Newspaper in Sri Lanka had written these words in the wake of the dastardly acts of hooliganism and thuggery in Jaffna on the nights of May 31st and June 1st, 1981! Particularly the words:... "the rule of law admits of no double standards!"

# Election nip in the air - as P.M. prepares to get back



When Prime Minister R. Premadasa steps down on Sri Lanka soil after two months, on February 21st, having completely recovered from his gall bladder operation in the United States, he might well find the entire political landscape changed.

Knowledgeable political sources close to the government say that due to the Premier's recent illness, he may be relieved of some of his important functions such as Housing. It is also recalled that the Prime Minister's ambitious and massive housing programmes have met with reverses in recent months.

### New political Front

Tycoon Upali Wijewardene who has through prestigious journals abroad revealed his undisguised political ambitions, is likely to head a new political Front which will be based in the deep South of Sri Lanka; its slogan—Sinhala and Buddhism.

Tipped to be his political aides are: M. D. H. Jayawardene, the free-wheeling, six-foot ex-Finance Minister, who has in recent times enjoyed the license to criticise his own government; and Dr. W. Dahanayake, Galle's "man for all seasons".

1982 has been designated "Election Year" by no less a person than President Jayawardene himself.

Administrative machinery has already gazetted the complete electoral lists and the number of members under the new Constitution.

### Polarisation of forces

Drop-outs from the splintered Sri Lanka Freedom Party and dissatisfied elements from the United National Party are also expected to join the new Front. Hectic behind-the-scenes activity now going on, are expected to lead to a new polarisation of political forces in the country.

Meanwhile, Elections Commissioner M. A. Piyasekera has gazetted the electoral districts and the number of members. There will be 22 electoral districts and 196 members for the next Parliament.

All political parties and independent groups contesting in each district have to have a third more than the number of members to be elected from that district, as candidates on their nomination papers.

Colombo will have 21 members and 28 candidates, Gampaha 17 members and 23 candidates, Kurunegala 16 members and 22 candidates, Kandy 12 members and 16 candidates and Jaffna, Galle and Kalutara 11 members and 15 candidates each. Vanni will have 5 members and 7 candidates and Batticaloa and Trincomalee 4 members and 16 candidates each.

### Passport office in Jaffna: Minister Hameed's assurance

This assurance was given by Minister for Foreign Affairs Janab A. C. S. Hameed in Parliament, on Monday the 8th.

The M. P. for Nallur, Mr. M. Sivasithamparam raised the matter in the House and pointed out

that the people of the North experienced great difficulties in obtaining passports as they had to travel all the way to Colombo to get one.

The SATURDAY REVIEW (6 February) editorially spotlighted this issue.

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## Saturday Review

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## Ambassador's daughter weds

The marriage took place recently of SHOBA, daughter of Mr. PUNCH COOMARASWAMY, Singapore's Ambassador in Washington and MRS. KAILA COOMARASWAMY to HARI VIJAYAN, son of CAPT. and MRS. SEGAR, in Singapore. Both families hail from Vaddukoddai / Araly, in Jaffna.

A Sri Lankan girl SUBHADRA SUNDHARALINGAM had her Bharata Natya Arangam, followed by a public dance recital in Madras, Tamil Nadu, recently. Subhadra is a pupil of Bharata Kalanjali, founded by Sri Dhananjayan and Smt. Shantha Dhananjayan.

The public recital was entitled "Aradhanai" and the theme of the recital was "Endaro Mahanubhavulu Andariki Vandanam" ("Great Souls are indeed many salutations to them all")

Subhadra opened her recital with Nattyanjali in Ragamalika Panchanada, an invocation to the guardian deities of the Fire Arts — Ganesha, Saraswathi, Vishnu and Siva and obeisance to the preceptor "Guru". Her repertoire included "Varnam" — "Mayam Etho Swamy". The lyric by composer Papanasam Sivan; Keerthanam — "En Palli Kondir Aiyai" by Arunachala Kavirayar; a well-known Padam — "Thikkuthuriyatha Kaatil" by renowned poet Subrahmanya Bharathi.

The Nattuvangam was by Sri Dhananjayan and Smt. Shantha Dhananjayan; vocal by Sri Aravindakshan and Kumari Premeela. Other accompanists were Mirudangam — Sri Kannan, Violin — Sri Padmanabhan, Veena by Sri Kannan and flute by Sri Unnikrishnan.

Subhadra is the daughter of Mr. V Sundharalingam and Parasakthy Sundharalingam of Pamankade Lane, Colombo 6, Sri Lanka and Subramaniam Colony, Madras.



Anandarani Rajaratnam will give a dance performance based on Subrahmanya Bharati's poems on Women's Emancipation on the 21st of February at Veerasingham Hall, Jaffna. The dance performance is one of the main features of the two-day Cultural Festival that will be conducted by the Sri Lanka Performing Arts Society on its successful completion of three years of activities.

## Deaths

**Srikantha, Mylvaganam O. B. E.** Retired Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Lands and Land Development, beloved husband of Maheswary, loving father of Malinidevi Yoganingam (Chartered Accountant) Papua New Guinea, Capt. Janakam (Air Ports Authority) father-in-law of Dr. V. Rasnayagam (New Zealand), Chithra and Pathma, expired. Cremated at Kombayan Manal Crematorium at 4 p. m. on Sunday, Seventh. "Sri Manai", Palaly Road, Kondavil

**Kanapathipillai Theivanairpillai**—Beloved wife of late Kanapathipillai, P. W. D. Overseer, Kalpitiya, mother of Thinapackiam, Mangayarkarasi, Ratneswary, late Sarojinidevi, Kandasamy (U. K.), Shanmugarajah (Libya), mother-in-law of C. Sivasubramaniam, K. Thiruchelvam (Railway), K. Shanmuganathan (Irrigation), A. Ramanaathan (U. K.), Devaki, Rajamalar, Grand-mother of Sivakumaran (U. K.), Gowri, Vaheesan, Mirnalini, Geetha, Dhyalan, Gajan and Anusha, expired—Moolai Road, Vaddukoddai.

**Damayanthi, George, Stella and Christabel**, brother-in-law of Dr. Neelaranjithrajah, (U.K.) and S. Chinniah (Cement Corporation, Puttalam) died under tragic circumstances. 107, Vystwyke Road, Mattakuliya.

**Srikanthan—Rasadorai Srikanthan** (Formerly of Carsons) dearly beloved husband of Sasidevi, loving father of Jayashree, Viji (Ceylon Trade), Vasanthi, Mohan (Dubai), Sukhanya (Walkers), Pradeep (Oman) and Sharmila (Student St. Lawrence's), son of the late Mr. and Mrs. M. K. Rasadorai of Trincomalee. brother of Sandiran, Mahendran, Pushpawathi and late Leelawathi and Nagendran son-in-law of late Mr. & Mrs. Vijayaratanam, father-in-law of Kanthan and Kula (both of Oman) and Hilda, expired—E3, 2nd Floor, Govt. Flats, Bambalapitiya.

**Chandran—David** — Student, Wesley College, beloved son of R. C. David (Proprietor Ceylon Marine and Hardware Stores) and Thangarani, brother of Rajan (Ocean Trading) Grace (U. K.), Daisy, Robin, Lily

# Bharati Jubilee in Russia

The hundredth birth anniversary of Subramanya Bharati, the outstanding Tamil poet (1882–1921), was marked on December 11, 1981. His name is known not only in India, but far beyond its borders. Soviet people also know the poet as an ardent proponent of Soviet-Indian friendship. His poetry has been translated into Russian many times in this country, and Soviet Indologists study his works at length.

The Soviet Union in making preparations for marking the anniversary. A jubilee commission has been set up in Moscow at the initiative of the Union of Friendship Societies. It includes well-known writers, scientists and men of art. The Soviet Writers Union, the Soviet Peace Committee, the Soviet Institute of Oriental Studies at the USSR Academy of Sciences, Moscow and Leningrad State Universities, and the major Moscow publishing houses, Progress and Khudozhostvennaya Literatura, are also taking an active part in these preparations. The commission is headed by famous Soviet Writer Sergei Baruzdin and Vice-President of the Soviet-Indian Friendship Society, Prof. Evgeny Chelyshev.

Under the jubilee programme there are plans to give an account of the great poet's life and creative activity by the mass media, and to publish his poetry in Russian. The Institute of Oriental Studies will bring out a book entitled Subramanya Bharati in the series "Oriental Scientists and Writers". The jubilee programme includes seminars at the Institute of Oriental Studies where scholars will present papers on Bharati's literary works.

Bharati's poetical legacy has been known to a broad Soviet readership. In 1963 a collection of Bharati's poems was published in Russian which consisted of 24 works from different periods. These included "Desiya Gitangal," the famous poem "Pudiyarushya," "Vasana Kavithai," and "Kuyil pattu". In the seventies Bharati's verses were published in this country in Russian in various collections. An anthology of modern Indian poetry Friends' Voices, translated by Sergei Severtsov, including six of Bharati's poems, was issued in Alma-Ata in 1980.

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# Political Causerie by GAMINI

## The most-awaited visitor this year— Sri Lanka's own P.M.

Undoubtedly the most distinguished and eagerly awaited visitor to Sri Lanka this year will be its own Prime Minister, the Hon. Ranasinha Premadasa.

Having left our shores on December 18 for California for medical treatment, accompanied by a doctor, his Secretary (official) and two others but not the wife, 56-year Mr. Premadasa left for home via Japan and Hawaii arriving in late January in Singapore, where he was reportedly joined briefly by his wife. He is still there.

The Prime Minister of a country is not an ordinary person. His welfare, his health is the concern of all its citizens. They have a right to learn what exactly is wrong with him, what has been done about it and how he is progressing.

The Prime Minister's Office had a duty by the country to keep the people regularly informed. This is what is done in other democratic countries in similar situations.

Why was it not done in our Prime Minister's case? What appeared in the official media was mostly vague statements, giving rise to all manner of speculations.

Is it that the people do not matter, or that the Prime Minister's "illness" is a private affair? The least that can be said is that a bad precedent has been established.

The latest information is that Mr. Premadasa will arrive in Colombo in mid-February. This is certainly an event eagerly anticipated by friend and foe alike.

Knowledgeable sources say his return will mark the beginning of a new phase in the ongoing power struggle within the United National Party.

### WHO FOOTS THE BILL?

The opposition parties, naturally, are trying to make the most out of the Prime Minister's prolonged absence. One of the most pertinent issues raised in this connection appeared in the Sri Lanka Freedom Party weekly "The Nation".

It noted, "Under the rules and regulations of this country, the Prime Minister and other Ministers must bear their own expenses if they choose to go abroad for medical treatment. Not even the President is entitled to such treatment at public expense.

"If they be so ill as to need treatment abroad, the Government could allow them the necessary foreign exchange for which they must pay in rupees.

"Still less are the Prime Minister and Ministers in this country permitted by rule or tradition to take with them valets, doctors, Ministry officials and personal friends at public expense.

"The only individuals Government could pay for are security personnel..."

"The Nation" recalled that when the late Dr. N. M. Perera then Minister of Finance, fell ill on an official visit to London in 1964 and when Mrs. Srima Bandaranaike, while she was Prime Minister, went to Yugoslavia for treatment, all the expenses were met personally by them.

It also recalled that when Mr. Felix Bandaranaike and his wife underwent eye surgery in London, they obtained funds from the High Commission, which were reimbursed by them. However, this was one of the charges of "abuse of power" made against Mr. Bandaranaike before the special Presidential Commission. The Commission exonerated him.

"Nevertheless, if Mr. Bandaranaike had to face such a charge in these circumstances, it is imperative that Mr. Premadasa should meet his own expenses and those of his companions other than the security officer," concludes "The Nation."

### MISSED OPPORTUNITY

That Indian President Sanjeeva Reddy was unable to fit Jaffna into his itinerary was regrettable for a reason that had nothing to do with him. If he came, President Jayewardene would most probably have accompanied him.

It would then have been Mr. Jayewardene's first visit to the North since the United National Party assumed office four and a half years ago... and a tangible endorsement of his proud claim made from

the historic Octagon of the Dalada Maligawa on July 28 1977: "Today I stand before you not only as the Prime Minister (as he then was) of the United National Party. I



President Jayewardene  
"I shall come back....."

am glad to say that I stand before you as the Prime Minister of all the people of this land" The last occasion Mr. Jayewardene visited Jaffna was in 1976, when he and his retinue had a torrid time. He was interrupted in mid sentence at a public meeting which was broken up by anti-UNP elements. He left the stage vowing "I shall come back to complete my speech."

### Away from pomp and pageantry

All the political big-wigs were there at the grand Independence Day celebrations in Anuradhapura.

But how many of them bothered to proceed a few miles into the interior, to places like Medawachchiya, Horowupotana and Mihintale, and see the plight of the peasant families, vast numbers of whom are reported to be facing starvation due to the prolonged drought?

If they had done so, then they would have been imbued with a greater sense of urgency in organising relief for the affected people.

The situation in Anuradhapura district as well as in other districts, like Hambantota and Batticaloa, which

also have had no rain for a considerable time, is reported to be so grave that there is justification for summoning a special session of Parliament to sanction money for relief work.

Or do the peasants who produce the nation's food matter only at election time?

### "Pup of a politician yapping at the moon"

"A pup of a politician yapping at the moon!" That's how a colleague dismissed the statement alleged to have been made by Education Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe that persons who opposed the White Paper on Education Reforms should be horse-whipped.

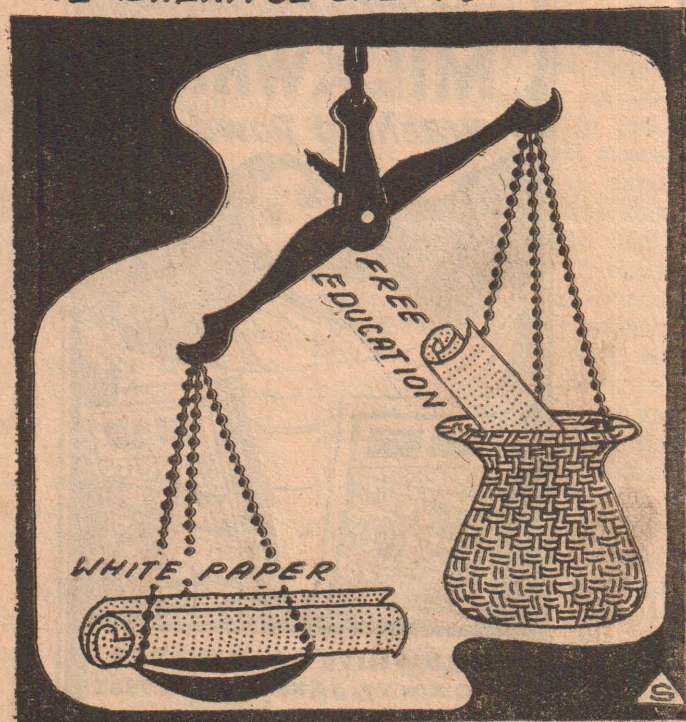
If he had indeed made that statement, it cannot be dismissed so lightly. It reveals an autocratic streak unworthy of a member of a Government which professes to be committed to democratic values.

If the Minister is serious about what he said, there is a member of the UNP itself, who eminently qualifies for the punishment. He is none other than Galle's Dr. W. Dahanayake, who during the debate in Parliament made

a scathing attack on the White Paper, virtually saying that the proposed reforms, if implemented, would ring the death-knell of free education. Incidentally, most daily newspapers did not give much publicity to Dr. Dahanayake's speech.

Then how about the statement said to have been made by Justice Minister Nissanka Wijeyeratne that 'English will never be a compulsory subject under the proposed reforms while the White Paper clearly states that at the Grade 8 examination "pupils will be tested in ALL the subjects in the common curriculum" (which includes English)' and that at the General Certificate of Education Examination "students will be tested at the national level in five subjects," including English?

### THE BALANCE SHEETS



(This is the third and final instalment of Mr. Sunil Bastian's article continued from the two previous issues.)

Post '74 - a qualitatively different situation:

If in the sixties we could speak of the Tamil grievances under the areas of discrimination, the seventies saw the development of a qualitatively different situation. First there was the formation of the TULF and the emergence of the demand for a separate state. Parallel to this was the promulgation of the 1972 Constitution which gave special status to Buddhism and removed the security that the earlier Constitution had for the minorities. In the predominantly Tamil areas all other political parties and political groups other than the TULF were reduced to an insignificant position and at the same time we see the emergence of militant youth groups who gradually took to the path of armed struggle to secure their demands.

The reaction of the state to this situation has been to increase the activities of the armed forces in the North.

From 1974 onwards Jaffna people have been subjected to outbursts of violence initiated by the so called forces of law and order of the state. These incidents could be summarised as follows: 1974 Shooting by the police at the International Tamil Research Conference; 1977 August - Police on the rampage in Jaffna followed by communal violence in the whole country; 1979 July - Emergency in Jaffna, arrests and six deaths reported; 1981 June - Police and Army on the rampage again. What we notice is that within the past four years major incidents of violence had taken place in Jaffna at two year intervals. In between these outbursts, the rounding up of people, house to house searches, and other forms of harassment take place regularly. Such regulations like the Anti Terrorist Act give wide powers to the Police and

# Sinhala-Tamil relations: the most crucial problem of Sri Lankan society

Armed forces to carry out these deeds. The number of people arrested and kept in custody is not known. There have been allegations of torture being used widely. Those of us who react to the situation in Jaffna only when there are large scale outbursts of overt violence, fail to realise that violence practised by the organs of state security have become a part of every day reality of Jaffna. Oppressed more than any other section of our population by the injustices of our capitalist system, with its deepening crisis, Tamil people are standing up to this oppression with the Jaffna peninsula as a centre of grim resistance. In this process they are already resorting to violent methods. The state is reacting to this with violence, using the Police and Armed forces. Therefore in present day Sri Lanka, in the National (Tamil) question we have the main point of contradiction of our society.

## Towards solutions - minority rights and communal harmony:

It is difficult to foresee a solution to this problem if there is no acceptance of the Tamil grievances and a basis laid for their solution. As mentioned above, the violations of the human rights of Tamil people through arbitrary arrest, torture, shooting, etc. where armed forces are directly involved have given a qualitatively new stage to the Tamil grievances. It is difficult to think about harmony for such a community, if their rights are constantly denied in this fashion by the governments supported predominantly by the other community. Instead

of solutions to these grievances the reaction of the state is more oppressive laws that make it difficult to find a solution within the legal framework. When we consider the violent actions of the groups in the north in their attempt to exercise their right for self determination we must remember the constraints that are imposed by the constitution and laws on the people, which is making it more and more difficult to voice grievances within the constitutional framework.

Sometimes the already established D. D. C.s are put forward as a possible solution to many grievances of the Tamil

Is decentralisation of economic development really possible in the context of the developmental model presently followed? All the major development programmes carried out at present (Mahaveli, IPZ, Housing Development, Colombo Master Plan and Parliamentary complex, Master Plans for Tea and Rubber, Expansion of Sugar cultivation, Fisheries mechanisation, Fisheries harbour development and other part improvements, large industrial projects like Urea factory and Prima, etc.) are of the type that need centralised planning and implementation. They are capital intensive and have a large component of

by **SUNIL BASTIAN**

people. But even the Presidential Commission that was appointed before the establishment of the D. D. C.s did not think of it as a direct solution to the national question. But some expect D. D. C.s to be a step in the right direction because it is expected to bring about some sort of a devolution of power to the districts and facilitate the participation of people at the district level in the development programmes. But is this really possible?

In the analysis of the structure and the composition of the D. D. C.s the overwhelming power of the Executive Committee headed by the District Minister has been pointed out. It is claimed that this is really an extension of the Presidential powers through the District Minister, who will be his appointee, at the district level. The Executive Committee is responsible for the implementation of the development plans at the district level. The function of the elected members of the D. D. C. is only to 'approve the plans' that originate from the appropriate Minister and presented and implemented by the Executive Committee. Therefore in the Executive Committee of the D. D. C.s the President has a body that can effectively implement the plans originating from the centre and which can be controlled by him. The presence of powerless elected members gives an illusion that there is popular participation at the bottom and through that device the government has sold the word 'decentralisation' to those who for a long time in this country believed that a solution to the national question of this country could be found through some form of decentralisation.

foreign investment, either directly or as aid. These will be directed by authorities at the Centre, in liaison with the sources from which foreign capital emanate. Even the Integrated District Development Programme is one financed by the World Bank and implemented by the Ministry of Plan Implementation.

The Government has not made any provision for true decentralisation through the D. D. C. Bill and cannot do so due to the very nature of its development programmes. On the contrary, the trend is in the other direction - greater centralisation. The Constitution has created a strong Executive (President) who can carry out much of the development activities, with the help

of a technocracy and a bureaucracy collected around it. It does not have to answer to Parliament nor can Parliament control it through funds. Parliament is also made stable by eliminating defections that can bring down a government. In the proportional representation system the party puts forward a list of candidates, who, after being elected, will be completely under party control. People are also expected to vote for the party and not for individuals during the elections. All this has created a political structure that can have stability when it has to carry out unpopular measures, in attempting to further capitalist growth. It helps to minimise the instability arising due to pressures from the bottom. In such a situation, decentralisation is contrary to what is required by the development model followed.

In addition to the solutions to the major grievances of the Tamil people, a political structure giving a greater weightage than it is now to the minorities, has to be found if we are to work for communal harmony in our plural society. Thirdly, we also have to ensure through the legal framework that minorities are not discriminated against in any field. Finally action should be taken against all forms of chauvinistic propaganda that rouses one community against the other. It is only within such a framework that all forms of activity directed towards communal harmony have a chance to succeed. This does not mean that a solution to this question can be found with the help of legal reforms alone. But a proper legal and political framework lays the base for various other types of activities for communal harmony. But the question who will have the political will to bring about such changes ultimately remains.

(Concluded)

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Fr. PAUL CASPERSZ writes on —

## The Plantation areas: People and Problems

(Continued from  
S R. Vol. 1, No. 1,  
January 30, 1982)

What does the tea worker get in return? The highest illiteracy rate of all sectors in the island, the highest maternal and infant mortality rates, the highest rates of malnutrition, poor water supply, sanitation, housing. Of this last (at least in order to offer some evidence that all the rest can similarly be supported by figures) let us cite the 1980 UNICEF finding that the proportion of housing under 250 sq. ft. to total housing was 64 per cent in the estate sector, 28 in the villages and 27 in the towns and cities. It is not rare for us to meet, in the estate line-rooms, families of five or six members living, cooking, eating, sleeping, bearing and rearing children in one room 10 by 12 ft. with may be a front or back verandah 3 by 12 ft.

Why?

Basically, the answer lies in the secular economic, political and cultural isolation of the Tamil tea workers from everyone else in the country.

The British began the isolationist process: how deliberately and with what forethought of its disastrous consequences, it is difficult to say. Throughout the 19th and well into the 20th century not only was the estate isolated from the village but, through a series of vicious laws, regulations and customs, each estate was carefully sealed off from every other.

These isolationist processes gathered momentum when Sri Lanka, at the turn of this century, began to move forward to eventual constitutional independence. In fact, to isolation was added the factor of hostility, more or less overt. Isolation and hostility could have been mitigated or even completely eliminated, indeed imaginatively transformed into open acceptance and creative integration, by four sets of forces.

The first was formed by the Sri Lanka Tamils (about 11 per cent of the population) who constitute a group as ancient in the island as the majority Sinhalese. These Tamils could have espoused the cause of the Estate Tamils (about 9 per cent of the population). But they did not. One brilliant exception was Mr. S. J. V. Chelvanayagam. It was precisely his opposition to the Citizenship Act of 1948 and its decree of statelessness for the Estate Tamils that led him to break with the Tamil Congress and form the Federal Party. But for reasons still to be researched (at least,

by the present writer - would our readers please oblige him?), the newly created Federal Party does not seem to have pursued with any significant degree of resolution its espousal of the cause of justice for the Estate Tamils. Only in very recent years or months have the Jaffna Tamils begun to be aware that the estate Tamils and the other Tamils of 19th century Indian origin (about 9 per cent of the population) have their own problems and that these problems are very different from those of the Sri Lanka Tamils.

The second was the Trade Union Movement. In the

More than 60 per cent of all tea lands and all the larger estates have been taken over by the State. More than 50 per cent of the tea lands taken over are managed by two large public sector corporations: the Jannatha Estates Development Board and the Sri Lanka State Plantations Corporation. Gone forever, some thought, were the days of Brooke Bond, James Finlay, Lipton et al. Surplus value would no longer be drained out overseas. Democracy would replace the Superintendent's despotic rule. There would be a much better deal

England mansions on the top of the hill to the UNICEF sponsored estate creche and gingerly carry for a few moments an estate worker's baby. In the English language the former Superintendent is now called "Manager", but in Tamil and to the workers he is the Periya Dorai (Big Master) and his Assistant is the Sinna Dorai (the Small Master). Both dorais still live in 'bungalows', the middle grades such as the clerks and the medical assistants live in 'quarters' the workers (who are over 97 per cent of the estate populations) live in 'line-

## THE TAMIL ESTATE WORKERS (2)

late 1920s there was some hope that the newly emerging estate labour (Tamil) movement would link in fruitful symbiosis with the older urban (Sinhalese) unions. However, for a number of reasons these hopes did not materialize. Up to this day the estate labour movement has developed largely in unfortunate solitariness.

The third force was the Marxist. In the late 1930s the Trotskyite unions had significant success in certain areas in organizing the estate workers for the defence of their rights. But when war broke out in Europe, many Marxist leaders in Sri Lanka were forced to flee the country or go underground. When they returned they found that the estate workers had increasingly opted for the (Tamil) Ceylon Indian Congress. Then came the Citizenship and Franchise Acts which made the estate workers politically and electorally expendable. Ever since, the betrayal of the estate workers by the Marxists has been the greatest and costliest blunder of the Marxist movement in Sri Lanka.

The fourth is nationalization. This calls for a fuller comment.

The Land Reform Laws of 1972 and 1975 - passed during the tenure of the Bsdaranaike Government - took over the units of tea land which were over 50 acres in extent, owned either by private individuals or by companies. There was a French Revolution air about the event. Even Cuba, it was said, had not dared to be so radical in land expropriation.

for the workers. In the event, a lot of this has proved to be but wishful thinking.

On the criterion of economic productivity, nationalization has been disastrous. In the ten years preceding the first nationalization law, production exceeded 215,000 tonnes per year except in two years when it exceeded 210,000 tonnes; in the nine years after 1972, production has never exceeded 215,000 tonnes per year, in six years was below 210,000 tonnes and in three years did not even reach 200,000 tonnes. In 1980 production at 191,000 reached the lowest level recorded since 1959.

The preventable reasons for the fall in production are inefficient management and political interference in management (both being the bane of our state-managed enterprises), corruption and sheer robbery, repatriation of skilled Tamil labour (under the Repatriation Agreements) demoralization of Tamil workers and poor labour relations. The forces over which we had no control are increase in the cost of all imported inputs, fertilizer, the continuing stranglehold exercised by the affluent countries upon the international tea market and decreasing real prices of tea.

But what of the expected social benefits of nationalization and the social revolution which the idealists expected? The patterns of management are still basically the same, though a very few Sri Lankan planters' wives may now occasionally descend from their little-

rooms'. There is no more worker participation in management than there was at the end of the British period.

Moreover, there have been three ugly episodes of anti-Tamil communalism on the estates in the post-nationalization period of only nine years. The first took place in 1972 soon after the first Land Reform Law. The Tamil workers, on many estates close to the Sinhalese villages, were driven-out of the places where some of them had lived for generations - defenceless, friendless, their hearts in the dust, like a teabush uprooted - to roam the streets of the cities and live off garbage bins. The British, if they ruthlessly exploited the workers, at least protected them from outside attack!

The second was in August 1977 in the climate of unredressed Sri Lanka Tamil grievances and the consequent ultimate demand of the Sri Lanka Tamils for a separate State of Eelam. In August 1977 an estimated 10,000 estate families were attacked—just because they were Tamils and despite the fact that they had nothing to do with the politics of the Sri Lanka Tamils and were not connected with the demand for Eelam. Many of them lost everything or nearly everything they had — clothes, pots and pans, precious savings converted into jewellery—during the senseless violence.

The third was as recent as August 1981 and seems to have been the backlash of racial clashes in the far

## Whose decision was this?



Departing Tamil

Written by V. Mookan while  
awaiting repatriation to  
India.

(Translated from Tamil)

The rulers alone decided  
That we leave this land  
And go across the sea  
And the loved one is  
separated  
From the beloved.

Separated from the goats  
and cows  
We reared so lovingly  
And the dog that followed  
us  
So gratefully.

On the sea between Lanka  
and India  
Separated lovers groan  
And mourn of what will  
become  
Of hearts long knit into  
one.

Others watch and sigh  
As we from each other  
part  
With unrestrained cries  
And tears which flow

The ties that bound us  
To those with whom we  
worked  
Are broken forever  
By our departure.

What jewels and money we  
saved  
And the pots and pans  
We take with us  
Are looted on the way.

What! Oh what is this Act!  
This Srimavo-Shastri pact  
As long as we lived here  
Nicknamed 'Kallathoney'  
And on the other shore  
To be branded 'refugees'?

I do not know, O God  
What is there in store  
for me  
Only let me have your  
grace  
To live with your  
blessing.

(Continued on page 11)

# From the pages of Hansard - 50 YEARS AGO

## Debates in the Legislative Council of Ceylon-Thursdays

November 8, 1928

# The First

# FRANCHISE

# debate

(Continued from last issue)

On resuming —

The Hon. Mr. C. E. VICTOR COREA:— Sir, I believe I had the privilege, as President of the Young Lanka League, of being the first among the Ceylonese to commend to the Special Commissioners the grant of manhood franchise to the people of this country. Since that time I have heard no arguments adduced, nor have I seen anything in the conditions of the country to make me alter my opinion on that point. There is certainly much to be said for the suggestion that the restriction of the franchise to the literates only would be an incentive to those who are illiterate to qualify themselves for the franchise by securing the necessary degree of literacy. But, Sir, we know that in this country education is a question of opportunity. The fact that so large a number of my countrymen are illiterate is their misfortune and not their fault. That after a hundred years of British rule there should be such a large percentage of illiterates is to my mind proof irrefragable that the administration has been in the hands of bureaucrats who have been absolutely callous to the needs of the people of this country. And the conviction is borne into one's mind with irresistible force that the people of this country should have a hand in the administration of this country so as to make for a large number of children of school-going age attending school, and to scatter night schools broadcast throughout the Island so that grown-up men who are now illiterate may become literate.....

### Female Franchise

Then there is this question of female franchise. The females of this country are to be hampered by the galling condition that they are to come before the public and make a confession that they have passed the first bloom of youth. And the irony of it all is that all this is in an age when thanks to the aid of cosmetics, the bobbing of hair, and the shorting of skirts we cannot distinguish the grandmother from the daughter.

The Hon. Mr. D. S. SENANAYAKE:— Shall we adjourn now, Sir?

The Hon. The VICE-PRESIDENT:— Yes, I was on the point of adjourning. We adjourn till 3 p. m.

The Hon. Mr. C. E. VICTOR COREA:— Sir, from the remarks I made this morning it will be realized that I am in favour of the extension of the franchise to women. But I trust that my politically-minded sisters will pardon me if I venture to offer them a word of advice. Let me hope that in exercising this franchise they will not neglect the babies. It has been truly said that the hand that rocks the cradle rules the world. I think the converse of that, that the hand that neglects the cradle will end the world, will be equally true. So I hope that the women of my race who have not been accustomed to exercise a right of this nature will take heed and not follow the fashions of the West too much and not become too fashionable to the extent of not being able to recognize their own offspring. I say this because I remember reading in a paper—it may have been true or not, but it is possible—that a fashionable English lady, while walking in a park, coming across a child in the arms of its nurse, went into ecstasies over the beauty of the child and exclaimed "Oh nurse, what a lovely child!" And the nurse in surprise exclaimed "why ma'am, it is your own child!" I trust that sort of thing will never happen in this country.

### Sinhalese tolerance

To pass on now to the more controversial subject of the franchise to the Indians, I have observed with great pain of mind that attempts are being made in certain quarters to create racial animosity in regard to a simple matter of economics. I have seen in an Indian paper published in this Island of Ceylon those of us, who object to aliens temporarily resident in this Island being given a hand in the Government of this country, being referred to as "protagonists of this doctrine of hate". I would ask our Indian friends, is that a just description of those who are of opinion that self-Government means Government of the people by the people for the people?

This morning my honourable friend, the Member for the Tamils of the Western Province, said that some of us are going about the country somewhat like Peter

the Hermit, preaching a crusade against the Indians. I would ask, is there a scintilla of bona fides in the suggestion that there is any rancour, any ill-feeling, or any ill-will toward the Indians in the attitude we are taking in this matter? If the Indians are anxious to have a finger in the making of the administrative pie, all we say is that we will welcome them provided that they sit down and eat it with us at the risk of getting indigestion. Let them become people of this country. We do not ask them to follow the example of Ruth and say "your people shall be my people and your God my God"; because we Sinhalese at least are very broad-minded in matters of religion I think, Sir, I can venture to say without fear of contradiction that throughout the history of the ages the Sinhalese people have been the most tolerant of all peoples with regard to religion

### Franchise 'not mine'

Now, I have been carefully following all that has been said in favour of the proposal of giving the Indians the franchise. In my humble opinion not a single argument has been adduced to support that proposal. All the speeches of my honourable friends when condensed amounts to a mere *plea ad misericordiam*. They say that the Indian coolie is living in a state of semi-slavery, that he is an under-dog, and that, therefore, we Ceylonese should make an endeavour to raise him from that deplorable condition. Speaking for the Sinhalese, Sir, Buddhists or Christians, I may say that "helping when we meet them lame dogs over stiles" has been our national characteristic. There are, no doubt exceptions to this rule just as there are exceptions to every rule. That charity is our most predominant trait not even our enemies will deny. But this is not a matter of charity; just as it is no question of hatred. It is simply a question whether we should permit the alien to predominate in our Councils of State.

As regards this question of hatred towards the Indians

I personally am under a debt of gratitude towards the Indian community in Colombo. During the general elections of 1924, Sir, the Indian community in Colombo North rallied round me to a man. And am I then repaying their trust in me with black ingratitude now? My conscience acquits me, Sir, of any such baseness. While I feel that I would not shrink from any self-sacrifice to prove my appreciation of their goodwill towards me I also feel that the franchise is not mine to give. We are dealing now with matters that will affect generations yet unborn, and I feel that our children will arise and call us accursed were we to make the stranger within their gates their rulers. The phrase, Trust begets trust, and confidence begets confidence, has been dinned into our ears in the course of this debate *ad nauseam*. But, Sir, we Sinhalese have been bitten once and are twice shy.

### Alien voice in govt.

In 1815 the Kandyan Sinhalese entrusted their all to the British under the most solemn guarantees. Every one of those covenants in that Treaty of 1815 has been violated. Has a single Englishman arisen to cry "shame" upon his country for that breach of faith? On the contrary I remember seeing a document by a retired Civilian, where referring to the decision of the Ceylon Government to publicly announce that it was going to commit a breach of the fourth clause of the Convention, I mean that clause stipulating that the Buddhist religion should be maintained—this Civilian exclaims exultantly "We Englishmen could now hold up our heads without shame." Then, Sir, coming to later times do we not know that the mere profession of that ancient faith of our fathers was considered an indication of disloyalty to our Sovereign? How many of our noblest and our best were incarcerated, fined, shot, battered to death, or sent to the gallows for no other crime but that they belonged to

the Buddhist religion. If I had no other reason to be glad that I am Christian I have a feeling of certainty that had I been a Buddhist in 1915 I would not have been alive to-day. No, Sir, in this country trust does not beget trust; on the contrary it may be our experience has been that it begets the blackest treachery and betrayal. Under such circumstances I think if we, forgetting that lesson, permit aliens to have a voice in the Government of this country we would be thrice accursed. I therefore, Sir, vote for these amendments before the House.

### Likes and dislikes

The Hon. Sir PONNAM-BALAM RAMANATHAN Kt., K. C., C. M. G.:— I desire, Sir, to have a quiet talk with my colleagues in this Council and also those beyond, I mean the electors of Ceylon, to view these questions dispassionately and without emotion in order that a proper solution may be arrived at. I am afraid a number of wrong opinions and wrong principles have been thrust into this question which have made the subject very complicated. We must remember that in the solution of this question we do not want the opinions of people so long as we have a mind to think. We know as a matter of fact that the mind thinks all kinds of things whether right or wrong and that it is the thoughts of the mind that are said to be the opinions of a man. What is the good of having the opinions of men unless those opinions are well founded and in fact sanctioned by experience and authoritatively supported by the best and truest of men in our midst. We have to think laboriously according to the dictates of sound reason unpolluted by likes and dislikes, because likes and dislikes have the power of drawing reason away from the right path and bringing it to conclusions which are not at all acceptable to saner men.

(Continued next issue)

## ARCHAEOLOGY

To its foreign guests, European and Asian alike, the great mediaeval capital of Vijayanagar ("City of Victory") in South India was one of the world's most majestic sights. "The eye has not seen nor the ear heard of, any place resembling it upon the whole earth," wrote Abdur Razzak, a Persian who visited it in 1443. Domingo Paes, a Portuguese trader of the early 16th Century, was another who left with glowing accounts of the city's size, wealth and stately buildings. "It was as large as Rome and a very beautiful sight," summed up Paes. This is the best provided city in the world."

It wasn't for long. The Vijayanagar empire (1336 to c. 1614) formed the last Hindu bulwark against Muslim domination of India and warred almost constantly with the sultanates of the Deccan plateau to the north. In 1564, four of the Muslim states struck an alliance and declared a *jihad*, or holy war, on their neighbour. After the disastrous battle of Talikota a year later, the conquerors marched on Vijayanagar and laid it waste. "Never perhaps in the history of the world," says a modern historian, "has such havoc been wrought, and so suddenly, on so splendid a city." The armies set about systematically destroying the temples and palaces. "With fire and sword, with crowbars and axes, they carried on day after day their work of destruction."

### From the Deccan of Sri Lanka

Four centuries afterwards, little remained of the imperial capital except a scattering of desolate ruins. Now, however, the government of Karnataka (formerly Mysore) State has embarked on the monumental enterprise of restoring its most glorious historical site. Centred about the modern town of Hampi, the recreated Vijayanagar, if fully financed and executed, promises to be one of post-colonial India's greatest archaeological and cultural projects—perhaps even rivalling Fatehpur Sikri, the Mughal emperor Akbar's abandoned capital near Agra on the North Indian plains.

Founded in 1336 by the rebel princes schooled in statecraft by the Delhi sultanate, Vijayanagar was built in a defensible position on the south bank of the Tungabhadra River about 270 kms. east of Goa. Though its borders waxed and waned, at the empire's height it stretched from the Deccan to Sri Lanka and from the Arabian Sea to the

# Restoration of a medieval Hindu capital

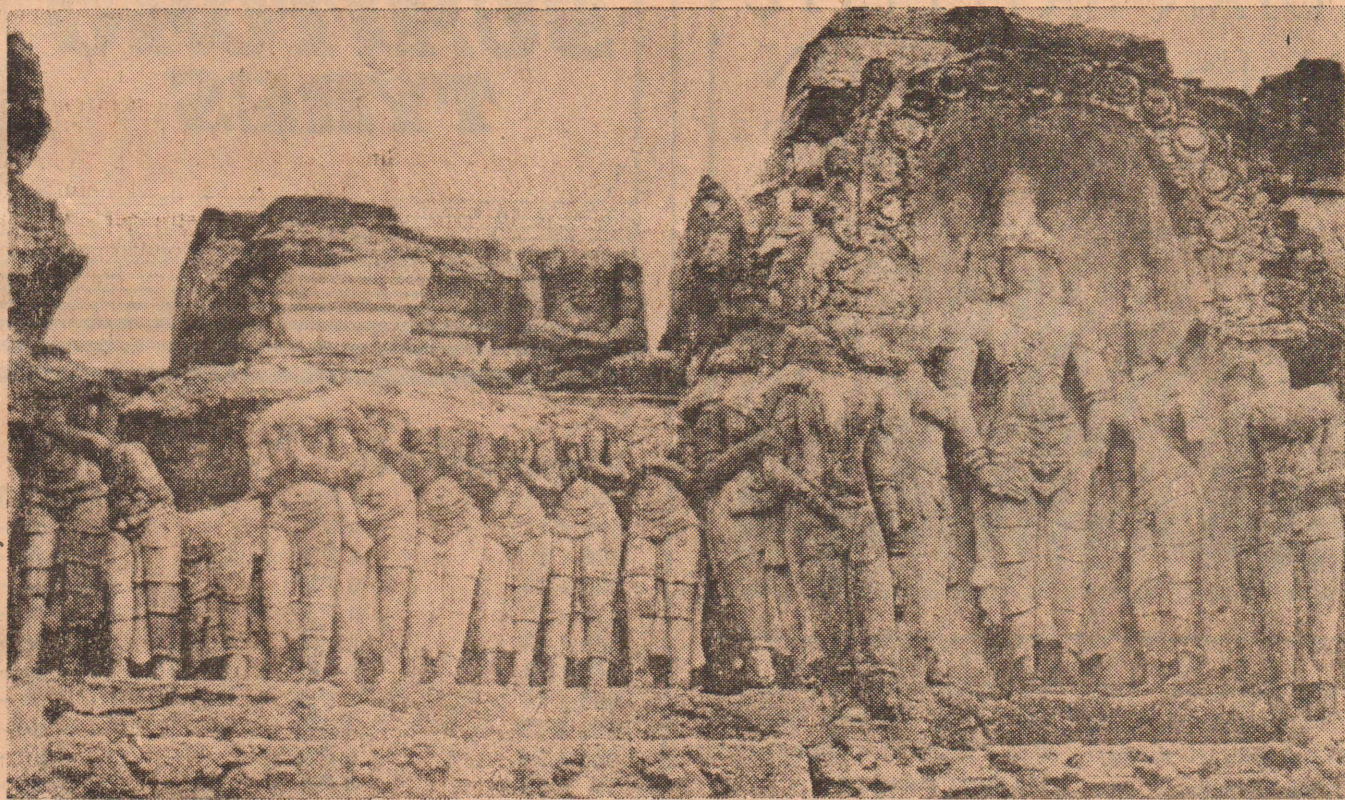
Bay of Bengal. Many of its kings made brilliant conquests and adorned their capital lavishly. After Portuguese navigators rounded the southern tip of Africa in the 1490s and gained their first footholds on Goa and the Malabar Coast, Vijayanagar carried on a flourishing—if at times contentious—trade with the Iberians. The empire contracted heavily with the Portuguese for the import of horses from Arabia, which it used in battle against the Muslim forces.

1820 when a British officer, one Col. Sherer by name, set out to discover the legendary capital only to get lost in the wilds. After wandering futilely through the hills and jungles, he finally reached the small village of Cumlapur (modern Kamlapura). Sherer trained his sights eagerly northwards in search of the ruins of Bijanagar (the city's name as spelled in European annals). "But," recorded Sherer, referring to himself in the third person, "when he sees the pros-

enormous outlays have been earmarked for the venture, including substantial funds from Karnataka's own coffers. Plans call for even more to be sought from the World Bank and other international institutions. The University of New Mexico in the U. S. alone has offered to spend Rs. 4 m. (US\$400,000) over a term of five years, and one representative of the university now serves on a committee set up to direct the project.

Forecasts estimate that it will take at least two decades, and probably longer, to carry out the restoration in full. At present, the vast sight is being mapped with the help of topographical surveys, including aerial photography. Costly and ambitious as it is, perhaps by the dawn of the 21st Century Vijayanagar will live again to spellbind a new generation of visitors to India.

(Courtesy: Asiaweek.)



Beheaded figurines adorning the walls of one of the palaces of Vijayanagar

Vijayanagar's most famous ruler was Krishna Deva Raya (reigned 1509-29), who captured Raichur Fort in 1520 with the help of Portuguese gunners. One of Krishna Deva's callers was Duarte Barbosa, a cousin of the great Portuguese explorer Ferdinand Magellan who discovered and claimed the Philippines for Spain in 1521. Barbosa reported that the imperial city, which he visited between 1504 and 1517, had numerous palaces, wide and crowded boulevards and a standing army of 100,000 men. Plans for the Hindu king's funeral, the traveller added, called for 400 to 500 women to commit *sati*, the ancient custom of ritual suicide, on his pyre.

After 1565, the old City of Victory lay in forlorn rubble for more than 250 years until

pect filled and bounded by lofty and rugged piles of rock heaped up in strange and threatening forms, and all the valleys which separate them choaked (*sic*) up with bush and giant-grass with, here and there, a few large and ancient trees thinly scattered, he pauses in doubt and disappointment for he cannot think that city ever stood in so barren and desolate a spot."

### Funds sought from World Bank

Karnataka's restoration scheme beyond doubt, will fall somewhat short of the original article, but when the state launched the project a few months ago it was, as press reports put it, "in an atmosphere surcharged with emotion." In due time, it may also be surcharged with money;

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# a window on INDIA

(By Courtesy: Washington Post)

BANGALORE, India—India used Bullock carts and high technology to become the only Third World nation to plant a flag firmly in outer space.

One of the two "made in India" working satellites currently orbiting the Earth was carried to an open field near the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) centre here in a bullock cart so scientists could gauge its radio-magnetic emissions in a metal-free environment.

The space scientists here are proud of that mix of ancient and modern, which reflects In-

working while the others were turned off after having done their jobs.

They all were launched on other nations' rockets, three supplied by the Soviet Union and one by France. The U. S. National Aeronautics and Space Administration is to launch two communications satellites now being built for India by an American Company.

While India's satellites represent significant technological achievement, they still are a decade or two behind current technology. Space officials

and the world that tell you if you don't build your nation yourselves no one else is going to come and build it for you," he continued.

Following that policy, Mr. Dhawan, 51, promised that the next generation of communications satellites will be Indian made, and some time in the next decade India will be able to launch these large, complex and expensive satellites with its own rockets.

The space effort plays a major role in India's campaign to project itself as the most developed of the underdeveloped nations—a leader in the Third World, a power on the South Asian subcontinent, a force to be reckoned with in international affairs and an incipient industrial giant.

The government of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, who also holds the portfolio of minister of space, would rather

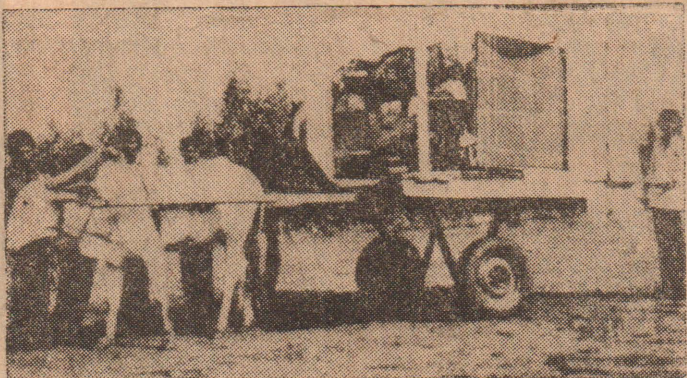
**This can happen only in India: Combining ancient and modern technology**

see India portrayed as a space age nation than as the 15th poorest country, with half of its 650,000 villages lacking electricity and two-thirds of its 680 million people unable to read or write.

Some Indians, however, question the wisdom of spending India's scarce financial and technical resources on a space program.

Mr. Dhawan said he sees space technology as a tool for the future development of India, a way to bring communications to the vast areas of the country that virtually are cut off from the world; to give television to remote villages—helping teach the illiterate to read and write and the farmers to get better crop yields—and to help manage national resources by providing up-to-date information about forests, crops and weather.

## INDIAN SATELLITE TAKES A RIDE ON A BULLOCK CART



dian society itself, and they display the photograph of the spacecraft on the cart as part of the research center's promotional slide show.

India's space experts justify the expenditure of \$634.5 million on the space program during the last 19 years as part of the job of turning an underdeveloped country into a modern nation, a job they say must be accomplished by Indians, not foreign experts.

As a result of India's push to develop its own space programme, 20 months ago it became one of seven nations to launch its own satellite into Earth orbit with a domestically manufactured rocket. The tiny Rohini satellite spun around the Earth for a full year, longer than expected, before falling into the atmosphere and burning up.

Four Indian-made satellites are circling the Earth, to still

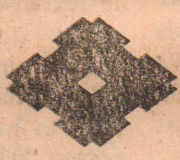
here agree with the observation of a Western scientist, that "there is nothing India has done elsewhere."

Nonetheless, ISRO director Satish Dhawan staunchly defended as part of the job of nation-building India's policy of making its own satellites rather than buying them from the world's technological giants.

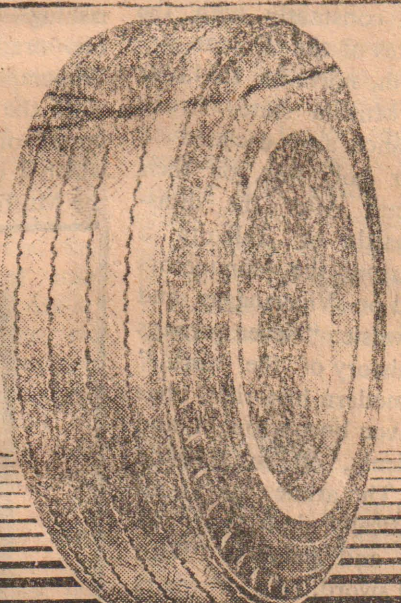
### Geopolitical Position

"We are at the stage of development and our geopolitical position as a nonaligned nation is such that we have got to build our country and utilize our best talent and manpower," he said in a conversation with a group of foreign correspondents visiting the space facilities here.

"How do we utilize them if we go on buying satellites? There are many examples aro-



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## NEWS BRIEFS

### TALKS WITH GOVERNMENT—NOT FOR CONCESSIONS OR PORTFOLIOS:—AMIR.

We are conducting talks with the Government to save our people's lives and property from the waves of violence unleashed from time to time against them—not for the sake of concessions or to get portfolios for ourselves as some mischievous elements are trying to make out, said the Leader of the Opposition, Mr. A. Amirthalingam, when he declared open a new Library at Kankasanturai.

He said some headway had been made in the talks. Home Guard Units would be set up in May. About 40 per cent of the Police Force in the North and East are Tamil speaking; cases had been filed in the Mallakam Courts against 13 policemen alleged to have taken part in acts of violence. The Committee appointed to inquire into compensation claims had completed the work and it was expected, compensation would be paid soon.

### KALPAGE'S ASSURANCE TO STUDENT DELEGATION.

Professor Stanley Kalpage Secretary to the Ministry of Higher Education and Chairman of the University Grants Commission gave a sympathetic hearing to a delegation of Commerce Students from the University of Jaffna who met him to protest the U.G.C.'s decision not to grant the Bachelor of Commerce Degree to three batches of students who had successfully followed the course. He said he would take up the matter at the U.G.C. meeting on 11 February and see that a favourable ruling was given.

### "KATPAKAM" OPENS IN JAFFNA

The Palmyra Development Board opened a Sales Centre, "Katpakam", on 7 February in Jaffna Town.

### A ROOF OVER HIS HEAD IN 24 HOURS

A cadjan hut near the Naval Road - Kasthuriar Road Junction, Jaffna, where one Balasubramaniam lived a hermit's life accidentally caught fire on the evening of 6th February and was razed to the ground. Taking pity on the now homeless and poverty-stricken man, about 25 youths of the area collected Rs. 2000/- from the neighbourhood and before the next evening itself had cleared the debris and put up a brand new hut with a fence round it.

### FLAG BURNT

A National Flag ceremonially hoisted at the Mannar A. G. A.'s office on Independence Day was later found half-burnt at the Mannar busstand.

### M.P. ALLEGES ARMY ASSAULT.

The M.P. for Kayts, Mr. K. P. Ratnam, has sent an urgent telegram to the D.I.G., Northern Range, demanding an immediate probe into an alleged assault by the army on a van driver near the Broadcasting Corporation's Transmitting Station at Mandaitivu, Jaffna.

### A FULL-FLEDGED AYURVEDIC MEDICAL COLLEGE AT KAITHADY.

A delegation from the North Ceylon Federation of Ayurvedic Medical Practitioners which has urged the setting up of a full-fledged Ayurvedic Medical College at the Kaithady building recently vacated by the Jaffna University's Medical Faculty, will meet officials of the UGC to discuss this.

### HILL-COUNTRY ARTISTES PERFORM IN JAFFNA.

A group of hill-country Tamil artistes from Talawakelle will be staging a series of performances in various parts of Jaffna till 20th February. The repertoire will include folk dramas, dances and musical items. The Tamil Teachers Union of Ceylon has sponsored the performances.

### POLICE HAUL DOWN BLACK FLAGS.

Black flags which sprouted up in Kankasanturai, Punnalaikadduwan, Kayts, Pungudutivu, Kilinochchi and other places on Independence Day, February 4, were later hauled down by the Police.

### 'SELF-RULE PARTY' APPLIES FOR REGISTRATION

The Tamil "Suaatchikazhagam" (self-rule party), headed by ex-M.P., Mr. V. Navaratnam, has applied to the Commissioner of Elections for registration as a political party. Its application for registration in 1979 was turned down by the Commissioner.

### MINISTER'S FIRST OFFICIAL VISIT

After nearly 2 years since he assumed office, Minister for Regional Development and Hindu Affairs, Mr. C. Rajadurai, paid his first official visit to the Northern Region when he recently visited Mankulam about 80 miles away from Jaffna, to ceremonially inaugurate an electricity scheme.

### NEW HEAD FOR SINHALA M. V.

Mr. N. R. G. Gunawardene, Principal of the Sinhala Maha Vidyalaya, Jaffna, has been promoted and transferred to Kandy as the Circuit Education officer. During his stint as Principal, a storeyed building worth Rs. 6 lakhs was put up. Mr. M. Yapa succeeds him as principal.

Very often we read obituary notices in the newspapers about the demise of an individual whose near and dear ones are living in the U.K., Canada, Australia, Nigeria and other distant lands. The notices end by mentioning: "Funeral arrangements will be notified later".

My uncle Rasa is one of those who is immensely horrified by these notices. He is a typical Jaffna man. "Notifying funeral arrangements later" in his opinion is a status symbol. He has made it absolutely clear that his obituary notice should not carry this statement. He says that he has already given the necessary instructions to the dhoby, barber and the other characters involved in a typical Jaffna funeral, that his body should be cremated within 24 hours of his death.

My uncle knows very well what happened to a number of his compatriots whose children are in distant countries. Why, take the case of old Sellar down the lane who passed away last month. Not one of his seven children was nearer than 5,000 miles. The body of old Sellar lay embalmed for ten whole days and nights until two of his children arrived. Three of the children could not be contacted and the other two sent perfumes and flowers from Paris and Copenhagen.

My uncle Rasa knows how Sellar, who was stinking like a pig the few previous days before his death was later sprinkled with the most exquisite of perfumes from Paris and Copenhagen. My uncle also knows how old Sellar was deprived of all the tastiest food and drinks he wished to have during his last days and how three days after cremation an effigy resembling Sellar with walking stick, hat, coat and tie to match was offered whiskey and all types of delicious food that is customarily served to the dead during the alms giving ceremony on the third day after a Hindu funeral.

So, you would agree that the behaviour of my uncle Rasa was not anything peculiar. If you are still in doubt let us start from the beginning.

My uncle, as I said earlier is a typical Jaffna man. He was a clerk in a Government Department. He spent most of his 37 years as a government servant in Colombo as a married bachelor. He lived in Wellawatte down Moor Road, had his morning meals at a Saiva Hotel along Galle Road, lunch at his Department Canteen and his dinner in his chummary.

Although all his meals were insipid, he tolerated them dreaming of the days he would join his wife in Jaffna after retirement and relish the tastiest Jaffna crab and prawn curries and the odiyil kool — the famous Jaffna porridge. He made visits to Jaffna at a frequency of one in two months

## "FUNERAL

## ARRANGEMENTS

## WILL BE

## NOTIFIED LATER"

when he behaved like a married man. He fathered two children, a boy and a girl and sent them to leading private schools in Jaffna after "voluntarily paying" according to the School Heads, large sums of money as donations which he earned by spending sleepless nights in his office working 'overtime'.

Uncle Rasa initially had only three ambitions in life. He wished that he should build a beautiful house in Jaffna on his dowry property, that his son should enter Medical College and become a doctor and that his daughter after a reasonable

yes, all of them to live in Sri Lanka. He yearned to have a direct share in their happiness and their worries. This is where the trouble started. His son and daughter with their respective families decided to leave for the U.K. and Australia much against their father's wishes.

The father actually did not press the matter. He just argued his point. He said, "My dear children, you have received the best education any father could possibly give his children. You have got the status, the money and all what one requires to lead a happy life in this country. Why seek more?

by **S. THIRUNAVUKARASU**

education be married to a doctor or an engineer. Time went by and by the grace of Lord Muruga all his three wishes were fulfilled. In fact he went one better. He was able to put up a large house he went one better. He was able to put up a large house in Jaffna, his son passed out as a doctor and what is more his daughter too passed out as a doctor beating her elder brother by obtaining a class at the finals.

As the old bloke was a good and sincere man, a conscientious worker who never harmed anyone, and never took even a rupee as "santhosam", he survived the 1958 and 1971 "events" and retired after 37 years service. After a fitting farewell given by his office mates he returned to Jaffna to his dear old wife.

Back in Jaffna with all what he earned, which included his pension, diabetes and high blood pressure he continued to take insipid food, now on doctor's orders. He got his daughter married to a doctor giving her the beautiful house and all his savings as dowry. His son too received a fat dowry, a house in Colombo, a house in Jaffna, plenty of cash, jewels and a father-in-law, a leading lawyer in Colombo earning monthly dowry for his only child.

My uncle was still not satisfied. He wanted more. He wanted all of them—his son, daughter-in-law and their daughter, his daughter, son-in-law and their son—

His point was really a psychological one. He had no worries. He had them all through his life. Now if they go, his only worry would be that he has no worries. He needed problems. He wanted to take his daughter-in-law to the maternity clinic, his grandson to the Montessori School, work up a transfer for his son-in-law to Jaffna and take his granddaughter falling down the steps to the nearest dispensary.

But his dear children decided otherwise. They wanted to give less troubles to their father and earn more. So they insisted on packing their bags and taking wing. That did it. My dear uncle Rasa, straight as he was through all the 37 years in government service did not beat about the bush. He said it in very simple language with not a tear in his eyes. "If you want to seek greener pastures by all means go. I do not want to stand in your way. But keep this in mind when I die here, let there be no obituary notices stating that funeral arrangements will be notified later". My body will be cremated within 24 hours of my death. If you want to see just dead bodies please go to the mortuary at the Jaffna General Hospital. You may find many there. As much as you have found that this country is no longer suitable for you I take it that your mother and I are no longer fit to be your parents". My uncle you know, is a typical Jaffna man.

## Book Review

by **RAJAN**

(Report of a Mission to Sri Lanka in July-August 1981 on behalf of the International Commission of Jurists by Prof. Virginia A. Leary, Faculty of Law and Jurisprudence, State University of New York at Buffalo, U.S.A.)

Here is a study undertaken on behalf of the ICJ of the human rights aspects of Sri Lanka's Prevention of Terrorism Law and events related to its adoption and application. Prof. Virginia Leary has made remarkable good use of her three week long stay in the island in mid-1981 and relying on published and unpublished material and on interviews with representative persons, has compiled an invaluable brochure for the benefit of anyone who wishes to familiarise himself with the prevalent situation in regard to ethnic conflict and violence in Sri Lanka.

The report traces the historical background, deals with the emergence of the Tamil separatist demand, the question of self-determination and analyses the nature of violence and the efforts of the government to control ethnic conflict and violence. But the chief merit of the report is in its study, conclusions and recommendations in regard to the Terrorism Act, the main component of government's efforts. It is also the subject of this review.

Both the genesis and the aftermath of the Prevention of Terrorism Act of 1979 involve two issues, namely, the national question and the practice of democracy in our country, either one of which cannot now or ever be viewed in isolation from the other. On both the issues, the present government took a clear, promising and apparently uncompromising stand when it faced the hustings in 1977. It promised a return to democracy and jealous protection of human rights and civil liberties, even as it displayed understanding of and resolve to solve the problems of the Tamil speaking people with the consensus of an all party

Alas, what was given in 1978 was taken away rather rudely in 1979, and what was promised in 1977 was never honoured. The Jaffna district was kept under emergency rule from 12 July 1979 until the end of that year. The Prevention of Terrorism Act was passed in Parliament on 19 July 1979 and continues to be in force throughout the country. The events relating to the emergency rule have been well documented. Virginia Leary's report has come to confirm the fears and criticisms of many in regard to the adoption and application of the Terrorism Act.

### The I. C. J. Report

At the time of the enactment of the Terrorism Act, the contention of the government was that the Act is similar to legislations adopted by many democratic countries such as Australia, Canada, India and the United Kingdom, when faced with similar situations as Sri Lanka is supposedly faced with. But what the government conveniently chose to ignore was the proven ineffectiveness of such legislation in these countries in dealing with the problems posed by terrorism.

Now, even the claim of the government that it was following the worthy example of other democratic countries is contradicted by the ICJ report which having compared the relevant provisions of the different Acts, concludes that the Sri Lankan Act is more similar to the notorious Terrorism Act (1967) of South Africa, than for instance, to the UK Act. According to the report the Sri Lankan Act substantially differs from the UK Act in the extent to which it infringes human

# Ethnic Conflict and Violence in Sri Lanka

rights and a number of provisions are contrary both to the international norms of criminal procedure and to the constitutional provisions for safeguarding the right of the subject.

What of its effectiveness? The report holds that "since 1979 when the Act was adopted, terrorism has not declined..... This experience is similar to that of some other countries which have attempted to control terrorism by armed force rather than dealing with the fundamental factors contributing to the recourse to violence".

4 of the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, when resorted to "in times of public emergency which threatens the life of the nation.... to the extent strictly required by the exigencies of the situation" It would appear that there has never been the fear of a threat to the life of the nation. The submission of the report is that "its the) Act's draconian provisions do not seem strictly required by the exigencies of the situation; particularly in view of the fact that they may be counterproductive in dealing with terrorism".

It was in 1980 that the government ratified the International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights and on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and made the declaration under Article 41 of the Civil and Political Covenant which permits the Human Rights Committee to entertain complaints of non-observance by another State which has made a similar declaration. The government stopped short of ratify-

ing the Optional Protocol to the Civil and Political Covenant which would permit individuals to bring complaints of violations before the Human Rights Committee. However, the government's willingness to accept international norms, has been described as a welcome step. What is curious is that this step was taken when the Prevention of Terrorism Act with its "draconian provisions" was already in force.

The recommendation of the report is that in view of the violation of human rights inherent in its provisions and experienced in its enforcement, and in view of its ineffectiveness in dealing with terrorism, the Prevention of Terrorism Act should not be re-enacted on its expiration in 1982 or be suitably amended if it is to be in force for a longer period. It is not as yet certain whether this recommendation will be well received, accepted and implemented by those to whom the recommendation has been made.

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# The Tamil Estate Workers (2)

(Continued from page 5)

away Eastern Province. This time the target seems to have been the estates in the Sabaragamuwa province where the estate often abuts the Sinhalese village. The hard core of the attackers seems to have been formed of goon squads organized by politically powerful anti-Tamil racials, hoping to be shielded by state power. Round the racist goons gathered the looters.

1972, 1977, 1981.... When will there be the next orgy of arson, loot, assault, some times murder and rape? The first understandable reaction of the poor workers is flight: to India, to the frontiers of the Northern Province, to the wastelands of the Eastern Province. After the President's inexplicably belated but absolutely forthright condemnation of the violence on 4 September, the emotions of first fear seem to have subsided and a certain surface calm seems to have returned to the plantation areas.

## 'No work today, no pay'

The present Government claims that it has appreciably increased estate worker wages since it came to power in 1977. Really, increases in money wages have not kept pace with the steep rise in the cost of living and so real wages have probably fallen. At the end of 1981 all-inclusive wages stood at Rs 14 per day for a male and Rs 11.69 for a female. Even these wages are ridden with unbelievably unjust anomalies. For instance, the 1979 salary increase of Rs 55 to all government employees was made available to estate workers at Rs. 2.50 per day, subject to the maximum of Rs 55 per month. If therefore the female plucker worked 23 days, her wage on the 23 subsequent days would drop from Rs 11.69 to Rs 9.19 only, and the male worker's wage on the 23rd and subsequent days would be only Rs 11.50 per day. Similarly, the 1981 pay rise of Rs 70 per month was made available to the estate workers only much later than to all others, and even then only in a truncated form.

Not only are estate worker wages lower than the wages paid to urban industrial workers but they, though paid once a month, are calculated on the basis of 'no work today, no pay today'. On most estates, according to the present writer's admittedly incomplete findings, the average number of workdays per month for the first eight

months of 1981 never exceeded 23, sometimes barely reached 20, and men had marginally less workdays than women. As in British times, the estate workers—unlike the villagers—have few supplementary sources of possible income or none at all. It is either work for the day or hunger. As in British times, women are paid less than men for the same work.

It is sometimes stated that the estate workers—despite their poverty—are still better off than the villagers in the matter of regular work, security of employment, housing, schooling, medical facilities and mothercare. Published figures provide little evidence to establish the statement. However, in the view of the present writer, such comparisons are fatuous and dangerously divisive. Both—estate workers and poor peasants—suffer oppression from the prevailing system. To ask where the oppression is greater is much less important than to end it—both on the estate and in the village.

## Oppression built into the system

The oppression in the estate areas is proving more resistant than may be some of us hoped in 1972. But then ten years is a very short time for even the best of governments to end the oppression built into the plantation system over a period of 150 years. Indeed, more improvements seem to have been effected over the past 10 years—in housing, basic amenities for households, schooling, care for children, take-home pay—than during the whole of the British period. Even so, there is reason to be profoundly dissatisfied with the quantum and the rate of progress. Furthermore, in many places the improvements seem to be effected not so much to better the lot of the Tamil working population as to attract new Sinhalese worker families into the estates. The secular alienation of the Tamil estate worker is still very much with us and creeping communalism is heightening it.

## Trade Unions can do more

The Trade Unions can do much more than they have done in the past. Voluntary organizations can also do more if they can work as allies with the Unions and the Parties. Together with the workers we have all also to discover the revolutionary potential of the four major world religions authentically and vitally present in the country.

Nationalization—all told—has been a good thing. It is unthinkable that the commanding heights of a country's economy should be left in the hands of foreigners. But nationalization should be looked upon as a challenge to the nation—for greater production, better conditions of living, more worker participation, more solidarity between the Tamil workers and the Sinhalese peasants (against the machinations of politicians seeking to divide in order to rule them), a freer and juster society.

## Going forward together

The young estate worker, Balakrishnan, who rose to speak at the conclusion in July last year of a series of Leadership Seminars conducted for a mixed group of Tamil estate workers and Sinhalese village youths of both sexes in Kandy, was absolutely correct when he said: 'Before we came to these classes, we on the estates thought that the people in the village had it fine; land, happiness, freedom. Now we know that there is oppression also in the village. So the villagers must have thought that we had heaven on the estates: free houses, free schools, free dispensaries, work every day for good pay. Now they know the truth. The future lies in our going forward together.'

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# Saturday Review

SRI LANKA

## CRANE REFUSES TO OBLIGE MINISTER

Industries Minister Cyril Mathew who ceremonially opened the new jetty at the Kankesanthurai Harbour left

after a fruitless one-hour wait for unloading operations to begin. An un-cooperative crane caused the delay. After he had

left, heavy machinery intended for the K. K. S. Cement Factory and other cargo were unloaded.

# Common robbers pose off as political terrorists - Police

Police investigators who have arrested more than fifty youths in connection with robberies that took place over the last few months, have recovered nearly Rs. 3 lakhs worth of jewellery and money out of about 4 lakhs worth of jewell-

ery and money reported stolen.

Police sources say that some of the arrested youths had confessed that under cover of, and using the name of so-called political movements, they

had individually, and in groups carried out these robberies. Some of them had arms as well.

The Police investigators who had thoroughly grilled the arrested youths found out

from them that, contrary to the impression created by some 'National' dailies, they had no links with any political movements whatsoever. They were nothing but common-or-garden robbers.

The top Police Official told the SATURDAY REVIEW that robberies take place all over Sri Lanka: wherever they occur the Police will take necessary action.

## 'Saturday Review' report upsets Dr. Kalpage

"Saturday Review" seems to have asked the right questions regarding the opening of the Medical Faculty building last Saturday. A rather disturbed Chief Guest, Dr. Kalpage, castigating newspapers like the "Saturday Review" (a copy of which he had in his hands at the time) for misleading the students asked why Jaffna University has to compare itself with Ruhuna "since it is so far away". He also added in an intimate vein that the man in charge of the country's finances has a soft corner for Ruhuna and that we should try and understand this human weakness! Unfortunately we did not get any more clarification on

the issue of disparity in allocation between Jaffna and Ruhuna.

While gently chiding the students for their impatience regarding the completion of the Medical Faculty building, Dr. Kalpage cited a whole list of prestigious universities here and abroad which took years to build. But he conveniently forgot to mention that the Ruhuna Medical Faculty, which started building along with Jaffna has completed work on this block. Dr. Kalpage also warmed up with the remark that "Ruhuna buildings may look nice but they are not as good as this".

Dr. Kalpage, bemoaning the fact there isn't much money available for any more building project urged the University and the students to collect funds amongst well-wishers of the University of Jaffna for its buildings. This is one area where Jaffna University's autonomy seems to be much respected!

Anyhow, "Saturday Review" wishes the Medical Faculty Good Luck and a happy ground - floor house-warming.

## An act condemned by the entire civilized world - Jaffna Mayor

The burning of the priceless collection of 97,000 volumes and rare manuscripts in the Jaffna Public Library on the night of 1st June 1981 will remain as an indelible blot on this island's long history, said Mr. Raja Visuvanathan, Mayor of Jaffna, when he laid the foundation stone for the third stage of the Jaffna Public Library on February 7th.

The Mayor went on to say: Ceylon got its independence in 1948 on a platter. Not one drop of blood was shed, nor did the country make a sacrifice or pay the price any country has to, for wresting independence. It is because the value of free-

dom has not been realised that no less than seven times since independence, the Tamils of Sri Lanka have been attacked, murdered, raped and robbed. However cruel and barbarous these forms of national oppression the burning down of the repository of our traditional culture has caused us the most unbearable pain of mind. The fact that the guardians of law and order who are paid by the tax-payer committed this heinous crime makes it even worse. The entire civilized world has unreservedly condemned this dastardly act of cultural genocide and dubbed it a crime against humanity, he said.

## Library Week in Jaffna

Arrangements have been made to observe the week beginning 22 February (Maha Sivarathiri Day) as LIBRARY WEEK in Jaffna. This has been initiated by Raja Visuvanathan, Mayor of Jaffna, as part of the campaign to collect public funds for the

restoration of the burnt down Jaffna Public Library.

Thursday, 25 February, has been set apart as FLAG DAY in which large numbers of Jaffna school children are expected to participate.

## The Island's Sinhala sister does it again!

Under a blood-curdling Page 1 banner headline "BUDDHIST RELICS DESTROYED", the 'DIVAINA' the Island's Sinhala sister - reports (9.2.82) that 261 Buddhist relics and places of worship have been destroyed in the North and East.

The report goes on to say that Indian estate workers who had left the plantation areas after the disturbances had been settled in thousands of acres which once housed Buddhist places of worship. 11,000 acres in Vavuniya and 600 acres in

## The Media Scene

Ampaira had been distributed to these workers.

The report adds that the Cultural Affairs Minister Mr. E. B. Hurulle and the Minister of Industries, Mr. Cyril Mathew

had drawn President J. R. Jayawardane's attention to these acts of wanton destruction.

The 'ISLAND' of the same date carried on Page 1 under a three column head, a story titled "LEGAL ACTION TO STOP FILM ON S.W.R.D.S 'ECCENTRIC SISTER'". Not a word anywhere in its pages about these 'wanton acts of destruction' calculated to inflame any pious Sinhala Buddhist.