

Saturday Review

SRI LANKA

Vol. 1 No 16

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Rs. 2

Editorial

Seeing the picture upside-down

Well-meaning friends of this paper living in the South, have been trying to persuade us to give the SATURDAY REVIEW a more "national" orientation. Since anything well meant has not only to be accepted with good grace but also examined in all honesty, let us test this advice against a logical frame.

The beginning of wisdom as someone said is to call things by their right names. What does "national" mean? "National" means pertaining to a nation, and a nation means a body of people marked off by common descent, language, culture, or historical tradition. In Sri Lanka today, we certainly have one country and one State. But do we have only one nation? To talk of one Sri Lankan nation at this stage of our history is nothing less than a piece of duplicity, whether conscious or unconscious. It would be like opening the stable door to allow the horse to bolt and then closing it again so that everyone can pretend that the quadruped is safe inside. The horse in fact fled long ago. In 1956.

1956 marked the beginning of Sinhala nationalism, and Sinhala nationalism has come to stay. There is nothing wrong about it; not only that, it was historically inevitable. What was wrong about it, was the anti-Tamil animosity that preceded it and then came in its wake. Anti-Tamil mob violence began on the very day the Sinhala Only Act was passed, when a small group of Tamil M.P.s led by the late venerated leader S. J. V. Chelvanayakam sat in silent protest at the Galle Face Green and was stoned and attacked by a mob. That day also marked the genesis of Police indiscipline with the Police being told by the powers that were, not to interfere with the proceedings. In short, mob violence against Tamils and Police approval of it were both given the seal of official sanction!

The very bedrock of Sinhala nationalism was founded on Aryan descent, the Sinhala language, Sinhala culture, Buddhism and the historical tradition of Sinhala possession of this country, each one of which effectively excluded the Tamils from the mainstream of Sri Lankan life. This naturally left the Sinhala leaders in a state of dilemma. What could they possibly do with the Tamils? Push them into the sea? Naturally they had to be absorbed into the Sinhala mainstream. But how? Peacefully, if like Marlowe's Shepherdess who boasted "Nobody can rape me, no Sir, because I am most willing", the Tamils had said: "We are most willing to be absorbed".

But over the past twenty six years they had made it loud and clear that they are NOT willing to be absorbed. So there the Sinhala rulers' peaceful option ends. The other option is violent absorption; and it is this process that we have been seeing over the past several years. But unfortunately for the Sinhala people, their politicians and mass media have inverted the picture. They are seeing the same picture, but seeing it upside down. All what they see is Tamil obduracy, Tamil communalism and Tamil Tigers!

There is a third option open to the rulers: accept Tamil nationalism. It was as inevitable as Sinhala nationalism, and equally valid, and it has come to stay.

As we said earlier, the beginning of wisdom is to call things by their right names. If anything Sinhala is national and anything Tamil is communal, then we are only clinging to a Myth. The SATURDAY REVIEW can speak up for two nations. The entire mass media in the South speak up for only one. That is our difference.

**Call for release
of Jaffna
Undergrad
Vimalarasa
held without
trial for 1 year**

Island-wide undergrad solidarity: 100 % boycott in Jaffna

Undergraduates and students in the North and East boycotted lectures and classes yesterday (14 May) to protest the continued detention, without trial, of Jaffna University undergraduate Apputhurai Vimalarasa for over a year at the Panagoda Army Camp. The undergraduates of the University of Colombo too joined in the protest by boycotting lectures in the afternoon while telegrams asking for the release of Vimalarasa have been sent to President J. R. Jayawardene by undergraduates of the other Universities.

The almost hundred per cent boycott was in response to a call by the Students Assembly of the University of Jaffna which is carrying on a campaign to free Vimalarasa, a Science Faculty student of the University of Jaffna, who was arrested by army personnel at 4 a.m. on 24-4-1981, a few hours before he was due to sit the Final Examination.

The Students Assembly had, in a leaflet issued in Tamil, Sinhala and English, called upon students to boycott all schools, private educational institutions and universities on 14 May in the fight to free Vimalarasa.

Some undergraduates and students issuing these leaflets in Kilinochchi and Batticaloa were arrested by the Police on Friday morning. At the time of going to press, they are still in Police custody.

S. Ragupathy and S. Tharmaratnam, first year Arts Faculty undergraduates of the University of Jaffna were arrested at Kilinochchi along with two students of the Kilinochchi Maha Vidyalaya whose names are not known.

A Telegram addressed to the Editor, SATURDAY REVIEW from TILAK FERNANDO on behalf of the Student Assembly of Colombo University states:

"On 13th (May) poster campaign, on 14th half-day strike for Vimalarasa"

In Batticaloa, five undergraduates of the Batticaloa University College and seven students were arrested by the Police. The undergraduates taken into custody are Thiyanathan, Prabhakaran, Indrakumar, Mohideen and Mansoor. The names of the students are not available.

Sources close to student circles say that the boycott will continue if those arrested are not released.

Meanwhile, members of the University Grants Commission who were scheduled to visit the University of Jaffna have put off their two-day visit (14, 15 May), the Saturday Review learns.

Two-tone speech

Speaking at the inauguration of the new Parliament at Sri Jayawardenepura, the Minister of State Mr. Anandattisa de Alwis, opened his speech in Sinhala thus:

Your Excellency, at today's opening ceremony itself we have witnessed the cut and thrust of debate associated with a parliament. We had the privilege of listening to a speech made in two tones; one tone to appease us and the other to satisfy his people in the North so that he can go back there in safety (Hansard-Official Report - Vol. 20, No. 1-Page 33)

Please see pages 7 and 8 for full text.

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Saturday Review

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Punitham Tiruchelvam Memorial Lecture

Dr. K. Kailasapathy, Dean of the Faculty of Arts, University of Jaffna, will deliver the first Punithawathy Tiruchelvam Memorial Lecture, under the auspices of the Sri Lanka Tamil Women's Union, at Kalalaya, Colombo, on 18th May. His topic is "Cultural and Linguistic Consciousness of the Tamil Community in Sri Lanka."



Punitham Tiruchelvam
Indian High Commissioner
Thomas Abraham.

A portrait of Mrs. Tiruchelvam will be unveiled by

Vegetable growers unite

Vegetable growers in the Jaffna District have banded themselves together in an association to safeguard their interests.

It was formally inaugurated by Jaffna DDC Chairman S. Nadarajah and Govt. Agent Devanesan Nesiah on

10 May. The Association is expected to free producers from the clutches of middlemen, protect their overall interests and, at the same time, give the consumer a fair deal.

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Who made that Mace?

The silver-topped Mace carried by the Sergeant-at-Arms at the ceremonial sitting of the Jaffna Development Council on Wednesday caught the eyes of many invitees. Topped with a "Nanthi" figurine (seated bull) in silver and combining exquisite filigree workmanship of the Yarl (Harp) with floral patterns and turned out in ebony—like black wood, it looked a good synthesis of the western concept of the Mace and an oriental kingly sceptre. An invitee was heard asking an official whether the silver workmanship was made by Kandyan Craftsmen?

Saturday Review learns that the Mace was designed by Professor K. Indrapala, Head of the Department of Fine Arts, University of Jaffna; but what was most surprising was that the entire Mace with the silver workmanship was turned out by some hardly known craftsman at Nachchimarkovilady, Jaffna, in less than a week!

The official told us that the craftsman concerned was overjoyed to undertake this order despite the short notice as he rarely got the opportunity to exercise his skills on an assignment like this.

NEWS BRIEFS

Hindu Temple to become Buddhist

The fifty-year-old Murugan temple opposite the Polgahawela Railway Station is about to be transformed into a Buddhist Vihare.

The SATURDAY REVIEW learns that on Vesak day (7 May) some persons had white-washed the gopuram; preliminary arrangements to lay the foundation for a VIHARE have already been undertaken, it is learnt.

TRAINING COURSE FOR NURSERY TEACHERS

The National Co-operative Council, Jaffna, has started a 9-month training course for nursery school teachers. Over 60 trainees chosen by the Women's Committees of multi-purpose co-operative societies in the Jaffna District are following this free course.

TRAINING CENTRE, SALES OUTLET IN MANNAR

The Palm Products Co-op Societies Federation of Jaffna has opened a Palmyra Products Training Centre and a sales outlet—Katpakam—in Mannar. The ceremonial opening was by Mannar M.P. B. S. Soosaithasan.

CEREMONIAL RELEASE OF TULF PAPER

SENKATHIR, the official organ of the TULF, was ceremonially released on 9th May at Veerasingham Hall, Jaffna.

FOUR FREED, TWO DETAINED

The army arrested six persons at Delft (including a former V. C. Chairman and his son) suspected of being connected with a terrorist movement. Guns and toy guns are alleged to have been found in their possession. Four were later freed while two are still in detention at the Gurunagar Army Camp.

TENTH ANNIVERSARY OF PALM PRODUCTS COOPS

Palm Products Co-op Societies in Jaffna celebrate their tenth anniversary at the end of May. The Federation of Palm Products Co-op Societies has planned to celebrate the occasion on a grand scale.

DRAMA SCHOOL HOLDS FESTIVAL

The Nadaka Aranga Kalloori has arranged to hold a drama festival at the Veerasingham Hall, Jaffna. The first of five plays, KODAI, will be staged on 29 May and the last, SANGARAM on 27 June.

ADDITIONAL POST FOR ADDL. G.A.

Addl. G.A. Jaffna B. L. Patrick has also been appointed Administrative Secretary of the Jaffna District Development Council.

NEW REGISTRAR FOR UNIVERSITY

Addl. G.A. Jaffna, S. Tharapalan has been appointed Registrar of the University of Jaffna. He will assume duties shortly.

Brief show of pomp

A brief and symbolic show of pomp and form marked the ceremonial sitting of the Jaffna Development Council at the Council Chambers at the District Secretariat, Jaffna on Wednesday morning, 12th May at 10 a. m.

As scheduled at 9-59 the Chairman entered the Chambers preceded by the Sergeant-at-Arms carrying the silver topped Mace. As the assembly stood up there was blowing of conch shells, followed by "Valthuppa", (song of invocation) sung by white clad girls of the Vembadi Girls' High School.

The assembly then sat down and the District Secretary, Mr. Devanesan Nesiah, presented the Policy Statement of the Chairman, Mr. S. Nadarajah, who read it in Tamil.

Earlier it was intended that the Policy Statement be read in Sinhala by Mr. S. N. J. Senaratne, Assistant Collector of Customs and additional Landing Surveyor, Jaffna, and in English by the District Secretary and Government Agent Mr. Devanesan Nesiah but at the actual ceremony it was restricted to the Chairman reading it in Tamil only, apparently because of a walk-out threat by Members of the Development Council earlier. The Policy Statement however was printed in all three languages and distributed to the invitees. On the wall above the Chairman was a golden embossed plaque of "NANTHI" (traditional representation of a seated bull associated with Jaffna history). Apart from the Members of the Development Council and some Members of Parliament, present on the occasion were the Leader of the Opposition, Mr. A. Amirthalingam; Mr. U. B. Wijekoon, District Minister, Jaffna; the Mayor Mr. Rajah Visuvanathan; Brigadier S. C. Ranathunga, Commander of the Security Forces in Jaffna. The American Ambassador Mr. John Hathaway Reed and Mr. Kenneth Scott, First Secretary (Political) who were both on a visit to Jaffna were among the invitees present.

"While expressing optimism at our capacity to deliver the goods and fulfil the expectations of the people, May I call upon all for the unremitting commitment of the Development of the District. May we be worthy of our high mission" said Mr. S. Nadarajah in concluding his policy statement at the ceremonial sitting of the Jaffna Development Council.

Here are a few excerpts from the Policy Statement:

Regional Autonomy

We, the people of Jaffna have been quite vocal in our demand for regional autonomy. The clamour for this reform which we have campaigned for consistently has succeeded in creating an awareness that the sharing of power in the process of Government is in the best interests of the country as a whole. Attempts were made earlier to give legal expression to this aspiration for decentralization of power. It is to the credit of His Excellency the President to have steered through the Development Councils Act, thereby creating a landmark in the process of a devolution of power. As Chairman of the Development Council, Jaffna I should express my sense of gratitude to the Government for having brought forth the necessary legislation whereby the Development Council of Jaffna has come into being.

Devolution of Power

While voicing this sentiment I should however make it clear that I have no illusions as to how potent this body is. There is no quarter for complacency. I full well realize the serious limitations that beset me in the discharge of the obligations for which the people have given a mandate so unreservedly. May I say that the Council has yet not covered the first mile stone on its journey. But, the few steps that we have taken have helped us in large measure to get a clear insight into the process of Government. In the light of this experience we have critically appraised the powers that have been given to us. This has helped us to note that the authority that is devolved on the Council needs clear definition, elucidation and amplification. The area of central preserve vis-a-vis the purview of the Development Councils requires clear demarcation. It is a keen realization of this need that, has urged us to parley with the President for a definition of the powers of the Council and to amplify the scope of its responsibilities.

Success has been registered in these talks and the posi-

Ceremonial sitting of the Jaffna D. C.

Chairman on need for regional autonomy

tion taken up by us in these negotiations has been appreciated by those in power. I feel fortified to state at this juncture that the confidence reposed by the people by a verdict of overwhelming support will never be belied. The Council shall measure up to its responsibility and carry out the programme of action to satisfy the people's aspirations.

Conceptually, the establishment of Development Councils constitutes a watershed in the process of administration. The Kachcheri system which has now been an outpost of a centralized system of government has now been partially replaced. But, it will be a protracted course to complete this

process. The initial steps taken in Jaffna have been salutary. To administer the fifteen subjects devolved upon the Council, ten Sectoral Committees have been set up. Members of the Development Council find representation in each of these committees. The experience and talent in the private sector too is drawn in. Each of these Committees is serviced by a senior public servant as its Deputy Secretary. The dovetailing of plans and co-ordination of work are effected by the District Secretary. I am happy to say that this organizational structure which is perhaps unique to this District provides the infrastructure needed to absorb further

devolution of power.

Financial Resources

The fifteen subjects range from irrigation and agriculture to education and health

services. They constitute a wide spectrum, impinging on the life of the community in a multitude of ways. These subjects have among them nineteen heads of expenditure.

The Development Council can become truly dynamic only when it commands the wherewithal to translate an aspiration into reality. The power to levy taxes is provided in the law. But I must emphatically state that the limits to such taxation as is now within our scope have been reached. Any attempt at increasing such revenue can only cause a backlash of resentment which will prove inimical to the growth of the Council. Further,

(Continued on page 11)

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LETTERS

Women Teachers' College
Gezawa, P. M. B. 3273
Kano—NIGERIA
April 27, 1982

The Editor,
Saturday Review,
303, K. K. S. Road,
Jaffna,
Sri Lanka.

Sir,

I have been receiving your paper regularly over here and I must first congratulate you on your courageous and cut and dry opinions voiced in your editorials. I think we have now filled a void in the mass communication system which was lacking all these years. Most of the articles in your Saturday Review are interesting and informative.

Reference the article by Mr. R. Balasubramaniam (Attorney-at-Law) on 'CEYLON TAMILS AND THE REVIVAL OF SOVEREIGNTY', which appeared in your issue dated 6th February, 1982, I would like to clarify the following points either from the Leader of the Opposition who was deeply immersed in this question of sovereignty.

(i) According to the author's point of view—"... the Tamils have up to date not consented to the present constitution and are therefore entitled to exercise the sovereignty which is already vested in them and be a free, distinct separate state", - it is crystal clear that the Tamil community is still entitled to enjoy the fruits of sovereignty which was in existence before the invasion of the Portuguese. If so,

(a) what were our parliamentarians and their legal advisers including the author of the article doing since 1976 i.e. after the trial-at-bar judgement?

(b) why were they not taking any step to establish a free, distinct, separate state?

What prevented them from doing so?

(ii) Again referring to the author's point of view which says "... in the absence of the legal continuity or the consent of the Tamil nation the constitution enacted is not valid and binding on the Tamil nation."

(a) Why are our leaders still abiding by the laws enacted by the Sri Lankan government which has no jurisdiction over the northern and eastern parts of Sri Lanka?

Furthermore, the recent proclamation of Tamil Eelam in the USA and the UK becomes absolutely prerogative and the press statement made by the Leader of the Opposition dissociating themselves from the proclamation seems ridiculous and contradictory to the author's point of view.

(b) Are these Tamil politicians some of whom claim to be legal pundits, really unaware or pretending to be unaware of these points raised by the author in his article or are they trying to take the Tamil community for a JOLLY ride?

(c) We as laymen are at a loss to find that when there is a legal and proper way of establishing a free state of Tamil Eelam why this hue and cry and political pranks by these legal pundits?

(d) If the Tamils are in a position to decide about their future, what prevents their leaders from making arrangements for a plebiscite and to go ahead with it?

I am sure many people who have read this article would have thought about the points which I have raised above and perhaps would have already contacted the author. Since these matters are of vital importance to our people, I expect an early clarification please.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully,
Chinniah Sivanesan

204, Kasturiar Road,
Jaffna.
10-5-82.

The Editor,
Saturday Review,
Jaffna.

Dear Sir,

I read with interest Dr. S. Srinivasan's letter in your last issue (SR of 8-5-82). He has enumerated a number of requirements for the success of our goal-Eelam. I am inclined to feel that the learned doctor has been away from the island in the sun for quite sometime and is not fully informed of the goings-on in this little corner of our earth.

Hence this reply:

1. On Faith in Leadership: The masses had implicit faith in the movement until June, 1981. The TULF victory at the D D. C. elections is conclusive proof of the degree of faith the masses had for the movement. Even now, according to the TULF leader "ninety percent of the people are with the TULF" (S. R. 8-5-82).

Tamil goals and the leadership

gimmick in any issues of your journal. Perhaps I am accustomed to them. Dr. S. is in a better position to judge these matters. In conclusion, I agree whole - heartedly with the learned doctor's suggestion "that we should not encourage controversy among our people on trivial matters" at the present crucial moment of our history.

Yours faithfully,
P. Ramachandra

Nallur,
Jaffna.
12.5.81.

Sir,

Truth pervades the whole universe. Truth prevails and never dies. Those people who do not tread the path of truth are disturbed when truth is told. Your editorial of 13.3.82 on the above subject told the truth. Thereby a hornets' nest was raised.

Let the leaders deliver the goods for the mandate they obtained from the Tamil Nation. If they cannot deliver let them step down and give room to those who can deliver the goods.

Yours truly,
V. Sinnathurai.

2. On Aftermath of Mandate: It was only after the mandate was given to the TULF that the masses began to show their solidarity with the movement in a manner never before thought possible. But what happened after June last year could be likened to the reaction of the passengers of a bus whose driver was found dead drunk.

3. On Truce, Long Struggle and Ultimate Goal: The doctor, I hope, is aware that our patient (goal) has been bed-ridden for nearly three decades with various ailments and has been taking medications in the form of truce, pacts and cooperation, and has not shown any appreciable response or improvement. Must we continue this agony any longer? The people have had enough experience in pacts, truce and talks not to be deceived by them any more. Time is running out and we must not allow our goal to pass away into the limbo of forgotten things.

4. On Sensation and Others: I have been a regular reader and have not found any discernible traces of sensation or

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A Historical foundation of the Economy of the Tamils of North Ceylon (Continued)

No. 5. in the Series

(Continued from

last issue)

Those officials who argued that economic conditions had improved in the 1680's based their case on the evidence of growing circulation of money in the economy. They pointed out to the rising price of paddy land which had increased over a fifty year period between 60% and 120% depending on its quality. They noted that cooly labour wage has risen 100%. They further asserted that the fact that more and more people were commuting their obligatory service for money payments was evidence of growing prosperity. This may well be true but we should relate these increases in wages to the increase in price of essentials. More importantly, what classes of society were benefiting from the increased circulation of money? What would have been the impact of an increasing cash economy on periods of recession and unemployment that kept recurring and the frequent occurrence of drought and famine in the whole south Asian region?

Employment and Economic Activity

There are a number of indicators to show a general upturn in employment and economic activity throughout this period. Youths with some education had career openings in the Company's junior administrative service. They were employed as translators in the Company's offices, in the revenue services in a wide range of duties and as schoolmasters and catechists. Both the revenue officer and schoolmasterships were lucrative, the latter carrying with it the perquisites of commissions on the stamp duty on land transfer and other notarial work. All these white-collar offices carried a salary ranging from 8 or 9 florins a month rising up to 24 florins. The wages of skilled artisans — carpenters, ironsmiths, stone-masons and the like — was 18 florins and thus compared favourably with the former category. Unskilled labour was paid a wage of 6 florins a month. Where there was a serious labour shortage, to wage was added a parra of

rice. There was a great demand for labour, both skilled and unskilled. They were employed both by the state and by private employers.

It is interesting to compare these wage rates with the price of rice to which they were generally pegged. In periods of good supply, the market price of rice was 3/4 florins a parra of 32 measures or 44 lbs. In times of scarcity this rose to 1 1/2 florins a parra or even higher. If a wage labourer's family at the lowest end of the wage scale of 6 florins a month were to spend half its income on rice, it could buy 4 parras in a good season. This appears to be a good-living wage but we must take note that everything else that that family needs — clothing, fish, vegetables, spices, edible oils — it had to purchase at increasing prices. The artisans, cash-crop farmers and the wealthier sections of society could have been able to live comfortably on their incomes. As seen above, taxation took away a good share of the income of the poorer classes in cash and was fixed while employment tended to be seasonal. By the mid-18th century, the price of rice seems to have doubled to 1 1/2 florins a parra and stayed at that level with no evidence of a corresponding increase in wages. All the evidence points to a decline in living standards at the end of the 18th century.

Slavery

The documents of the period talk repeatedly of slavery but do not give precise details about the exact nature of the slavery. Many of those who are classified as slaves appear to have been in a state of bonded serfdom than slavery. Some of these must have been depressed castes that originated from south India together with their masters of the higher castes and continued this bond in Jaffna. But over the years a number of these appear to have liberated themselves, though they may have continued to live on the land of their masters and performed some services. When the Thesavalamai was codified, the rights of slaves were carefully written in, despite opposition from the Mudaliyars. There

were many who were listed as state slaves who were obliged to work for the state. After some years, the Dutch gave them a monthly wage, from the savings of which they were able to buy their freedom.

The number of slaves was added to by the import of slaves from India. It is now becoming clear that there was a brisk slave trade in maritime Asia. The unrest and commotion of the 18th century in India forced a number of people to sell themselves to slavery. The Dutch bought some slaves but more appear to have been bought privately by some Jaffna rich. Slaves were constantly looking for opportunities to free themselves. Nalava slaves of the Dutch in 1784 requested to be free of all obligatory service and were prepared to pay 10 florins per year. There was a duty of 2 1/2 florins on each slave imported from India. In 1694-96 a total of 3,589 slaves were imported from Coromandel by private individuals who had to pay 11 fanams or 2 1/2 florins import duty for each slave. These slaves would have been employed in domestic and farm labour. They were also sent to perform the obligatory *uliyam* service on behalf of their masters. In this way the master saved the fine that they had to pay in lieu of service.

The Wealthier Classes

The wealthier classes of society benefited from the various avenues of economic activity that were available. Merchants and brokers were among the most prosperous of them. Brokerage was a thriving business, the most lucrative being tobacco brokers and elephant brokers. Tobacco brokers dealt with Malayalee traders and with agents of the Rajah of Travancore. Elephant brokers had dealings with the wealthy Bengal and Coromandel merchants, some of whom represented powerful figures like the Nawab of Bengal, the king of Golconda and the Nayak of Tanjor. Local and domiciled merchants traded with India and the rest of Ceylon. The mercantile community was drawn from a number of sources. There were old

land-owning families with the title of Mudaliyar who had taken to merchandising. There were merchants from maritime and fishing castes. There were merchants from the traditional chetty caste settled in Jaffna. And there were a number of migrants who had been domiciled in Jaffna and were powerful merchants. Muslims of Jaffna had an increasingly important role in the commerce of Jaffna. In 1675, it was recorded that there were 300 to 400 Muslim families. Many of them engaged in small scale coastal trading to the east and west of the island. Others were engaged in the trade to Madura and Tanjore. There were a few very affluent entrepreneurs among them. They diversified to a variety of speculative enterprises, sometimes in partnership with Hindu Tamils.

Auctioning of farms

Tax farming was an enterprise in which the wealthy local speculators featured prominently. Farming out the taxes of the state was a practice widespread in contemporary Europe and the Dutch followed the practice in Ceylon. With their numerous taxes on commodities and services, there were several such tax farms which were auctioned on an annual basis. Affluent local entrepreneurs successfully bid for these farms. Value of these farms ranged from the lease of the rentals on the fish market at Arali which was bid for 380 florins to the most expensive farm of the customs and tariffs on goods that passed through the Jaffna harbour. In 1761 this was purchased for 50,000 Florins by a large combination of Jaffna businessmen of a number of castes as well as Muslims. In a number of cases like this, syndicates of businessmen of different social origins came together to run a tax farm. Presumably this type of cooperation would have extended to other economic ventures as well.

Delicately Poised Economy

To sum up, the northern Tamil areas under Dutch rule appear to have had a steady and stable period of economic growth. It appears

that during these years, the foundations of the economy of the Jaffna peninsula were laid. We see the stabilization of small-holding peasant farming in the villages of the four provinces of Jaffna. We see the transfer of some of these areas to cash crop cultivation and to market gardening. We see the continuance and growth of maritime and commercial activity and the continuing prosperity of these groups engaged in seafaring, fishing, merchandising and brokerage. And we see an expanding sector of employment of artisans and craftsmen of various skills. Wage levels for all types of labour remained well above subsistence. There was an increasing circulation of money. The population of the peninsula was expanding. Also during these years began the phenomenon of the movement of excess population to the lands of the Vanni. Paddy and other food grains were coming into the peninsula from the Vanni.

On the negative side, however, we have the attempts at a regimentation of the economy by the Dutch. We have the monopolization of trade in the lucrative commodities. We have high rates of taxation in an effort to squeeze the land of all it could deliver and to make good the heavy deficits of the south. The specialization of agriculture and the growing market in food grains brought a great sensitivity to movements in food prices, particularly of rice. The shortages in India towards the end of the 18th century and the resultant high prices caused hardships in Jaffna. A report of Vander Graef, the last Governor of Ceylon, dated 1794, drew attention to the declining state of Jaffna and its people. It said that the inhabitants of the peninsula were at one time mostly 'well-established' but were now mostly poor and getting poorer. There was more sale of land and possessions resulting from insolvency in Jaffna than in the rest of the island. Jaffna with its dense population and its dependence on food imports had become a delicately-poised economy sensitive to any adverse changes within and without.

(To be continued)

From the pages of Hansard - 50 YEARS AGO

Debates in the Legislative Council of Ceylon - Friday

November 9, 1928

(Continued from last issue)

The position will only have to be better known and realized by the masses that live on the other side of the Palk's Strait for them to come in large numbers, whether we have the Mandapam Camp or not. Why do people leave for distant shores—why do people leave Armenia and go to the United States in spite of the tremendous expense of the steamer journey from that country to the United States? Why do people leave India and go to Canada, to the United States, and to Australia?

It is not possible to stop this migration. Migration of races has been the one constant factor in history from its very beginning. But for this migration of races, the Aryans of India and the Ceylonese who speak the Aryan language would not have been where they are; but for this migration of races Europe cannot be what it is. Sir, it is impossible to prevent this migration of races, and if we attempt to stem the tide of migration, we can only stop the onrush for a time, but the tide will rise higher and yet higher and then will come a rush which will be far worse than the migration which takes place unnoticed and slowly. We can assimilate a small number of people who come in year by year; we can, through the efforts of the Education Department, through the efforts of the Press, and through the efforts of the many societies and institutions make them part and parcel of ourselves.

BUDDHISM AND HINDUISM

We have in this country two great religions — Buddhism and Hinduism. Those two religions are practically one and the same. If you go through Ceylon you will find in every Buddhist temple several Hindu gods worshipped. The great kings who sat on the Sinhalese thrones found it necessary to introduce the gods of every community into the same temple and when we realize that Buddhism is nothing more than Hindu Protestantism, can we see any difficulty in the way of the great masses that in-

habit this country, belonging to the two great faiths, coming to a closer understanding between themselves? No doubt the difficulty is greater in the case of the other religions, Mohammedanism and Christianity; but in the case of Christianity it has been realized by its missionaries to-day that Christianity can be Indianized, can be made Oriental. Only the other day I read in a striking book by Stanley Jones in "Christ on the Indian Road" that the work of Christian missionaries in India is to introduce Christ into India though not Christianity as a distinct religion. Whether we accept Christianity as a religion or not, the fact remains that Christianity permeates the whole of India and Ceylon, and the time is not far distant when, with greater culture, with greater understanding of each other, the labels of religion will vanish and there will come about greater understanding of each other's viewpoint.

Well, Sir, these methods, one may say, will not lead to immediate results. That is perfectly true. But we are not concerned with present evils; there are no evils today.

'No other country in Asia except Japan, as prosperous as Ceylon'

—K. Balasingham (1928)

The Indian cooly is not a danger to-day; he is a helper, an indispensable factor who has created prosperity where there was none, who has made us all what we are to-day. But, it may be said, if the Indian immigrant population increases at the present rate, the time may come when the people of this country would be lost in the large crowd of Indians. But have the people of the United States been lost in the large number of immigrants who have gone there? By no means. The people of the United States have assimilated every race that has gone there. There are, no doubt, a few Germans and others who live in certain centres in

the First FRANCHISE debate

America to-day as distinct communities. But that is only a passing, a temporary phase.

Parenthetically, I may say in this connection, there is some danger in our trying to preserve what is called the homogeneity of the village, in preventing a man from a distant village from coming in. It is that feeling that will try to preserve for all time the difficulties against which we are now contending.

I for one do not fear that the racial question is by any means an acute question in this country. It will never become an acute question in this country because it becomes acute only in places which are poor and there people are at each other's throat. Ceylon, fortunately, is a country where there is much prosperity. We are on

as she is, there is no fear of this race question becoming an acute one. It is chiefly in places where there is poverty, where there is depression that the race question becomes an acute question.

If we look into this question without bias or prejudice we will find that it is but elementary justice that we should give to those who reside in this country some share in the administration of this country. That the vote has not been given to the Indian in the case of the Gansabawwas is not the fault of those who have been denied the privilege. We are changing all that. We are all coming into the light, and we are seeing that what we have been doing is wrong. Let us, therefore, open the doors and admit them into partnership in this business of Government. It is not

country of their origin, then they would not have left it. To refuse the franchise to all persons of foreign origin is not a policy that is followed in other parts of the world.

If we realize the rights of men; if we realize that men are entitled to be treated as human beings, to have some voice in the administration of their country, to have some voice in righting the wrongs under which they are groaning, then, Sir, we will not say that these Indians should not have the vote. When we give the franchise to all men and women, we cannot with any sense of propriety, refuse it to those British subjects who are toiling and moiling for us in this country.

FULL RESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENT

The Hon. Mr. N. H. M. ABDUL CADER: — Sir, I should like to make one or two remarks on this great question of franchise which has been discussed for a long time and the discussion of which has nearly come to an end. I would not take up much time; you need not entertain any misapprehension that I will take up much of your time and of the time of the Council. (Cries of "Go on.")

In making a few remarks, let me state at the outset that I am for manhood suffrage. I also agree with the Commissioners when they state that without a wider franchise the country is not fit to obtain a fair measure of responsible Government. But I do not admit for a moment that the form of responsible Government recommended by the Commissioners in their report is an advance towards full responsible Government by the people of this country.

(To be continued)

the high road to make this country a most prosperous place. I doubt whether you will find anywhere in Asia, except perhaps in Japan, a country of the size of Ceylon which is so prosperous as Ceylon.

The Hon. Mr. H. R. FREEMAN:—What about the Wanni?

The Hon. Mr. K. BALASINGHAM:—I quite realize that that is a place to be developed, and it can only be developed by human labour. Ceylon is not as prosperous as it might be, and we are all hoping for more prosperity. But as long as Ceylon is as prosperous

the business of the few, and that is the reason why the franchise is extended from time to time. That is why the franchise has been extended to everybody in practically all democracies in the world. All human beings have a right to a share in the Government of the countries where they reside.

The argument has been adduced that the Indians are better off in this country than in their own, and that therefore it is not necessary to give them this privilege of the franchise in addition. As a matter of fact, Sir, no people who have left their own country and gone to another are worse off in the country of their adoption. If they were better off in the

At the new Parliament at Sri Jayawardenepura (Kotte)

**Mr. A. Amirthalingam,
Leader of the
Opposition —**

Your Excellency, I am very happy that I have been given this opportunity to speak a few words on this unique and historic occasion. A change in the Seat of Parliament from one building to another is a unique event, more so when it also means a change of capital, however close to each other the old and the new capitals may be. This change of capital from Colombo to Kotte is doubly significant. The declaration of Sri Lanka as a Republic in 1972 was hailed as a break with imperialism and the realization of the full sovereignty of the people. This change of capital means another break with the traditions introduced by the European conquerors, the imperialist rulers who succeeded one another, the Portuguese, the Dutch and the British.

Colombo was made the Seat of Government by these foreigners from across the oceans who landed in the harbour and who wanted trade. Colombo was the harbour in which they could land their reinforcements of men and material to rule over the land and from which they could ship the merchandise for which they came. Colombo, the centre of trade and shipping became the political capital as it suited the convenience of the foreign rulers.

The shift of the capital from Colombo to Kotte has been referred to as a prelude to the revival of the glorious heritage of the Sinhalese during the period of the Kingdom of Kotte, which was the high-water mark of achievement of Sinhalese literature. The Tamil people do not grudge the Sinhalese the restoration of what was theirs. We believe in a policy of live and let live. We believe in co-existence with the Sinhalese on a basis of equality and freedom. We certainly resent and will fight against any set-up under which we are made second-class citizens and a subject nation.

The period when Colombo was the capital paved the way for the reduction of the whole population to a position of subjects of foreign imperialists, followed by the gradual emergence of the Sinhalese as the rulers, leaving the Tamil-speaking people as they were, a subject nation under different masters. As if to rub it in, the grant of Independence in 1948 was

followed by citizenship laws which decitizenized and disenfranchised half the Tamil population and made the rest doubtful citizens, by language laws which enthroned Sinhala as the only official language, leaving the Tamil-Speaking people out in the cold, and by amendments to the Constitution which made Buddhism virtually the State religion, leaving the Hindus, Muslims and Christians with a stamp of inferiority.

The Parliament in Colombo saw the emergence of the reaction to these measures in the form of demands for balanced representation put forward by the late leader Mr. G. G. Ponnambalam, the demand for a federal form of government put forward by the late leader Mr. S. J. V. Chelvanayagam, and ultimately and inevitably in the face of the total rejection of all these demands, the demand for the restoration of the sovereignty of the Tamil nation.

In the history of this Island the Kotte period has special significance. The name "Kotte" itself is a Tamil word, meaning a fort; and the city took its name from a fort built by a Tamil by the name of Alagakkonara.

At the time the capital was established at Kotte in the 14th century there were two other kingdoms in the Island. There was a Sinhalese kingdom in the central hills with its capital at Gampola and later in Kandy. There had been a Tamil kingdom in the north with its capital at Nallur.

According to Professor K.M.de Silva, in his latest book "A History of Sri Lanka" at page 84:

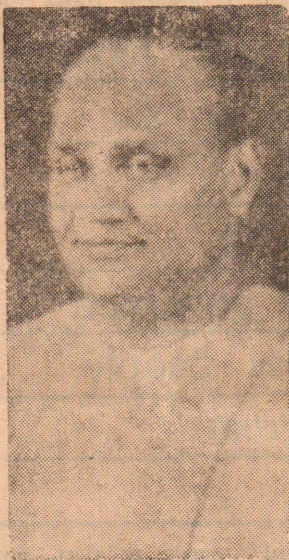
"In the second half of the fourteenth century, the fortunes of the Sinhalese reached their nadir. True the writ of the Gampola Kings appears to have run in Rohana as well as on the western seaboard, but Jaffna under the Aryacakravartis was much the most powerful kingdom in the Island."

Even the reasons for moving the capital to Kotte which Professor K. M. de Silva gives are rather interesting. This is what he says at page 86:

"The capital of the Sinhalese Kingdom was moved once more, this time from the mountains to the west coast near Colombo, where Nissanka Alagakkonara had built the fort of Jayawardenepura (Kotte) ... and once more the reasons for the move were essentially defensive, to

protect the west coast with its rich cinnamon resources which the Tamil Kingdom was so anxious to gain control of."

No doubt, these three kingdoms had their ups and downs. Reference was made in the former Parliament to the conquest of Jaffna by Sapumal Kumaraya who was known in Tamil as Sampaga Perumal, an adopted son of Parakramabahu VI, who was the greatest ruler of the Kotte period.



A. Amirthalingam

Your Excellency, under your Government, District Development Councils have been established in all the districts with power to look after certain matters at the district level. May I make use of this opportunity to ask that the District Development Councils established in Jaffna be given the necessary authority to locate, revive and resuscitate the glorious palace and capital that was occupied by the last Tamil King of Jaffna, Sankili.

While there is an attempt to revive and resuscitate ancient Sinhalese greatness, let there be a similar revival of ancient Tamil greatness, both of which bloomed side by side. Let not one wilt and wither while the other revives and blooms. Both nations were free during the Kotte period. Both languages flourished during that period. All religions, particularly Buddhism and Hinduism, were thriving during that period. Let us hope that the new Kotte era which is being inaugurated today will lead to the revival of the Kotte

the most opulent, the most fantastic living exhibit of imperial grandeur and imperial opulence. The dictatorship of the proletariat is no less valid because it operates from those hushed corridors of a million secrets.

He was also somewhat concerned, Your Excellency, about the prevailing trends. He spoke of some kind of corruption in this country. When there is such an enormous degree of development cramped into the space of a mere four and a half years the size of which five of our Parliaments which preceded us have never seen, and constituted as we are as a human government, restricted as we are voluntarily by the provisions of democratic freedom available to everybody, it is not strange that there should be some degree of corruption in some places.

I will come to the concern of the hon. Communist Member for public probity and public consciousness, but apparently in these days, in preparing his speech for this

What Amir & Anandatissa said

spirit, the spirit of equality, the spirit of freedom for all. Let us find a modus vivendi, a means of co-existence as friends, recognizing the equality and the right to self-determination, the right to freedom of the nations occupying this Island.

I thank Your Excellency.

**HON. MINISTER OF STATE
AND MEMBER FOR
KOTTE, MR. ANANDATISSA DE ALWIS.**

Your Excellency, I do not intend on this historic occasion to cover all of the territory that has been covered by the Hon. Leaders and Members of the Opposition. I want to make a gentle but passing reference to the strange tremors that appear to run through the gentle frame of the Member of Kalawana, the handsome frame of the Member for Kalawana. His amiable and generous disposition appears to have been somewhat disturbed by the fact of the grandeur of this building and its immensity. It comes strange from one who follows the path of communist doctrine where the Kremlin is

occasion, he may have forgotten to read in the press that quite recently a Soviet Minister was sentenced to death for having sold caviare for a bribe. I do not say this with a lot of relish and glee. To pounce upon such an incident is unworthy of a House as noble as this. I merely mention it, Your Excellency, in passing to point out that human frailties and human greed are not expelled when we change one form of government for another. Even when we have abolished the meaning of money, even when we have abolished the system of inheritance as the communist system has done, personal, individual frailty at the highest level is bound to surface some time or other. That is not an excuse that this Government has for tolerating a system of corruption. Already his Excellency himself has been empowered by the working committee of his party, by the Cabinet of his Government and the entire Parliamentary Group that we will rely upon his sole judgment and authority that if he

(Continued overleaf)

What Anandatissa said..

(Continued from page 7)

as much as suspects any of us, friend or foe, or closest contemporary or closest ally, that we will accept his verdict of our probity and our sense of right and wrong and we will go. We have given to him an unparalleled privilege.

I do not wish to take away from the solemnity of this occasion by referring to past periods of corruption which reached the summits and when the summits were powerless and afraid to interfere! This summit is not afraid to interfere, and to this summit we give that reverence because for a hundred years to come you will not get someone in whom in your own hearts you repose a sense of confidence in his justice and impartiality.

ASKED SO MANY QUESTIONS

The hon. Member for Madawachchiya, the leader of the SLFP, whose leadership was challenged by some of the Members who came into this House - asked many questions about this Parliament. He was overwhelmed by its majesty, overwhelmed by its beauty. I know that he has always throughout his political life been particularly sensitive to beauty. I am not surprised therefore that on this occasion, when he saw the panelled walls of this building, the pennants of all the Korales from North to South and East to West, when he saw the magnificence, the elegance in the space that has been provided for the deliberation of this nation, that he should have asked himself so many questions. He asked whether this was for the public good. He asked whether it is because it is a temple of democracy. He asked so many questions like that, but as is customary at the moment with the Sri Lanka Freedom Party he could not find an answer! So when he cannot find an answer, who am I to provide one, except to say that, if you will go back in memory to the time you began as a youth leader in the UNP with the hon. Member for Weligama standing shoulder to shoulder at the first youth camp and if you recall what the UNP leaders tried to teach you then, you will come to the conclusion that a Parliament is the assembly of the people and it must be worthy of that people.

Would you dispute that the people of this country are worthy of this magnificence, they whose works of art are still the wonder of the world,

they whose living monuments still worshipped as in ancient times are witnessed by hundreds of thousands of people who come from all parts of the world, a people who created the guardstones in our buildings, the Sath-mahal Prasadaya of Anuradhapura, the fortress of Sigi-riya, the battlements of many of our cities, the vast irrigation works, as magnificent then as they seem to be now?

**'I know that you have
a sense of humour as
we all must have in
this Assembly. A
country that is governed
by a humorless people
would be in great
jeopardy'**

Is this unworthy of such a nation, a nation who can look towards the world and say, we were not made by treaty, we were not created by a United Nations conference, we were not created at Potsdam or Zurich or Washington? We have a history of over 2,500 years of writing, of poetry, of sculpture, of learning second to nobody except the more ancient civilization of my Dravidian Colleagues across the Floor of this House.

THEY DESERVE THE MONUMENT

Therefore, you will now console yourself that this Parliament has been so designed because there is a vision in this country, and that vision is not only to make the people of this country to love each other, but in Sri Jayawardenepura Kotte of Buvenekabanu, of Panditha Sri Parakramabahu the emphasis was, as the Hon. Prime Minister so aptly said in his speech and in the verse he quoted on the quality of its people. And the quality of its people deserves the people of Sri Lanka deserve, a monument to all their endeavours and all they have suffered through the centuries to protect, to preserve with their lives the liberty, the language and the religion to which they are still dedicated. This is a monument to them and you will not deny that they deserve it.

My hon. Friend, the Leader of the Opposition, rightly said that this city was discovered by Alagakkonara

and that he was a Tamil. Of course that is true. No one will deny that history, least of all the Sinhalese. If you search through the annals of many nations, I would like to know of any other nation that is so generous to people who have come and are not of them. Your Excellency, time after time the history of this country records how our kings of ancient times prot-

that I should express that he is ready, willing and able!

Your Excellency, in conclusion, may I recall to the minds of everyone present here and the nation through us that we are the heirs to a tradition which you so richly described in your speech. May I also recall to mind that in this moment of slight disputation by the Hon. Leader of the Opposition, we the Sinhala people must, on the Floor of a House like this, express our undying gratitude to the great Sir Ponnambalam Ramanathan. When Sinhala leaders were in prison and British imperialism had them in the palm of their hand, including the redoubtable E. W. Perera of Sri Jayawardhenepura, Kotte, who represented Horana in the Sate Council in a later period, one man, and one man alone, stood up against the might of British power and that man was a Tamil, and to that Tamil accustomed as we are to be grateful, accustomed as we

are as a nation to face the truth with humility and gratitude, to that man I say on the Floor of this House "Thank you". That act made possible the growth of democratic freedom for our people and the power that they now enjoy.

PERENNIAL SPRING OF LIBERTY

Let us hope, Your Excellency, that in the House we shall always ensure that it will be the perennial spring of liberty that all of our people will equally enjoy and that every deliberation that is undertaken in this House will lead to prosperity and that we shall be able to be merely the sources by which we will express what is there deeply implanted in mankind. In the words of the greatest orator who ever spoke in this House, the late Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike, I would call that "the unconquered and unconquerable spirit of man".

Thank you.

Verse & worse: All in good humour, of course

We ruled whole Sri Lanka for uncounted years
Until it was spoilt by the heathen Portuguese
Dutch and the English we kicked out

And waved high the Lion of Sinhalese
Once again we've built our fortress in Kotte
Ready to march on ahead

Anybody not infected by our Elephantitis
Will bury in our blind stampede.

We're so generous to 'people who've come and not of us'
And accept we are of true grit

But if Eelam is a serious demand
We'll drown you in our own shit.

If Lingam becomes Sekara and Singam, Singhe
We might exchange wedding rings
But if Nallur is to be revived

We'll send the Mathews to be your Kings.

We'll parody the spirit of democracy

And make sure we win the race
To suffer the loss of a Neville Fernando
Is better than losing face

Burning a library or two and a kovil here or there
Can sometimes be political butter and bread
While we have Alwis and his gang
Who said GAMUNU was dead?

MANO
Colombo 15

ALAKESHWARA AND AMIRTHASEKERA

There was a reference to Alagakkonara, but I must remind the hon. Member that he later preferred to be called Alakeshwara. There is no time now, but I can take you and show you the road where Alakeshwara is still remembered. Why? So there is no objection whatsoever. We shall take you to our hearts. You have come here as Amirthalingam. You are welcome to be with us and go anywhere you like as Amirthasekera. I do not want you to give an interpretation to that remark which you know very well is not intended. I know that you have a sense of humour as we all must have in this Assembly. A country that is governed by a humorless people would be in great jeopardy. And in that same tone may I say that if ever you want to resuscitate that ancient kingdom of Nallur, you will find in common with us the difficulty that you cannot agree upon who will lead it. In such an eventuality we shall be glad to persuade Mr. Cyril Mathew to come and assist you as its king! Your Excellency, I am told by the Hon. Prime Minister that Mr. Mathew has already desired

The Tamil people's impasse: A way out

An extraordinary and dangerous situation faces the Tamil people today.

The TULF which in 1977 had sounded the clarion call for a Tamil Eelam has now been silenced.

The recent visit to Taiwan by its leader marks a watershed in its history. The men whom the Tamil people hopefully sent to Parliament in 1977 to fight their cause and right the wrongs done to them are neither seen nor heard. They have gradually melted away from public view, but nevertheless continue to mark their attendance in Parliament.

Have they kept their faith with the Tamil people or have they betrayed the confidence our people had so trustingly placed in them?

A 1-man show

The TULF which started as a collective leadership has now become a one-man show. From the once vociferous MPs one can now hear only a deafening silence. They have all been reduced to the role of yes-men or at the most silent and cynical spectators of the political scenario now unfolding before us.

Let us ask once again. Are these men worthy of the awful responsibility they promised so solemnly to shoulder when they were elected in 1977? Or have they proved themselves totally unworthy of it?

These men know all that is happening now. They know and sense the great peril that confronts our people. Yet they are silent. They do not even dare ask their leader what he is doing.

Creeping doom

Why? One may ask. Simply because they are afraid of losing their miserable seats in Parliament, seats which to them are of greater value than the welfare and security of the Tamil people. Their salaries, allowances and perquisites of office, not to mention their foreign trips, are of greater value to them than their duties and obligations to the Tamil people, duties and obligations which they swore to fulfil on many a platform and before many, many thousands of people in 1977.

What then are we to do in the context of these events? Are we to stand by and watch the inexorable doom creep on us?

No.!

It is now the duty of all men of goodwill, all men who put the well-being of their people first, to band together and move forward to rescue the Tamil people who now feel so abandoned and helpless.

Even more than their elders, the younger generation knows that it has been betrayed by this coterie of men. Several hundreds of them have been uprooted from their homes and now live a wandering existence both here and abroad. It is the youth who have to be shown where the future lies and in what direction we should strike out.

The Youth

Remember it is the youth between the ages of 18 and 30 who control more than 60% of the votes and it is they who will decide the future of our race.

Right along in the history of our political parties, the be-all and end-all of politics was to be an MP. Once our leaders became MPs their next endeavour was to beguile the Tamil people with fake accounts of their exploits in and out of Parliament and thus pass the time until the next elections came along. At these elections the leaders would conjure up new slogans and new issues to be forgotten once they have been elected. And so the tragic comedy goes on.

Politics was never considered a means to an end, namely the social and economic betterment of the Tamil people and thus leading ultimately to their greater happiness and prosperity.

Once the elections are over the people are left to fend for themselves and politicians spend most of their time on their professional or private work. They show one face to the Tamil people and another face to the politicians in power in Colombo.

We ask a question?

Have our leaders, as all genuine leaders do, trained a second line of future leaders from the youth to take their place? Certainly not! On the contrary they have seen to it that no second line was formed, and in fact they have broken up any move in that direction. They view any second line with distrust as a direct threat to their own positions. Staying in power was their only goal and all their cunning and resources have been directed to that end.

by

RISHI

As an author of a book on Arab-Jewish relations noted — "while the Jews were developing their young leaders and the social institutions that would be their greatest resource, Haj Amin Hussein (The Grand Mufti of Jerusalem) methodically deprived the Arabs of theirs... He reduced a generation of Arab leaders to fear and silence".

For the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem substitute the name of any of our leaders and you have what is going on today.

Is there any way out of this impasse? Yes there is. But then only if every right-thinking Tamil plays his part however small, and not shirk his responsibility, expecting the next man to do it for him.

The following guidelines are suggested for consideration

1. A new leadership is necessary and this message is a call to those who have the welfare of our people at heart to join forces, unite and throw out at the next Elections the selfish coterie of megalomaniacs who now masquerade as saviours and leaders of the Tamil people.
2. A unique position that has been given to MPs as leaders of the people should be down-graded and the representatives who are sent to Parlia-

ment should be considered as spokesmen for the Tamil people and not as their leaders.

3. Future MPs should be chosen from among the younger generation for their specific ability to participate effectively and with the utmost vigour in all debates both inside and outside Parliament.
4. They should be young men well-versed in all aspects of the Parliamentary process and each

one of them should be prepared to specialise in a group of subjects so that they will be able and effective adversaries of the Government Ministers and MPs.

5. They should also carry the message of the Tamil people to the South and educate the Sinhalese people on the issues that have been so grossly misrepresented to them by the Government media, the Dawasa group and now by the Island group.
6. Future MPs should take to their work as a full time career and should devote their entire time and energy to their Parliamentary and other work. That is, they should be full time and not part-time or week-end politicians as several of our politicians are. They should not have any other gainful employment or interests to distract them from their one-pointed devotion to their Parliamentary duties.
7. They should get their briefs from their leaders and should be the watchdogs of the peoples' rights in Parliament.
8. These facts should be publicly stated at every meeting by the leaders and by those selected for the job of being Parliamentarians so that the voters and the MPs them-

selves are made fully aware of their new role.

9. It will be obvious that the MPs will be the vehicles for the execution of policy decided upon by the collective leadership and not policy makers themselves.
10. The new Party should involve in its work the Tamil youth who constitute over 60% of the voters and who are now leaderless and frustrated. The youth should be integrated into the new Party. In this context it may be useful to remind ourselves that Mrs. Gandhi's spectacular come-back in 1980 was wholly due to the untiring work of the Youth Congress (I) which had been so effectively organised by her son Sanjay.
11. The new Party should have in its manifesto an economic programme with self-reliance and not aid as its main plank.
12. The Party should be broad in its objectives and should not merely be an official grouping with the sole object of seizing the plums of office and plundering the economy of the people, as most political parties have been. The Party should include people from all walks of life and from all the professions. The Party should not be purely political but should also be an organization for the social and economic betterment of the people. It is only then that it will be possible to form expert committees to formulate and execute plans for the welfare of the people.
13. A weekly newspaper is a sine qua non for a political party and this should be organised without any delay.
14. The Party should unlike the previous political parties of the Tamils organise effective and functioning branches in each village and town. These should be more than mere political offices. They should offer effective leadership to the people in all matters affecting their social and economic welfare.

Whereas in the past politicians considered grassroots organizations a threat to their supremacy, now
(Continued on page 11)

(Continued from
last issue)

1981 COMMUNAL VIOLENCE

The communal violence which occurred on August 1981 appeared to many observers to be the product of organized gangs and to have been stimulated by anti-Tamil propaganda, some of it allegedly emanating from the United National Party. During the August violence the government and Sinhala controlled English language newspapers reported, but did not play up, accounts of the killings, widespread arson and looting which occurred directed primarily against the Tamil population. On the other hand, the English language papers headlined the terrorist attack by Tamil youth against the police station in Anaiçottai in July in which two policemen were killed. Censorship of news of violence would not be a wise solution, but government efforts might well be directed towards discouraging selective reporting which arouses racial animosity. Controlling elements within the government's own Party which contribute to anti-Tamil sentiment is clearly a necessity. As a minimum the Tamils are entitled to protection of their physical security within Sri Lanka. This protection can no longer be taken for granted. Some Sinhalese have urged the Tamil leaders to refrain from advocating separation since it appears to be one of the causes of Sinhalese animosity and thus violence. Such urging hardly seems likely to be heard as long as Tamils feel discriminated against in education and employment and, as happened in Jaffna in June 1981, feel unprotected, even from police violence in their traditional homeland.

PROSECUTION OF POLICE

A major step towards controlling the violence of the police in the Jaffna area would be vigorous investigation and prosecution of police and security officials responsible for the burning of Jaffna in June and allegedly responsible for several arbitrary killings. The government has stated that a Commission of Inquiry will be established to investigate the events occurring up to June 2, but not the irregularities which occurred during the election for the District Development Council. It is to be hoped that the government will respond to demands of civil rights groups and others to expand the scope of the inquiry and to name to the Commission respected persons acceptable

The I. C. J. Report

Historical background to the present ethnic conflict

(continued)

(9th weekly instalment)

Ethnic Conflict and Violence in Sri Lanka: Report of a Mission to Sri Lanka in July-August 1981 on behalf of the International Commission of Jurists by Professor Virginia A. Leary.

to both the Sinhalese and Tamil communities.

The problem of political violence or terrorism has proved an intractable one for many governments. Easy solutions are obviously not available. The Jayewardene government has chosen to attempt to control the terrorist activities of the relatively small group of Tamil youths by the application of the Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act adopted in 1979. The human rights issues raised by this Act as well as questions concerning its effectiveness are such that they warrant discussion in a separate section of this report.

Prevention of Terrorism Act

ADOPTION AND PROVISIONS OF THE ACT.

In 1979, Parliament adopted the Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act in response to growing political violence in the northern Tamil area. The Act contains a number of disturbing provisions from the human rights point of view. Section 6 of the Act provides that

"Any police officer not below the rank of Superintendent or any other police officer not below the rank of Sub-Inspector authorised in writing by him...may, without warrant...notwithstanding anything in any other law to the contrary—

- arrest any person
- enter and search any premises
- stop and search any individual or any vehicle, vessel, train or aircraft; and
- seize any document or thing connected with or concerned in any unlawful activity.

An "offence" or "unlawful activity", as defined under the Act, goes beyond murder kidnapping and unlawful possession of arms to include words or signs which cause or are intended to cause "religious, racial or communal disharmony or feelings of illwill or hostility between different communities or racial or religious groups" (Sections 2(1) (h) and 31) and erasing, mutilating or defacing "any words, inscriptions, or lettering appearing on any board or other fixture on, upon or adjacent to any highway, street, road or any other public place." (Section 2(1) (1)).

The Act provides that a person may be detained for periods up to 18 months (renewable by order every 3 months) if "the Minister has reason to believe or suspect that any person is connected with or concerned in any unlawful activity" (Section 9). The same Section also provides that such a person

may be detained "in such place and subject to such conditions as may be determined by the Minister." Under recent application of the Act, 27 persons have been detained in an army camp without access to attorneys or to relatives for prolonged periods.

The Act also provides that any confession made by a person orally or in writing at any time shall be admissible in evidence unless made to a police officer below the rank of an Assistant Superintendent (Section 16). Thus, confessions made to police, possibly under duress are admissible. It provides that a statement recorded by a Magistrate or made at an identification parade shall be admissible in evidence even if the person is dead or cannot be found and thus cannot be cross-examined. (Section 18 (1) (a)). Any document found in the custody of a person accused of an offence under the Act may be produced in court as evidence without the maker being called as a witness and

the contents of the document will be evidence of the facts stated therein (Section 18 (1) (b)).

The Act is also retroactive since it defines "unlawful activity" as including action taken or committed before the date of coming into operation of the Act which would, if committed after the date of passing of the Act, be an offence under the Act. (Section 31 (1)).

The Act provides for prison terms for conviction of an offence, ranging from five to twenty years or life imprisonment depending upon the severity of the offence.

The government has stated that many democratic countries such as Canada, Australia, the United Kingdom and India faced with similar situations have adopted similar legislation. The title given to the Sri Lankan Act, "Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act" is the same as the title of a United Kingdom Act originally adopted in 1974 and repealed and re-enacted with some amendments in 1976. The Sri Lankan Act, however, differs substantially from the U.K. Act in the extent to which it infringes human rights. In the latter, terrorism is given a narrow definition, namely, "the use of violence for political ends, and includes any use of violence for the purpose of putting the public or any section of the public in fear." The U.K. Act makes membership in a proscribed organization (the IRA) an offence, with some exceptions. The much broader definition of offences or unlawful activity under the Sri Lankan Act has been referred to above. While the U.K. Act permits arrest without warrant on suspicion that an offence under the Act has been committed and permits exclusion of persons from mainland Britain in certain circumstances, it does not permit prolonged incommunicado detention without trial as does the Sri Lankan Act. Persons arrested under the U.K. Act may not be detained more than seven days without being charged with an offence. Under the Sri Lankan Act they may be detained incommunicado up to 18 months. The application of the U.K. Act, which is less repressive than the Sri Lankan Act, has been

criticized within the U. K. The **Guardian** (London) reported on Jan. 13, 1980 that

"The Act's critics say that the police use it to trawl indiscriminately for information about all left-wing groups, that it is an essentially racist law designed to intimidate the Irish into avoiding political activity, and that ordinary laws are sufficient to deal with terrorism."

THE SOUTH AFRICAN ACT

A number of the objectionable features of the Sri Lankan Act are similar to provisions of the widely criticized 1967 Terrorism Act of South Africa. The South African Act defines a "terrorist," *inter alia*, as a person who has committed or attempted to commit any act which could "cause, encourage or further feelings of hostility between the White and other inhabitants of the Republic." This provision has been criticized as unduly vague since speeches or writings which criticize the **apartheid** system, for example could be considered terrorist activities under this definition. The same criticism may be directed against a similar section of the Sri Lankan Act (Section 2 (1) (h)) which states that "Any person who...by words either spoken or intended to be read.... causes or intends to cause....religious, racial or communal disharmony or feelings of ill-will or hostility between different communities or racial and religious groups shall be guilty of an offence under this act."

SUCH BROAD DEFINITION

Such a broad definition could be construed as encompassing the advocacy of a separate state by the Tamils or criticism of policies which appear to be discriminatory against minorities. While the present government has not interpreted the Act so broadly there is an evident potential danger in such a vague provision remaining on the books.

(To be continued)

Jaffna D. C: The Policy

Statement

(Continued from page 3)

expenditure on additional infrastructure to tax collection will make increased collection self-defeating. The system of indirect taxation has come increasingly into vogue in all modern governments. The best arrangement would be for selective transfer of taxes like BTT, Excise and taxes on corporate income to the Development Council. Such a step is possible under the Development Councils Act and I urge strongly that this be given effect to.

Widening of Scope

For the Council to arrange its development priorities the specific quantum of allocation that would be forthcoming for a district should be indicated by the Central Government. The Development Council will be preoccupied for quite sometime in gaining a mastery over the fifteen subjects which fall under its purview. But this will not detract the Council from reaching for certain other areas of activity which have an intimate relationship with the welfare of the people. The Council will seek to extend the scope of its activity in such areas as Highways, Electricity, Forestry, Marketing, Ayurvedha, Textile Industry, Coconut Industry and Regional Development.

Integrated Rural Development Plan

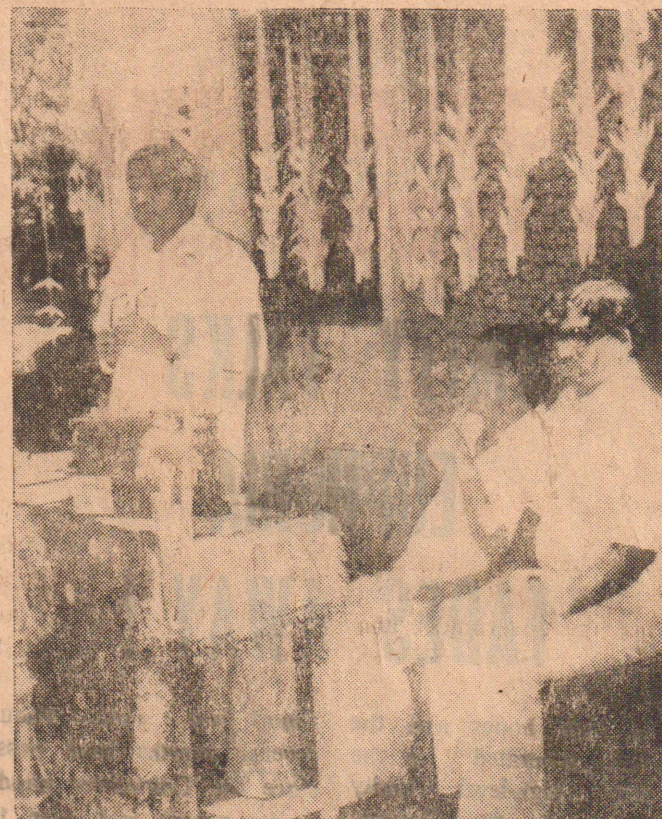
Even as the Development Council becomes a repository of greater authority and power it has to settle down

to the serious task of laying the foundation for planned growth. To determine the structure and balance of the plan such criteria as the population of the district and its needs, the resources of the area and its development potential would be considered. The contours of the policy frame for a development plan have already been mapped out in the Integrated Rural Development Plan that has been prepared for the district.

The Integrated Rural Development Programme that has been formulated for Jaffna seeks to present a comprehensive scheme of mutually reinforcing sectoral programmes. I must allude here to the uniqueness of the Integrated Rural Development Plan prepared for Jaffna District. Most of the Plans for the other Districts have been drawn up among other considerations to suit the policy formulations of donor countries. Plan preparation itself was undertaken by foreign teams collaborating with local officials or by firms where representation was not wholly indigenous. The Plan for Jaffna takes into account the felt needs of the people as understood by the team which had its fingers on the district's pulse.

The scale of investment envisaged in this plan is Rs. 750 million. An investment of this magnitude within a time span of five years can certainly launch the District into the mainstream of planned development. But the Development Council simply

does not have the means to translate this plan into achievement. Nor does the Council expect of the Central Government to fund this programme. But I am certainly within the bounds of reasonableness in soliciting the endeavours of the Government in seeking foreign funding as has been done for Kurunegala, Matara, Hambantota, Puttalam, Nuwara Eliya and Matale for their respective Integrated Rural Development Plans. When the above request is seriously pursued, the overtures of the government, for the people in the North to join the mainstream of development would be considered as of genuine intent.



Nallur Vocational Institute

The Nallur Vocational Technical Institute (Navotec) was opened recently with a view to impart vocational and technical skills to the youth of Jaffna. The idea of vocational training in Jaffna was mooted in 1976 by two brothers, K. Balaratnam and K. Rajasunderam, who offered their family land in Nallur for that purpose.

In 1981 the brothers who form the original

settlers in this project, invited the Ootru Organization—a Centre for Developmental Studies in Jaffna—to formulate the proposals for a vocational institute.

The Board of Trustees of the Institute are Mr. S. Ambalavanar, Attorney-at-Law, Colombo (Chairman); Professor A. Thurairajah, Dean of the Faculty of Engineering, Peradeniya; Mr. C. E. Anandarajan, Principal, St.

John's College, Jaffna; Mr. K. Rajasunderam, Retired Police Officer, Jaffna; and Rtn. K. Balaratnam, retired Irrigation Engineer.

The picture shows Mr. S. Ambalavanar speaking at the opening of the Institute. Seated from left to right are Professor Thurairajah and Mr. Krishnanandasivam of the Ootru Organization.

The Tamil People's Impasse: A way out

(Continued from page 9)

these organizations should be used to gather strength and sustain the new organization.

It is superfluous to state here that the youth should be fully involved with these party branches for it is they who will benefit from them.

The above suggestions are made with a view to provoking a discussion on this matter which is so vital and of momentous importance to all of us.

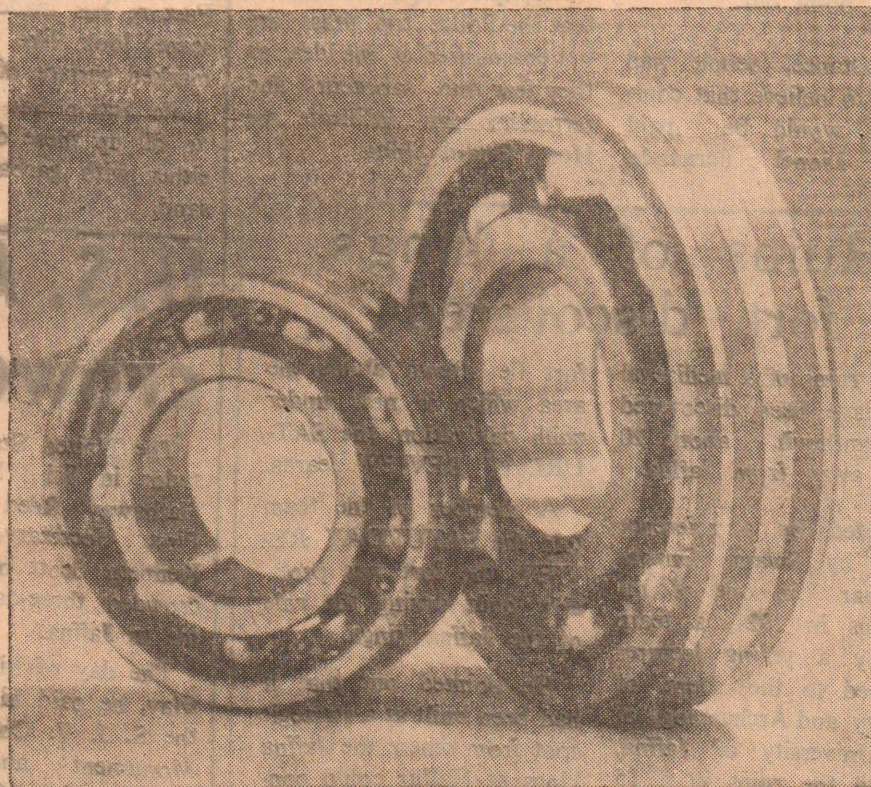
It is of the utmost importance to bear in mind that premature release of information regarding the new political party will only be to scuttle the project and in

fact will be the greatest disservice one can perform.

All ground work must be meticulously prepared and a sound and viable infrastructure laid down before we can "go public". This will mean careful planning and very hard preparatory work for 3 to 4 months, work that has to be done more in the field than in the office.

A central office must be set up and branch offices organised on a secure basis with permanent and full time dedicated and enthusiastic workers. These workers will have to be first found before we can take the next step.

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Saturday Review

SRI LANKA

AMITY TALKS

EUPHORIA

FADES AWAY!

The high hopes and the euphoria generated by the ongoing high-level amity talks between the Government and the Tamil United Liberation Front have begun to fade now, according to informed political observers.

These sources say that there is a widespread feeling of disillusionment among the common people in the North and the East who think they have been led up the garden path once again.

When the talks got going about six months ago, the impression gained ground that the TULF's minimum demands would be met by the Government.

During the negotiations, the TULF dropped the demand for a commission of inquiry, and agreement was reached on the other demands.

But little or nothing has been done to translate these verbal assurances into action, observers point out.

For instance, people had been led to believe that compensation would be paid once the Lionel Fernando

report was out. Though several months have passed since the Committee handed in its report, not even the Jaffna Public Library has received one cent yet as compensation: the Committee had recommended a compensation payment of Rs.10 million to the Library, out of a total compensation of Rs. 25 million. The President is reported to have allocated Rs. 1 million from the President's Fund for the Library.

The implementation of one of the other main demands of the TULF—the setting up of Home Guard Units—has been inexplicably put off.

It was announced with much fanfare that Home Guard Units would start functioning from 1 May and people were led to believe they would enjoy perfect security thereafter. Then a few days before the deadline the plan was reported to have been shelved indefinitely. Newspaper reports indicate that the Police top brass are not enamoured of the idea, as they fear that saboteurs and terrorists may infiltrate the Home Guard Units.

Ruins of a king's fort discovered

The ruins of a mediaeval fort have been discovered at Manthuvil, about 20 miles away from Jaffna.

Alerted by a reference made by Swami Gnana-prakasara in one of his writings in 1921, a team led by a young lecturer attached to the Dept. of History and Archaeology of the University of Jaffna, spotted the ruins in a 15 acre site at Thalvalai, Manthuvil (Chavakachcheri electorate). Bricks and limestone used to build the

fort lie strewn about the area which is now under chilli cultivation, the SATURDAY REVIEW learns.

A member of the team told the SATURDAY REVIEW the fort was probably built during the rule of the Jaffna kings.

He pointed out that it had been built at a strategic spot from where the Jaffna kings at Nallur could control not only Vadamaratchi and Pachillapalli areas but also the Point Pedro-Kachchai highway.

K.K.S. Cement could ruin Jaffna's water for ever

In ten years time, people living in the Jaffna peninsula will have nothing but brackish water to drink—unless action is taken fast.

This warning comes from a team of American experts who are studying the underground water resources of the Jaffna Peninsula.

The experts, the SATURDAY REVIEW learns, have told the authorities that indiscriminate drilling and quarrying of the limestone bedrock at Kankesanturai can well destroy the natural balance between salt water and fresh water in the Jaffna peninsula.

Large scale quarrying by the Kankesanturai Cement Factory has made the landscape look like the pock-marked surface of the moon. No action has been taken to fill up these deep craters, either with garbage or with sand.

The experts have pointed out that if these gaping craters are left unfilled, sea water would seep into the limestone bedrock which stores up the underground fresh water—on which the Jaffna Peninsula is totally dependent.

This seepage, if not checked in time, would soon lead to Jaffna's underground fresh water resources turning saline—and this would be a

death blow to Jaffna's agriculture as well, the experts say.

Concerned groups of citizens are planning to lobby Northern parliamentarians on this issue.

They also hope to prod the Jaffna District Development Council into taking steps to avert the catastrophe.

American aid

A team of American experts is in Jaffna studying the drinking water projects at Chavakachcheri and Point Pedro, as well as Jaffna's underground fresh water resources.

American aid worth Rs. 72 million has already been allocated for these projects.

Jaffna Library Week in Colombo begins today

JAFFNA LIBRARY WEEK for the purpose of collecting funds for the restoration and reconstruction of the Jaffna Public Library burnt one year ago will be held in Colombo beginning today. The Flag

Day will be held on Tuesday, the 18th and Jaffna Mayor, Rajah Visuvanathan will ceremonially sell the first flag to his Colombo counterpart Sirisena Cooray.

U.S. Ambassador had crowded Jaffna programme

The United States Ambassador in Sri Lanka John Hathaway Reed and his First Secretary (Political) Kenneth Scott had a rather crowded three-day programme in Jaffna.

The day of his arrival, 10 May, he paid his respects at the S. J. V. Chelvanayakam Monument and called on S. Nadarajah, Chairman of the District Development Council, the Roman Catholic Bishop of Jaffna, Rt. Rev. Dr. B. Deogupillai and the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Jaffna, Prof. S. Vithiananthan. The Ambassador was the Chief Guest at the first anniversary celebrations of the Evelyn Rutnam Institute at 4.30 p.m. on

10 May. The first day's programme was rounded off with a dinner to the Ambassador hosted by the Leader of the Opposition, A. Amirthalingam.

On 11 May, the Ambassador called on Brigadier S. C. Ranatunga, Commander of the Security Forces in Jaffna and the District Minister U. B. Wijekoon. He also called on the Editors of the EELANADU and the SATURDAY REVIEW, along with his First Secretary. At 4.30 p.m., the Ambassador formally presented books worth Rs. 1 lakh to the Mayor of Jaffna, Rajah Visuvanathan, for the Jaffna Public Library. This was followed by a civic Tea to the Ambassador by

the Jaffna Municipal Council. The second day's programme was rounded off with a cocktail party hosted by the Ambassador.

On 12 May, after visiting the Ramanathan Academy of Fine Arts, University of Jaffna, the Ambassador participated in the ceremonial sitting of the Jaffna District Development Council. After a visit to Nallur Kandasamy Temple, the Ambassador lunched at Jaffna College, Vaddukoddai with the Principal, Rajan Kadirgamar and the Bishop of the Jaffna Diocese of the Church of South India Rt. Rev. D. J. Ambalavanar.

The Ambassador and the First Secretary left Jaffna on the 13th morning.