

V. Muthugananda
21/8/82

Saturday Review

SRI LANKA

Vol. 1 No. 29

August 14, 1982

Rs. 2

Viewpoint

THE TAMIL DILEMMA

The decks are being cleared for Elections this year. The apparatus and the machinery for an election are being quickly assembled. The proclamation ordering a Presidential election could come within a week from now, and the election itself could take place early in October. For the first time since independence the Sri Lanka voters are going to enjoy the novel experience of choosing an Executive President. But how ready are the voters themselves? Do they know in their own minds what they are going to do?

That is the problem in generality. But how about the Tamil voters? Is it realised that for the first time in twenty six years, the Tamil voters have been left orphaned without leadership on a matter as crucial as the Presidential elections? Ever since 1956 the Tamil voters have returned the Federal Party and its successor the T.U.L.F. without a break and have chosen to be guided by this leadership on all matters affecting their future. The T.U.L.F.'s position on the Presidential election has yet to be outlined publicly. By merely asserting that the party has no intention of putting forward a candidate for the Presidential election, and saying nothing else, Mr. Amirthalingam has only left the Tamil voters to their own devices. What he has not said is far more important.

Although seemingly, there are many options open to the Tamil voters, they are illusory. In the absence of a common Opposition candidate, which itself is not as significant in the North as in the South, many of those whose names are bandied about are non-starters as far as the Tamil voter is concerned. Some of them are even non-persons, Mr. Hector Kobbekaduwa for example. Mr. Maithripala Senanayake, despite a Jaffna education and a Jaffna wife, or maybe because of that, has pointedly ignored the Tamil voter along the years. Mr. Rohana Wijeweera of the JVP has apparently entrusted the Tamil voters to Mr. Lionel Bopage and is even suspected to talk with a forked tongue in the South. Dr. Colvin R. de Silva holds some marginal advantages provided he emerges as a common Opposition candidate. Mr. Kumar Ponnambalam has some nuisance value as far as the T.U.L.F. is concerned, but if he emerges as the T.U.L.F. M.P. for Vaddukoddai even that ceases. Then there is Mr. Jayawardene himself. Men with business interests and the uncritical backers of the T.U.L.F. may yet support him, but if the Police and the Army continue to behave in Jaffna in the same way as they have been doing, for the next two months, even the existing vote could get eroded.

There seems to be therefore only one serious option open to the Tamil voters particularly those living in their traditional homelands: IGNORE THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS. The Tamil Eelam Liberation Front would prefer to call it a boycott, but this section of T.U.L.F. rebels has yet to make a systemised campaign on this issue. Mr. S. C. Chandrahassan is the reluctant Messiah to some, but he has yet to make up his mind to tap the untapped goodwill that he surely has.

Meanwhile, the Tamil voter after 26 years of T.U.L.F. leadership is ready, as far as the Presidential election is concerned to fall back on his grandmother, who in her wisdom always said: "What does it matter whether Rama rules or Ravana reigns?"

Three decline offer of Vaddukoddai seat: T. C. man asks for time

The Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) is likely to nominate Kumar Ponnambalam, General Secretary of the All Ceylon Tamil Congress (TC), and would-be Presidential candidate, as M.P. for Vaddukoddai, the SATURDAY REVIEW learns.

According to informed sources, a top TULF leader sounded Kumar Ponnambalam about this when they met recently in Colombo at a party thrown by the Embassy of a Middle East country. Kumar is reported to have asked for a week's time to consider the offer, the SATURDAY REVIEW understands.

Vaddukoddai

a T. C. preserve

A section of the ex-TC members now in the TULF is actively lobbying for Kumar's nomination, it is learnt, on the grounds that the Vaddukoddai seat rightfully belongs to the TC: the late M.P. for Vaddukoddai, T. Thirunavukarasu, was originally a member of the TC wing which merged in 1975 to form the TULF. They also point out that in the 1970 elections, the Vaddukoddai seat was won by a TC candidate, the late A. Thiagarajah, who defeated Mr. Amirthalingam.

One of the moving spirits behind the formation of the TULF, who is presently the Chairman of a local body in the North, is also strongly backing Kumar, informed sources say.

Reliable sources indicate that though several names have been mentioned as likely TULF nominees, the field has now narrowed down to two contenders: Dr. Neelan Tiruchelvam, who has Vaddukoddai connections, and Kumar Ponnambalam.

Dr. Neelan Tiruchelvam has, it is learnt, declined the offer and suggested instead the nomination of S. C. Chandrahassan. Chandrahassan has since indicated that he is not interested in a parliamentary seat.

Mrs. Thirunavukarasu, widow of the late Vaddukoddai M.P. has also politely but firmly declined to seek nomination despite tremendous pressure from

TULF supporters in the Vaddukoddai electorate, especially Karainagar.

The TULF's Working Committee meets today (14th August) at Nallur M.P. and TULF President M. Sivathamparam's Nallur Office to decide on its nominee for Vaddukoddai.

Meanwhile TC Youth wingers are reportedly perturbed about the TULF move to nominate Kumar: they argue that this will eventually lead to the virtual annihilation of the TC as a distinct entity.

Kumar Ponnambalam was not available for comment as he is away from the island. He is due back on 16th August.

Tamils in France ask for speedy Interim govt.

The TAMIL CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE - FRANCE and the FRANCE THAMIL ASSOCIATION, the only two Tamil organizations in France, while declaring unanimous support for the newly formed New York THAMIL EELAM LIBERATION COUNCIL, have strongly urged that an INTERIM GOVERNMENT OF THAMIL EELAM be set up in less than one year.

A joint public meeting of these two organizations--the first of its kind--at which this resolution was passed, was held in Paris on 1st August. Over one thousand members attended, resulting in several hundreds having to stand outside the hall throughout the four-hour

meeting, chaired by Mr. M. Muthukumar.

Guest Speaker Mr. Krishna Vaikunthavasan, a member of the Tamil Eelam Liberation Council, stressed the necessity for this mass meeting to fully endorse the New York

(Continued on Page 12)

Saturday Review

SRI LANKA

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Subscription Rates

(Inclusive of local postage and Foreign Airmail)

Sri Lanka — Annual — Rs. 120/-

— Half year — Rs. 60/-

India — Annual — Rs. 200/-

(Indian rupees)

All other countries

Annual — U. S. \$ 50

Cheques payable to Kalai Nilayam Ltd.

NEWS BRIEFS

LIBRARY AID FROM CANADA

The Eelam Tamils' Club
of Alberta city in Canada

has collected a sum of 2600
Canadian Dollars to con-
tribute to the Jaffna Library
Fund, the Club's Secretary
N. Devarajan has informed
the Jaffna Municipal Council
Mayor, Mr. Rajah Visuva-
nathan recently.

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PASSPORT OFFICE IN JAFFNA

Steps have been taken to
set up a passport issuing
office at the Jaffna Secretariat,
Deputy Minister of Defence
T.B. Werapitiya said in Parli-
ament recently.

RS. 65 MILLION FOR ROAD REPAIR

The Prime Minister R.
Premadasa announced in
Parliament last Saturday that
a sum of Rupees 65 Million
will be reserved for road
repairs throughout the island.

GRADE 5 SCHOLARSHIP EXAM

The examination to select
students of Grade 5 for
award of scholarships was
held throughout Sri Lanka
on Monday 9th. Of the
236,000 students who sat the
exam about 1500 students
whose parents have an in-
come less than Rs. 6000/-
will benefit from this.

COMMISSION INTO GALLE INCIDENT

A Commission of Inquiry
will be appointed to go into
the recent incidents of viol-
ence in Galle and compens-
ation will be given on its
recommendations, Prime
Minister R. Premadasa said
at a conference held in
Galle on 9th August.

BUS EMPLOYEES — L.T. CASE

The cases of the 84
employees of the Northern
Region Transport Board,
forcibly terminated, have
been taken up at the Northern
Region Labour Tribunal, at
Chavakachcheri by the
Magistrate Mr. N. Guru-
samy, starting on Monday
9th.

TESTING FOR OIL IN SEAS OFF JAFFNA

An American oil prospector
the 'Western Endeavour' is
exploring the Palk strait and
Palk bay area off Mannar
for possible oil prospects.
The oil exploration program-
me is done jointly by an
American firm and Ceylon
Petroleum Corporation.

Fishermen have been asked
to keep clear of this area
until explorations are com-
pleted on August 17th.

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(Part II of the submissions made on behalf of Mr. J. R. Jayewardene in the Constitutional Court of Sri Lanka in February 1973. Part I appeared last week)

Clause 6 of the 1972 Constitution states:-

"The Republic of Sri Lanka shall give to Buddhism the foremost place and accordingly it shall be the duty of the State to protect and foster Buddhism while assuring to all religions the rights granted by Section 18 (1) (d)."

Bearing in mind the place that Buddhism has been given, in accordance with the will of the people, in the Constitution one has to remind oneself that freedom of thought has been accepted by the people of this country as part and parcel of their religious teachings and upbringing. This freedom to think has been enshrined and contained in the teachings of the Buddha for over 2,500 years.

The Kalama

Sutra

For instance, in the "Kalama Sutra" the Buddha has emphasised the importance of the freedom of thought to his followers:

"When the Exalted One while going his rounds with a great company of monks came to Kesaputta, the Kalamas of Kesaputta came to Him and stated they had doubts and were wavering in their thought when recluses and Brahmins came to Kesaputta, and not only propounded their own views but abused, reviled and even deprecated the views of others. The Exalted One stated that whilst a person may well doubt or waver in a doubtful matter, advised them not to be misled by mere report, tradition or hearsay but form their own opinions on any question.

Freedom to

hear others

"In words quoted in the Anguttara Nikaya (The Book of Gradual Sayings) Volume I, Woodward's Translation, page 173, the Buddha advised the Kalamas as follows:- 'So then, Kalamas, as to my words to you just now: Be ye not misled by report or tradition or hearsay. Be not misled by proficiency in the collections, nor by mere logic or inference, nor after considering reasons, nor after reflection on and approval of some theory, nor because it fits becoming, nor out of respect for a recluse (who holds it). But, Kalamas, when you know for yourselves: These things are

Political Causerie

by

Gamini Navaratne

unprofitable, these things are blameworthy, these things are censured by the intelligent, these things, when performed and undertaken, conduce to loss and sorrow--then indeed do ye reject them, such was my reason for uttering those words. Come now, Kalamas, be ye not...so misled. But if at any time ye know of yourselves: These things are profitable, they are blameless, they are praised by the intelligent: these things, when performed and undertaken, conduce to profit and happiness--then, Kalamas, do ye, having undertaken them, abide therein...

This exhortation is regarded as the recognition of man's right to think, his right to listen to criticism, and his right to form his own judgment. See, in this connection "Budun Wadala Dharmaya" (What the Buddha Taught) by Ven Walpola Rahula, where at page 3, it is stated that the Buddha had allowed "freedom of thought" on the basis of individual responsibility. The freedom of speech is therefore, a necessary corollary to the freedom of thought and, therefore, there can be no freedom of thought unless one has the freedom to hear others.

Understood

for centuries

It is submitted that in so far as this country is concerned, freedom of thought and freedom of expression is engrained as part of their religion and mode of normal life and to interfere with this freedom is to destroy a nation's heritage. The Constitutional Court should, therefore, approach any attempt in this direction with the greatest care and interpret any proposed legislation in favour of sustaining the freedom and against the lawmaker.

It is also relevant to mention that unlike in the case of legislation already approved and promulgated which Courts are slow to hold unconstitutional, there is no such presumption of constitutionality as far as proposed legislation is concerned, and this Court is considering not the law but a Bill, and it is submitted that the benefit of any doubt must be given to the citizen in this instance.

It is submitted that Sections 8, 9 and 16 (1) and (2)

and sections 22, 24 and 30 of the Sri Lanka Press Council Bill conflict with section 18(1) (g) of the Constitution of Sri Lanka.

Although the phrase "Freedom of speech and expression including publication" has not been the subject of interpretation in our legal system, its meaning has been well understood in our society for centuries. This phrase however has a well understood meaning internationally and in the jurisprudence of India and the United States. (International Universal Declaration of Human Rights).

portunity essential to the security of the Republic, is a fundamental principle of our constitutional system.

Stromberg v. California 283 U.S. 359, 369. "(1) 'It is a prized American privilege to speak one's mind, although not always with perfect good taste, on all public institutions,' **Bridges v. California**, 314 U.S. 252, 270, and this opportunity is to be afforded for 'vigorous advocacy' no less than 'abstract discussion.' **N.A.A. C.P. v. Button**, 371 U.S. 415, 429.

The First Amendment, said Judge Learned Hand, "pre-

and that the fitting remedy for evil counsels is good ones. Believing in the power of reason as applied through public discussion, they eschewed silence coerced by law--the argument of force in its worst form. Recognizing the occasional tyrannies of governing majorities, they amended the Constitution so that free speech and assembly should be guaranteed."

Thus we consider this case against the background of a profound national commitment to the principle that debate on public issues should be uninhibited, robust and wide-open, and that it may well include vehement caustic, and sometimes unpleasantly sharp attacks on government and public officials.

In **Near vs. Minnesota** 283 US 697, at pages 717 to 718

"The last right we shall mention, regards the freedom of the press. The importance of this consists, besides the advancement of truth, science, morality, and arts in general, in its diffusion of liberal

The Buddha and Freedom of Thought

FIRST AMENDMENT

The First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution provides "The Congress shall make no Law...abridging the freedom of speech or of the Press..." and this provision has been the subject of judicial interpretation for nearly two centuries.

In **New York Times Co. vs. Sullivan** - 376 US 544, at pages 269-240 the Supreme Court of the United States said:

"The general proposition that freedom of expression upon public questions is secured by the First Amendment has long been settled by our decisions" The constitutional safeguard, we have said, was fashioned to assure unfettered interchange of ideas for the bringing about of political and social changes desired by the people.

Roth v. United States, 354 U.S. 476, 484. "The maintenance of the opportunity for the free political discussion to the end that government may be responsive to the will of the people and that changes may be obtained by lawful means, an op-

supposes that right conclusions are more likely to be gathered out of a multitude of tongues, than through any kind of authoritative selection. To many this is, and always will be, folly; but we have staken upon it our all." **United States V. Associated Press**, 52 F. Supp. 362. 372 (D.C.S.D.N.Y. 1943)

TYRANNY OF MAJORITIES

Mr. Justice Brandeis, in his concurring opinion in **Whitney v. California**, 274 U.S. 357, 375-376, gave the principle its classic formulation: "Those who won our independence believed...that public discussion is a political duty; and that this should be a fundamental principle of the American government. They recognized the risks to which all human institutions are subject. But they knew that order cannot be secured merely through fear of punishment for its infraction; that it is hazardous to discourage thought, hope and imagination; that fear breeds repression; that repression breeds hate; that hate menaces stable government; that the path of safety lies in the opportunity to discuss freely supposed grievances and proposed remedies;

sentiments on the administration of Government, its ready communication of thoughts between subjects, and its consequential promotion of union among them, whereby oppressive officers are shamed or intimidated, into more honourable and just modes of conducting affairs." Madison, who was the leading spirit in the preparation of the First Amendment of the Federal Constitution, thus described the practice and sentiment which led to the guarantees of liberty of the press in state constitutions:

"In every State, probably, in the Union, the press has exerted a freedom in canvassing the merits of measures of public interest of every description which has not been confined to the strict limits of the common law. On this footing the freedom of the press has stood; on this footing it yet stands.... Some degree of abuse is inseparable from the proper use of everything, and in no instance is this more true than in that of the press. It has accordingly been decided by the practice of the States,

(Continued overleaf)

It is high time that all our humanists, politicians and religious leaders launched a relentless crusade against the dowry system. This article seeks to re-inforce and supplement your staff writer's synopsis on the subject (Saturday Review- August 7). Though we have inherited this legacy from our living memories, circumstances influenced by socio-economic changes have made the dowry system the most vicious and unique of any, found elsewhere in the world.

An analysis of the essential components of our dowry system will bear this out. A dowry once consisted of a house, some cash, enough jewellery and if possible some land, be it a garden or a paddy field. But over the past decade or so a new component has raised its ugly head, that is 'donation' which is being extracted for a host of reasons, the most appalling and degrading of which is for meeting wedding expenses including the purchase of the Thali Kodi (nuptial chain) and the koorai (bridal saree). This demand for 'donation' stems from the clamour for a certain type of eligible and suitable partners of whom there is a severe dearth today. No doubt our dowry system has been driven to a point where no solution seems to be within sight.

**We are heading
for disaster'**

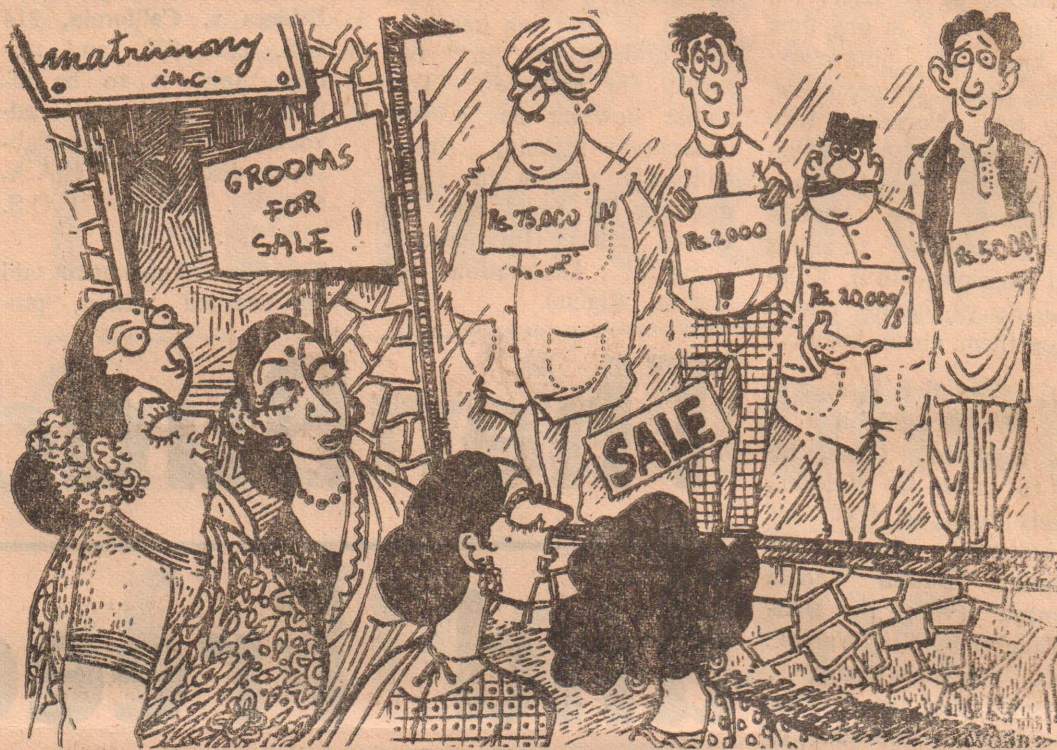
The other contributory cause to this evil is the increase in the number of working females in our society, bringing in its train other social problems. One may ask why the once useful and pragmatic arrangement of giving a part of the house as dowry and resorting to inter-marriage is fast becoming a thing of the past. So far no sociologist has given, as far as I know, an acceptable explanation for this.

Our society is certainly heading for disaster; the rot has already set in, which is just a syndrome. The psychological repercussions on parents with two or more marriageable daughters are difficult to imagine. Quite a number of them have ended up as physical wrecks or subject to mental ill health. The pace set by one-daughter families has made the struggle of other families even worse than they have anticipated. This mental ill health is being passed on to growing girls and grown up ones too who are forced into higher and professional studies, more often beyond their aptitude and capability. The end result of this trend is that most of them drop out. Quite a large number of girls become victims of frustration which becomes

The Dowry evil can lead to a sick society

by

M. S. Nathan



Bridegrooms for sale: Cartoon from an Indian Magazine

more acute the longer they remain unmarried. Marriage has become to the majority a remote possibility as things are now. As women proceed beyond 30 their chances recede even further—a stigma being attached to this situation. Their age of usefulness is up to this point whereafter they stand self-condemned as being 'over-mature'. A life full of frustrations is the culmination of a dowryless existence. Even where they get married after 30 they invariably find it difficult to enjoy a happy married life.

The dowry itself implies surplus wealth lying hidden somewhere. This means that the bride who can come into the matrimonial market with the highest offer by way of dowry beats the rest. This aspect of the evil system is a glaring instance of the Darwinian theory of survival of the fittest and elimination of the weakest. The economic set up of our society is largely responsible for this sad plight of ours.

What we see today is a mad deviation from our traditional approach to marriage, which was based mainly on social value. The sad and tragic situation is caused by the economic and social thinking of the Tamil

man, which has become opportunistic, greedy and self-assertive. Very few in our community are able to escape the limitations of this thinking motivated entirely by self-interest. No one feels for the neighbour's child and all accumulation of wealth by unjust means is not thought of as the negation of the religious impulse. Nowhere does any religion sanction the giving of dowry though the bigger the dowry the more expensive becomes the religious ceremony. What sort of society are we breeding now?

Many a parent seems to take refuge in the makeshift arrangement in making his daughters take to a career while others continue to live in a world of hope depending unduly on luck and good period of time as predicted by the astrologer; only to be disillusioned! Just consider the number of working females, even the professional ones, who are waiting with fingers crossed over the slim prospects of getting married according to their expectations.

Social Problems

Ever since the dowry system took a change for the worse the growing tend-

ency for our females to break loose from discipline by parents, school and religion has become more manifest. Some of them are innocently exposed to experiences that may only heighten their frustration or may qualify them to become the 'nucleus' of a permissive society that is threatening to be born. The intriguing behaviour of this 'nucleus' at bus stands and stops, the cinema, the temples, tutorials and on mini buses is giving a lot of data for the sociologists whose feed back is important for the solution to this vexed problem. Is it an act of commission or an act of omission on the part of our community to allow a sizeable percentage of our female population to remain unmarried (My modest estimate is around 35%).

What will be the biological, and psychological effects if

The Buddha & Freedom.....

(Continued from page 3)

that it is better to leave a few of its noxious branches to their luxuriant growth, than by pruning them away, to injure the vigour of those yielding the proper fruits. And can the wisdom of this

policy be doubted by any who reflect that to the press alone, chequered as it is with abuses, the world is indebted for all the triumphs which have been gained by reason and humanity over error and oppression".

(To be continued)



**Garlanded
with his
own
dowry cash?**

stay-at-home females are denied the benefits of a married and full life. Working females are slightly better off than these because they are able to stand on their own legs money-wise and because they are wedded to their work. Are they not forced into a sort of life that goes against the law of nature? Are the high moral standards set up by our forefathers for the past many generations going to be kept at that level? Answers to these thought provoking and challenging questions do not fall within the sphere of knowledge of the politician, economist, sociologist or the psychologist but they can be tackled by the ordinary man if only they could stir him to action, after making him realise the seriousness of the problem. We males are double-tongued and utterly hypocritical and it is up to our womenfolk to start an organised resistance so that we may rebuild our society.

To achieve this goal a strong public opinion needs to be created on lines suggested by your staff writer. Solutions to this evil social problem in the light of what this article attempts to bring out will come as a follow up.

M. S. Nathan.

Amirthalingam told New York journal :



'We're nowhere near a solution'

Foreign View

The national anthem was not "The Star Spangled Banner" and the flag did not bear stars and stripes.

The anthem, and a flag showing a golden sun rising against a red background, are the emblems of the Tamil people, a predominantly Hindu minority on the island of Sri Lanka, the Indian Ocean country formerly known as Ceylon. The Tamils are seeking independence from the Buddhist Sinhala majority that controls the country.

As Americans celebrate two centuries of independence this weekend, 150 Tamils with roots in Sri Lanka are gathering at the Nanuet Holiday Inn for the first "World Tamil Eelam Convention" to discuss their goal, winning a sovereign state.

The men, dressed in the white, loose-fitting garments known as "vertys" or western style casual clothes, and women all dressed in colorful saris, are meeting in a conference room of the motel for two days of speeches punctuated by traditional meals, dancing and drama.

Physician and High school teacher

Most are expatriates who came for the week-end from Canada, West Germany, France, the United Kingdom and India, the home of the Tamils who first settled in the north of Ceylon starting in the eighth century, touching off competition with the already established Sinhalese.

In recent years, that competition has entered a new era marked by death and bitterness as the Sinhalese have escalated a campaign of political and social oppression in an effort to squeeze the Tamils and their traditions out of national life, Tamil leaders said in interviews at the convention Saturday.

Dr. Winston Panchacharam, a physician who lives in Nanuet and Edward Benedict, a high school teacher who

lives and works in Vonkers, are among American and Canadian members of the Tamil community who organized the convention under the umbrella of the Thamili United Liberation Front (TULF).

"We have to bring our movement to the light of the world," Dr. Panchacharam said Saturday. "We have to make the world see our plight."

The urgency of delegates at the convention was underscored by the trend among radical Tamil elements to take up armed violence in opposition to the Sinhalese while the TULF continues to work politically worldwide and in Sri Lanka to win recognition for the Tamils.

After centuries of colonial control by European nations, Ceylon won independence from Britain in 1948 and the Sinhalese took the political opportunity to begin suppressing the Tamils and expropriating their property, said Dr. Panchacharam.

Tamil leaders said the oppression has moved in recent years from the political arena to the streets with murders by Sinhalese, looting of homes, attacks against Tamil youths—including allegations they are tortured when in police custody and the burnings last year of Tamil cultural and political centres.

The goal of the TULF, said S. C. Chandrasenan, a Tamil attorney who practices in the capital city of Colombo, is "restoration of what we had, what we lost, we want to regain."

With a majority of 72 percent to 20 percent in the island's population of 14 million, the Sinhalese dominate the Sri Lankan Parliament by 5-to-1 over the Tamils.

The history of the conflict, according to a 1981 study by members of the International Commission of Jurists, is complicated.

When the British empire was substantially dismantled after World War 2, Ceylon was granted independence in 1948 and the Sinhalese majority promptly passed laws curtailing the rights of the Tamils.

Legislation in 1949 took the vote away from Indian- or "estate" - Tamils, those whose ancestors were imported to the island from Tamil lands in Southern India by the British as labourers during the 19th century.

Through the 1950's the Sinhalese majority passed

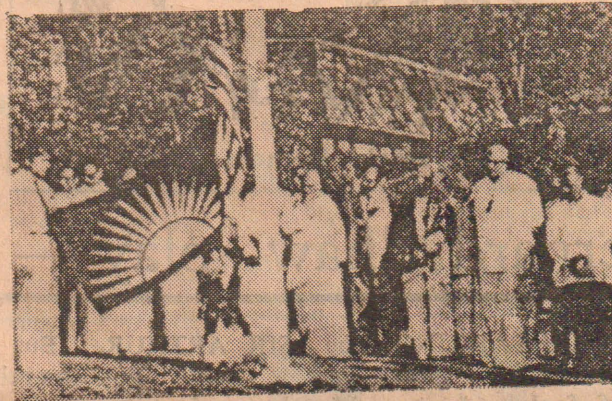
Amirthalingam, who also serves as secretary general of the TULF, described a political answer as "illusive" and said "chauvinist forces (among the Sinhalese) are gaining momentum" as hardcore elements, particularly among the security forces are reacting to the Tamil movement.

northern city of Jaffna, said "the youths feel so frustrated because they see there is no future for them."

Tamil militancy resides with the youths, he said, who have abandoned the hope that non-violent protest will induce a "Gandhian change of heart" among the Sinhalese leadership.

Sunday Journal - News

Rockland County, New York



Hoisting of the Tamil Eelam flag at the convention. Present were Mr. A. Amirthalingam and Mr. M. Sivasithamparam

From INDIA ABROAD

measures establishing Buddhism and Sinhalese as the national religion and language in an effort to dilute the Tamil culture and effectively excluding Tamils who could not speak Sinhalese from public service.

In August 1977, after five years of military rule in the north, violent rioting erupted and left 600 Tamils dead, said the attorney Chandrasenan, adding that 22 Tamils are known to have been victims of government "atrocities" over the past several years.

The International Commission of Jurists, an organization of judges and lawyers, was critical in its report of the Sinhalese, particularly in connection with the 1979 Prevention of Terrorism Act that suspended the human rights of Tamils arrested in connection with alleged political violence.

When asked whether a political solution is possible in the dispute, Appapillai Amirthalingam --the leader of the Tamil minority, or opposition party, in Parliament--said Saturday, "In spite of all our efforts, I don't believe we've moved any closer to a solution."

Eela Venchan, the organizing secretary of the radical Tamil Eelam Liberation Front and a resident of the

Chandrasenan noted that some youths have gone underground and are waging a guerilla war against security forces.

On Thursday, four police were shot to death and three others injured when they were ambushed on their way to reinforce a group of police who allegedly assaulted a group of Tamil youths, he said.

One of the Tamil leaders interviewed warned that the situation is escalating and urged recognition of the Tamil plight before the violence can no longer be controlled.

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Sir Jafna Pandranath

at No.10, Downing Street

Who is, or who was Sir Jafna Pandranath? Nobody will know him because he is not a real person. He was a character in a play written by the famous Irish Playwright George Bernard Shaw!

According to Eric Bentley, the faithful Shavian, dozens of Bernard Shaw's characters are portraits of his friends. But considering the fact that Shaw enjoyed the longest career in the British Theatre and had been writing plays from as early as 1885 to as recent as 1939..... not many friends of his appear to have had the privilege of being portrayed in his plays.



Playwright Bernard Shaw

From the Bernard Shaw play — 2

(Continued from last issue.)

HILDA (reappearing) The deputation, Sir Arthur. They've come back. (She vanishes).

The deputation enters. Hipney is not with them. Barking, shaved, brilliantly dressed, and quite transfigured, is jubilant. Aloysia glows indignation. Blee and the Mayor, doggedly wearing their hats and overcoats, are gloomy, angry, and resolute. They group themselves just inside the door, glowering at the Prime Minister and his colleagues.

SIR ARTHUR (beaming) Gentlemen: a Labor deputation from the Isle of Cats. The one element that was lacking in our councils. You have heard the voice of the peerage, of the city, of the King's forces. You will now hear the voice of the proletariat. Sit down, ladies and gentlemen.

THE MAYOR (rudely) Who are you calling the proletariat? Do you take us for Communists? (He remains standing).

ALOYSIA. What you are going to hear, Sir Arthur, is the voice of Labor. (She remains standing).

BLEE. The verdict of democracy (He remains standing).

EARL OF BARKING. The bleating of a bloody lot of fools. I am with you, Chavender. (He detaches himself from the group and flings himself into Hilda's chair with intense disgust).

SIR ARTHUR (surprised) Am I to understand that your colleagues are against me?

THE MAYOR. Of course we're against you. Do you expect me to go back to my people and tell them they should vote for compulsory labor and doing away with strikes?

BLEE. Ar'n't the workers enslaved enough already without your depriving them of that last scrap of their liberty? the only weapon they have against the capitalists?

SIR ARTHUR. My dear Mr. Mayor, what is the right to strike? The right to starve on your enemy's doorstep and set the whole public against you. Which of you starves first when it comes to the point?

THE MAYOR. I am not going to argue. You can beat me at that. But if you think that the British workingman will listen to compulsory labour and putting down strikes you don't know the world you're living in; and that's all about it.

SIR ARTHUR. But we need not compel the workers to work: they are working already. We shall compel the idlers. Not only your idlers but our idlers: all the idle young gentlemen who do nothing but waste their own time and your labour.

BLEE. We know. Keep all the soft jobs for your lot and the hard ones for us. Do you take us for fools?

BARKING. He does. And you are fools.

SIR ARTHUR. I am glad to have your lordship's support.

ALOYSIA. Support your grandparents! He wants to marry your daughter.

BARKING (springing up) Oh! You can hit below the belt, Aloysia. But as a matter of fact, I do want to marry your daughter, Chavender.

SIR ARTHUR. Hardly the moment to go into that now, is it?

BARKING. It was Aloysia and not I who let the cat out of the bag. Being a cat herself she had a fellow-feeling for the animal. (He resumes his seat).

BLEE. You're an aristocrat, young-fellow-me-lad. I always said that when things got serious you'd turn on us and side with your own.

BARKING. Rot! You are always bragging that you

are descended from the Blee of Blayport, whoever he may have been. I shouldn't have tuppence in my pocket if my grandfather hadn't made a fortune in pork pies and bought my father's Norman title for his daughter with it. The blue blood is in your skimpy little veins; the proletarian red's in mine.

ALOYSIA. You've too much money, Toffy.

BARKING. I haven't had all the pluck taken out of me by poverty, like you chaps. And what good will it do me to have a lot of money when I have to work like anyone else?

SIR DEXTER. Why should a man work like anyone else if he has money?

BARKING. My brother had heaps of money; but he had to go into the trenches and fight like anyone else in the war. That's how I came into the property.

BLEE. So we're all to be slaves for the sake of setting a few loafers to work. The workers will die sooner than put up with it. I want my liberty.

BARKING. Liberty to work fourteen hours a day and bring up three children on thirty-four shillings a week, like your brother the shopman. To hell with your filthy liberty.

BLEE (hotly) I -

THE MAYOR. Order! order! Don't argue with him, Blee. No good ever comes of arguing with college men. I'm not arguing with Sir Arthur: I'm telling him. The long and the short of it is that if he don't withdraw that silly new program he'll lose every vote in the Isle of Cats. And what the Isle of Cats thinks today, all England thinks tomorrow.

SIR JAFNA. May I speak to this gentleman? Will you introduce me, Arthur?

SIR ARTHUR (introducing) Sir Jafna Pandranath. The Mayor of the Isle of Cats.

SIR JAFNA. You have heard of me, Mr. Mayor. You know that I am a man who knows what he is talking about.

Well, I tell you that the fundamental question is not the Labor question but the Land Question.

THE MAYOR. Yes: we all know that.

SIR JAFNA. Then you will vote for Sir Arthur because he will nationalise the land for you.

BLEE (scornfully) Yes, with compensation! Take the land with one hand and give back its cash value to the landlords with the other! Not likely. I ask again, do you take us for fools?

SIR ARTHUR (introducing) Mr. Alderman Blee.

THE DUKE. Enchanted. I happen to be a landlord—a duke, in fact—and I can assure you, Mr. Alderman, that as the compensation will come out of my own pocket and that of my unfortunate fellow landlords in the form of income tax, surtax, and estate duties—what you call death duties—you will get all your cash back and the land as well.

THE MAYOR. Blee: I tell you, don't argue. Stick to your point. No compensation.

BLEE. Not a penny, by God.

THE DUKE. You believe in God, Mr. Alderman. I am charmed to hear it. (Here the Duke is astonished to find Aloysia towering over him and pointing an accusing finger at him. At the moment of his introduction of himself as a duke her eyes lighted up; and she has moved menacingly across the hearth towards him until she is now standing behind the vacant chair between him and Basham.)

ALOYSIA. Have you ever heard of the Domesday Clearances?

THE DUKE. Clearances? Which clearances do you refer to? The latest cleared me out of Domesday Towers. I can no longer afford to live there.

ALOYSIA. Don't prevaricate. You know very well what I mean. It is written in blood and tears on the pages of working class history.

(Continued next page)

SIR ARTHUR (introducing) Alderwoman Aloysia Brollikins. The Duke of Domesday.

THE DUKE (rising courteously) Wont you sit down?

ALOYSIA (sternly) You shall not put me out by these tricks and ceremonies. My Lord Duke; I would rather touch the hand of the most degraded criminal in London than touch yours.

THE DUKE (collapsing into his chair) Great heavens! Why?

ALOYSIA. Do you forget how your family drove a whole countryside of honest hardworking Scotch crofters into the sea, and turned their little farms into deer forests because you could get more shooting rents out of them in that way? Do you forget that women in childbirth were carried out by your bailiffs to die by the roadside because they clung to their ancient homesteads and ignored your infamous notices to quit? Would it surprise you to learn that I am only one of thousands of young women who have read the hideous story of this monstrous orgy of house-breaking and murder, and sworn to ourselves that never, if we can help it, will it again be possible for one wicked rich man to say to a whole population "Get off the earth."

SIR JAFNA. Admirable! What did I tell you? Hear hear!

ALOYSIA. I thank you, Sir Jafna, for shewing this man that even hardened capitalist millionaires shudder when that story is told. You will not find it in your school histories; but in the new histories, the histories of the proletariat, it has been written, not by the venal academic triflers you call historians, but by the prophets of the new order; the men in whom the word is like a burning fire shut up in their bones so that they are weary of forbearing and must speak.

THE MAYOR. Aye: in the Bible, that is.

ALOYSIA. The Domesday Clearances filled your pockets with gold to console you for the horror and remorse of your dreams; but the vengeance they cried to God for in vain is upon you now that Labor is coming to its own; and it is your turn now to get off the earth.

BLEE. And in the face of all this, you come whin-

ing for compensation! Compensation!! Compensation from us to you! From the oppressed to the oppressor! What a mockery!

ALOYSIA. It is from you that we shall exact compensation: aye, to the uttermost farthing. You are conspiring here with these capitalist blood-suckers to rob us again of the value of what you have already stolen - to make us give you gilt edged securities in exchange for the land that no longer brings you in shooting rents; and you think we cannot see through the plot. But in vain is the net spread in sight of the bird. We shall expose you. We shall tell the story of the Domesday Clearances until the country rings with it if you dare to lift your dishonoured head again in English politics. Your demand for compensation is dismissed, turned down: we spit it back in your face. The crofters whom you drove from their country to perish in a foreign land would turn in their graves at the chink of a single penny of public money in your hungry pockets. (She tears out a chair from under the table and flops into it, panting with oratorical emotion.)

BLEE,
SIR JAFNA,
SIR BEMROSE,
GLENMORISON :

Good for you, Brolly! (enthused) Hear hear! (They hammer on the table with their knuckles.)

THE DUKE (very appreciative) What a magnificent speech, Miss Brollikins! I really must insist on your shaking hands with me before we part.

ALOYSIA. Never. How dare you ask me (She sweeps away from him and sits down in the opposite chair at the other side of the table.)

THE DUKE (taking the armchair) May I not have the privilege of telling my grandchildren how I once met and shook hands with the greatest orator of my time. I assure you all these shocking things happened before I was born.

BLEE (bawling at him) Yes; but you still pocket the shooting rents.

THE DUKE (brusquely) Of course I do; and so would you too if you were in my place. (Tenderly, to Aloysia) I assure you Miss Brollikins, the people make much more money out of my shooting tenants than they could as crofters; they

would not go back to croftering for worlds. Wont you let bygones be bygones - except when you are exercising your wonderful gift of eloquence on the platform? Think of what your ancestors were doing in those ruthless old days!

BARKING. Grabbing all they could get, like yours or mine. Whats the good of tubthumping at those johnnies, Brolly? Theyve been doing it themselves all their lives. Cant you see that compensation makes them share the loss fairly between them?

SIR BEMROSE. It's no use. These damned Liberals cant understand anything but virtuous indignation.

THE MAYOR. Who are you calling a Liberal? I represent the Labor Party.

SIR BEMROSE. Youre a No Compensation man arent you?

THE MAYOR. Of course I am.

SIR BEMROSE. Then youre a Liberal.

THE MAYOR. Call me what you like. I'm telling you that the Labor Party of the Isle of Cats puts down its foot and says No Compensation. Is that plain?

SIR DEXTER. I am glad we have arrived at the same conclusion from our opposite points of view, Mr. Mayor. The Party I represent, the Conservative Party, will withdraw from the Coalition if there is the slightest wobbling on this point. We shall defend our property---and yours; yours, Mr Mayor, to the last drop of our blood.

BASHAM (incisively re-entering the conversation; they had forgotten him and now turn to him in some surprise) Our blood, you mean, dont you?

SIR DEXTER (puzzled) Whose blood?

BASHAM. The police's blood. You landed gentlemen never do a thing yourselves; you only call us in. I have twenty thousand constables, all full of blood to shed it in defence of

whatever the Government may decide to be your property. If Sir Arthur carries his point theyll shed it for land nationalization. If you carry yours theyll stand by your rent collectors as usual.

BLEE. The police come from the ranks of labour; dont forget that.

BASHAM. Thats not how they look at it, BLEE. They feel that they've escaped from the ranks of labor; and theyre proud of it. They have a status which they feel to be a part of the status of the Duke here.

THE DUKE. I suppose that is why they are always so civil to me.

BASHAM. In short, Mister Blee, the police are what you Socialists call class-conscious. You will find that out if you are foolish enough to fall out with them.

BLEE. Who cut their pay? Tell me that.

SIR ARTHUR. I shall restore the cuts, Mr. Alderman, with a premium.

(To be continued)

N T N

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LETTERS

International Tamil meet in Singapore?

29, Kamaraj Avenue,
Adyar, Madras -20
3rd August, 1982.

Sir,

I happened to see a "news release" published in your issue of 24th July announcing that the "VIth International Conference Seminar on Tamil Studies will be held in Singapore in June, 1983." This announcement by Mr. Thuraijah, signing himself as the Secretary of IATR, Sri Lanka Unit, is rather intriguing since the office of the IATR in Madras, which is the only body that is responsible for conducting the International Conference Seminar with the assistance of international scholars. So far no country or institution has offered a venue for the VIth Conference after the Vth meet at Madurai in January, 1981. The practice for the international meet is once in four years, to give ample time for organising and coordinating. The IATR office in Madras expressed surprise when informed about Mr. Thuraijah's announcement.

NO OFFICIAL BACKING

During last June when I was in Kuala Lumpur and Singapore I was informed by friends that Mr. Thuraijah who was the convener for the Ceylon delegates and observers for the last Madurai conference had visited Singapore and scouted around for a Meet in that city. Certain Tamil newspapers in Kuala Lumpur also carried the news that Singapore might be the venue for the VIth World Tamil meet. As I am closely associated with the IATR in Madras I was interested to know the facts. I contacted officials in the Cultural, Information and Education ministries in Singapore who expressed the view that there may be some private individuals planning such a thing but, as in the case of earlier conferences held at Kuala Lumpur, Mad-

ras and Madurai, there cannot be any official or governmental support and patronage for such a meet. In fact a member of Singapore parliament who is interested in Tamil declined to associate himself with a committee that initiated the move to hold the Conference in Singapore. A move was made to influence the Malaysian government to invite the Conference saying that the first Conference was held in Kuala Lumpur and it was more than fifteen years. After the Telugu conference fiasco Kuala Lumpur refused to accommodate any more linguistic conferences. The Singapore government too does not want to associate itself in any such venture. Singapore University has no Tamil department and it cannot be used as a venue. In this climate one wonders at the announcement of Mr. Thuraijah of Sri Lanka.

OFFER FROM SENEGAL

Your readers will be interested to be informed of a few historical facts. At the end of the IVth Conference at Jaffna Prof. M. Shanmugampillai, then of Madurai University, invited the IATR organisation to hold the Vth Conference at Madurai. Somehow it was not followed up and Dr. Sengor, President of Senegal, himself a student of Dravidian philology, expressed his desire to invite the Conference to his country. Political situation in Senegal changed and there was long delay. In the meantime the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister wrote to Dr. Sengor and requested him to allow Tamil Nadu to host the Vth Conference and invite the next Conference to Senegal. This request was accepted by Dr. Sengor and this resulted in the Madurai Conference of 1981.

So the VIth Conference rightfully belongs to Senegal if Dr. Sengor's invitation still stands. But there are many hurdles. Dr. Sengor is no more in Senegal, he is

retired and lives in Paris. Mauritius was another applicant and there too those who invited are no more in power. Tamil residents in London and America, a powerful force in recent times, have been expressing fears that Tamil politics would creep in and change the mood of academic discussions which is the main aim of the International meet.

Hence, according to the IATR office in Madras, so far no thought has been given to the venue of the next Conference which will have to be, according to practice, in 1985, four years from the last one. Mr. Thuraijah and his friends in Singapore have every right to hold any Tamil Conference, they say, but it cannot go under the banner of IATR which is not only improper but unauthorised and quite illegal. The IATR's conducting of the International Conference Seminar is recognised and supported by the UNESCO is a matter to be known by your readers.

I am writing this in detail to put the records straight so that your readers who have seen the announcement of Mr. Thuraijah may be aware of the full facts. Yours etc.

S. Sivapatha Sundaram

Politburo for T.U.L.F.

Tellippalai,
5-8-1982.

The Editor,
Saturday Review,
Jaffna.

The suggestion made by the Chavakachcheri Branch of the T.U.L.F. that a Politburo be set up for streamlining the policies of the T.U.L.F. is a very good one. It will not only prevent accusations being made against the leadership of the Front that it is dictatorial but will also greatly help to avoid any split in the party due to ideological differences provided the Politburo is constituted in such a manner that representatives of different opinions find a place in the Politburo. It will then help the leadership to thrash out the different viewpoints and come to a conclusion acceptable to at least the majority of them and act accordingly.

One way of setting up a Politburo of such a type is to have them elected by preferential vote as was done for electing the Senate Members from the House of Representatives under the Soulbury Constitution. It will give a chance for representatives of major differing opinions being elected to

the Politburo. Election by majority vote will not give room for differing opinions to be represented in the Politburo. The supporters of the majority view will elect all the members from their own group and as such the Politburo will not achieve the objects for which it was set up.

I therefore suggest that in case such a Council is set up that they be elected by preferential vote and not otherwise.

T. K. Rajasekaran

Fr. Pio Ciampa's appeal

No. 103 2, Hulftsdorp Street,
Colombo 12.
2nd August, 1982.

The Editor,
Saturday Review,
Jaffna.

Honoured Sir,

The appeal for "peaceful co-existence and Pro-existence" appearing in your esteemed journal from an earnest and highly respected member of the Christian clergy, Rev. Father Pio Ciampa S.J. that leaders of political parties and other important personalities from all walks of life, from all communities and creeds, meet together and evolve a requisite programme to achieve inter-communal harmony, peace, goodwill, and co-operation and the avoidance of strife is very weighty and timely. (It is also desirable that such Conferences try to meet persons considered to be wedded to the exercise of violence to achieve political objectives, who are called Terrorists, to borrow an expression used in current parlance.)

A good deal of misfortune could have perhaps been avoided if the recommendations of the Commission which constituted Mr. M. C. Sansoni, one of our former Chief Justices, were implemented. Likewise, it is submitted with the utmost deference, that if appeals like the one from Father Ciampa are not acted upon, a bad situation could deteriorate still further.

A series of conferences and meetings referred to could be started now without undue delay and maintained and continued till tangible results are achieved. Nothing more vital for the country and for all constituent elements of the diverse population could be thought of than an appeal for peaceful co-existence and peaceful solution of all problems.

It is heartening to read from Father Ciampa's communication that the first of

the meetings of the National Commission for missionary activities representing Roman Catholic groups in this country has decided on a Mission of National Reconciliation among the different communities and to promote brotherly love and harmony. Such a programme is worthy of pursuit by other religious denominational institutions and religious Societies including the Congress of Religions in Sri Lanka. Doubtless, the valuable support of the Press would be forthcoming for this noble cause.

It is desirable to emphasize that the subject of peace, good-will, and harmony in Sri Lanka is not merely a local and internal matter, but that it transcends national limits and is of grave international concern. Even as for purposes of our country's development, the assistance of several foreign countries is being readily given, it is hoped that the friendly advice of all such lands will be given in this context, as International Peace is not possible without peace in Sri Lanka.

S. Sivasubramaniam
(Retired Attorney-at-law)

Secrecy of the ballot

Christmas Walawu,
Uduvil.
2-8-82

The Editor,
"Saturday Review"
Jaffna.

Sir,

In a free democratic society, notwithstanding the fact that everybody is equal in the eyes of the law, the freedoms that are guaranteed in it are seldom or never availed of by the common man in the field, the factory and the office for he lacks either the capability or the power to enjoy them.

Freedom of speech, though he is assured of, never or seldom does he enjoy, for he possesses little knowledge to avail himself of this right. Neither does he enjoy the freedom of expression through the mass media to put his views across the length and breadth of the country for his command of the language, be it vernacular or English, is inadequate.

These freedoms though open to all theoretically are actually in practice enjoyed by the knowledgeable and educated only.

The only freedom that remains open to him therefore is the one he gets periodically when he joins the queue at a poll with the highest in the land on equal

(Continued on page 11)

Aurobindo—the revolutionary turned Sage

Aurobindo Ghose belongs to the Indian Tradition—rather to that common metaphysical tradition that underlies the cultures, whether European or Asiatic, which have valid meanings for all mankind. As an intellectual after 13 years of study in England in the linguistic fields of Latin, Greek and a half a dozen European languages, he still remained Indian. He was Indian in upbringing and outlook.

Aurobindo rejected the conventional yearnings for the Civil Service by refusing to attend the compulsory riding test, though academically he had scored high marks and had already served two years in the service on probation. His being reflected fiery energy as he entered the forefront of India's freedom struggle. Under his inspiration the **Bande Matharam** of which he was editor became the voice of nationalist extremism. He was prosecuted but acquitted.

He took to the centre of the stage in revolutionary politics when Tagore wrote the celebrated poem: "Aurobindo, Accept the obeisance of Rabindra". He was arrested and remanded in jail for a year on charges of revolutionary conspiracy, but was acquitted. Later he wrote an allegedly seditious article in the **Karma Yoga** and a warrant of arrest went after him, but he was already in Pondicherry, a French territory in India, engrossed in yoga. That was to be his home until December 5, 1950 when he attained **Maha-samadhi**.

Even as a yogin he wrote on a system of national education for India, the national value of art and the renaissance in India not excluding those subjects pertaining to yoga, the Bhagavad Gita and on supra-mental channel of knowledge entitled "The Riddle of This World". He wrote poetry too, a monograph on Kalidasa and on the Mother. The last portrayed the four great aspects of the Divine Mother as Maheswari, Mahakali, Mahalakshmi and Mahasaraswathi. In his own ashram the Mother, a French lady who came there in 1920, became the presiding genius and made it possible for the ashram to take shape as a focal point of the world. In her luminous utterances, the secrets of Sri Aurobindo's yoga and its "sunlit path" were revealed. She herself gave illuminating answers to questions on yoga, religion, science, art etc.

Aurobindo's magnum opus was "The Life Divine" in two volumes and the Essays on the Gita. In the former,

writing about the human aspiration he says: "To know, possess and be the divine being in an animal and egoistic consciousness, to convert our twilight or obscure physical mentality into the plenary supra-mental illumination, to build peace and a self-existent bliss where there is only a stress of transitory satisfactions besieged by physical pain and emotional suffering, to establish

identity with Atman, the reality within. Fritjof Capra, in his book 'The Tao of Physics', has stated: "As we study the relativistic models and theories of modern physics, we shall see that all of them are impressive illustrations of the two basic elements of the Eastern world view—the basic oneness of the universe and its intrinsically dynamic character."

Aurobindo was interpreter

to the human level without wanting anything that surpasses it.

Aurobindo did not take up his task of interpreter of Tradition with levity. Commenting on sloka 13 of Chapter 4 of the Bhagavad Gita, he makes it clear that "the fourfold order of society is merely the concrete form of a spiritual truth which is itself independent of the form; it rests on the conception of right works as a rightly ordered expression of the nature of the individual being through whom the work is done, that nature assigning him his line and scope in life according to his inborn quality and his self-expressive function." Herein lies the concept of education for employment in which there is so much confusion today.

He feels that "the rationalistic tendency of Materialism has done mankind great service." In this is the certainty, according to him "that the wider we extend and the surer we make our knowledge of the physical world, the wider and surer becomes our foundation for the higher knowledge, even for the highest, even for Brahavidya."

Agnosticism, he feels, has rendered great service "in preparing the illimitable increase of knowledge". The further science has proceeded the closer are we to the Hindu sages who were not afraid to identify the rhythmic divine play with the evolution of the cosmos as a whole. As man proceeds to

By

C. Rajasingham

The 110th Anniversary

Mr. V. Murugesu, Joint Secretary, Sri Aurobindo Society of Sri Lanka (Ceylon) writes:

"The 15th August 1982 marks the 110th Birth Anniversary of Sri Aurobindo and on a day such as this it is well to reflect on his views on many matters political, educational and spiritual. His early writings, however, do not express his later thoughts and views for his entry into the higher consciousness resulted in a change in some of his concepts.

"Sri Aurobindo never wrote without experience and whatever he wrote welled from fountain springs that touched eternal sources and carried with them a Truth which is rarely found in the writings of those who have dwelt on such subjects. He was one of India's early fighters for freedom. His weapons were never violent but always spiritual."

ish an infinite freedom in a world which presents itself as a group of mechanical necessities, to discover and realise the immortal life in a body subjected to death and constant mutation—this is offered to us as the manifestation of God in Matter and the goal of Nature in her terrestrial evolution."

Nature's evolution is treated in different ways by modern science. For instance Einstein showed his altogether revolutionary break—through by means of his relativity theory that time and space form a four-dimensional continuum. The astonishing properties of atoms arise from the wave nature of their electrons; opposed to the mechanistic conception of the world is the view of the mystics which is more organic and harmonious.

Today there is a tendency to harmonious blending of the mystic and physicist which brings Brahman, the ultimate reality without, into

of Tradition par excellence. "We do not belong to the past dawns, but to the noons of the future...the remote and dateless past which seemed to be dead is returning upon us with an effulgence of many luminous secrets long lost to the consciousness of mankind but now breaking out again from behind the veil. All this points to a new, a very rich, a very vast synthesis; a fresh and widely embracing harmonisation of our gains is both an intellectual and a spiritual necessity of the future." This shows how deeply rooted he is as Indian in the Tradition which is different from the progressive development of the anti-traditional spirit in those who took to politics of his own generation.

Since Aurobindo, few have shown evidence of the least knowledge of a profound order. The modern mentality is a wholesale uprooting of the very things that maintained the texture of Indian life thus reducing everything



Sri Aurobindo

He attained Maha Samadhi on December 5, 1950

explore the sub-microscopic world, he begins to deal with dimensions which are a hundred thousand times smaller than atomic dimensions. Movements here are so fast that descriptions now come under the framework of the special theory of relativity. The meanings of energy and mass take such special significance as to make Shiva's Cosmic Dance the closest interpretation of what is not merely science but poetry as well.

To Aurobindo "the drive of science is towards a monism which is consistent with multiplicity; towards the Vedic idea of the one essence with its many becomings." In works of science, he explains, Space and Time are contracting to the vanishing point—thus making man "the master of circumstance and so lighten the fetters of causality." It is Infinite Consciousness, and not Mind, which can translate itself into omniscience. That brings to focus the limitations of science and the limitations too of our present education system.

To know matter is to proceed from the dense to the more and more subtle. To Aurobindo, Matter is "lost to itself in an unconscious sleep and an inert motion." In the ascending series are Matter, Life, Mind, Supermind and "that other higher divine triplicity of Sachchidananda." The Divine Life that Aurobindo presents "is the inevitable outcome and consummation of Nature's evolutionary endeavour."

Aurobindo as Editor

In 1906 Aurobindo edited a paper called "Bande Matharam". This newspaper soon became the herald of Indian Revolution—in the words of Mr. Ratcliffe the then Editor of "The Statesman" full of leading and special articles written in English with brilliance and cogency not hitherto attained in the Indian Press... the most effective voice of what he then called nationalist extremism.

Through the pages of "Bande Matharam" Aurobindo spelled out a concrete scheme to make continuation of the British rule impossible.

In 1907 the Government prosecuted "Bande Matharam" and Aurobindo as its editor for propagating sedition. He, who had always avoided the limelight came on to the centre of the stage. The prosecution could not prove that Sri Aurobindo was the editor. He was acquitted....

S. Nadesan Q. C. on Fair and Free Elections — III

(Continued from
last issue)

In the recent Development Councils Elections, which may be looked at as a sort of rehearsal for the general elections, all Returning Officers were required to adopt a new method of counting. Each polling station was also made a counting centre, and at the end of the poll the Counting Officer at each polling station was required to count the votes and send the results of the count to the Returning Officer along with other specified documents and the ballot box or boxes of the polling station. The Returning Officer for the electoral district in turn was required to total up the votes from the statements sent by the various Counting Officers from the various polling cum counting centres and ascertain the number of votes to which each party was entitled, and thereafter declare the names of the persons elected.

Fear of reprisals

As all the Returning Officers in all parts of the Island adopted this method, the principal feature of which was the ascertaining the results of the poll at each polling station, it is clear that this must have been done on the directions of the Commissioner of Elections sent to each Returning Officer.

This direction enables the secrecy of the ballot to be violated to the extent that it will be known how the people of a particular locality and specially a minority group resident in such locality, voted. If this procedure is adopted in the general elections also, it will mean that voters may not cast their votes according to their conscience for fear of reprisals or for fear that they may be discriminated against. This violates the principle of free elections which is the foundation of parliamentary democracy.

Home Guards to

look after...

Each Development Council electoral area is very much larger than the parliamentary electorates, and in fact comprises several such electorates. One could have understood the Commissioner attaching the polling stations of each former electorate which comprised part of the electoral district to the same counting centre as was done in the last Parliamentary elections, and arranging for the counting of the votes after mixing up all the ballot papers at

each counting centre. There would then be one counting centre for each former electorate. As before this would normally have been the Kachcheri. Thereafter the Returning Officer could have added up the total for each electorate and ascertained the party position in the entire electoral district.

If the Commissioner of Elections considered it cumbersome and inconvenient to bring all the ballot boxes in the entire electoral districts to one place and counting them, this method of counting electorate by electorate would have been the best solution. This would mean that so far as the Commissioner is concerned he would

be able to provide adequate security at 8,000 counting centres, some of them in remote parts of the country.

It has been alleged in certain quarters that at conference discussions about the forthcoming parliamentary elections, following the same method of counting in each polling station was discussed. The police authorities raised this question of security but were told that home guards who were to be recruited will look after the security. It is doubtful such a statement was made by any responsible person. Considering the way in which home guards are intended to be recruited, they may well prove a menace so

total ascertained for each electoral district.

No discretion should be given to the Commissioner of Elections in respect of such a vital matter if we are to have a free and fair election in this country.

This brings me to another disturbing feature which was revealed by the last D.C. elections.

The Jaffna Development Council election was fought more keenly than in other parts of the country because the country's main opposition party the SLFP and certain other parties, decided to boycott the elections. In Jaffna however, the TULF took the Development Coun-

were on duty at a TULF meeting were shot by some unknown persons. Within half an hour of this incident practically one third of the Jaffna bazaar was in flames, several other buildings were destroyed or damaged and the Jaffna Public Library was set on fire and valuable books were burnt. All this was done by a section of the police and the armed forces or by other persons with their connivance. There was a reign of terror in Jaffna and the police themselves were in near revolt.

In fact the conditions prevailing in Jaffna were such that four days before the election date a number of officers chosen for election duty by the Commissioner of Elections had sent letters of excuse and medical certificates in order to avoid going to Jaffna. The Elections Department was thus seriously handicapped and had to make whatever makeshift arrangements it could make at such short notice, under emergency conditions.

Emergency in Jaffna

On the 2nd June 1981 emergency was declared for the Jaffna Development Council area, and though a curfew had been declared only for the Municipal area, this fact was not notified in the Government Gazette or by the radio. In effect the result was that the curfew was imposed all over the Jaffna district and the people lived in fear.

In fact, people were shot dead outside the Municipal area though the curfew was not in force in those areas.

Curfew still in force

On the 3rd July 1981, the day before the polling day, all shops and eating houses were closed. It was not possible even to get a cup of tea. Transport had come to a stand-still. Normal life had ceased.

Only the army and the police were patrolling the streets in their jeeps. The curfew was still in force ostensibly for the Municipal area, but people believed that it was for the whole district. The area of operation of the curfew was not clarified. The SLBC contradicted itself and announced that the curfew was in force for the whole of the Jaffna district. This created uncertainty, confusion and fear in the minds of the people.

Thereafter, on 30th May 1981, five days before polling day, three policemen who

The role of the Commissioner of Elections

be following the practice which had been followed by the Department from 1947 in ascertaining the votes cast by each electorate. The only additional work that the Returning Officer would have to do was to total up all the votes cast in the various former electorates which comprised the Development Council electoral area to ascertain the party position for such area. Thus the whole operation could have been performed smoothly and efficiently.

Instead of doing this, the Commissioner adopted a method which undermines the very foundation of free elections.

Did he do this on his own or did he do this at the request of the Executive?

It has been stated in certain quarters that there was some sort of a sub-committee of the Cabinet which was concerning itself with these Development Councils elections and it was this body which instructed the Commissioner to adopt this method despite the fact that at least for security reasons, it would have been better if the old well-tryed method had been followed. The number of polling stations in the country is about 8,000. The entire regular police force of the country is about 18,000. It may not be pos-

far as free and fair elections are concerned.

Was this new method of counting votes at each polling station adopted by the Commissioner of Elections on the directions of the Executive? If so it is a serious interference with the Commissioner of Elections with regard to a discretion which has to be exercised by him in respect of a vital matter. If it is indeed true that the Commissioner acted on the directions of the Executive in this matter it reveals an unsatisfactory state of affairs which should be remedied without delay.

Equally

Unsatisfactory

If on the other hand, the Commissioner himself on his own exercised the discretion given to him by directing the counting of votes at each polling station, thus violating the secrecy of the ballot, it again reveals an unsatisfactory state of affairs.

Therefore, it is imperative that the Elections law should be changed providing that the ballot boxes of each former electorate shall take place in one counting centre, that the ballot papers should be mixed before the counting commences and thereafter the votes cast in respect of each electorate should be sorted out and counted and the

cils elections seriously, as it considered that it was a step in the achievement of a genuine autonomous region for the Tamil minority. So did the UNP, which wanted to break into the Northern Province, and establish its claim to be an all-island party. The All Ceylon Tamil Congress, an old established party, which espoused the cause of the Tamil minority for its rightful place in this country, also actively participated. Nominations were submitted by all these three parties and by two independent groups. The date of elections was fixed for the 4th of June, 1981, as was the case in the rest of the island. (Polling was to be from 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. and the counting was to be done at each polling station immediately thereafter and the results were to be announced by the Returning Officer after adding up the votes cast by each party on the count at the various polling stations.)

After Nominations day feelings ran very high in Jaffna. About 8 or 9 days before the elections, Dr. A. Thiagarajah, who was a leader of the UNP Development Councils group was shot dead by some unknown persons and there was great tension in the Jaffna area.

(To be continued)

PANDARA VANNIAN OR VANNI BANDARA?

Who would have thought a son of Vanni's soil could inspire such high drama or was it low slapstick, after all?

The scene was the unveiling of a statue of Pandaravannian in the Vavuniya Kachcheri premises. The time --- the afternoon of July 16th. The dramatis personae---a motley lot composed of officials of the government and officials of the TULF,

JAFFNA HINDU COLLEGE OLD BOYS' ASSOCIATION COLOMBO 1982/83

The following office-bearers were elected for the year 1982/83 at the Annual General Meeting of the Jaffna Hindu College Old Boys Association Colombo, held recently at Saraswathy Hall, Bambalapitiya.

Patrons:-

S. Nadesan, Q.C.,
K. C. Thangaraja,
V. Siva Supramaniam,
S. Balasingam,
A. Namasivayampillai.

Presiden - Executive:-

Shiva Pasupati

Vice Presidents:-

Justice S. Sharvananda,
Dr. K. Vellauthapillai,
P. Karalasingam,
V. Kumaraswamy,
N. Somasundaram,
Dr. N. Vignarajah and
P. Kanagaratnam

Secretary

P. Thillainathan

Treasurer:-

Y. Yoheswaran

Asst. Secretary:-

N. Vivekananthan

Asst. Treasurer:-

N. Paramanandam

Auditor:-

M. Pasupati

indistinguishable as the play unfolded.

The first act began with the statue making a surprising appearance at the Kachcheri, intended as it originally was for a prominent site at the Jaffna junction. Is it not a mockery that the likeness of the Buddha, the Compassionate One, now stands there looking down at the swords of discrimination being brandished in his name?

Nevertheless, the Development Council thought the surrogate statue deserved full honours. Its unveiling was a prelude to a Kalai Vizha (July 16-18), a farcical curtain raiser to what was supposed to be a festival of high culture.

Garland of

Rs. 50 notes

Cynics noted with relish the tug-of-words between Vavuniya's District Minister Mahindasoma and Vavuniya MP Sivasithamparam. The one baptised the hero Vannibandara and adopted him as a Sinhala son; and the other resolutely called him Pandaravannian, noble defender of the Tamils.

Mr. & Mrs. A. Amirthalingam, gracing the platform with the rest of the assorted cast, were hailed guests newly returned from the US, and garlanded. In a show of seeming spontaneity, stalwarts of Vavuniya took a collection of fifty rupee notes, made a garland of them and thrust it on their MP. A fortunate coincidence, no doubt, that so many were to be had for the asking.

Such staged displays are of no avail if no audience is present. And it was, lured by the Siren song of two

South Indian Artists, Manjula and Asantha Mathahe. There was bigger bait in the person of Jaya Shankar, billed as one of the entertainers but who, strangely, did not turn up.

The modus operandi is reminiscent of May Day rallies in recent years for which artistes are judiciously imported to draw and keep the crowds.

Postscripted a spectator, "All that wasn't there was the TULF members in the garb of Kandyen Chieftains".

Perhaps, but there were plenty of fainthearted sheep in tigers' clothing.

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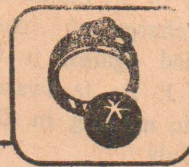
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LETTERS

(Continued from page 8)

footing to exercise his franchise. This freedom to the credit of successive governments has not been tampered with and is available to all irrespective of race, caste, colour or position ever since universal suffrage was introduced into this country.

Secrecy of the ballot was found to be imperative to ensure this freedom and improvements on this have been made from time to time to make it more real. In the forthcoming presidential election the Secrecy of the ballot would stand the test of its real secrecy. If the counting of votes is done electoralwise or districtwise as in the case of parliamentary

election the pattern of voting of different groups would be easily identified. Unless a new method of counting is devised to avoid this identification the whole process of the secrecy of ballot would stand nullified. The minority groups, both racial and religious, through fear of reprisal may avoid full participation in this election. More so, if they are left with no alternative but to elect one from among the contenders from the majority community.

Secrecy of ballot if confined only to individual and not extended to groups the purpose of it would be lost because if the pattern of voting of a group is identified it becomes detrimental to the individuals who form the group.

Yours faithfully,

P. C. P. Gnanadurai

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Saturday Review

SRI LANKA

Tamils in France
ask for speedy....

(Continued from page 1)

resolution for the setting up of an INTERIM PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT OF THAMIL EELAM.

The other Guest Speaker Mr. M. K. Eelaventhian, Organizing Secretary of the THAMIL EELAM LIBERATION FRONT (TELF), appealed to the Paris Tamils to give the lead in the struggle as the Tamil community is virtually becoming a rootless society in Ceylon.

The next speaker, Mr. Sritharan, while regretting that no one from France participated in the New York Convention, welcomed the newly-set-up Liberation Council and pledged the support of the Tamils of France. He also declared that the hundreds of young men and women present at the meeting represented the innermost aspirations of their kith and kin back in Thamil Eelam.

Mr. K. Kandasamy of the FRANCE THAMIL ASSOCIATION formally pro-

posed a resolution endorsing the one already before the Liberation Council to set up a Provisional Government.

Mr. V. Niruthakumar of the TAMIL CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE—FRANCE moved an amendment that the Provisional Government should be set up much sooner than the one year limit. He suggested that the next Convention be held within five months to achieve this objective: his organization was prepared to do the necessary spade work to make it a success. He also wanted a full time Working Committee to be appointed and the Head-quarters of the Liberation Council moved to Tamil Nadu.

The proposer accepted this amendment and then moved his resolution as amended. This was formally seconded by Mr. T. Umakanthan of the FTO.

The amended resolution was passed unanimously, amidst prolonged applause.

C. R. M. denies the

Charge

The Civil Rights Movement of Sri Lanka has denied the charge of partisanship levelled against it by President J. R. Jayewardene at a public meeting in Dompe on 25 July.

The President, whose speech was widely reported by press and radio, accused the C.R.M., and certain named members, of being "inactive on human rights issues during the period of the last government," thereby implying partisanship on the part of C.R.M.

C.R.M. in its reply to the President, points out that it was formed late in 1971 at the height of the long period of emergency rule by the previous government, and had made public pronouncements and representations to the then government on various matters relating to human rights.

Solidarity for Paranthan Strikers

About 150 members of the Paranthan Solidarity Committee picketed opposite Jaffna Kachcheri for one hour on Tuesday, 10th August expressing solidarity with the 395 employees of the Paranthan Chemical Corporation who are on strike for the last 8 months.

Representatives of GUES, NSSP, CP, CTUF, LSSP, TC, CMU, Village Workers Organizations, Bank employees and strikers took part in the campaign.

UNP & TULF at loggerheads: Batticaloa D.C. in deep freeze

Will the Government break the political deadlock that has arisen in Batticaloa by dissolving the Batticaloa District Development Council?

The Batticaloa DDC has not met since June: DDC Chairman S. Sambanthamoorthy (TULF) adjourned the June meeting after a heated argument with Home Affairs Minister K. W. Devanayagam.

The furore was sparked off by Minister Devanayagam's disparaging remark about the status and powers of DDCs.

Chairman is adamant

When the Minister remarked that DDCs have no powers but have only the status of Village Councils, Chairman Sambanthamoorthy objected vehemently and wanted the Minister to withdraw his remark. Since Minister Devanayagam refused to do so the Chairman adjourned the meeting.

Chairman Sambanthamoorthy has since then refused to summon DDC meetings till either the Minister with-

draws his remarks or the Government acknowledges that the Minister's statement is a mistaken one.

Chairman Sambanthamoorthy told the *Saturday Review* that he will not summon any meetings till either of this happens. Stressing that the Government itself has declared that DDCs have plenty of powers, he said it is ironical that a Minister, under whom DDCs come, should proclaim that they are toothless and powerless.

"We are prepared" the defiant Chairman told the *Saturday Review*, "for the dissolution of the Batticaloa DDC. Neither the plums of office nor trivial concessions can tempt us."

Meanwhile the Government has asked the Batticaloa

District Minister, Janab Abdul Majeed, to report on whether the Batticaloa DDC should be dissolved. This follows a call for its dissolution by UNP branches in Batticaloa.

Informed political circles predict that the Batticaloa DDC is not likely to be dissolved.

They put forward two reasons for their forecast: dissolution would seriously weaken the good relations the Government has patiently built up with the TULF. Secondly, they say, such a move before the impending Presidential election would boomerang on the UNP. They feel the deadlock will drag on till the elections, as neither the Chairman nor the Minister is likely to give way.

2 a. m. raid at gunpoint

Twelve armed youths carried away a roneo machine and a Tamil typewriter from the Jaffna Education Department Office at Nallur---Chemmani Road on Wednesday, 11th August, 1982 around 2 a.m.

The youths who are reported to have come on

bicycles held up the watcher at gun-point and having severed the telephone connection carried out the robbery.

The typewriter and roneo machine together cost over Rs. 25,000/-.

Police have not made any arrests so far.

REVOLUTIONARY MARXISTS ASK FOR WITHDRAWAL OF STATE OF EMERGENCY

The Revolutionary Marxist Party (RMP) has called upon the government "to withdraw the state of emergency, the ban on public meetings and the press censorship forthwith".

A press release issued by the Central Committee of the RMP (Sri Lanka section of the Fourth International) states "it is evident that the Government has declared the state of emergency over the entire Island with a view to achieving reactionary political needs or as a rehearsal towards such ends."

The RMP points out that "under the present state of emergency public meetings other than those of 'recognised political parties' are totally banned. Thus it is against the emergency 'law' for political parties other than those recognised by the bourgeois government or for trade unions and any other organisation to hold any public meetings whatsoever. That is not all. There is also a blanket press censorship without defining any limits thereof. All this shows that there are reasons better known to the govern-

ment itself and hidden from the people for the declaration of the present state of emergency with a press censorship and its continuance."

While denouncing the declaration of the emergency, the RMP says that "the new constitutional amendments designed to deprive the masses of the limited rights of bourgeois democracy, without allowing any room for the masses to express their opinion in that regard, could be one reason for the continuation of the declared state of emergency."