

Saturday Review

SRI LANKA

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S. O. S.

The Refugee Rehabilitation Organisation Ltd. (TRRO) and the Mothers' Front of Jaffna are in urgent need of cash, food, clothes and drugs for distribution among nearly 100,000 refugees displaced after the "Prohibited Zone" Emergency Regulations came into force on 30th November 1984.

The situation in Mullaitivu, where there are nearly 10,000 refugees, is reported to be "very bad".

TRRO's address is No. 66, Chapel Street, Jaffna. Cheques should be drawn in favour of TRRO Ltd.

The Mother's Front operates from Trsmmer Hall, Jaffna.

EDITOR MEETS TIGER LEADERS IN MADRAS

I was in Madras from 11th to 19th December as a "special emissary".

My mission was to establish contact with the leaders of the various militant Tamil groups fighting for the rights of the Tamil people.

The mission was successful: I was able to meet representatives of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), the Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF), the Eelam Revolutionary Organisation of Students (EROS), the Tamil Eelam Liberation Organisation (TELO) and the People's Liberation Organisation of Thamileelam (PLOT) with which is associated the Tamil Eelam Liberation Army (TELA).

There were several rounds of talks with the representatives during which there were free and frank exchange of views on the National Question and how it could be solved.

The names of the representatives and the meeting places must necessarily remain secret.

I FOUND THAT NONE OF THE GROUPS WAS AVERSE TO A DIRECT DIALOGUE WITH PRESIDENT JAYEWARDENE'S GOVERNMENT

TO SEEK A POLITICAL SETTLEMENT—PROVIDED ONE COULD BE FOUND AND PROVIDED THE PROPER ATMOSPHERE COULD BE CREATED FOR SUCH A MEETING.

It was the SATURDAY REVIEW which first suggested the necessity and urgency of holding direct talks.

In a letter addressed to all participants at the All-Party Conference and published in the SATURDAY REVIEW of 29th September 1984 under the headline "INVITE THE TIGERS TO THE TABLE", I said:

"Everyone wants a solution to the National Question and an end to the senseless butchery on both sides. (Personally, I have seen enough maimed bodies and parts of bodies, of innocent civilians, suspected militants, policemen and soldiers at the Jaffna Hospital Mortuary, on the roads and fields that I pray I be spared such gory scenes in the future.)

"Or are there some people in the Government who wish to keep the issue simmering to distract the people's minds from other problems, especially the grave economic situation in the country?

"The only way out, as I see it, is by repealing the Prevention of Terrorism Act, followed by the grant of an amnesty and the involvement of the militant groups in the process of dialogue.

"For just as the Palestinian Question cannot be resolved without the participation of the Palestine Liberation Organisation, the National Question cannot be resolved without the participation of The Boys.

"Please remember: whatever settlement is arrived at by the APC participants, it will not be workable without the concurrence and co-operation of The Boys.

"The good offices of the SATURDAY REVIEW will be available to all who desire to work towards a practicable solution."

I also said: "The Military Approach will never work, even if you send the whole Army to the North. Remember Vietnam?.....

It must be realised that, just as Sinhalese nationalism, Tamil nationalism has also come to stay; it cannot be ignored or suppressed in the way some people think. The Sinhalese must recognise the legitimacy of Tamil nationalism and provide for its full expression through an equitable devolution of

state power—if they want to ensure that Sri Lanka remains one country."

Representatives of some of the groups said they would like to have discussions with Sinhalese and Tamil leaders of all shades of opinion before a meeting with the President.

One of them said; "Mr. J. R. Jayewardene is not the only Sinhalese leader just as Mr. A. Amirthalingam is not the only Tamil leader."

All of them insisted that before any moves are made for a direct dialogue, the Government should establish its bona fides by, among other things, releasing immediately all the Tamil youths now held "hostage" in various parts of the country by the Security Forces, stopping the harassment of the civilian population and withdrawing the draconian emergency regulations promulgated on 30th November 1984 converting the North into a virtual prison. (These regulations were published in the SATURDAY REVIEW of 8th December under the headline "SLAVE LAWS").

A ceasefire, on both sides, will have to be a prelude to any meeting.

The views expressed by the representatives of the various groups have been conveyed by me to the relevant authority.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF MY MISSION IS THAT FOR THE FIRST TIME A PERSON FROM THE SOUTH WAS ABLE TO ESTABLISH CONTACT WITH THE MILITANT GROUPS.

The ice has been broken; the Sinhalese leaders, within and outside the Government, must take advantage of the thaw to hammer out a political settlement.

I SAY IN ALL SERIOUSNESS: THIS IS THE LAST CHANCE FOR THE SINHALESE TO ARRIVE AT A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT.

IF THEY CONTINUE TO BE ADAMANT, CONTINUE TO BE INTRANSIGENT, CONTINUE TO IGNORE REALITIES, THEN CIVIL WAR WOULD BE INEVITABLE, WITH POSSIBLE FOREIGN INTERVENTION AND THE DIVISION OF SRI LANKA.

— Gamini Navaratne

At the time of going to press, a team from the Jaffna Citizens' Committee was in Colombo to meet Sinhalese leaders on the National Questions.

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DEATH IN FRANCE

The death occurred in Paris under tragic circumstances of Mr. Jayanthan, 23, on 4th. December. The remains were cremated on 13th. December, 1984.

He was the only son of Mr. S. Saravanapavan, Station Master, Jaffna, and Mrs. Saravanapavan and brother of Vasuki and Mathini of Urumpirai, Jaffna.

READ CROSS APPEAL

The Jaffna Branch of the Red Cross Society requests urgent assistance in the form of cash or kind in order to meet the urgent need for relief work to the affected, from well wishers from foreign and local sources. Foreign and local donors may send their remittance to the Bank of Ceylon, Hospital Road Branch, Jaffna. Cheques should be drawn in favour of "Red Cross Society, Jaffna Branch."

APC FIASCO

The so-called All-Party Conference was doomed the moment the Buddhaputras, with their known idiosyncracies, walked in. But by a miracle of manouvering President Jayewardene kept the talks going for nearly a year. Finally, rebellion within his own United National Party compelled him to scuttle the proposals which he believed could be the basis for a political settlement of the National Question.

Now the only hope for the Tamil people lies in Mr. Rajiv Gandhi's

new Government using its good offices to knock some sense into the heads of the Sinhalese leaders both in the Government and outside: they must be made to see the realities of the present situation and not play politics with the lives of millions of people, both Tamil and Sinhalese.

For the record, we have published in this issue some details of the proposals (below), the reaction of the main Sinhalese Opposition Party Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike's Sri

Lanka Freedom Party (pages 4 and 5), the views of Mr. A. Amirthalingam, Secretary-General of the Tamil United Liberation Front, the main Tamil Party (pages 5 and 6)

A number of communications on the APC proposals received from other political parties, trade union organisations and individuals has been held over for lack of space.

JR'S IDEAS AND PLANS

The following is the statement made by the President and Chairman of the All Party Conference at the plenary sessions on the December 1984:

The All-Party Conference held its first meeting at the Bandaranaike Memorial International Conference Hall on 10th January 1984. It was the sequel to a preliminary meeting of eight political parties summoned by me on 23rd December 1983, at which it was unanimously decided to summon an All-Party Conference to discuss the daily growing problems of the country in regard to ethnic affairs and terrorism and seek solutions.

The work done by the APC till September 1984, appears in my report to the plenary sessions of the APC of 21st September. I do not therefore propose outlining that work again now. The main decisions taken so far appear further down in this statement.

The last plenary session of the APC was on 30th September. It was the 35th meeting. At that session I informed the Conference that my intention was to consider the views expressed so far and prepare draft legislation to be placed before the next Plenary. The next session was fixed for 15th and 16th November to give time enough for any further private consultations and for drafting. The meeting had, however, to be re-scheduled since many of those engaged in the consultations and drafting had

to be away in India for the funeral of the late Shrimathi Indira Gandhi, Prime Minister of India. To suit the convenience of many delegations, it now takes place on December 14th and 15th.

Consultations and discussions on drafting made this period between September and 14th December a very busy one. I have had several discussions with all the leaders of delegations. I also invited the leaders of recognised political parties for discussion and met all of them who accepted my invitation. In all I have had some 32 meetings between September and today with political parties and associations, 11 meetings with the lawyers and officials who have been helping in the drafting and several informal meetings with my Ministers. The proposals now before you are the outcome of these discussions as well as of the discussions at the meetings of the APC.

The draft legislation presented represents the views of the majority of the delegations that form the APC at its sessions today. I briefly outline the main recommendations below. They are set out in detail in the draft legislation and are explained further in the statement of objects and reasons of the proposed legislation.

FROM VILLAGE UP

These proposals create a form of participatory democracy, involving the people in systems of government

from the village to the supreme legislature, the parliament of a united Sri Lanka.

There will be around 4,500 gramodaya mandalayas chosen from the people's voluntary societies in the villages.

The pradesheeya Sabhas will be at the level of an assistant government agents division as presently constituted and numbering around 250. They will be elected. Their functions will be mainly local governmental.

The third tier will consist of district councils like the presently constituted development councils. The area of authority of a district council will be an administrative district. There will therefore be 25 of them. In future too, they will be elected and the chairman and vice-chairman will be elected by the electors at the election of members of the councils. Their powers and functions will be larger and wider than those presently exercised by a development council.

Provincial councils will be constituted for two or more administrative districts in a province where the district councils resolve to join and their decision is approved by the majority of the registered voters in each of these administrative districts. Provincial councils will have such powers as are delegated to them by the district councils. Provincial council will consist of all the members of

the district councils resolving to join.

The President will have the power to appoint members of Parliament or members of the Council of State as provincial ministers or district ministers. He may appoint a provincial Chief Minister who is likely to command the confidence of a provincial council.

COUNCIL OF STATE

There will be established a Council of State consisting of 75 members. Of these the chairman and vice-chairman of each district council will number 50. There will also be 18 members, two members appointed from each province from amongst members of those communities which are not represented or inadequately represented in the district councils established within that province. There will also be seven members appointed by the President.

The functions of the Council will be mainly advisory. It will not have the power to delay any legislation passed by Parliament though it will have the power to initiate legislation and to communicate its opinion on bills affecting fundamental rights, language rights, regional interests national unity and integrity etc. It can also set up committees to inquire into inter-district and inter-provincial matters, questions of national unity or social and economic affairs.

It will also serve as a reservoir for the selection of Ministers.

(Continued on page 7)

NO JOBS, NO MONEY, NO FOOD (NOT EVEN FISH), NO FUEL, NO TRANSPORT
BUT PLENTY OF RAPE, MURDER, ARSON AND LOOTING!

WITHDRAW EMERGENCY LAWS, MOTHERS TELL JR

law-abiding citizens to go about their normal day-to-day life.

YOUR EXCELLENCY

We the mothers and women of Jaffna write to you with extreme sadness that the new regulations and excesses of the Security Forces are a virtual declaration of war by your Government against the Tamil people of Sri Lanka as a whole. The new regulations are the basis of a merciless war of attrition against the entire Tamil people in this country.

The implications of the new regulations are:

Prohibited Zone: The declaration of the Prohibited Zone will deprive the entire fishing population of the Northern and Eastern provinces of their livelihood and would also deprive them of their homes and would entail the destruction of the thickly-populated coastal towns and hundred of other villages within this Zone. The thickly-populated towns of Point Pedro, Valvettiturai, Thondamannar, Myliddy, Mathagal and Ponnalai will be affected by the new regulations.

The Zone covers a large number of prominent schools, hospitals, post offices, crematorium, burial grounds, 35 temples and 15 churches. The creation of the Prohibited Zone and the regulations governing them would destroy the coastal fishing people of their right to employment, to live in their homes, educate their children in schools, to worship, to bury or cremate their dead and in short their right to live.

Transport: To possess a vehicle under these regulations one has to obtain

a permit from a police officer not below the rank of Assistant Superintendent of Police from the nearest police station. All police stations except that in Jaffna have been closed down. The Jaffna Police Station

The Mothers' Front of Jaffna has sent two letters to the President, signed by it Joint Secretaries, one demanding the withdrawal of the Emergency Regulations promulgated on 30th November 1984 and the other protesting against the rape of women by members of the Security Forces.

is now a barricaded fortress and the public are denied free access, which makes it difficult for the people to obtain these permits.

The Competent Authority was appointed by Your Excellency only a few days ago. Motor vehicles and bicycles number several lakhs and the task of issuing permits for this large number of vehicles will take months to accomplish. In addition to the permit to possess a vehicle one has to obtain a pass to run the vehicle on the road. So far these passes have not been issued.

The number of state buses is so small that they cannot cope with the transport demands. People are experiencing great difficulty to commute to their work places and attend to their daily business. The transport of persons who require urgent medical aid had received no consideration.

These regulations have made the entire population prisoners in their homes and have deprived them of their income and their right to work and earn.

Food and Food Production: The stoppage of all transport, the lack of fuel for motor vehicles and

water pumps, the declaration of Prohibited and Security Zones in this region have brought food production to a halt. The marketing of the agricultural produce has been seriously affected and this will

deprive the farmers of their livelihood. There is hardly no transport of food and essential supplies by rail. Hence the people of the Northern Province will face an acute shortage of foodstuff and essential supplies.

Students and Schools: The new regulations will result in the closure of schools within the Prohibited Zone and children will not have adequate transport in other areas to travel to their schools. The disruption of normal life will further affect their wellbeing. The psychological effect on the young children due to arbitrary arrest and harassment by Security Forces is very damaging.

Curfew: The imposition of curfew for days at a stretch has resulted in complete dislocation of the life of the community. Curfew has been imposed without any consideration of the essential needs of the community. Patients in need of urgent medical aid had no means of transport to hospitals during the curfew hours and no ambulance services were made available.

Attacks on Civilians: Reprisals by the security forces against civilians and their

property have now become a common feature. The search for "Terrorists" has now resulted in indiscriminate arrest of innocent persons and children, rape of women and young girls and plunder and looting. The

whole operation of the Security Forces has now become a war on the Tamil people.

We wish to emphasise that the new regulations do not make it possible for the Tamil people to live with self-respect and dignity. These regulations are counter productive in that they no longer help the

We of the Mothers Front and Women of the North call upon you in the name of justice and in the interest of the entire country to rescind these regulations forthwith to enable the restoration of normal life in these parts of the country.

— JOINT SECRETARIES

FOR SALE

Original 'KNIGHT' PIANO with damp chaser & seat. Contact Mrs. P. Durayappah, 'Malar Vasam', Eachchamoddai, Chundikuli. T'Phone: 22417.

MERRY HELL

Your Excellency:

We strongly protest to you regarding the raping of young girls and a pregnant woman by the Security Forces on 14th December 1984 at Thirunelvely while on a combing our operation. This is a very serious act of the Security Forces on the helpless women.

The armed might of the Security Forces had been used to rape, molest and humiliate the women in this area in the pretext of a search for the "militant youths".

We personally visited the affected parties who have confirmed to us the raping, molesting and humiliation perpetrated by the Security Forces. These affected women have been threatened with reprisals if they gave evidence against them to the authorities. The pregnant woman is in the advanced state of pregnancy and was admitted to the Jaffna Hospital.

We do not understand why women should be raped, molested and humiliated by the security forces to solve the National Question. We, therefore, request you to stop these inhuman acts of the Security Forces on the helpless women.

Joint Secretaries.

MRS. BANDARANAIKE'S

The following statement was issued by Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike on the draft legislation presented to the All-Party Conference.

Many people who are deeply concerned with the future of our land, have sought my views on the draft legislation, placed before the 'All-Party Conference' on 14th December, 1984.

As the President stated the purpose of the All-Party Conference was to discuss, and to seek solutions, to the daily growing problems in regard to ethnic affairs and terrorism.

The question is, whether the draft legislation provides a solution which the people of Sri Lanka can accept.

I believe the Government had several purposes in view, having regard to the way in which the 'All-Party Conference' was conducted.

First, to wear down the terrorists by military action while the conference dragged on so that the terrorists and by the same token the Tamil leaders, would become more amenable to peace on any terms, to gain a respite. This in my opinion was a wrong assessment, the terrorists are actually extending their operation Southwards, in Padaviya, for example.

Secondly, to change the image of Sri Lanka internationally from that of a nation mistreating its minorities, to that of a nation embattled by terrorists.

Thirdly to get Opposition parties to solve for the Government many problematical issues, ranging from devolution to University education and language rights. Upon these matters the Government was vary of committing itself without a corresponding commitment by opposition political parties.

The elimination of political opposition, of course has always been a major objective of this Government—the most glaring

instance being the deprivation of my civic rights, by a special Presidential Commission one of whose members was subsequently discredited by a judgement of the Supreme Court.

The Government really dissipated its energies in such useless exercises instead of a genuine and compassionate attempt to solve the real problems of the people and eliminating the roots of terrorism which has been a continuous feature from 1977, greatly exacerbated after the terrorism inflicted on the process of free elections at the Jaffna Development Council Elections in 1981.

It is pertinent to mention at this stage that it took the SLFP-led Government only two months to successfully deal with the Island-wide Insurrection in 1971, although the Emergency was continued as a preventive measure in accordance with the best advice in the country available at that time.

I wish to make it abundantly clear, that discussion and compromise in the abstract, or upon academic terms, is meaningless unless it leads to fruitful results—the result in this case being the abandonment by the Tamils of their 'Eelam' demand, the acceptance by them of Sri Lanka as a unitary state, and the turning away from terrorists methods by those who engaged in them.

If a settlement is arrived at which is satisfactory to the representatives of the Sinhala and Tamil people which will end terrorism in the North and East, and which will make it possible for the writ and authority of the Government of Sri Lanka to run from Devinuwara to Point Pedro and from Puttalam to Batticaloa, then, even if I think that such a settlement is far from perfect, I would do nothing to agitate against it.

On the other hand, if the so-called solution consists of nothing more than series of legislative give-aways devoid of results, with the

problem of terrorism in the North and the East unsolved, and awaiting resolution by military means I would have no choice but to declared the so-called 'solution' is unsatisfactory whether the Tamil leaders accept it, or not.

How should the people judge the draft legislation, to see whether it endangers the fundamental interests of the people, and whether it provides a solution to the daily growing problems in regard to ethnic affairs and terrorism.

My view is that it would be a mistake to start by looking at the drafts as purely legal documents, the constitutionality or interpretation of which is the core of the problem.

What is needed here, is a political assessment of the consequences, if the drafts were to become law.

I would suggest the following tests.

1. Would these draft laws if passed, really bring about new relationship between the Tamil people and the Sinhala people? Would the Tamils feel that the ties that unite them to the Sinhala people, transcended the sympathy they feel for their own terrorist youth as well as their affinity for those across Palk Straits who speak the same language?

2. Would these draft laws ensure an end to terrorism in the North and East? The Tamil leaders would probably say that they do not exercise any control over the terrorists. But if they really feel that they want terrorism to end, they could—

a) appeal to the terrorists to lay down their arms and to surrender to the security forces, and appeal to the Government for an amnesty;

b) appeal to the State Government of Tamil Nadu to repatriate all refugees from Sri Lanka and to close all their camps;

c) appeal to all Foreign Governments not to accord 'refugee status' or 'asylum' to expatriate Tamils;—and

d) appeal to all expatriate Tamils, not to engage in propaganda hostile to Sri Lanka;

Would the Tamil leaders be willing to do these things although I do hope that they may be able to do so.

3. Would these drafts, laws, be acceptable to the Tamils, to use their own words, as a viable alternative for Eelam? Would they be willing to publicly renounce the goal of Eelam and appeal to all Sri Lankan Tamils to do likewise, both in Sri Lanka and abroad?

4. Would these draft laws, make the writ and authority of the Government of Sri Lanka, effective from Devinuwara to Point Pedro, and from Puttalam to Batticaloa? or would it, in the absence of Sinhala Population in the North become an empty mockery?

Frankly, I am sceptical whether these draft laws can constitute the bias for a 'political solution' to the ethnic problem or to the problem of terrorism: and after a careful consideration on the draft legislation I have come to the conclusion that all the questions I have posed here must be answered in the negative, and that the people of the country, would be well advised to reject the draft legislation, clearly and categorically. And, I shall briefly indicate in this statement, my reasons for saying so.

Let me begin with the General Election of 1977 Commencing with August 1977, there have been serious outbreaks of communal violence between the Sinhala and Tamil peoples, the worst being the outbreak in July 1983, with the brutal killing of Tamil political prisoners held in Government jails, not once but twice.

Though there had been outbreaks of communal violence before, as in 1958, when my late husband, Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike was the Prime Minister, the whole country, including

the Tamils know that law was being enforced even handedly and that successive SLFP Governments accepted their obligation to protect Tamil lives and property, by punishing wrongdoers.

But after 1977 there was a significant difference. In September 1981 President Jayewardene, speaking to the All-Island executive committee of the UNP at the Ramakrishna Hall at Wellawatte declared: 'Members of my own party, both inside and outside parliament, have incited the communal violence, and the arson, murders, looting and rapes, that had taken place.'

He said he was ashamed to lead the party in such circumstances. But the Government significantly refrained from taking any action under the criminal laws of the land against these party men who were known to be wrongdoers.

Likewise, in 1983, no serious steps were taken to punish any one for the horrors committed.

Is it surprising that many Tamils are bitter, and have suspicions that the violence in 1983, was inspired by Government thugs and hoodlums in the first instance, though it got out of hand, later on.

Another aspect of the draft legislation is the Eighth Schedule to the Constitution, in the draft Tenth Amendment, setting out the powers of the Central Government which are 'out of bounds' for District Councils and Provincial Councils.

But this can be meaningful only if the political authority of the Central Government is accepted by the people in the Districts concerned.

The Eighth Schedule reserves some twenty four subjects to the care of the Central Government; these include subjects like National Policy, Defence, Internal Security, Foreign

STATEMENT

Affairs, Posts and Telecommunications, Justice, Ports and Harbours, Aviation and Air Force, National Transport, Shipping and Navigation, Customs.

The policy of the Central Government in areas of this magnitude can be effectively enforced only if it has the political power to do so.

But there are today no Sinhala people in the North of Sri Lanka. How in fact is the Government intending to enforce its laws and policies in the North, in regard to all the matters spelled out in the Eighth Schedule to the Constitution? In the past, in addition to a police and Army presence, the Government operated through Government Agents who were solely answerable to the Government.

Now the Government Agent will be the agent, not only of the Government in Colombo, but also of the local District or Provincial Council; and he will not be able to get a realistic degree of co-operation from the people, to function effectively; and laws like immigration Control, can only be enforced by a strong Military and Police presence to reinforce the civil power or in other words military government, which is the very thing against which the terrorists fought.

Furthermore, having regard to the provisions of Sections 92, 93, 94, 108 of the Draft Law on provincial and District Councils, one is not quite certain if in the actual constitution of the first District and Provincial Councils it is intended to consult the wishes of the people in regard to the membership they would like to elect for the District Council or whether they desire to form Provincial Councils; and it would appear that the proposed legislation is merely to legalise the handover of the North and East of Sri Lanka to the T.U.L.F. as Provincial Councils, which would then be exercising the legislative power of the

region' as contemplated in the document called Annexure C, which is described as the 'the proposals which.....emerged as a result of discussions in Colombo and new Delhi.

"The Ordinances enacted by the District Councils and Provincial Councils are not like the by-laws under the old Development Councils Act, which have to be confirmed by parliament; these Ordinances are presented to the president; and parliament has nothing to do with them.

It is also clear that the concept of Provincial Councils with Chief Ministers and Boards of Ministers for the different provinces will, without a doubt, lead to the division of the rest of the country too, on narrow sectarian and personal interests.

Furthermore, the proposed Council of State is not a second Chamber as normally understood, but only a permanent bargaining or agitational forum for narrow racial and sectarian interests.

So far as I know, the problems referred to the 'All-party Conference' did not include any minority grievances in the seven provinces, outside the North and East.

I am completely at a loss to understand why, in these circumstances, the President has found it necessary to recommend the creation of such an 'agitational base or forum'—unless, of course, the purpose is to divert attention from the area where the real problem exists, i.e., the North and the East.

But, I can see many dangers in such an approach, especially in the Kandyan areas; I think it is the President's express intention to grant citizenship to all Indians who come under the category of 'stateless persons'.

The SLFP is firmly of the view that the problem of "stateless persons" should not be linked with

the present burning questions concerning the North and the East.

Sri Lanka is a mere 25,000 square miles; and some fifteen million people. Why, pray, is this attempt to legalise a permanent vivisection of this country, without even placing the matter fairly before the people, and if we divide ourselves in this manner, we certainly expose ourselves to very grave dangers.

Of course, the President's crowning argument is that when Mr. Bandaranaike had been Minister of local Administration in the State Council—he had gazetted a scheme for setting up Provincial Councils—Regional Councils, actually.

These would have democratised and given some degree of local control over the functions of Kachcheris, in the Colonial Administration. The difference that the President now conveniently forgets, is that at that time, the demand in all areas was only for a greater degree of democracy in Kachcheri Administration, and not for a viable alternative to a separate state for the Tamils.

I do not wish to deal with many other matters that arise for consideration in the Proposed Provincial and District Councils Law, which deals with land use and land settlement, nor on the absence of an accepted statement with regard to the 'National Policy on Land Colonization' which was expected to be worked out as stated in Clause 11 of the Annexure C. I mentioned earlier; they can be considered later.

The Sri Lanka Freedom Party withdrew from the "All-Party Conference" because it was felt there was no sincere effort at working out a national solution on a national consensus, but directed only to delay, to save face to confuse and to divide, while at the same time displaying to world that a serious effort is being made here to arrive at a political solution.

The position of my Party, however, has always been a principled one, which placed the interests of the people of Sri Lanka, before sectarian, party or communal interests.

The SLFP has refrained from saying or doing anything to inflame communal passions.

In conclusion, I would appeal to all the people of this land not to treat these issues lightly; for they are fraught with grave consequences, and I would appeal to the Government to drop these proposals entirely, and not to proceed with them.

Amirthalingam's Response

The following statement was issued by Mr. A. Amirthalingam, Secretary-General of the Tamil United Liberation Front after the All Party Conference on 21st December.

In response to an invitation from President Jayewardene dated 28th December 1983, the TULF agreed to attend the All Party Conference summoned for the 10th January 1984, on the basis of certain proposals "to enable them to arrive at an acceptable solution to the present problems facing the Tamil community in Sri Lanka."

When those proposals were abandoned, the TULF would normally have withdrawn from the conference. But, we continued to participate and pursue the search for an acceptable viable alternative to our demand for an independent State of Tamil Eelam.

Mrs. Indira Gandhi, the late Prime Minister of India, who "offered her good offices to enable a final solution to be reached" and her special envoy Mr. G. Parthasarathy played a very big part in persuading the TULF to continue the negotiatory process.

In view of certain aspersions cast by some people on India's role in this matter, it behoves me to place this fact on record. India has been the biggest factor working for a peaceful political solution.

In the very first statement we made at the Conference, we indicated that though we were elected on a mandate to work

for a separate State, if an acceptable and viable alternative is offered, we were willing to recommend it to our people.

Even in the face of total absence of positive response on the part of leading Government Members—even when the major Sinhala Opposition party avoided the responsibility by walking out—we continued to participate because of our party's commitment to non-violence an integral part of which is the path of negotiation.

We indicated that a solution based on a Tamil linguistic region, consisting of the Northern and Eastern Provinces, granting regional autonomy to the Tamil nation as contained in the proposals placed before this Conference by the Ceylon Workers' Congress may be one we could recommend to the Tamil people.

We also said that the regional body should be "empowered to enact laws and exercise executive powers in relation thereto on certain specified listed subjects, including the maintenance of internal law and order in the Region, the administration of justice, social and economic development, cultural matters and land policy".

A careful study of the provisions of the draft bills placed before the Conference will convince anyone that they fall far short of the regional autonomy indicated above.

(Continued on page 6)

WHAT IS TERRORISM?

The Editor
SATURDAY REVIEW

"Separatism" and "Terrorism" are two words which are bandied freely by politicians and the mass media in Sri Lanka and elsewhere in relation to the Tamil problem in Sri Lanka. An unbiased examination will convince any reasonable man that both do not exist.

The Tamil United Liberation Front no doubt passed a resolution at Vaddukodai before the 1977 elections that it would work for a separate state for the Tamils. This was a result of untold hardships the TULF suffered at the hands of the previous Government. Except to pass such a resolution no meaningful steps were taken by it to achieve that end.

As soon as the United National Party Government came to power all hopes for a just solution of the problem were dashed to the ground by the riots that followed. Thousands of disillusioned youths who were unjustly denied higher education by an iniquitous system of standardisation felt that they could get justice by peaceful means. Many youths were arrested and tortured and even killed. Human rights to which mere lip-service was paid were greatly violated. They took up arms. Unable to fight the superior might of the Government directly they resorted to guerilla warfare. The Government resorted to armed repression. Instead of finding a political solution the Government unreasonably dragged on the All Party Talks for an year and even brought in pressure groups to sabotage the talks.

The "terrorism" of the Tamil youths cannot be compared to the terrorism of the Red Brigades or the Mafia. The fight of The Boys is only against the atrocities perpetrated against the Tamils whose blood is being shed by a Dharmista Government.

S. S. Vasan
Chunnam

WHO IS A TERRORIST?
The Editor
SATURDAY REVIEW

At last the Minister of National Security, Mr. Lalith Athulathmudali has come out with the definition for the hitherto abstract term "terrorist". Well, Sir better late than never.

According to him (Daily News, 6th December), a "terrorist" is "a person who uses the guns; a person who accompanies a terrorist with a gun; a person who gives a house to a person who has a gun; a person who watches the movement of the Army and goes and tells a terrorist. Do not go that way, the army is around".

However, for the sake of Sri Lankans who are peacefully residing for those who never felt the soil of the North, for those who make fantastic legislations in their air-conditioned rooms in Colombo where no permit is necessary to have a car, bicycle, or scooter, where no permit is necessary to travel on a particular road at a particular time, where no permit is necessary to travel on another particular road at another particular time.

I would like to suggest another definition for the term "terrorist". (My ideas as Mao said, come directly from the social life, not from the sky!)

Any person, male, old dumb, crippled or blind whosoever, female or even a one and a half-year-old child who happens to be living or travelling around a spot where a man in uniform is killed shall be a terrorist! (and could be shot at sight!)

Saneeswara
Batticaloa

TAB ON EXCESSES

The Editor
SATURDAY REVIEW

Is it not time that to awaken the conscience of the world some organisation with a civic sense, if not the Tamil United Liberation Front, collected all

instances of the "excesses" of the military regime in the North of Lanka since the day the much-waunted All-Party Conference first met under President Jayewardene?

S. Asirwatham
Ilavalai.

AFTER THOUGHTS

The Editor
SATURDAY REVIEW

With reference to President Jayewardene's thoughts on the violence in India after the assassination of Indira Gandhi and the July 1983 holocaust in Sri Lanka, published in the local newspapers, I wish to state that at least a little thinking must be done before expression of opinions.

Forty-year old Rajiv Gandhi, just come to power in India with several languages and a population of about 700 million, not only condemned communal violence with neither delay nor reservation but also initiated prompt action to stop it and punish those responsible for it, whereas the 76-year old self-established all-powerful "Dharmista" exponent of tiny Sri Lanka, with only two languages and a population of about 15 million, has been floundering for more than 16 months to white-wash it.

A. Don
Peradeniya.

P.D.B. CLARIFIES

The Editor
SATURDAY REVIEW

The contribution by Mr. S. K. V. Achary to the SATURDAY REVIEW of 22nd December, on "Palmyrah for Welath" has drawn my attention.

While appreciating Mr. Achary's interest in the cultivation of the palmyrah palm, I, as Chairman of the Palmyrah Development Board, must enlighten him that the Board during the past two years has been responsible for planting lakhs of palmyrah seeds in several districts of the country.

LETTERS

The Board has also given wide publicity through leaflets etc., commending to the people the potential wealth of palmyrah and giving them technical advice by qualified officers in regard the mode of planting, etc.

Planting of palmyrah seeds is a continuing process and is being undertaken by the Board every year during the appropriate season.

If Mr. Achary would read the annual reports and the progress reports of the Board, he would get a true picture of the comprehensive projects undertaken by the Board for the develop-

ment of the palmyrah industry in general and the cultivation of the palm in particular.

It might interest Mr. Achary to know that Mr. Kanagarajah, to whom he refers in his article, is a senior and active Director of the Board.

I shall thank you to publish this letter in your valuable journal and advise Mr. Achary to contact me to obtain a fuller briefing of the activities of the Board of which he seems to be quite ignorant.

K. Nadarajah
Chairman, Palmyrah Development Board, Jaffna.

AMIR'S RESPONSE

(Continued from page 5)

When we accepted the scheme of District Development Councils in 1980, it was clearly understood that it was not meant to be an alternative to our demand for a separate State.

It was hoped that it may help to solve some of the pressing problems, like colonization, and ease tensions thereby creating the climate for a solution to the larger political question.

The total failure of the Government to work that scheme in the proper spirit has largely contributed to the present situation. The repetition of the provisions of the same law in the present draft is totally unacceptable to the Tamil people.

The bills do not embody a proper scheme of devolution or autonomy. Devolution to the larger unit should be done by the Constitution and that unit may delegate any functions to the smaller unit.

I am surprised that even these meagre and inadequate provisions are being opposed by some responsible persons.

We have endeavoured both in the All Party Conference and in informal discussions outside to work out a peaceful solution.

Time is running out. The Tamil areas are under virtual siege. Normal life has come to a stand-still. Death, arson, rape and looting, stalk our areas. Starvation is staring the poor people in the face.

This is the grim reality of the situation in the Northern and Eastern Provinces.

We are constrained to state that the two Bills before this Conference do not embody any scheme of autonomy which could be accepted by the Tamil people, or their accredited representatives the T.U.L.F.

BISHOP'S APPEAL - 2

The following is the text of a letter sent by the Rt. Rev. Dr. B. Deogupillai, Bishop of Jaffna, to President Jayewardene on 31st December 1984 on the arrest of innocent Tamil youths:

"At the request of three very high-ranking Police Officers and the Government authorities of the North, I made an earnest appeal on 26th December for the unconditional release of the police officers,

Mr. Terrence de Silva and Mr. J. A. R. Nanayakkara, on humanitarian grounds. I trust my appeal has helped to preserve their lives till now.

"Now, at the request of the wailing mothers of the North and the East, I earnestly appeal to you, on the same humanitarian grounds to release immediately the hundreds of innocent Tamil youths who have

been unjustly arrested and are being detained in military camps in the North, East and South.

"Further, I earnestly appeal to you to see that the practice of indiscriminate mass arrest of Tamil youths in the North and East by the Armed Forces is forthwith discontinued.

"Thanking you and wishing you and the Country a peaceful and prosperous New Year.

Yours sincerely,

B. Deogupillai, Bishop of Jaffna."

Copies of the letter have been sent to the Minister of National Security, the Co-ordinating Officer North the Government Agent Jaffna, Mr. R. Sunderalingam Senior DIG (Ranges), Mr. S. S. Joseph, Senior DIG (Administration) and Mr. Tyrrel Gunatileke. DIG (Northern Range).

JR'S IDEAS...

(Continued from page 2)

In regard to the powers and functions of these bodies, the report of the working group of officials and experts of Committee "A" of the APC and the report of Committee "B" on the Equalisation of Opportunities in Education, Employment and Language Rights will be implemented.

It will be seen from a comparison of the draft legislation and Annexures "A", "B" and "C" that the proposals to establish provincial councils within a province and the appointment of ministers from provincial councils are contained in these proposals. Many other details regarding powers and functions mentioned in the annexures are also adopted in the draft legislation.

THE STATELESS

There were other matters, too, in which consensus was reached earlier. In the sessions in 1st March informed the APC that there was consensus not only on the need for delegation of central powers to enable the people's participation in Government at all levels, but also regarding the stateless and the eradication of ethnic violence and terrorism in all its forms. There was acceptance, too, regarding the setting up of a second chamber as a means of solving the ethnic problem by making the second chamber an institution—

(1) to afford a forum for the minority members living in the districts to function in the supreme legislature; and

(2) to create a reservoir of members in the second chamber who may be chosen as minister to function in the provinces by the President.

The legislation regarding the systems of government and second chamber are now before you.

Solutions for the problem of the stateless are being worked out by the Government. Solutions to the problem of ethnic violence has to be many faceted and is very much in the forefront of the minds of us all now.

Condominium

The following telegram has been sent to the President by Prof. K. Nadarajah:

"Condominium is the only Golden master key to revive the lost amity and peace in Sri Lanka between the Tamils and Sinhalese brethren and sisters to exist as during the days of yore. This would avert war and a bloody revolution. Once granted, your name will be perpetuated in the annals of Sri Lankan history."

AI Grows in Stature

Amnesty International's 1984 report presents documented facts on political imprisonment, torture and executions around the world.

The new edition of the annual report reflects the growth of the human rights movement as a whole and the increased exposure of such abuses, despite efforts by many governments to suppress the facts.

The report, with entries on 117 countries, shows that human rights violations and the struggle against them—are not limited to any particular ideological or political system.

It also reflects the growth of Amnesty International into a voluntary movement with over 500,000 members and subscribers in more than 150 countries.

On 1984 it worked on behalf of more than 5,000 individuals who were either known or possible prisoners of conscience, mounted urgent appeals to protect other prisoners under threat and campaigned for national and international safeguards

Copies of the report may be obtained from AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PUBLICATIONS, 1 Easton Street, London WC1X 8DJ, United Kingdom. AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL SOUTH ASIA PUBLICATIONS SERVICE 82, Rosmead Place, Colombo 7, Sri Lanka.

ARMY MEN ON THE PROWL

Army men on the spree in Jaffna town just after noon yesterday shot dead three people and assaulted a doctor.

The names of those killed don't matter because such killings are routine stuff in the North now.

But the assault on Dr. V. Sivagnanavel orthopaedic surgeon at the Jaffna Hospital, was a serious matter.

He was cycling back to hospital when he was stopped by some men in khaki uniform and despite identifying himself subjected to harassment.

Immediately after this incident, doctors and other staff at the hospital staged a walk-out.

Only a personal apology by Brigadier Nalin Seneviratne, Co-ordinating Officer of the North, save what could have been a serious situation

News Briefs

A land mine is reported to have killed 8 policemen at Kalawanchikudy on 18-12-84. In the reprisals at least 38 civilians are reported killed.

A 32 year old, Mylvaganam Ramanathan, was stated to have been pushed off the train on 19-12-84 by 'persons in civil' between Paranthan and Kilinochchi. He has been admitted to Hospital.

A 'curfew' was declared at Wellawatte on 19-12-84 with a view to curtail the movement of people.

At Pulimoddai on 19-12-84, 2 members of the security forces are reported to have been killed by a land-mine. In the ensuing 'shoot-out' 4 'terrorists' were reported killed.

Army volunteers are reported to have been summoned to safeguard public buildings, in Colombo, apart from Gurkha mercenaries.

At Padaviya on 19-12-84 four army personnel, including 2 officers have been allegedly killed by a land-mine. In counter-operations 4 terrorists are stated to have been killed.

Saturday Review

SRI LANKA

Starvation in North:

Fresh Exodus to India

Nearly 100,000 people in the North are on the verge of starvation as a result of the enforcement of the new Emergency Regulations declaring certain areas as "Prohibited Zones" and "Security Zones".

The majority of the affected people are fishermen and their families who had been living in the coastal areas.

Others include people engaged in ancillary services such as fish sales and the making of dried fish.

Boat-loads of affected people have begun to leave for South India in the hope that they would be able to earn a living there.

This is going to complicate the National Question and become a new irritant in Indo-Sri Lanka relations

In addition, thousands of other people in the North are finding it increasingly difficult to exist because the Emergency Regulations not only severely restrict their move-

ment but also contributes to the disruption of essential supplies.

Food and fuel stocks are fast running out, agricultural production is slowing down and fish has become a luxury.

Public transport has also become a problem, to add to which trains from Colombo now stop at Kilinochchi, which is 50 miles from Jaffna, after the mysterious blowing up of a railway bridge on 1st January.

With the Colombo-based newspapers ignoring or playing down the tragic situation in the North, the leaderless Tamil people have no one to espouse their cause or to appeal to—except the Gods.

But if the Government believes that it can starve the Tamil people into submission it will be in for a rude shock. If at all, the Government's attitude is only strengthening the determination of larger numbers of people to think in terms of a separate existence.

BISHOP'S APPEAL - 1

At the time of going to press the to police officers reportedly kidnapped by a organisation styled "Movement" have still not been released, the authorities say.

This is the text of a press release by the Rt. Rev. B. Deogupillai, Bishop of Jaffna, in this connection:

The following Police officers, Mr. S. S. Joseph, Senior D.I.G. (Administration), Mr. R. Sundaralingam, Senior DIG Ranges Mr. Tyrrel Gunatilleke D.I.G. Northern Range, and Mr. M. Panghalingam, Government Agent of Jaffna met me on 26th December in connection with the following letter, dated 25th December, addressed to Mr. Sundaralingam:

"The police officers, Mr. Terrence de Silva and Mr. J. A. R. Nanayakara who had been abducted by

us on 21st December are under our custody safe and sound. To show you that both of them are alive we are sending you a video-cassette. If you want both of them back you will have to pay us a ransom of Rs.

"If the Sri Lanka Government wants to settle this matter secretly, you could do it so. We won't contact you directly over this matter.

"If you agree to pay us the indicated ransom ask the Jaffna Bishop to make a request over the radio and television to release them. This is the indication that you have agreed to pay the ransom. We are expecting your reply before 9p.m. on 26th December. If you fail to meet our demand, both the police officers will be shot dead.

Sgd. "Movement."

To begin with I wish to whoever is responsible for having spared the lives of Police officers Mr. Terrence de Silva and Mr. J. A. R. Nanayakkara up to now.

With regard to the ransom referred to in the letter, I wish to state categorically that I have no connection with whoever has been responsible for the kidnapping and for the ransom demand.

Therefore, this message should not in any way be construed as acceptance on the part of the Government to pay the ransom demanded

Having made this quite clear, since we are in the season of Christmas, both from the Christian point of view and on humanitarian grounds I earnestly appeal for the unconditional release of the two above mentioned officers.

See also Page 7

Fr. Singarayer's Trial

The trial of Fr. Singarayer and Fr. Sinnarasa under the Prevention of Terrorism Act. was begun at the High Court of Colombo, Before Mr. H. W. Senanayake on 1st January.

Senior State Counsel, Mr. C. R. de Silva in his opening address said that the two accused were charged with having reason to believe that Prabhakaran and another had participated in the bank robbery at Neerveli, failed to divulge that information to the police and also failed to divulge the whereabouts of Mr. Prabhakaran and others.

Mr. de Silva said that Fr. Singarayer was a Catholic priest belonging to the O.M.I. order. He was ordained in 1973 and had taken the vows of poverty. Fr. Sinnarasa was ordained in 1980 and was a close friend of Fr. Singarayer.

The entire indictment centred round a robbery which took place at Neerveli on 25th March, 1981. On that day Rs. 8.1 million belonging to the People's Bank was being transported when at Neerveli the robbery took place and the money was removed. The involvement of the two accused arose after the robbery. Both of them facilitated in the disposal of the Neerveli loot knowing that those monies were part of the Neerveli robbery he said.

Mr. Silva, with Mr. Mohan Peiris, State Counsel, and Mrs. Jayasinghe Tillekeratne, State Counsel, appeared for the prosecution. Mr. Bala Tampoe with Mr. G. Kumaralingam Mr. I. F. Xavier and Mr. K. S. Ratnavale appeared for Fr. Singarayer. Fr. Sinnarasa, who is being tried in absentia was not represented.

A detailed report of the trial will appear in our next issue.

SPECIAL ISSUE

If Jaffna remains "normal" as of now, we propose to publish a special issue of the SATURDAY-REVIEW on 26th January 1985 to mark our third anniversary of publication.

Readers' contributions to this special issue are welcome. These should reach us by 15th January the latest. Please keep the contributions down to 200 words to enable us to accommodate as many of these as possible.

Advertisers who wish to book space in the special issue are advised to contact the Advertisement Manager early.

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