

Saturday Review

SRI LANKA

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PITHA ENTERPRISE

229 A, Point Pedro Road,
Anaipanthi,
Jaffna.

IT'S THE BOYS WHO MATTER

We repeat yet again: Hold Direct Talks with the Boys. That is, if the Sri Lankan Government really wants to solve the ethnic problem.

The Boys are the people who really count.

Their clout should not be underestimated, especially by those forces in the South, both within and outside the Government, who appear to believe that the Sinhalese can, with the aid of Kautilya's heirs across the Palk Straits, impose their will on the Tamils through military might.

That stage is long past.

The SATURDAY REVIEW was the first paper in Sri Lanka to advocate direct negotiations with the militant groups. This it did as far back as September 1984, under the headline **INVITE TIGERS TO THE TABLE**—long before Thimpu 1 and 2, and New Delhi 1, 2 and 3. We took the trouble to contact the leaders of the militant groups in Madras in early December 1984 to pave the way for a negotiated settlement. This was before the Dollar and Kent farm massacres, which could have been averted if our advice had been heeded. All the militant groups were ready for talks at that time, though naturally they stipulated certain conditions.

50 CENT FUND

This week we sent another cheque for Rs. 100/- to the Minister of National Security, Mr. Lalith Athulathmudali, as further part payment of the legal costs (Rs. 1,575/-) awarded to him by the Press Council on a complaint made against the SATURDAY REVIEW.

Unlike certain politicians of various hues, we have no vested interest in the ethnic problem, except to see an early end to the senseless blood-letting going on in the North and East, especially.

To allow this state of affairs to continue will only mean the tragic draining-off of the life-blood of the entire country.

Recently, the SATURDAY REVIEW took a new initiative (or rather a continuation of the previous moves to bring about direct negotiations between the Government and the Militant Groups.) There was no secret about it. We made our position public in

the SR of 15th November, with the headline **HOLD DIRECT TALKS**.

We now suspect that there are certain elements both in the South and the North—probably backed by foreign forces who, for reasons of their own, don't want the ethnic problem to be solved—who would like to keep the ethnic pot boiling.

We repeat: Hold direct talks with The Boys, using India's proposals as a basis for the negotiations.

The ethnic problem could be solved in no time, if there's the correct spirit. Yes, the correct spirit.

What do our leaders on every side want? **WAR OR PEACE?**

Army's Expansionist Move?

Is the Army stationed at the Jaffna Fort trying to expand its perimeter? Or are new b(r)ooms trying to show they can shell well?

Since last Thursday (20th November, 1986), the mortars positioned in the Jaffna Fort have intermittently opened up killing more than ten civilians and injuring several others. Several shop buildings too have been badly damaged.

The Army seems to be concentrating its mortars on Jaffna's Grand Bazaar.

If the idea is to drive the traders away from the bazaar and make it a ghost area, then the mortar shelling has achieved its objective to some extent.

Quite a few traders in the Bazaar area have put up their shutters and moved their goods to safer places from where they are conducting their business. Commuters now generally shun the Bus Stand as, without any warning, shells are likely to hit

them at any moment, and send them to a destination they hadn't bargained for.

The Jaffna Traders' Association has appealed to the Indian High Commissioner in Ceylon, Mr. J.N. Dixit to take up this matter with the Sri Lankan authorities to prevent further loss of innocent lives and destruction to property.

BLACK DAY

An appeal has gone out to the Tamils of Sri Lanka to observe 10th December, U.N. HUMAN RIGHTS DAY, as **BLACK DAY**.

The call specifically pin-points the disappearance of 272 persons which Amnesty International had taken up with the Sri Lanka Government.

As the Government has failed to give a satisfactory reply, Tamils throughout Sri Lanka should observe 10th December as **BLACK DAY** to draw the attention of the international community to the violation of fundamental human rights in Sri Lanka, the appeal states.

Fast Continues

The Jaffna undergraduates' death fast—sparked off by the disappearance of undergraduate A. Vijitharan—entered its 10th day at the time of going to press (Friday, 28th November). (See SR of 22nd November)

There were signs the last few days that the fast would be given up, following negotiations undertaken by a group of clergymen, representatives of mass organisations and the University Teachers' Association.

A settlement was expected to be reached on Thursday (27th November) but following the demand made on behalf of a militant group that the undergraduates should give an undertaking not to launch any other kind of struggle, the Students' Organising Committee has decided to continue the death fast.

Earlier, one of the fasters, Miss Kohilesuary, was hospitalised when she collapsed. She is understood to be suffering from stomach ulcers—a fact she had not disclosed earlier to the Organising Committee. Her place was taken by another undergraduate.

Three undergraduates, two undergraduates and a member of the public are continuing the fast.

Two Big Demos

Jaffna witnessed two big demonstrations on Monday, 24th November 1986.

One was a demonstration organised by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) protesting the confiscation of arms and communication equipment from the LTTE and other militant groups in Madras.

The other demonstration was organised by the students of the University of Jaffna to protest the involuntary and mysterious disappearance of a fellow undergraduate, Vijitharan.

'Corridor' Out

Sri Lankan High Commissioner in India, Bernard Tillekeratne, left on Thursday evening (27th November) for New Delhi carrying the Govt's rejection of the 'Corridor' proposal made by the Indian Ministerial duo—Ministers of State P. Chithambaram and Natwar Singh—who made a hush-hush trip to Colombo on the 24th accompanied by three officials.

Saturday Review

SRI LANKA

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MATRIMONIAL

Tall and handsome professional in his forties from a leading and respectable Vellala family, now permanently settled in London with own house, car and senior position in the Public Service, desires to meet Tamil Roman Catholic—View marriage. Moral standards and sense of values are more important than other attributes. Photo appreciated. All letters will be replied in the strictest confidence. C/o. R 2724 SATURDAY REVIEW 118, 4th Cross Street, Jaffna.

Congressman Visits Lanka

Us Congressman, Charles Wilson, a Democrat of Texas, arrived in Colombo 20th November.

The congressman paid courtesy calls on President J.R. Jayewardene, and members of the cabinet.

Congressman Wilson has been a member of the House of Representatives since 1973. He is currently a member of the house appropriations sub-committee on foreign operations.

His visit to Sri Lanka is part of a tour the congressman is making of several countries in the region.

A QUIET TURN

"Through what wild centuries
Roves back the rose" —De la Mare.

The ancients knew that in the cycle of violence there is no respite. In Homer's *Illiad*, composed nearly 3000 years ago, the combatants in the battle for Troy in some sense fight in vain. The heroism of Hector and Achilles notwithstanding, the outcome is decided by games played between the gods of mount Olympus indifferent to the passions and heart-burns of men on the plains of Ilium. Even for the gods there is no rest. The gods of Olympus had themselves defeated the earlier Titans as Siegfried supersedes Wotan in Nibelung's Ring.

The great religious teachers addressed themselves to the task of breaking out of this cycle of violence and their answers were so radical that few had really digested them. Many of these teachers either by design or by coincidence lived about 2500 years ago — Pythagoras the Buddhat Prophet Elijah and Mahavira, the founder of Jainism.

We in this country owe allegiance to religions going back to one or more of these teachers and yet we have lived the *Illiad* all over again. Our Olympians may be in Delhi, London or Washington D. C. Yet the cause of justice has not been entirely lost.

The unexpected problems of General Weeratunge in Canada show

that the world will continue to be concerned with questions of justice. It is a warning to the ruling class in Colombo who have no great human qualities to commend them except their worship of the west.

Whatever India's role, it seems to have resulted in a vicious bombardment of the Tamil population near Army encampments. We still do not know what terrible things are happening in the Eastern province. The rationale behind killing and maiming one's own civilian population is to maintain troop morale as stated by the Army chief in Jaffna according

by **Rajan Hoole**

to an interview published in the SATURDAY REVIEW.

Only Ministers De Mel and Ranarajah seem to have a grasp of the terrible state of this country if not of their own futures. Elections and periods in opposition are meant for Ministers to sit back and reflect on their credibility. Those who become stale in positions of power tend to believe that everyone who does not agree with them is a liar. Perhaps the ministers should take time off and read Amnesty International's reply to the Minister for National Security to judge where their credibility stands.

For all his arrogance in power, Felix Dias Bandaranaike learnt in opposition some salutary lessons that did his soul much good.

What of the Sinhalese people? A human rights worker who recently visited the South told me, "thanks to the work of the peace committees in the South, the Sinhalese people are aware that the military commits atrocities in Tamil areas. They are now likely to be indifferent to reverses of the Army. But they are most concerned about harm to Sinhalese civilians".

As for the Tamils, two incidents involving University students have stirred up a gush of public interest in questions of fundamental liberties and democratic rights. The University has now become a focal point for long bottled-up feelings. The students' detractors accuse them of weakening the military defence at a critical time. But for many others questions of justice can never be made secondary whatever the climate. A very learned Hindu gentleman who first complained of the total absence of intellectual life in Jaffna then added that he saw the hand of divine providence in recent events.

The sky over Lanka is heavy with castles built upon it. It may not be very cheering, but these lines from Milton's *Samson Agonistes* are worthy of thought:

All is best though we oft doubt
What th' unsearchable dispose
Of highest wisdom brings about,
And ever best found in the close.

Briefs

Army Rampage

During the 24 hour curfew clamped down in Mullaitivu district on 21st November, the security forces launched a massive search operation in Mulliyavalai and Thaneerootu. There was air cover and strafing and bombing by planes and helicopters. 'Operation Mullaitivu' resulted in several houses being destroyed and people were forced to seek shelter in refugee camps. There was indiscriminate shooting and many youths were dragged out of their houses. In one place in the area, 6 youths were allegedly hacked and shot by security personnel in front of a Grama Sevaka's house. Many people were taken into custody but those over 35 years were later released. A large number of civilians, including women, were admitted to the General Hospital, Jaffna for treatment.

The villages of Kumulamunai, Cherumulai and Alamunai in the Mullaitivu district were surrounded

by army personnel on 23rd November and about 500 people were taken into custody. It is believed that more than 20 were killed. 15 bodies were discovered with gunshot injuries. Several shops were looted and set on fire. Rifle toting men in black were alleged to have harassed women and children.

Citizens Protest

The Citizen's Committee of Batticaloa has stated in a press release that 15 civilians were shot and killed in a search operation by security forces on 23rd November. Earlier a student of 16 was ordered to get off a moving vehicle; when he refused to do so, he was pushed out of the vehicle and shot.

New York Demo

Thirty members of the Tamil Youth Society in New York demonstrated recently against the action taken against the militants in Tamil Nadu.

Lalith In Jaffna

Fifteen Parliamentarians, including Ministers and Deputy Ministers, accompanied National Security Minister, Lalith Athulath Mudali on 23rd November to the Jaffna Peninsula. The M.P.'s were taken to Thondamannar where they inspected the camp and met the soldiers who had taken part in the recent 'Battle' against the militants.

SAARC Echoes

Dr. Janathanan, the leader of the World Tamil Movement, has stated in a letter to President Jayewardene, during the recent SAARC Conference in Bangalore, not to be complacent because of the action taken against the militants by the Tamil Nadu Government. This action by the Tamil Nadu against the Tamil militants was a temporary set-back but there is no gainsaying the fact that the people of Tamil Nadu are solidly behind the militants whose sacrifices to achieve their just rights are appreciated by them, he added.

CHOOOLAIMEDU:

What Really Happened?

On Deepavali day a few militants from the Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF) were going across to a shop from their residence at Choolaimedu, in Madras when they saw a mob carrying sticks and broken bottles coming at them with the obvious intention of assaulting the unsuspecting and unprepared militants.

The militants to avoid being attacked on the road returned to their residence but the mob followed them there and purely in self-defence they had to fire at the mob, which resulted in the unfortunate death of a bystander. Later, Mr. Ketheeswaran, spokesman of the EPRLF, regretted the incident at a press conference and said "We will not justify the incident."

Some members of the Central Committee of the EPRLF, and the chief of staff of the People's Liberation

Army, Douglas Devanantha, were also residing there but were not present at the time of the incident. However, soon after, when Devanantha arrived on the scene, he was arrested by the Tamil Nadu Police and was also charged in connection with the incident of which he had no inkling whatsoever.



Douglas Devanantha

The Tamil Nadu Police released a statement which is not in keeping with the facts of the case. It is surprising to note that the Police have indicated that the militants of the EPRLF provoked the people and this resulted in the incident.

It is necessary to ask who engineered this situation? It is also pertinent to find out how those who started the disturbance hoped to benefit by it.

Was it to bring about an estrangement between the South Indian Tamils and the Tamils of Sri Lanka? Was it to weaken the bonds of friendship between the South Indian people and the militants? Was it to make a particular militant group lose its political popularity and leadership?

It is within these parameters that we should try to pinpoint the real cause for the Choolaimedu debacle.

It is not enough to be satisfied with the belief that the Choolaimedu episode was contrived by Sri Lanka. One should not always accept the obvious.

Just a few weeks before the incident there was a confrontation between the traffickers of illegal drugs and the supporters of the EPRLF. Certain forces have utilised this confrontation. These forces which safeguard and assist the merchants who peddle drugs do not like the EPRLF apprehending them. On the other hand, those who are really in

league with them accuse the militants collusion. This propaganda is used even internationally to discredit the militant movements. This affected all the militant organisations. The Choolaimedu incident is perhaps a direct result of the confrontation they had with the drug peddlers. But we cannot believe that they, on

Apparently, the confrontation between the drug peddlers and the EPRLF can be used as a stepping stone for future endeavours by some others. So it will be useful if the perpetrators of the incident are unmasked in the interests of the present and future politics of the Tamils.

The South Indian Tamils should accept the truth and join hands with the militants. At the same time, the other militant groups must not countenance one particular group being made the scapegoat for this incident. All the groups must ascertain the truth and place it before the people. It is only in this way that unity can be achieved.

If one militant errs it will affect all his comrades. In India when a militant group errs, it will necessarily affect the others. In the same way an aspersion cast on one group will necessarily affect the others. As such all groups should jointly strive to get at the truth.

It is also our hope that the truth in respect of the incident will emerge out of an impartial judicial inquiry and consequently incidents of this nature will not be repeated in the future.

—S. PARTHIPAN

LIFE GOES ON— SOMEHOW

*As I spend
Lonely nights
in Jaffna,
I wonder
and wonder
about the verities of life.
Not the eternal verities,
but present-day realities.*

*Life somehow goes on,
despite the bombs and shells.
It is not grin and bear
but grim and bear!*

*The shells fall,
but the weddings on.
Children, more children.
Oh, God.*

*This is the stuff of life,
since creation.
The bells ring
from church and kovil
morning, noon and night;
sweet music to the faithful.
Sweeter is the sound of shells.
Maimed bodies, dead bodies.
No matter.
Life somehow or other
goes on.*

*Somewhat or other.
Boom, boom,
it goes again.
How sweet
the sound of music.*

—ANON - X

SOCIALISM BY ORGANISING THE PROLETARIAT

Marxist dialectical method calls for advancement, for the replacement of the old by the new. Materialist dialectics irrefutably proves the transient nature of capitalist society, which has outworn itself and no longer conforms to the requirements of mankind, and shows that it will be inevitably replaced by a new and advanced social system.

Lenin pointed out that the struggle for democracy and socialism should be waged not by a group of conspirators, but by a revolutionary party rooted in the workers' movement, and that this struggle "must consist not in organising conspiracies, but in educating, disciplining and organising the proletariat."

For a knowledge of the dialectic method whose substance lies in the law of the unity and struggle of opposites, which gives the key to understanding the self-development of matter in the process of which the old is replaced by the new, read the book "Lenin and Asia" by Attorney-at-Law T. Duraisingam, a pioneer of the socialist movement in our country.

Sinhala, Tamil and English editions of the book
are available at bookshops.

Price Rs.10/—

Council for Socialist Studies
31, Wilson Street, Colombo 12.

CRISIS IN SRI LANKA

The conference on Crisis in Sri Lanka took place on Saturday, 25th October at the University of California, Los Angeles. The conference was chaired by Professor Stanley Wolpert of the University of California.

The keynote address was given by Lord Avebury, Chairman of the British Parliamentary Human Rights Group.

In his speech, Lord Avebury presented an expose of the ongoing ethnic crisis in Sri Lanka. He pointed out that the gross violations of Human Rights by the Sri Lankan authorities was in contravention of the U.N. Human Rights Conventions, to which Sri Lanka was a signatory. He went on to state that there was documented evidence of hundreds of cases of torture, involuntary disappearances, arbitrary arrests and detention without trial. Lord Avebury urged the Sri Lankan Government to implement the due processes of law in its dealing with the problems arising from the ethnic crisis.

Lord Avebury also outlined the possible approaches for a solution to the ethnic crisis, based on a meaningful autonomy for the Tamil areas in Sri Lanka, which in his opinion would not affect the Sinhala community. He said that the experience of other countries, such as Canada had shown that a sharing of power under a Federal structure in a bipolar polity far from encouraging recessionist tendencies, had only led to greater cohesion and integration.

Lord Avebury further underlined the importance of guaranteeing any agreement by the International Community, given the past history of the non-implementation of previous agreements between the two communities. In this regard, India had in his view a special role to play.

Mr. David Hinckley of Amnesty International explained that A.I. had a limited mandate to investigate violations of Human Rights by governments in the areas of the use of torture and other inhuman, degrading forms of punishment, mistreatment of prisoners, arbitrary arrests and detention without trial.

He went on to state that A.I. had no political position or affiliation of any kind and its investigations covered numerous countries.

Mr. David Hinckley cited numerous studies and publications of his organization on Sri Lanka. These documents, he said, presented carefully researched cases of arbitrary arrests, illegal detention, torture and involuntary disappearances of Tamils in Sri Lanka. He said all efforts by A.I. to seek explanations for these violations of human rights from the government of Sri Lanka had not elicited any positive response.

Mr. Hinckley stressed the point that such actions by any government or its armed forces were not permissible under any circumstances, even if there was provocation.

Mr. Paul Nallanayagam—a Canadian citizen of Sri Lanka origin—gave an account of any incident of mass-killing of Tamil Youths by the Sri Lankan armed forces and their secret burial without inquest in a mass grave. He had monitored this incident in his capacity as President of the Citizens' Committee for National Harmony, for the Batticaloa District. He went on to state that he himself was arrested

amples of the relative success of the Malaysian model. Prof. Horowitz stated that Malaysia had experienced only one ethnic convulsion, whereas Sri Lanka has had many such convulsions of escalating proportions.

Dr. Karuniyan Arul—former associate Professor of Yale University—speaking on behalf of the Tamils of California analyzed the domination and repression of the Tamil people in Sri Lanka from a historical and political perspective. He underlined Tamils' claims to nationhood and enumerated the numerous measures imposed on them against their unanimous and collective will. He drew pointed attention to the instances of the newly emergent Sri Lankan state, using its coercive powers as its first and only response to peaceful and democratic protests by the Tamil people against what was strongly perceived by them to be discriminatory. He emphasized that the origin of Tamil militancy was the outcome of organized violence and repeated pogroms against the Tamils, and of sheer despair and a sense of futility at

Report of the Conference on CRISIS IN SRI LANKA convened jointly by the University of California, Los Angeles and International Alert against Genocide and Mass Killing.

under the Prevention of Terrorism Act, for communicating information about this mass killing to the media. He said he was fortunate in that, as a Canadian citizen, he had the intervention of the Canadian Embassy in Colombo and the Civil Rights Movement, who took up his case and ensured that he had a fair trial and eventual acquittal. He said other victims in his category did not have these facilities. He further stressed that all political prisoners be afforded the opportunity of being charged in the Sri Lankan courts or be released.

Professor Horowitz of the Duke University, made an analytical and comparative survey of the ethnic problems in the newly emergent countries. He drew particular attention to the Malaysian model to show what directions the Sri Lankan authorities might have taken to avoid some of the mistakes which have accentuated the ethnic divide in Sri Lanka. He went on to point out that Malaysia—unlike Sri Lanka—was able to accommodate within the ruling coalition, the main political parties representing the various ethnic groups. As one of the ex-

seeking to resolve their problems under the existing structures, which concentrated untrammelled power in the hands of the majority Sinhalese.

Dr. Arul castigated the Sri Lankan government's propaganda to label Tamil militancy as terrorism. He said to so label a movement which began purely in self defence, after two decades of oppression and violence, and whose violence was in miniscule proportions to those committed by the State, was patently dishonest. He further said that the Sri Lankan State had special responsibility to abide by the Rule of Law and civilized standards, for the enforcement of which it is invested with coercive power and whose agents instead violated those very norms with impunity.

The TULF leader, Mr. A. Amirthalingam, detailed the various steps taken by successive governments against the Tamil community and the violence perpetrated on them over the years. He made an impassioned plea for the cessation of the ongoing violence and gross human rights violations against the Tamils. He stressed that despite the sufferings of the Tamil people of epic proportions, they

were still willing to come to a settlement with the Sinhalese to enable them to live with dignity and in security.

The Venerable Hewanpola Ratnasara of the Dharma Vijaya Buddhist Vihare, Los Angeles, CA recalled the glorious history of Sri Lanka and the amity that existed between the two communities. He went on to note with regrets that some misguided Tamil youths had taken recourse to violence as a means to solving their problems. He called for a settlement by peaceful means, and for the Tamil youths whom he described as 'terrorists' to eschew violence.

Dr. Ganepola of the Sri Lanka Association of New York strongly condemned the violence of the Tamils which he described as 'terrorism', and called on India to dismantle the 'terrorist' bases in India. He said that the Tamil leadership should emulate the example of their earlier leaders who stood for a policy of cooperation and concluded by dedicating his address to the great Tamil leader, Sir Ponnampalam Ramanathan.

Dr. Brian Senewiratne—Consultant Physician of Brisbane, Australia and a Human Rights Activist—stated that the Tamils had genuine grievances which must be assuaged and not repressed by force. He identified Sinhala Buddhist racism as the major stumbling block in efforts to resolve the problem. He pointed out the Centre in Colombo and advocated the devolution of power to five Provincial units—viz, three for the Sinhalese and two for the Tamils. He said such a solution would assuage Sinhala fears, however irrational, arising from devolution of power to a single composite Tamil unit, and also lead to a rapid economic development of the Sinhala periphery. For these reasons this formula should find acceptance with the Sinhala people. This would also defuse the Tamil demand for separate state in the North and East, by providing adequate scope for the fulfilment of their basic aspirations. He warned that if the ongoing human rights violations against Tamils was not arrested, the Sinhalese people themselves would eventually become the victims of similar violations.

Other speakers, included: Professor Stanley Tambiah, Chairman of Anthropology, Harvard University, Specialist in Southeast Asian Studies, Author of *Sri Lanka, Ethnic Fratricide and the Dismantling of Democracy* (University of Chicago Press, 1986), Professor Leo Kuper, Chairman Department of Sociology, UCLA, Bante Walapala Piyananda, Dharma Vijaya Buddhist Vihara, Walter Jayawardena, President Sinhala Defence League, Al Rammohan, USA Committee to Stop Genocide, Amita Shastri, Professor of Political Science, UCLA and Professor Phillip Trimble, International Law, UCLA.

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RAJIV: CONFUSION REIGNS

What is India's attitude to the principled demand of the Tamil speaking people of Sri Lanka for the right of self determination whether in the form of a separate state or a federal state or full regional autonomy for a contiguous Tamil speaking linguistic region?

That India has been helpful by allowing the Tamil militants of Sri Lanka to use Tamil Nadu as a virtual base area has been a factor of great strength. It is of course doubtful whether this is due to the genuine sympathy of the Central Indian Government to the Sri Lankan Tamil cause or because it cannot over ride the wishes of 53 million Tamils in Tamil Nadu. But, it is another matter.

But, what is the principled stand of India? On more than one occasion Rajiv Gandhi has come out with a statement that India is against the creation of a separate state of Eelam. But he has never let us into the workings of his mind and explained a reason why he is against it. Some of us who have not advo-

cated Eelam as the solution for the Tamil problem have done so because of in our opinion, the impracticability of the scheme and because we wanted to preserve the unity of the revolutionary movement of the whole of Sri Lanka in the future interest of establishing socialism in Sri Lanka.

What is behind Rajiv Gandhi's rejection of Eelam? Has he forgotten that in 1971 India helped to truncate Pakistan and create a new

by

state of Bangladesh; and that it did so through military intervention against a Sovereign State.

Now, at Bangalore, he has come out with another pontifical statement that he is against the establishment of a linguistic state of the Tamils in Sri Lanka. But, why? Has he forgotten that after the British left India, the borders of all Indian states were demarcated on linguistic lines? Was not Tamil Nadu con-

stituted to incorporate all Tamil speaking areas? Is not Kerala composed of all Malayali speaking areas? Why cannot it be done in Sri Lanka?

It is quite clear that India is following a muddled policy towards the Sri Lankan Tamil problem. It is vacillating between support for the Tamil cause and a desire, based on class interests, to come to the aid of the reactionary Government of Sri Lanka. The consultations with the Tamil militants at the high-

N. Sanmugathasan

est level, followed by their mass arrest on November 8 and the consequent summoning of the Tiger leader Prabhakaran, for consultation in Bangalore between the leaders of the two countries makes no sense. There is no common purpose or idea running through these events. One thing is quite clear. The Indian Government is willing to let down the Tamil militants at any time provided the Sri Lankan Government makes a suitable gesture.

I have had on previous occasions commented on the lack of wisdom of the Tamil militants of putting all their eggs in one basket—of depending too heavily and exclusively on the support of the Indian Government for their liberation struggle. Perhaps they could not help it at the beginning. But it is time they learnt their lesson. India is not a socialist country nor is its Government revolutionary one. On the contrary its government is an expansionist one that is aiming of becoming dominant power in South Asia. It will do anything to bring Sri Lanka into its sphere of influence—just as it has done with Nepal, Sikkim and Bhutan.

The Tamil militants for their part must do some serious rethinking, take clear decisions on strategy and tactics build their own unity and unity with the people in order to face serious battle that lie ahead of them. Where they might find India not on their side.

Sundara Ramaswamy On His Critics

ANGRY BUT NOT BITTER

(Continued from last issue)

How does Sundara Ramaswamy react to the sweeping remarks of critics against his novel 'J. J. Sila Kurippukkal'?

He is angry but not bitter: angry not because his work of art has been subjected to such a crude post-mortem and he has been the target of ruthless attack, but because 'none of the critics has cared even to read the text of the book in full'.

'If only they had read the novel carefully, they wouldn't have made most of the remarks. Which are quite baseless, he said in an interview to this scribe with no trace of any bitterness.

Most of my critics, I can assure you, have not fully read the text of my novel. They obviously haven't made any efforts to understand it. Shouldn't you give it the serious thought it deserves?' he asked.

That is why I have not thought it fit to answer any of these critics, he says with an apparent air of satisfaction of having punished an unintentional wrong-doer by just ignoring him.

Even to his worst critic, who wanted him to leave the country for good, he would simply say 'Sorry, sir. I can't oblige you. I have yet several unfinished tasks to finish here.

Did you have any persons in mind while delineating your characters including J.J.?'

'No, not at all. Not only I did not wish any one of my characters resemble even remotely any living or dead personality, but also I took special care to avert such possibilities.

'Any way, if some Tamil readers could see Jayakanthan or Sivasankari or anybody else in the novel, my Tamil knowing Malayalam and Kannada friends tell me that some of my characters resemble particular writers in their respective languages. Maybe, they conform to certain types of writers, or types of men who could be there in any society'.

'What I have tried to portray is the cultural decadence of the contemporary society,' he said.

Fifty-four year old, tall, well-built fair complexioned and bespectacled

Sundara Ramaswamy was in a reminiscent mood, when asked about his early association with the communist movement.

He said; 'those were the days, in the early fifties, when the Communist Party had just begun to function as a lawful party after the ban on it had been lifted. I was only a candidate member along with two others in a cell—Since I began to raise doubts about many practical aspects of the party's functioning, I was asked to confine my work to the cultural front and I was doing the same for some years. It was the towering personality of Jeeva (late P. Jeevanandam), who was broad-minded enough to tolerate dissent, which made it possible for people like me to continue in the party even with some doubts.'

'Nobody in the party cared to remove genuine doubts of sincere workers—To them even to doubt was a crime—' he said.

He continued: 'The events that followed Stalin's death and the 20th congress of the CPSU all confirmed most of the fears lurking in my

mind for quite a long time. The breaking point came a few years later with the Hungarian uprising.'

Sundara Ramaswamy, however, hastened to add that he has "nothing against Marxism as such". "my complaint is mostly about the Soviet system, their intolerance of dissent and also the way the party was functioning here in this country. You should not look above for everything—look below, look to the people for evolving a policy suited to this country. When you want to apply Marxism to this soil it has to be made acceptable to this land. Two basic factors you cannot ignore are the deep-rooted religious faith of our people as also the caste system with its wide ramifications."

Asked for his early influences he said the one writer he greatly admired was Puthumaipithan. Whose contribution to Tamil fiction could never be under-rated. He gratefully remembered, that it was Raghunathan's 'Saanthi' which published his first story ('Thanneer') in 1951 and also a few subsequent stories. During the second phase of his literary career, 'Saraswati' was his forum. He is sore that except Raghunathan most of his old friends had started losing touch with him

(Continued on page 7)

DEEDS BELIE WORDS

Editor
SATURDAY REVIEW

I listened to the speech made by his Excellency J.R. Jayewardene at the inaugural session of the SAARC meeting held in Bangalore.

He spoke at length about non-violence, Ahimsa and love towards other human beings and said that he is a great admirer and follower of Mahatma Gandhi, a true son of India. But it's this same Gandhian who some time back said that if there's no way of solving this ethnic issue through peaceful negotiations he has no way other than 'unleashing the troops'!

What does he mean by Ahimsa and non-violence? His Security forces stationed in the heart of the Jaffna Town shell the Town from time to time, killing innocent civilians, damaging valuable properties, and even causing severe damage to the General Hospital. The peace-loving people of Jaffna launched a massive demonstration—an act of non-violence, to remove the camp from the densely populated town. The doctors, nurses and the rest of the hospital staff too sent petitions after petitions to the President; even peaceful demonstrations were staged by them. The fasting campaigns by students of various schools, the undergraduates, the fast-unto-death by the political prisoners in various army camps and prisons, are they not acts of non-violence and ahimsa? But what action has the preacher of non-violence taken so far regarding these? He has said that hatred doesn't cure hatred, but love cures hatred. What noble words! But the actions belie the words.

I fervently hope that as Supreme Commander of all the Security forces in the country, he'll first preach these noble words to his Security Forces and tell them how not to brand all the Tamils as 'terrorists' but treat them as fellow human beings.

The question that's uppermost in all our minds is "Who is a Terrorist?" One who has taken up arms in self-defence and to protect his brethren from destruction or the one who advocates violence as a solution for the current problem that could be settled through peaceful negotiations?

Mrs. S. Mahesan

Chunnakam

Septuagenarian's View

Editor
SATURDAY REVIEW

I have been a regular reader of your esteemed journal for quite a long time.

I am a Sinhalese aged 73. I live in the South. I move very freely with the people of the South. I very often visit the villages of the South: Galle,

Matara etc. Therefore I can say almost with authority that the Sinhalese people in the South are hundred percent in agreement with one of the issues, that is, all Sri Lanka should have only one head of State, only one Central Government; call it Unitary or by any other name but there cannot be two or more separate States. So it is best that all Tamils should propose a system of Government with that principal object in mind.

I should like to ask the Tamil people a simple question: Can the Tamils in the North and East even jointly run a successful government without the support of the Sinhalese? I say definitely NO! Why cannot the Tamils run a successful government even if a separate State is established in the North & East?

In a country like Sri Lanka any government must earn foreign exchange because we have to import many things we require. Also that government must collect revenue to run an efficient administration.

LETTERS

Let us see how Sri Lanka now earns foreign exchange. In 1985, Sri Lanka earned Rs. 36,207 million from exports; Rs. 7,990 million from private remittances from abroad; Rs. 2,197 million from tourism and also from foreign loans. Let us now forget the foreign loans, i.e., official transfers which include project and commodity grants amounting to Rs. 3,996 million.

Export earnings consisted of the following: agricultural exports—Rs. 19,026 million, industrial exports—Rs. 13,980; mineral and other exports—Rs. 3,201 million. Industrial exports were mainly garments and petroleum products, amounting to Rs. 11,776 million.

Sri Lanka has 24 districts, without Kilinochchi. Of these, 13 districts produce agricultural exports (mainly) and out of the other 11 (4 in the North, 3 in the East, 2 in the N.C.P., and Moneragala in Uva and Hambantota in S.P.) produce consumer goods (mainly) and do not produce any exportable agricultural goods such as Tea, Rubber, and Coconut.

So one cannot understand how a separate government in the North and a joint government in the North and East could earn foreign exchange from exports.

Of the remittances from abroad, nearly 60% are from the mid-East countries where the Sri Lankans work as domestic employees.

I should like to appeal to the patriots in the North and East to ponder over the problem of importing the necessary goods without adequate foreign earning.

Next let us see how much the Sri Lankan government earned as government revenue.

Total government revenue in 1985 was Rs. 37,344 million. Of this Rs. 24,390 million were from taxes on production. Expenditure of Rs. 6,410 million came direct from the tax on exports of agricultural goods. Import taxes amounted to Rs. 8,397 million and turnover tax amounted to Rs. 10,195 million.

I should like to request Tamil patriots, whether they are militants or not, to ponder over the question of revenue that is needed to run an efficient government.

My next question is what do the people of the North and East produce and for whom do they produce? We all know that the North produces an abundance of food articles in such great quantities that they are compelled to sell them to the Sinhalese people. All of us know that most of these consumer produce are not exportable goods. The simple reason is that these food items are not wanted by even the people of Tamil Nadu. These produce cannot be sold to an antagonistic Sinhalese. So the Tamil patriots should realise that to get a good income for the people of the North, the North and the South should live in amity.

The North gets electrical energy from the Central regions of Sri Lanka, which will be under the control of Colombo. So a hostile North cannot expect cheap hydro-electricity.

Last but not least is the water problem. Jaffna needs water very badly. That is why as far back as 1928 the Hon. K. Balasingham proposed the closure of the Jaffna Lagoon and the water to be purified and pumped.

The Central Government should in my opinion divert either the Mahaveli or Kelani waters to the North. At present the Mahaveli waters do not go beyond N.C.P., not even to Vavuniya. Jaffna's water needs are greater than that of Bangladesh, which is having endless discussions on this with India. This is an important matter which can be thrashed out at a conference.

I appeal to the patriots, militants and others, to consider the facts given by me and come to a conference Table. Please remember, I again say, that one hundred percent of the Sinhalese do not want two heads of State in Sri Lanka. The Tamils have grievances I concede and a large majority of the Sinhalese concede that fact.

I, for one, have never voted for the U.N.P. from 1947 to the referendum in 1982. I will not vote for the

UNP in the future too, even if they accept socialistic principles as did the late Hon. Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike.

To keep Sri Lanka undivided the proposal for devolution of power to the 9 provinces is a good basis for discussion at a conference. So I should like to convey the above message to the peoples of the North and East.

R. V. de S. Wijenayake

Meetiyaigoda,
Ambalangoda

APPRECIATION

B. Lawrence

*"Memories of the ones
We've loved
Still cast a glow
To grace our days
Wherever we may go"*

The late Mr. Benedict Lawrence received his secondary education at St. Patrick's College, Jaffna. He was a Mathematics teacher par excellence and he served his Alma Mater in this field for more than 25 years. He produced excellent results and many of his students in all walks of life are doing exceptionally well due to the moulding given to them by him.

Although Mathematics was his forte, he had a deep knowledge of Tamil literature, especially Thirukural and Ramayana.

He was a man with a mission—a mission to give of his best to his proteges.

He was a simple, God-fearing man with a smiling face and a gentleman to the core.

In his younger days he was an active member of the then Catholic Club and excelled himself in Tennis and Billiards.

A Requiem High Mass will be sung at the Church of Our Lady of Refuge, Jaffna on 29-11-86 at 6.00 a.m. for the repose of his soul.

—Francis St. Roche

Felicitations Volume Presented

The Aziz 75th Birthday Felicitations Volume was ceremonially presented at the Banquet Hall, Hotel Ranmuthu on Thursday (27th November) under the chairmanship of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. A.C.S. Hameed.

Mr. A. Aziz, leader of the Democratic Workers' Congress, is a veteran trade unionist in the plantation sector and a former Member of Parliament.

The Chairman of the Felicitations Volume was Mr. V.P. Ganesan.

Citizens Committee Appeals For Relief

Text of an appeal sent by the Kilinochchi Citizens Committee to Non Governmental Organisations.

We have been directed by the Citizens' Committee to bring to your notice that due to the indiscriminate shooting of the Sri Lankan Security Forces in this District, Sixty Four (64) innocent civilians died several were injured and rendered homeless.

Kilinochchi was declared as a separate district with effect from 4th February 1984, and consists of 235 square miles. Paddy cultivation is done in 52000 acres and cash crops are done in about 20,000 acres: This District is fortunate enough to have irrigable facilities from major tanks such as (1) Iranaimadu Tank (2) Akkarayankulam (3) Pudumurippu (4) Periyakulam (Kalmadu) (5) Kanagambikulam, and (6) Piramanthalarukulam. Cultivation could be done during the Maha and Yala season, and this had been entirely an agricultural Dist. and a feeding centre of adjoining Provinces. There was a Central Market in Kilinochchi where the traders from south and north exchanged their commodities. This District supplied Paddy, Chillies, Red Onions, Tobacco, Dried Fish and all other cash crops. This Cen-

tral Market was situated in close proximity to the Railway and Bus Stations.

After the ethnic violence, the holocaust of July 1983, several thousands of people of Indian origin who were living in the Central hill country of Sri Lanka migrated to this Dist. The population of this Dist. in 1981 was 91,000 but due to the influx of these refugees in 1983 and afterwards, from the central hill country districts, the population has increased to 131,000. These refugees had been settled down in several new schemes consisting of about 150 to 200 acres each, such as (1) Vivekananda nagar (2) Gandhi nagar (3) Thondaman nagar (4) Selva nagar (5) Siva nagar (6) Ananda nagar (7) Bharathipuram (8) Amathipuram (9) Krishnapuram (10) Umayalpuram etc. Ninety nine percent of these new settlers in these schemes were daily wage earners. When the central market was functioning and the cultivation was done freely, these daily wage earners had full time work with plenty of activities and they were happy.

Now consequent to the intrusion of the Security Forces into the Villages and due to their destructive activities and shooting of young and the old working in the Paddy Fields cultivations had been neglected. Due to these destructive activities the

economy is crippled and specially the daily wage earners who migrated from the hill country are undergoing untold hardships. It appears that even in the event of 'achieving peace' it would take about five years of more to recover from the economic instability here.

Hence, we forward herewith a Project proposal (A) to rehabilitate eighteen widows who have lost their bread-winners and enable them to generate income which would give them the desired economic Stability to consolidate themselves in their own residences when they get resettled. Proposal (B) is a Home Garden Project to be implemented in stages. Example (1) Vivekananda nagar consisting of 150 acres may be taken for rehabilitation in 3 stages of 50 acres each. In the first instance they may be supplied with coconut plants, plantain suckers, vegetable seeds and ground nuts to enable them to stand on their own feet and seek an independent and self-sustaining existence.

Taking into consideration the abnormal situation that prevails here, Redd Barna and Save the Children Fund (UK) had been generous in distributing Milk Food, Multimix, Water containers with puri tablets to the refugees in this Dist. Through us, and we have appealed to Redd Barna for further assistance of Seed Paddy and manure to the affected farmers.

NORAD from whom we have sought assistance has informed us that they have provided a grant to the Ministry of Rehabilitation and there is provision in that grant for providing relief to those widows who had lost their bread winners. Hence we are in communication with the Ministry of Rehabilitation. We have appealed to OXFAM, HUDEC and FORUT too for immediate relief to the victims of ethnic violence including Fishermen who are living around the lagoons!

ANGRY BUT...

(Continued from page 5)

after he came out of the Communist Party.

Admitting honestly that he has not succeeded in doing all that he desired in the field of Tamil literature, he minces no words in blaming the 'contemporary Tamil life', for the same. 'It is not receptive to any new serious ideas. It rejects any bold ventures in any field... literature, cinema stage, art. Our people are contented with cheap entertainment, superficial pleasure. Everything has been commercialised here. Compared to other linguistic groups, we are far behind. See Malayalam literature. Little magazines providing only, serious stuff have a circulation of one and a half lakhs or more. Can you say the same thing of Tamil Nadu? How many of standard magazines are able to withstand the onslaught of the commercial trash. When are masquerading as popular periodicals here?'

Though apparently frustrated he has not completely lost hopes. Some people, I should say, are able to

do something even under the present difficult circumstances. ie. mentioned in this connection two 'good works by S.V. Rajadorai' one on Existentialism and the other on alienation, both of which have been well-received.

Claiming that he wrote 'J.J.' only with a view to giving a shock treatment to this Tamil society in deed slumber, he expressed his resolve to make a dent in the next five years and ruthlessly expose the weaknesses of this decaying society.

What impresses one in this write well-versed in English, Sanskrit and Malayalam, besides Tamil is his modesty. A good conversationalist he is a voracious reader and a great lover of books, possessing a large number of volumes in his private library, where he spends not less than five hours every day amidst his business preoccupations. It is really surprising to know that this scholar has had practically no formal education—it was cut short when he was ten-years old by a long spell of illness lasting eight years. He learnt all by himself and he is truly a self-made man.

—S. VISWANATHAN
(Concluded)

MIRJE ON POLITICAL DETENUS INDICT THEM OR FREE THEM

The Movement for Inter Racial Justice & Equality (MIRJE), as well as all other organisations committed to the preservation of civil and democratic rights of all citizens and ethnic groups, has been continually drawing the attention of the State to the problem of political prisoners in our society.

We continue to believe that all those taken into custody by the State under the Prevention of Terrorism Act and under the Emergency Regulations are in fact political prisoners, in that they become the victims of the State in their pursuit of political aims. According to figures given by some organs of the State, the number of such persons is approximately 3000. Among them are persons who have languished in custody for periods of over 30 months, even though the maximum detention period under the Prevention of Terrorism Act is 18 months, a period that was deemed far too long when the Act was first promulgated.

We wish to draw attention to the plight of these persons and particularly to the case of Indika Gunawardena, the Secretary of MIRJE in 1985. It is exactly a

year since he was taken into custody under the Prevention of Terrorism Act. We are not aware of the specific nature of the grounds on which he has been taken into and kept in custody; however a year is surely sufficient time for the State security authorities to conduct and complete their investigations and decide whether their original suspicions were well founded. If so and if the material exists for a

Text of a MIRJE press release issued by its President, Charles Abeysekera, on 21st November.

prosecution he should be indicted before the Judiciary and given the chance of defending himself. If not he should be released forthwith. It is indeed the duty of the State to keep any person in custody on suspicion for as short a time as possible.

Today we reiterate this demand on behalf of Indika Gunawardena as well as of all other detainees who have been in custody for long periods: Bring them before the judiciary or release them.

Saturday Review

SRI LANKA

HINDU PRIEST FEIGNS DEATH TO ESCAPE DEATH

A young Hindu priest from Mulliyawalai (Mullaitivu District) managed to deceive the Security Forces and save his life by playing possum.

Now warded at the General Hospital, Jaffna, Kasinathar Krishnarajah (25) of Kanukerni East, Mulliyawalai told the SATURDAY REVIEW the story of his ordeal.

On 21st November round about 6 a.m., he said, a helicopter hovering over the area dropped handbills announcing that a curfew had been imposed from 6-30 a.m.

The handbills urged the people to leave their homes and go to schools and temples.

Krishnarajah then started walking towards the Mulliyawalai Vithiyanda. On the way he learnt that youths who had gathered at this school were being singled out and taken away by the Army.

Army Refuses To Hand Over Body

Mr. Sam Thambimuttu, Secretary of the Batticaloa Citizens' Committee, has stated that army personnel had refused to hand over the body of Mamangam Thangamuttu (55) allegedly shot by security forces on 24th November. He has further stated that Iruthayam Michael Collin (17), a mechanic, was taken by commandos in a search operation at Akkaraipattu and shot at Thirukovil. His body had been taken away by the commandos themselves.

Sandbags Vs. Shells

Intermittent shelling from the Jaffna Fort Camp for the last four days has affected shopkeepers in the bazaar: they have been forced to pile up sand bags in front of their shops to minimise the danger from shelling. Further, they now keep only the bare essentials in their shops. They have taken their valuables to safe places.

Then Krishnarajah and Gopalasingham, a friend of his, started walking towards Wattapalai in search of shelter. Two other boys followed them on bicycles.

While approaching Wattapalai junction, Krishnarajah received gunshots on his right arm and thigh and fell down. His companion Gopalasingham was shot in the chest and died on the spot. Army personnel also fired at the two boys on bicycles. One of them died on the spot.

The Army personnel then dragged Gopalasingham's corpse into the jungle. Krishnarajah was ordered to follow them and did so. The other cyclist who was injured was dragged to the spot where Krishnarajah was.

(Gopalasingham was a final year Science Student of the University of Jaffna.)

Army personnel gave both of them first aid and told them they would be taken to hospital by helicopter.

Krishnarajah and the other injured boy were lying on the ground when the Army prepared to move out round about 12-30 p.m.

Suddenly one of the soldiers came up to Krishnarajah and, placing his feet on the fallen man's chest, trampled it.

Then another soldier came near and opened fire at Krishnarajah and the injured boy. The latter died on the spot.

Krishnarajah saved his skin—though not his wristlet—by pretending to be dead. A soldier snatched Krishnarajah's wristlet, before the Army personnel left the scene.

Krishnarajah later managed to get on to the road. Some people who saw him took him to a Private Clinic where his wounds were dressed.

Indian High Commissioner Protests Military Onslaughts

Here's the text of a Reuter report from New Delhi, datelined 23rd November:

In Colombo, Indian High Commissioner Jyotindra Dixit protested over fresh military operations in Northern areas as the government

reported fighting between troops and guerillas in which three rebels were killed and several wounded.

Dixit told Reuters he met President Junius Jayewardene last night to convey New Delhi's concern over military activity in which civilians were affected.

A seven-hour curfew was re-imposed today in Northern Mullaitivu where at least 13 rebels had been killed during the past 3 days. Residents at Vavuniya said civilians had been killed in the operations.

Civilians in the rebel-controlled Northern city of Jaffna said 4 people, including a hospital worker, had been killed by mortar exchanges between rebels and troops positioned inside a military camp.

Dixit said India was concerned about the violence in Jaffna and other areas. "It is difficult to talk peace in such an atmosphere", he said.

The next day he came by bus to Jaffna and got himself admitted to the General Hospital.

Krishnarajah told the SATURDAY REVIEW that he learnt later that Army personnel had been lying in ambush in the jungles close to the Wattapalai junction.

Sauce For The Goose, Not The Gander

The Sri Lanka Government apparently thinks that what is sauce for the British goose is not sauce for the Eelam gander.

Sri Lanka was, according to the international media, the only third world country to vote for the United Kingdom resolution that the inhabitants of the Falklands (Malvinas, as the Argentinians call it) have the right to self-determination.

The UK resolution was a counter to the Argentina-sponsored resolution—passed recently in the UN General Assembly, with an overwhelming majority—asserting Argentina's sovereignty over the Malvinas.

This is Sri Lanka's second diplomatic gaffe involving Argentina.

On a previous occasion too, Sri Lanka had backed Britain and voted against Argentina in the UN General Assembly.

TIGERS OVERRUN MINI - CAMP

The mini-camp at Mullipothanai in the Trincomalee District was attacked and overrun by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) on the night of 24th November. The following commandos were reported killed:- K. M. Seneviratne Banda, P. C. 15148 - I. C. 520611061; S. V. Somaratne P. C. 19647; S. M. Wijeyadasa, P. C. 21462 - I. C. 620882313.

Sri Lanka's pro-British stance resulted in Argentina sponsoring a motion against Sri Lanka at the Annual Convention of the UN Human Rights Commission held in Geneva in November 1985.

A political observer wryly comments: Sri Lanka is all for the right to self-determination—provided the people involved (in this case, the descendants of British sheep-farmers) live thousands of miles away. Besides, can Argentina gift us another Victoria dam project?

His tart summing-up: for Sri Lanka, the right to self-determination doesn't, unlike charity, begin at home.

EROS Militants Die In Combat

The Eelam Revolutionary Organisations (EROS) lost two of its top militants in combat on 22nd November.

The Trincomalee District Commander Chandran (30) and the Mannar District Commander David (25) were killed in a direct confrontation with the Security Forces who had attempted to cordon off Mulliyawalai (Mullaitivu District).

The bodies were brought to Jaffna and cremated at Kondavil, with full military honours.