

# Saturday Review

## SRI LANKA

Vol 4 No. 4

13th April 1985

Biography of Sir P. Ramanathan by M. Vythilingam B. A. (London)

Vol. II — 1910 - 1930.

Gives insight into Tamil political problems in Sri Lanka - Constitutional Reforms - The Ceylon National Congress—Donoughmore Constitution, etc.

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# RAJIV -- JR MEETING

## IMMINENT

Though the Foreign Ministry continues to be tight-lipped about it, diplomatic sources in Colombo believe a meeting of the Indian Prime Minister, Mr. Rajiv Gandhi and President Jayewardene will take place in New Delhi very shortly.

The groundwork for the meeting was laid during the Indian Foreign Secretary, Mr. Romesh Bhandari's visit to Colombo last month.

According to Indian press reports, a full review of bi-lateral relations is expected to take place at the proposed summit. The dominant theme, however, is certain to be the ethnic problem in Sri Lanka.

"The Times of India", commenting on Mr. Bhandari's visit, stated that he "made it clear to the Sri Lankan leaders" that "Any measure to contain the Tamil terrorists now seem to be inexorably linked with the disciplining of the Sri Lankan armed forces deployed in the Tamil-dominated areas. Sri Lankan leaders, particularly Mr. Jayewardene, expressed their commitment to a negotiated settlement of the crisis, which is playing havoc with the island's economy.

"Mr. Jayewardene appreciated the initiative taken by Mr. Rajiv Gandhi to make a new beginning on the development of bilateral relations. Mr. Bhandari's extensive

talks on the strength of the brief from Mr. Rajiv Gandhi seem to have impressed Sri Lankan leaders that India is only too keen on helping them to find an early solution to the ethnic dispute, which undoubtedly, is having its fall-out on relations between the two countries'.

Meanwhile, in the Rajya Sabha, serious concern was expressed by all sections over the plight of Sri Lanka Tamils, with several members insisting on a time-bound solution

and even suggesting the resort to direct intervention.

A Congress member asked whether the Indian High Commissioner, Mr. S. J. Chatwal, was being moved out of Colombo at the request of the Sri Lanka Government. He wanted to know how the Sri Lanka press knew about Mr. Chatwal's transfer to Canada a week in advance. There was no comment from the Government.

## 'ATROCITIES MUST STOP'

"We have to see that the atrocities which are being committed by the Security Forces in Sri Lanka—not totally under Government control—must stop", the Indian Prime Minister, Mr. Rajiv Gandhi said in response to a question on the crisis facing the Tamils of the island and on how the Government of India viewed the urgent situation according to an interview given to the New Delhi fortnightly FRONT LINE.

The Prime Minister also emphasised the need to take into full account "the long-term interest of the Tamils in Sri Lanka" adding that "a situation must not come about where they will have a problem over a 15 year period or a 20 year period."

The part of the interview relating to Sri Lanka is as follows:

"Q: There is a lot of concern about the major crisis the Tamil people (of Sri Lanka) are facing and it appears to me that they are all looking towards India for a way out. And yet the attitude of the Sri Lanka Government despite what one read about the Bhandari visit—seems very intransigent on the basic, substantive issues. What has India's foreign policy achieved, or India's good offices achieved in this context? And what do you plan to do, since it is a very urgent problem?

"A: Well, we have been in touch with Sri Lanka. Not everything that they say or we talked to them

about can be told to you at this stage. But, really, we must first consider the long-term interest of the Tamils in Sri Lanka. A situation must not come about where they will have a problem over a 15 year period or a 20 year period. That must be kept in mind by everyone...At the same time, we have to see that the atrocities which are being committed by the security forces in Sri Lanka—not totally under Government control—must stop. We have to see that an atmosphere is created where the refugees can go back. We've got almost a lakh now, may be 90,000...It's not that we don't want them here, or want to push them out. This would be the guarantee that conditions are all right. And it would be a barometer of the feeling and mood and confidence. So we must work towards that."

In response to a question whether he would agree that a solution to the Sri Lanka crisis must come on the basis of a substantive measure of autonomy or federalism, whatever it was called, for the Tamil people within the framework of a united Sri Lanka, the Prime Minister observed, "that is really something the Tamils and the Sri Lankan Government should discuss" and "it's not something that we can interfere with to any great degree."

He added that the autonomy that "we can talk about is what we have in India. We cannot go beyond that and that sort of federal structure." But "if a solution could be found on a pattern that we have, we'll be glad to help in any way that we can."

The Only Government - Censored Newspaper in Sri Lanka



## Saturday Review

### SRI LANKA

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## WITH LOVE — FROM BOTSWANA

As we went to press, we received a handsome donation of Rs. 30,000 from "well-wishers in Botswana" to our Refugee Rehabilitation Fund.

We offer our grateful thanks to all those kind souls in Botswana who responded to our appeal for funds to help the Tamil people who have been displaced from their hearth and home for no fault of theirs—except that they happened to live in areas which the Sri Lanka Government deemed to be "prohibited" or security" zones.

The bulk of the money received so far has been diverted to the purchase of drugs and infant food for the refugees.

The following further donations were received during the week:

Mrs. B. Balakrishnar	100.00
Mr. B. Johnpulle	500.00
Old Girls' Association,	

Chundikuli	1,000.00
Mr. K. D. S. Anandham	300.00
Anonymous - Colombo 2	1,200.00
S. K. Gnamuttu	1,000.00

#### APPRECIATION

#### NAGALINGAM PANCHADCHARALINGAM

Nagalingam Panchadcharalingam is no more with us but it is hard to believe that he is not among the living.

Born on 20th July 1956 to a distinguished family devoted to unstinted social work, he had his early education at Velautham Maha Vidyalayam, Point Pedro.

He was calm and quiet and was always ready to serve the community. He was at the time of his tragic death, the Manager of the Firewood Depot managed by the Point Pedro MPCs Ltd, and had much to do with the Forest Department.

At times, when there was an acute shortage of firewood, he did not allow the Forest Department to be at peace. He persistently troubled them and ensured the supply of firewood to Point Pedro.

His life was suddenly and tragically terminated on 21st January. Not only his friends and relations but also the public of Point Pedro miss him badly. The gleaming smile on his face even when he was busily engaged in hard work and the readiness to attend to the public endeared him to quite many people.

A. Theva Rajau

## SALVO BY ARMY?

We publish without comment an English translation of a Pamphlet in Tamil, purported to be signed by "Army Personnel who know the Truth" and distributed in Jaffna.

"Terrorist activity" is the main cause for the problems confronting the people of Jaffna.

Targets for "terrorist" attacks are food stores and transport. Such attacks tend to aggravate the problem.

Schools' boycotts, disruption of examinations, robbery of shops, extortion of money from shop-owners and shooting them as "enemies of society" if they fail to pay are some of the acts. Will such acts solve the food shortages and other problems?

There are nearly 28 groups fighting in Jaffna. If such groups fight among themselves, could they bring about a socialist set-up or usher in a socialist state?

There will not be a repetition of July 1983. Although 27 policemen lost their lives in the attack on the Chavakachcheri Police Station and 29 service personnel were killed in the bomb blast at Murugandy, there were no reprisals in Colombo.

If your fight is genuine, it is necessary for the people of Jaffna to have a leader. The Government is unable to find a solution because of a lack of leadership among you. If terrorism continues, it will not only jeopardise Jaffna but future generations as well.

## EPRLF EXPLAINS

The "Appeal to the Sinhalese Brothers and Sisters" on the National Question, excerpts of which were published in the SATURDAY REVIEW of 30th March, was by the Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front.

We believe it should be read by all interested in finding a solution to the National Question.

Those interested can obtain copies from the SATURDAY REVIEW office on the payment of a nominal fee to cover photocopying charges.

People of Jaffna, this is your place. If you wish to have peace, help us to eradicate terrorism.

Are the people of Jaffna prepared to put up a "neutral man" to solve the present problem?

It is for the people of Jaffna to create a climate for peace and harmony instead of prolonging the "problem" and endangering posterity.

(This appeared in the Eelamurasu of 26th March.)



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# THE RAJIV PHENOMENON

## I - India's Search For A Monarch

To begin with, let me state the obvious which is that Rajiv Gandhi is relatively new to the Indian political scene and so are some of his principal aides, Arun Singh, his parliamentary secretary, and Arun Nehru, minister of state for energy. It is, therefore, difficult to assess him the way one could Indira Gandhi and anticipate his moves, as one could hers. There is a generation gap between the new ruler and commentators like me.

Even so a couple of points can be made about him. Rajiv Gandhi and those around him — I exclude the Union cabinet for this purpose for the present — represent the post-independence generation. Their preoccupations are different from those of their predecessors. They have not been influenced either by Mahatma Gandhi's religious outlook or by Jawaharlal Nehru's anti-imperialist and socialist commitments. They are modernisers who call themselves pragmatists. Two of them, Arun Nehru and Arun Singh, were top executives in two multinationals before they took to politics.

Among the first move they made was to begin to use a computer in the All India Congress Committee which practice they have now introduced in government. They mean business when they talk of new work ethics. They work pretty hard themselves. They are determined to improve the working of government which has been rather lackadaisical. The management of public sector undertakings should improve considerably under them. This itself will be a great gain for the Indian economy.

Basically, however, we have to assess the forces at work in my country, the margins of manoeuvre these are likely to permit Rajiv Gandhi and the challenges he is likely to face.

As you know, it is virtually impossible to define forces at play in any country not to speak of a land of the size, complexity, variety and antiquity of India. Any attempt to do so has of necessity to be highly selective and general. One has to, as it were, paint with a large brush and in bold strokes. This is a risky enterprise. The risk cannot, however, be avoided. We

cannot otherwise begin to probe the Rajiv phenomenon.

### POPULAR ENDORSEMENT

It is, of course a commonplace that Rajiv Gandhi is Prime Minister of India by virtue of inheritance as well as popular endorsement, that he represents continuity as well as change and that he can assure India both stability and rapid progress. But the commonplace raises the question of compatibility.

I need hardly recall that Indira Gandhi faced a great deal of criticism when, following her younger son, Sanjay Gandhi's death in a plane crash in June 1980, she decided to bring Rajiv Gandhi into politics and to groom him as her successor. Most educated Indians

old controversies have become irrelevant in view of Indira Gandhi's death. Rajiv Gandhi's, rather than the Congress party's, massive victory in the elections to the Lok Sabha (the lower house of Parliament), and his leadership style favouring, as it does, a consensual rather than a confrontationalist approach towards the Opposition and emphasising, as it does, the removal of corrupt practices in politics and administration which had come to disfigure both in Indira Gandhi's India.

### CELLULAR SOCIETY

There is some merit in both these propositions. But neither is as conclusive as it is supposed to be. While Indira Gandhi did not do what she could to restore the supposedly old instructional

by **GIRILAL JAIN**

Editor-in-Chief, The Times of India

were appalled by the move because they saw it an attempt to establish a dynasty. But the same educated Indians turned to him as if to a messiah in the wake of Indira Gandhi's brutal assassination on October 31 last year.

Rajiv Gandhi took over as Prime Minister the same evening. No one else could have filled the bill. Her senior cabinet colleagues, Pranab Mukherjee (then finance minister and since dropped from the Union cabinet) and P. V. Narasimha Rao, then home and now defence minister must have known that the popular reaction would be less than happy if either of them took over as acting Prime Minister. They did well to opt out quickly.

In the circumstances, it would be logical to acknowledge that Indira Gandhi knew the Indian people and the Indian situation better than her critics, whether friendly or hostile. But I have not seen many people draw this conclusion. Within India, the old line of argument continues and a new one has been added on top of it. The old line is that Indira Gandhi had so emasculated the Congress party that no one other than her son was available to take over when she was suddenly put out of action. And the new line is that

method of functioning in the Congress after the two splits in the party in 1969 and 1978, she could not have produced a vigorous party however hard she might have tried. Indian society, still cellular and segmentary in character and still lacking in a firm commitment to large impersonal principles so characteristic of European societies, would have frustrated such an attempt. Though this is an important point in any discussion of India, it is seldom taken into account.

The reasonably conclusive proof in support of my contention in respect of the Congress party under Indira Gandhi is that with the exception of cadre-based Communist parties and to an extent the Bharatiya Janata Party, originally based on the RSS cadres, no political organisation has functioned very differently from it. In Indira Gandhi's case the personal inclination conformed to the social reality. She had contempt for the party over which she presided. At the conscious level, as a member of the elitist Nehru clan, she perhaps felt superior to the "commoners" in the Congress. In reality she was being quintessentially Indian—indifferent to the need for institutions run along impersonal lines for impersonal social ends.

Indira Gandhi had in fact only two options. First, if she had been inhibited by the anti-dynastic democratic principle as her father, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, was to an extent, and if she had cared enough for the opinion of the intelligentsia, as he did, she would have either left the question of succession open or tried to promote someone other than her son, as he promoted Lal Bahadur Shastri. It is difficult to think of an acceptable candidate after the second split in the party in 1978, when Y.B. Chavan left her. But we shall let that "small" matter pass.

Secondly, if she felt, as in all probability she did, that in view of the proven incompetence of other parties to provide an alternative to the Congress and of the lack of an alternative to her in her own party, especially after the 1978 split, she owed it to the country to provide a successor, she could not but project first Sanjay Gandhi and then Rajiv Gandhi unless she were willing to trust Menaka Gandhi, Sanjay Gandhi's widow, which she was not.

### MESSIANIC PERSONALITY

I say "first Sanjay Gandhi" because he had pushed himself forward at the time of the Emergency and he was too forceful a personality, almost messianic, to be easily denied. After his death in 1980, it was immaterial whether or not the other son was interested in politics or whether or not she thought he had the necessary qualities of leadership. He had to be brought in and projected as her successor.

This is not a case of wisdom by hindsight. No worthwhile appreciation of the nature of Indian society and history could have produced a different conclusion. India must have a monarch — by nomination or descent — or face the risk of anarchy leaving the scene open for some forceful personality to emerge and occupy the throne. It is doubtful whether the editorial writer of *The Economist*, London, had this point in view when he described Indira Gandhi as Queen Victoria's successor after India's victory over Pakistan and the birth, with India's help, of Bangladesh as a sovereign nation. But the writer had hit the nail on the head. Indira Gandhi had emerged as queen empress of India.

(To be continued next issue)



# Suriya Flowers with A.I.

How did you first become involved with AI?

I first heard of AI in 1971 when there was a violent attempt to overthrow the government in my own country. It failed and the government took firm counter-action—but, as so often happens, it was sometimes too harsh. At one stage about 16,000 people were in custody.

I was approached by many families, often very poor, who had come from distant parts of the country with heartrending stories, such as: "My son was taken in the night by the police and has never been heard of since, can you find out what's happened to him?"... "My daughter has been arrested and we know that torture takes place in our police station; please help us."... "My brothers have been falsely accused by a neighbour who is angry with us and they are now being held in prison without charge or trial"....

Many organizations, both at home and abroad, looked at these problems in a very politically biased way, without proper concern for the tragic and human problems involved. AI—almost the sole exception—sent delegations to Sri Lanka to look into the human rights violations.

What exactly was it that impressed you about the organization?

AI's complete lack of concern about the political stand either of the government or of the group which had tried to overthrow it. It was interested only in discovering the facts, and then trying to stop the arbitrary killings, and the torture in police stations; and in ensuring that all people being held under suspicion were not only treated humanely but were given fair trials.

AI's concern for complete accuracy in finding out what was happening, combined with the impartiality and 'dedication' with which it acted on its findings, made me realize that this organization was something very special indeed.

Do you feel you are on the IEC as a representative of Sri Lanka or of the Asian region?

No: as you know, there is no country or regional representation on the IEC. We are elected by the worldwide membership in our individual capacities. I just happen to be an Asian.

We have sometimes heard it argued that the movement reflects Western liberal values with limited or no relevance to countries which have different cultural heritages and whose most pressing problems are economic development and the eradication of hunger and poverty. As an Asian, can you talk about AI's relevance to third-world countries?

I totally disagree that one has to choose between human rights and development. This presents a completely false choice. The two are not in conflict—on the contrary they are interdependent. Development is not something imposed on people from above: it is a process in which the people must participate—and how can they participate if they are not free

Suriya Wickremasinghe is the Chairperson of AI's governing body, the International Executive Committee (IEC). She was elected to her third term as Chairperson in November 1984. A practising lawyer, member of the Bar Council of Sri Lanka since 1977 and co-author of its special report on the implementation of the United Nations Declaration against Torture, she has been a member of the board of AI Sri Lanka since 1977. She was elected to the IEC in 1978.

to speak their minds...if they are arrested and thrown into jail when they point out that government officials are wasteful and corrupt or even just inefficient?

How can you expect the ready and willing cooperation of the population in developing the economy if they are not allowed to participate freely in the decision as to whether public funds—their money—would best be spent on this or that type of project...if they are not allowed to have a say in the priorities of government spending and government policies?

So you don't accept the talk of alien Western values being foisted on a different culture?

No, I certainly don't. This is the sort of talk a government may indulge in—but really the free exchange of ideas and theories is crucial to the development of human thought and the progress of human society anywhere. The test would be to ask prisoners being beaten up in police cells whether they think AI is trying to foist alien values on their countries when it asks their tormentors to stop torturing them.

Apart from AI's concern about the accuracy of its information and its political impartiality, what other features have attracted you?

There are several other features that combine to make AI a unique organization.

● One is the fact that it has chosen to keep its work within a limited scope. It doesn't deal with all possible violations of human rights but concentrates instead on political imprisonment, torture and executions.

Is this because it feels the rights violated in such cases are more important than others?

Certainly not. This is an extremely important issue and I'd like to

Her special assignments as an IEC member have included a mission to Viet Nam, talks with central and regional authorities in Ghana, and membership development visits to India, Ivory Coast, Nigeria, Ghana and Senegal. In November she played an important part at AI's Regional Development Conference in Tanzania (see November 1984 Newsletter). She was interviewed for the Newsletter before her return to Sri Lanka earlier this year.

make AI's position quite clear. There have been repeated calls for it to broaden its sphere of action: to work for other civil and political liberties such as the right to vote in fair and free elections, the right to leave or return to one's own country, the right to be free from censorship...There have also been pressures on AI to move into the fields of economic and social rights. "What about the poor, the dispossessed, the exploited?" AI is asked. "Don't you care about them—or the unemployed, the homeless, the hungry...?"

Of course AI is sympathetic: it is a movement that cares about people. Clearly it recognizes that other human rights violations are no less grave than the ones it has chosen to concentrate on.

But it insists on sticking to its limited mandate for one all-important practical reason: to be effective in what it does undertake.

In other words, you feel that it would be impossible for any single organization to cope with all the human rights violations that take place?

Exactly. How could it possibly hope to acquire the kinds and depth of expertise needed for effective action when it is confronted by continuing and changing demands on such a wide front?

Economic and social rights pose a further problem. Their pursuit often involves complex questions of economic and social theory which are outside the competence of a broad non-political movement such as AI.

As individuals we have our various—and often conflicting—views on such matters, which we are free to pursue through other organizations. But AI must be preserved as a common meeting ground where people from the broadest possible spectrum of opinions and political leanings can come together on the basis of a common commitment to certain very basic freedoms and liberties.

So AI limits the scope of its activities...

...to get results in the field in which it is competent. To be effective. To succeed as far as possible in helping the people it sets out to help. Other human rights problems must be left to other humanitarian organizations better equipped to deal with them. As I said earlier, there is nothing to prevent AI members from working in such organizations as well; in fact many do so.

★ ★ ★

● Another important feature of AI's work is its focus on the individual prisoner—the individual man or woman in the cell, held there for no reason other than his or her conscientiously held belief, or racial origins. That's why AI was founded—and that's why it continues to exist: concern for individuals—for people, not statistics.

You mean it's not enough to provide general information about political imprisonment and related human rights violations?

AI is after the names of individual prisoners and specific details about each particular case. When was he or she arrested? Were there witnesses? Where is the prisoner being held? Is his or her life in danger? Are there any charges? Who can give us further information? This is the starting point of AI's work.



You have explained that AI works within a relatively limited scope in order to be more effective. Even so, many people are surprised at the impact it has on governments of widely differing ideologies. How do you explain this impact?

The very basis and cornerstone of AI's work is the involvement of thousands of men and women throughout the world in the work of the movement.

If governments today are prepared to receive and to listen to AI's delegations, this is often precisely because they have already been subjected for months or even years to relentless pressure from groups of AI members who, day in and day out, take pains to familiarize themselves with the facts about their prisoners and the countries to which they belong, write letters to ministers and other officials on behalf of these prisoners collect signatures on petitions, lobby visiting state dignitaries, pay visits to local ambassadors and ask them polite but informed questions.

It is mainly to the steadfast work of this international army of individual men and women interceding on behalf of other individual men and women that AI owes its impact.

In 1971 you were involved in the human rights situation in your own country, and you are a founder member of a leading Sri Lanka civil liberties organization. Have you continued to concern yourself with the human rights problems of your own country?

Naturally no person concerned about human rights in the rest of the world can remain unconcerned about problems at home. However, AI has a very strict and necessary rule that no member in the capacity of a member of AI works on human rights problems in his or her own country. Therefore in my AI capacity I take no action on any question relating to Sri Lanka.

**What is the reason for this rule?**

The rule operates at every level of the organization—in its local sections, among the employed staff at the International Secretariat, and in the IEC. It is designed to protect the impartiality and political independence of the movement.

The collection and evaluation of information about the human rights situation in any part of the world, and the decision on what action to take on this information, is done centrally, and must be free from local political or other pressures—which is why we exclude nationals from the countries con-

cerned from taking part in such decisions.

**What about other threats to impartiality and independence—for instance, funding?**

A human rights body such as AI, which monitors the way in which the governments of the world treat their own citizens, must be politically independent. Political independence and financial independence are inextricably bound together. Thus AI has strict rules about finances to ensure that the organization is not compromised by the funds it accepts, and that its freedom of action is not in any way affected.

AI does not accept funds from governments to finance its budget. Only exceptionally and after special procedures do we accept large donations from any one source. And we do not accept "earmarked" funds—no donor can say for what particular purpose his or her money can be used. Thus the giving of money cannot be used to determine our policies.

This fact gives the movement that extra moral dimension which is so important for AI when it, a voluntary non-governmental organization, has to come face to face with governments which ill-treat their own citizens, and try to influence them to respect human rights.

### EASTER VIGIL

The Easter Vigil in Jaffna began with a bang in Jaffna. About 11.15 p.m. the calm of Good Friday was broken by bursts of shells and rattle of machine gun fire. Intermittent bursts of shells and bullets continued for about 3 hours and many residents of town area were in a state of alarm. It is alleged that there was an abortive attempt to attack Gurunagar Army Camp. Two in a family, a father aged 27 and son 19 years, were reportedly injured by a shell which landed near their house.

### 1000 TONS OF FLOUR

Informed sources say that 1000 tons of flour is due to arrive this week at K.K.S. Port by ship. The flour will be transported by lorries from the port. Steps are being taken to provide the necessary fuel for the lorries at the Army Camp.

### BODY FOUND

The Ministry of State said that the body of Sub-inspector Weeratunga, who had been abducted by Tamil militants during an ambush, was found near Ayiththiamalai, Batticaloa. Fourteen lives were reported lost in this ambush.

# MONKEY BUSINESS

The Editor  
SATURDAY REVIEW

According to a communication issued by the Presidential Secretariat, the President has promised elections in the North and the East and has even invited the Tamil militants to contest parliamentary seats.

This strategy then adds on to the long list of tinkering with our democratic structures and electoral processes.

In 1978, we switched on to the Presidential system of Government adopted the proportional representation method of elections, convinced the national electorate on their virtues, only to abandon them in practice.

## LETTERS

Thus, the general elections-Presidential elections sequence was reversed and the Presidential elections were held long before the due date, the general elections substituted with a hastily imposed and questionable Referendum and now, having forgotten proportional representation, vacancies in Parliament are filled through divine inspiration by nominating persons in some cases and by-elections in others.

Can this monkeying with the whole democratic electoral process withstand the growing scepticism of the increasing number of voters of the younger generation? And are the majority Sinhalese regarded as political imbeciles?

If elections are held only in the North and the East it would mean that the minority Tamils are being given the opportunity of exercising the right to elect fresh representatives, while the majority Sinhalese have been denied this right since 1977.

And further, are not the majority Sinhalese saddled with representatives who let down the people who voted for them by renouncing the people's power vested in them by becoming parliamentary "hostages".

Therefore, holding elections only in the North and the East would be an unpardonable act of discrimination against the majority Sinhalese. And does it mean that the majority Sinhalese, too, must produce Tiger brand militants in

order to qualify for their right to vote at an election that would give them fresh representatives.

The whole exercise of holding elections in the North and the East in order to bring about a dialogue between the Tamil and Sinhalese parliamentarians is doomed for failure because what is required is for the freshly elected Tamil representatives to meet their Sinhalese counterparts, who would have the power of the Sinhala people vested in them.

Genuine dialogue cannot take place with spent forces who are on "parliamentary extensions" and are allegedly tainted with acts of violence towards the Tamils, corruption and terrorism.

Let saner counsel prevail and a clean, just and fair election, like those of 1965 and 1977, be held or we may be militarily eliminating Tamil terrorism to substitute it with Sinhala terrorism, or breed both!

Winged Bean

Colombo.

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## Waiting for Jewels

The Editor  
SATURDAY REVIEW

I am one of the many people who have pawned their jewels with the People's Bank, Main Street, Jaffna, and have already paid both capital and interest.

The Regional Manager of the Bank was approached on this subject and he assured that the jewellery was safe at the Head Office where these were taken after the spate of bank robberies and that steps were being taken to bring them back to Jaffna for release and distribution. We, however, very much regret that it is now over a year and we are still kept waiting.

Most of the people are in very urgent need of the jewels but the Bank's inaction have put them out completely. We trust that at least now the Bank will be appreciative of our needs and take suitable action that the jewellery is returned to the lawful owners expeditiously.

Many of the customers have already paid capital and interest on these jewels. Will capital and interest be paid to the customers who have been waiting for the last one year to claim?

M. S. Peter

Jaffna.



# WHO ARE SRI LANKA'S 1st CLASS CITIZENS?

(Continued from last Issue)

In a heterogeneous country, like Sri Lanka, with perennial ethnic conflicts, and ruled by representative institutions like Parliament, the political power of the minority depends on the strength of the representation that minority enjoys in the Legislature.

A perusal of the Soulbury Commission's Report which later became the basis for the Ceylon Constitution Order-in-Council of 1946 and the subsequent Ceylon Independence Act of 1947, shows the importance the Commissioners placed on the strength of the minority representation in the Legislature. The Commissioners adopted the scheme of representation adumbrated in the Minister's memorandum and made it a part of their recommendation to White Hall only when they were satisfied, through make-belief statistics furnished, that the minorities would win 37 of the 95 elected seats and with the six nominated members their representation in a House of 101 members will be 43 and thereby they will have a reasonable share of power to protect themselves against discriminatory legislation. The expectations of the Commissioners never materialised and only 27 minority members were elected to the First Parliament in 1947. Yet, without any further investigation Independence was granted in 1948.

## DUDLEY'S ADMISSION

The Sinhalese leaders in whom all legislative power were vested after the grant of independence proceeded without delay to use that power to reduce Tamil representation in Parliament. Citizenship Laws and amendments to election Laws were enacted in such a manner as to prevent the return of Suppiah and Rajalingams on the Kandyan Tamil votes to Parliament to which they were elected in 1947. At the time of negotiation for Independence it was never contemplated that half the Tamil population in Sri Lanka would be disenfranchised once Independence was won.

There can be no doubt that it was to prevent Kandyan areas being represented by Tamils that these legislative measures were enacted. One of the authors of these measures, the late Mr. Dudley Senanayake, admitted this in Parliament in 1961, under a different context.

In 1961, Federal Party M.P.s were taken into custody and a "state of emergency" was declared. The then Leader of the Opposition Mr. Dudley Senanayake, speaking in Parliament on the Emergency in general, and on the 3rd demand of the Federal Party relating to citizenship in particular, said:

"The Appointed Member (Mr. S. Thondaman) is very interested in that. That is the 3rd demand. The Minister of Commerce, Trade Food and Shipping (Mr. T. B. Illangaratne) who interrupted me, will not be sitting here if that happened. He was not sitting here; most of the Kandyan areas were represented by Tamils, except Kan-

dy. If that happened, a number of these seats will not be represented by the people I see before me. Is that a concession you are prepared to make. It may be that there is a solution. But surely the solution is not this.— (Hansard Vol. 42, Col. 4038). By this, Senanayake implied that even if some solution is found to the citizenship question the solution should not be such as to enable the return of Suppiah and Rajalingams to Parliament as in 1947.

Citizenship laws and election law amendments were made use of to eliminate from Parliament Tamil members representing Kandyan areas. State-aided colonisation schemes were adopted to reduce Tamil and Muslim representation to Parliament from their traditional areas. Sinhalese colonisation in the Eastern Province created the Amparai and Seruwila constituencies and, thereby, deprived the minorities of two seats in the House.

There are many instances in democratic countries where the minorities have been given weightage in representation to the legislature but it is only in the "Five-Star democracy" of Sri Lanka that since 1952, the majority community by its own manipulations, has been enjoying undue weightage in representation. For instance in the 1970 Parliament Sinhalese people who constituted a little over 70 per cent of the population arrogated to it-

self 81.5 per cent representation in Parliament.

When the present Government's proposal to inundate and submerge traditional Tamil areas with a Sinhalese population is fully implemented in the course of the next few years there will arise more Amparais and Seruwilas in many parts of these areas and in the not very distant future the heterogeneous country of Sri Lanka will have a homogeneous legislature ruling every section of the population.

## SANSONI PROBE

I will conclude this reply to Mr. Gunasekera with my comments on his references to the Sansoni Commission Report.

Mr. Gunasekera appears to have done only a selective reading of the Report. For reasons best known to the Government, it did not give wide publicity to the Report or

## A REPLY TO S. L GUNASEKERA

By V. Dharmalingam, Ex. M. P.

make it the subject matter of any debate. Though the Sansoni Commission inquiry was mooted at the request of Mr. A. Amirthalingam in Parliament, yet the Report, was neither presented nor debated in Parliament nor acted upon by the Government. The public have been getting only selected doses of it from parliamentarians like Mr. Cyril Mathews and Sinhala nationalists like Mr. Gunasekera.

If Mr. Gunasekera reads the full report he will bow his head in shame, if killing, burning, destruction and rape of innocent people by his brethren can bring him any shame. Sansoni had much more to say about the massacre of innocent Tamils by the "Teddy Boys" (the term the President used in similar circumstances in 1981) than he had to say of the violence of the "separatists". In the field of violence the "separatists" are not a patch on the "Teddy Boys". It is not my intention to open healing wounds by quoting chapter and verse from the Report to elucidate Mr. Gunasekera on the deeds of the "Teddy Boys" in August/September 1977.

Why were desperate attempts made to make the T.U.L.F., who were the complainants, an accused in the Commission's investigation? Why did the conscience of the Sinhalese nationalists that remained mute when the 1977 holocaust took place, get so agitated during the investigations of that holocaust? The reason is not far to seek.

Killing burning and destruction of property of innocent Tamils and even of political opponents on a massive scale is not unfamiliar to Sri Lanka, where, as stated by the Inspector General of Police in his administration report, a crime was committed every six minutes in 1977. The 1958 communal riots and the 1977 election and post election violence in the South where there were, according to the 1977 administration report of the I.G.P., 1374 cases of arson, compared to the 1141 cases in the communal riots that followed a month later, did not agitate the minds of the Sinhalese nationalists because there was no inquiry to find out the people responsible for these riots. But when the 1977 communal violence took place, the then Prime Minister, Mr. J. R. Jayewardene, with his then goal of achieving a "Dharmista Society" did not want to keep quiet. He appointed a one-man Commission in the person of Mr. M. C. Sansoni to inquire and report to him the causes and persons behind the riots. The inquiry began on 8th February 1978.

The Commission had sat for six months in Jaffna, Anuradhapura and Kandy, 600 witnesses (mostly victims and eye-witnesses of the holocaust) had testified to their harrowing experiences and evidence placing the responsibility for the massacre on the people on whom it should be placed was hardening, when a number of Buddhist and Sinhalese organisations, under the style of various Peramunas, made their first appearance before the Commission on 7th August 1978, represented by several counsel.

The national pride of these Peramunas was wounded not by the slaughter of innocent Tamils by Sinhala mobs but by the fact that the world had become aware through the Commission's inquiry of the ugly and brutal nature of the treatment that was meted out to the Tamils in every part of Sri Lanka, including their traditional areas.

## TULF BLAMED

It mattered little to them what the real truth was. With ceaseless effort and with statements they would have on investigation found to be false, they tried to make the Tamil people, and in particular, the T.U.L.F. responsible for everything that happened in August-September 1977, because the T.U.L.F. stood for a separate state and the Tamil people, in their eyes, had committed the unpardonable crime of accepting the T.U.L.F. as their parliamentary representatives.

(Continued next week)



# The Appalling Silence of Good People

Mr. J.K. Retnanandam, Editor of the newly-founded Bulletin of the Regional Council of Y.M.C.A.'s North, states in its first issue:

Pursuant to a decision of the Regional Council of YMCAs North - this publication comes out to convey to sister YMCAs located in areas outside the current scenes of violent strife, and through them to the people around, a fuller picture than is available to them presently, of the goings-on in this turbulent province.

This decision was the outcome of a growing feeling among members and the general public, too, that their efforts at mobilising aid for even rehabilitation and other humanitarian needs of innocent non-combatant victims have not received that degree of response, nor evoked that enthusiasm, as should have and would have, had those concerned been in possession of the full facts relating to the ethnic issue as a whole—leave aside the question of moves to find a just solution.

It is a sad commentary on the Colombo news media on which vast numbers depend for their information, that they have generally shown a tendency to unbalanced reporting—overplaying or underplaying certain incidents and even blacking out events, presenting news that will be pleasing to the Sinhalese people and also justify the actions of the Government. This has led to the magnifying of the prejudices and biases already so created by warped political propaganda and even through school text-books. Is it then strange that anything relating to Tamil grievances is allergic to many Sinhalese people? This is the biggest hurdle to bridge building and for restoration of the peace and harmony that prevailed prior to independence.

Our quest is as to how best the contrary stand-points of the two communities at loggerheads can be reconciled. The Sinhala contention is that what irks the Tamils is that they are not having it so good as during colonial times, while the Tamils bemoan the fact that they are discriminated against and have been reduced as second class citizens in the very land of their birth.

As such, in keeping with the Biblical saying "As a man thinketh so is he" and the Buddhist and

Hindu teaching that "thought impels action", this bulletin seeks to remould the present thinking in order to effect a change of attitudes. As Christian organisations dedicated to upliftment of mankind regardless of caste, creed, language or race distinctions, let us be animated to dynamic action to banish violence and reduce tensions and fears by applying healing balm on the injured by the exhorting words of our Lord and Master "Blessed are the peace-makers for they shall see God". Let us pressurise the National Council of YMCAs and, through it, the World YMCAs and other humanitarian institutions to exert their influence so as to help the warring parties to reach a just settlement.

It needs no extraordinary intelligence to know that forcing terms by military might on a people in a weak position, as contemplated by the Government, will not be productive of worthwhile results—for the most it would be a temporary cessation of open hostilities, only to break out in more virulent forms later. Only if we have not learnt this lesson from the past experience of failure to enforce Sinhala on the Tamils will we try to force anything on a people. The Tamils realising the benefits that would flow from a knowledge of their brothers' language and as a measure for fostering national unity had on their own begun to teach Sinhala in Tamil Schools in the Northern Province, but this healthy practice was jettisoned resentfully when the Sinhala Only Bill became law in 1956 from which point of time our race relations began sliding down to the pathetic position now prevailing.

It is only conciliatory methods and inductive offers that can stem the tide of offensive launched by the frustrated youth—disillusioned, dismayed and embittered by the evasive and dilatory tactics adopted by successive Governments, when Parliamentary and extra parliamentary pressures, satyagraha and other non-violent demonstrations harvested only the bitter reward of more discriminations and disabilities interspersed by thuggery, riots and mob violence of the vilest sort.

But amidst all this unfortunate background, the suffering Tamils gratefully remember the spontaneous expression of goodness and goodwill from the average Sinhalese population untainted by the calculating and cunning selfish schemes of politicians. It is that sort of attitude that can help build bridges of understanding and not proposals like the one to settle armed Sinhala families in traditional Tamil areas or the denial of the existence of Tamil grievances.

If it is thought that mixing populations is the answer to our problems, this is not the time to try it out when the flames of hatred are the highest ever. Being also a measure against the current of general world trends to carve out autonomous States for groups living together tied by cultural, language and religious affinities, prospects of the present proposal proving successful are remote.

On the contrary, the Government would be winning many Tamil friends and it would be also an earnest of Government's good intentions to come to a just settlement, if it would implement at least those clauses of the All Party Conference proposals regarding discrimination and disabilities. Discarding the proposals in-toto would be like throwing the baby with the bath water, out of a sense of pique.

The continuation of development works would be another way to win hearts and to dispel the notion of Government's abdication of authority.

The flagrant discrimination displayed in the treatment of victims of violence—Sinhala and Tamils—is another factor that can in no way help towards reconciliation, or to yield to emotional outbursts and thoughtless actions which have brought us to this present impasse.

It would not be irrelevant to point out at this stage the advantages of third party mediation, which the Government scorns as a reflection on its ability to untangle the tangled issues which, however, is a fact as evidenced by this problem having remained unsolved for three decades. Third party media-

tion is a way of getting over the weakness humanity is heir to of being unable to see one's own faults and failings and particularly so when one is involved and under emotional stress—a drawback spotlighted by Jesus in the words "You see the mote in your brother's eye but not the beam in your own eye".

In exceptional cases, where one may see one's faults there comes another inhibition—not to admit a mistake but to try to justify it by hook or crook.

So, we Sinhalese and Tamils are handicapped by all these disqualifications to be able to settle our scores. Furthermore, why shrink from this promising method having also the precedent of the Buddha coming in person from India to settle factional disputes in ancient Taprobane? If India is unacceptable, a party that both disputants agree on can surely be found.

This is not a matter for dilly-dallying any further. Every day's delay in arriving at a just solution costs priceless lives and valuable properties. Let not what is still a temporary alienation become a permanent estrangement by wrong approaches and the fear of the good ones of powers and principalities. Let us be moved to action by the stirring words of Martin Luther King—

"The greatest tragedy of this period of social transition could be not the strident clamour of the bad people but the appalling silence of good people."

## MOVEMENT FOR SOCIAL CHANGES

Mr. M. Kurumoorthy of No.96, Post-office Road, Thirunelvely South, Jaffna is taking steps to form an organisation to be called the Social Changes Movement with the motto "Simple Living and High Thinking".

Among its objectives are to promote the wearing of uniform dress and jewels by ladies, abolition of the dowry system and the abolition of the right of private property.



# Saturday Review

## SRI LANKA

### ● FLASH

A daring guerilla attack on the Jaffna Police Station on Wednesday night (10th April) left the DIG's office and part of the Police Station in shambles.

The attack began round about 9.30 on Wednesday night and lasted till about 3 a.m. the next day. The explosion of powerful bombs

and the rattle of machine-gun fire around the Police Station and the Gurunagar Army Camp—about half a mile away—were heard several miles away from Jaffna Town.

At the time of going to press, details of casualties and the extent of the damage were not known.

# THE BIG LET-DOWN BY MAGGIE

At the time of going to press there was mounting opposition in Sri Lanka to the two-day State visit of the British Prime Minister Mrs. Margaret Thatcher starting on 12th April. But there was no indication at all that she, or the Sri Lanka Government, would be deterred by the protests from various quarters, extending from the opposition parties (except Mrs. Bandaranaike's Sri Lanka Freedom Party) to organisations in the North.

## PM OUT IN THE COLD !

When the Prime Minister of one country visits another country, protocol demands that the Prime Minister of the host country should be there to receive him or her.

But what has happened in the case of the British Prime Minister's visit to Sri Lanka this weekend?

Our Prime Minister, Mr. Ranasinha Premadasa is away in Japan.

Mrs. Margaret Thatcher was received at the Katunayake Airport on the night of 11th April by the Minister of Mahaweli Development, Mr. Gamini Dissanayake.

And Sri Lanka's biggest development project, the Victoria power and irrigation project was officially commissioned yesterday in the absence of Mr. Premadasa.

Today, in Parliament, Mr. Montague Jayewardene, Minister of Public Administration, will deputise for the Leader of the House (Mr. Premadasa) and make the welcome address to Mrs. Thatcher.

Two other Ministers, Mr. Gamini Dissanayake and the Minister of National Security, Mr. Lalith Athulathmudali reportedly sought to fill the bill—which would have strengthened their respective claims in the Presidential Stakes.

But the wily old President has outfoxed them all! Again!

On this issue, Forward, in its issue of 1st April, commented editorially:

"What is so special in our Government's eyes about Britain's visiting Premier Margaret ('Iron Lady') Thatcher that she is to be honoured in a way no other state visitor has been?

"A special meeting of Parliament will be summoned to be addressed by her. National traditions regarding the ushering in of the Sinhala and Tamil New Year are to be brushed aside. And Mrs. Thatcher will address a specially summoned meeting of Parliament from within the chamber—an honour which was not extended so far to more distinguished visitors like the late Indira Gandhi or the late Marshal Tito, not to mention even Britain's official head of state, Queen Elizabeth II.

"Mrs. Thatcher's authority in her country is in sharp decline. Her brutal crushing of the heroic miners' strike has antagonised working people and democrats everywhere. Recent revelations of how she deliberately ordered the sinking of an Argentine warship returning home in order to sabotage peace efforts, start the shameful colonial war in the Malvinas (Falkland Islands), and thereby improve the electoral prospects of herself and her party are truly shocking. No less condemnable are her enthusiastic support for Reagan's war efforts and the racist measures she has imposed on the entry and stay in Britain of coloured members of the Commonwealth. No wonder Oxford University refused her an honorary doctorate.

"Apparently, there is no bowing and scraping that is too low for our Government where Mrs. Thatcher is concerned. The entire opening ceremony of the Victoria Dam on 12th April on which much money, time and energy had been spent, was postponed because she could not make it some months ago. Merely because of the Victoria loan (as our President admitted) we were one of the five countries that voted against the UN condemnation of Britain's gunboat colonial war in Argentina—a resolution on which even the U.S.A. declined.

"Mrs. Thatcher is a J.R. Jayewardene in skirts. But is political affinity to be a reason for national servility? We join the trade unions and all other progressive forces in saying 'No'. And we think it is equally disgraceful for Mr. Anura Bandaranaike Leader of the Opposition, and the SLFP M.Ps to co-operate in the Government's nadagama."

In Northern Sri Lanka, leading citizens, professionals, lawyers and organisations like citizens' committees, religious leaders, Rotary clubs and trade unions have submitted a memorandum to Mrs. Thatcher urging her to postpone her visit.

The following are excerpts from the memorandum, which has been signed by over 5,000 persons:

"We have not even an iota of doubt that the two millions of Tamils in Sri Lanka will view your visit as an act of condoning the atrocities of a democratically elected Government, following the path of genocide of minorities, under the pretext of containing terrorism. How could any human being, leave alone the head of a most civilised nation, take part in a ceremony in a country where part of the country is literally in flames, for whatever the reason.

"We are all against Terrorism. But no one in the civilized world will like to be a 'second class citizen'. It is the duty of everyone, independent of one's race or religion, to fight against injustice and support the cause of the oppressed by accepted methods.

"At this juncture, when the existence of our own race is at stake, the leader of the most civilised and highly-respected democratic country to visit and participate in a ceremony is like the mother attending the birthday party of her eldest step-son, while the body of her youngest step-son just killed by the brother (on a property dispute which probably could have been settled by the step-father long ago) lies in the same house..."

The Jaffna Student Members' Committee has also urged the British Prime Minister to postpone her visit.

In its memorandum, it has stated:

"A person of your standing, instead of using your good offices to lessen our misery, paying a state visit to Sri Lanka may amount to commending the actions of the Sri Lankan Government."

## 'REPEAL SLAVE LAWS'

The Point Pedro Citizens' Committee has requested President Jayewardene to repeal all regulations promulgated under the Emergency in November/December 1984 which curb the civil liberties of the citizens of the North "because the promised duration of two to three months of these regulations has already lapsed and because these have caused the people untold hardship".

The Committee has pointed out that the permit system to possess and use a bicycle or a motor vehicle, operate mini-buses and enter or leave security zones "has become meaningless in actual practice and only served to cause harassment".

The Committee has urged that the train service be extended to Jaffna so that the transport of people, food, fuel and mail would be eased.

It has also protested against the continuation of the curfew from 7 p.m. to 4 a.m. "Curfew, if so advised, may be confined to the hours 10 p.m. to 4 a.m., because it is also affecting religious observances. The festival season in many temples has already commenced but people are unable to hold the festivals."

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