

# Saturday Review

## SRI LANKA

Vol. 4 No. 5

20th April 1985

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

Vol. II — 1910 - 1930.

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# BUILDINGS RACKET IN UNIVERSITY?

It is a crying shame that the University of Jaffna authorities have returned to the University Grants Commission a sum of Rs. 21 million of the monies allocated up to 1984 for the development of the institution.

The total allocation was Rs. 76.3 million. Only Rs. 55.1 million was utilised for the various development projects. (See Table).

The matter was taken up for discussion at a recent meeting of the Project Monitoring Committee of the University, presided over by Mr. V. N. Sivaraajah, the Registrar. (The Vice-Chancellor, Prof. S. Vithiananthan, was not present at the meeting).

The University of Jaffna was opened hastily in 1974 by Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike as Prime Minister.

The buildings of a central school were taken over, its students transferred to other schools, the boundary walls were white-washed, a sign board was put up and, hey presto, a new University was born.

Never, perhaps, in academic history was a University born so fast—physically!

But, after 11 years of existence the University of Jaffna is no more than a cattle-shed, compared to the Ruhuna University which in just three years has blossomed into a fully-fledged institution.

It is fashionable to blame the Government for the deficiencies in the University. But there is another side to the story, as highlighted by the fact that full use had not been made of the monies allocated to it.

The construction of new buildings for the various faculties has been painfully slow, affecting not only the teaching programmes but also the recognition of the University by outside bodies.

The Dean of the Faculty of Medicine, Prof. C. Sivagnanasunderam, said at the Project Monitoring Committee meeting that he was unable to bring anybody and show the Medical Faculty building because of its present state.

The construction of buildings for the Science Faculty (which was housed in the Jaffna College premises at Vaddukkoddai until 1978), the Medical Faculty and the Library was started as early as 1979 and should have been completed in 1981 but not even 50 percent of the work has been completed in the Chemistry Block and Library buildings up to date.

The Mathematics Dept. building in the Faculty of Science was reported to have been completed on 15th February this year. But the Dean is not prepared to take over the building, it is learnt, because of the many defects that have not been rectified.

Work on the Chemistry Block for which Rs. 16.8 million has been allocated is going on at snail's pace with just 15 labourers at the site!

Progress on the Medical Faculty building has been even slower.

It is learnt that the Medical Degree conferred by the University of Jaffna is not recognised by international bodies for the simple reason that the Medical Faculty has no suitable buildings!

As the contractors had not been able to do enough work for the money given to the University, at the end of each year there had been money lying unused. Attention to this matter has been drawn by the University Grants Commission because this creates problems in making further allocations for construction work.

The contractors have a ready excuse for the delays. They say the University has not paid for the work they had already done.

(Continued on page 8. See also page 5)

### EXPENDITURE STATEMENT OF BUILDING PROJECTS UNIVERSITY OF JAFFNA AS AT 31.12.1984

PROJECTS	ALLOCATION	CONTRACTORS				ARCHITECT	BLDS DEPT, SUPERVISION	C.E.B.	CLERK OF WORKS	OTHERS	TOTAL
		Bill & Interim Payment	Advance 20% Recoverable.	Material	Total						
Medical Faculty	31,000,000	18,584,737	2,038,756	3,237,340	23,860,833	1,243,091	706,619	66,496	77,779	1,558,817	25,954,818
Chemistry.	16,850,000	8,085,885	1,106,858	2,084,575	11,277,318	550,538	342,335	20,400	30,672	217,063	12,428,326
Mathematics	6,175,000	3,307,000	409,217	857,005	4,573,222	206,371	198,582	10,230	26,672	54,317	5,069,394
Library	13,900,000	7,815,353	539,665	306,181	8,661,202	520,000	392,115	56,265	19,000	6,714	9,655,296
Arts Block including Auditorium	8,400,000	1,277,800	—	99,397	1,377,197	841,500	236,575	19,458	7,000	433,810	2,074,040
	76,325,000										55,181,874

ALLOCATION — 76,325,000  
EXPENDITURE — 55,181,874  
UNEXPENDED RS. 21,143,126

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## Saturday Review

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GAMINI NAVARATNE

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Part — I May 1986

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## MORE TALES OF WOE

On a hot April day, I with my two companions went to Illavalai by mini-bus. We got down at Illavalai convent and walked more than a mile down the dusty gravel path to a small sea-side fishing hamlet called Mareesankoodal. While I walked I was able to feel the tragedies that took place in this village in the hot air that blew the dry dust over us. The stillness of the village reminded me of death. Innocent naked children were seen walking past us not realising the miserable situation that the whole village had been engulfed in.

There were 72 families, comprising 342 people who had been reduced to starvation level as a result of the operation of the "Prohibited Zone" Emergency Regulations. Forty of them were children under five years. It was these people that we went to meet.

cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment towards civilians are not heard of elsewhere in the world.

One of the elderly men opened up his heart and told me of the Tamil United Liberation Front and its antics in politics. Leaders had taken them up the garden path to utter failure while they themselves enjoyed the lavish hospitality of the Indian Government. These leaders had not raised a finger to ease the burden of the masses but issued lavish statements over the press and the Indian Radio.

These people desire to live in dignity and not depend on others. They do not want to be beggars expecting charity. I was impressed by the stand they took and am proud of them.

by **Nirmala Balaratnam**

About fifty women and elderly men gathered round us to relate the saddest tales of their lives. Up to then nobody had been "to see them and listen and give them a ray of hope to live. The vacant look in the eyes of the mothers, which indicated that they had lost all hope, still haunts my mind for I could not offer them a solution.

The women told me that they were living a peaceful and contented life in this village and they had a good harvest from the sea, most of which was dispatched to Colombo for sale. They used high-powered boats to go fishing in the deep sea. The daily paid fishermen had regular jobs and the women also earned an income by providing ancillary services.

The Navy had behaved in a very brutal way towards these innocent civilians. They had destroyed almost all the fishing nets and also damaged most of the boats. The cheapest net is about Rs.450/- and the price ranges up to Rs.1,000. The poor women told me that even if they were allowed to fish they had no means of replacing the destroyed nets. Who would even dream of giving loans to these people?

Even before the 'Prohibited Zone' was declared, Navymen arrest these fishermen on the high seas, beat them up and get them to cut the nets so that these drifted away. Thereafter the Navymen used to make them eat raw fish and chew the bone raw. Such

Some of the women have decided to make papadams to earn a living. The Mothers' Front of Jaffna has promised to help them out. There may be various brands of papadams in the market but surely none will be precious than Mareesankoodal papadam.

## UNIONIST'S HOUSE ATTACKED

A leading Tamil trade unionist's residence at Wellawatte was attacked by a group of people in the presence of the landlord on 28th March.

This house was "an affected house" during the July 1983 disturbances and, as a result, the trade unionist, Mr. A. S. S. Moorthy (Sambandhan) incurred a loss of more than a lakh of rupees, according to an entry he made at the Wellawatte Police Station.

After the 1983 disturbances, the landlord, who capitalised on the situation, tried to take over the house by putting up a parapet wall against the entrance by breaking a side entrance.

Mr. Moorthy complained to the REPIA and got back the house, where he and his wife resided until Mr. Moorthy got a heart attack and came to Jaffna for medical treatment.

When they were away in Jaffna, the house was looted. Besides his belongings, Mr. Moorthy lost some trade union documents, and goods of a friend which were in his custody. Again, the loss totals more than a lakh of rupees.

## NEWS BRIEFS

### Abducted Policeman

A policeman kidnapped by the 'militants' in the attack on the Jaffna Police Station on 10th April was released at the residence of the Government Agent, Jaffna on the 14th. The released commando had earlier been interviewed over the clandestine 'Tiger Radio'.

### Pot - Shots

The Northern Co-ordinating Officer, Brigadier Wanasinghe, is reported to have given an assurance that security forces stationed at the Jaffna Fort Ramparts will be restrained from taking 'pot-shots' at passers-by along the roads adjoining the ramparts. Earlier security forces had reportedly killed or injured passers-by on these adjoining roads.

### Demo Succeeds

Two typewriters and a TV set which were among the articles taken away from Vaitheeswara Vidyalaya, Vannarponnai, some time back by unidentified youths, were returned on the 10th night. Earlier, the Vidyalaya students had demonstrated against this robbery.

### More Air Patrols

Air patrolling of the Northern sea-stretch has been intensified with helicopters and planes flying low over the sea both morning and evening.

(Continued on page 4)

### JAFFNA COLLEGE TECHNICAL INSTITUTE VADDUKODDAI

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Director, Jaffna College Technical Institute, Vaddukodai.

The Sri Lanka-Israeli tie-up, believed to be an expedient shift in foreign policy for short-term gains in fighting the so-called Tamil terrorism, has in the long run boomeranged on all the Sri Lankan passport holders aspiring for job placements in all the Middle Eastern countries as well as the Muslim states like Malaysia, Brunei and Indonesia.

Even those Sri Lankans already employed in these Muslim countries find it hard to have their employment visas extended as their services are overlooked in preference to nationals from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, The Philippines, South Korea and Thailand. This is made all the more easy since the contracting firms hail from these countries and recruit their own nationals perhaps at lower rates of pay.

It is no exaggeration to say that the Sri Lankans are looked upon as "pariahs" in all the Muslim countries where they have gone for employment and are held in contempt for the colossal blunder of their Government in forging security ties with the notorious Mossad of the Israelis.

This security tie-up apparently served to condition our security services to meet the challenge of the Tamil militants but have we ever paused to reflect and ponder over how this ill-advised move has hurt the Sri Lankans and their economy in the enormous decline of the foreign exchange remittances from Sri Lankans already employed or the ever increasing many who have lost potential employment in Muslim countries due to the thoughtless cussedness of our Government?

The writer, who was in Singapore for the past three months, is aware of many a Singapore-based Sri Lankan who applied for jobs in response to newspaper advertisements and who had the bitter pill of being told by the prospective employers in Muslim countries that Sri Lankan passport holders were not considered for engagement. There is no mistaking the polite but obvious decline with thanks message that comes posthaste to the anxious applicant for a job.

The Arabs' intelligence network has to be up-to-date to be worth its salt and to ensure that the Sri Lankan Government's pledge to send away the Mossad and sever its security ties with Israel by the end of last year is a hard fact and not a hoax and are therefore vigilant and keen to hit us where it hurts us most.

The Finance Minister's warning of the downswing in the economy

# THE ISRAELI CONNECTION BOOMERANGS

is a pointer to the resultant mix up and amateurish bungling of finance and foreign affairs.

## DOLLAR BONANZA

The Israelis do check in and out of Colombo, as a matter of course as a bird in one of the many proliferous travel agencies whispered to the writer in Colombo last week.

There is a happy dollar bonanza that comes India's way as a fall-out of the Sinhala-Tamil tribal war the United National Party militarists are waging on their home ground with all their National Defence Fund-raising mimics while losing precious American dollars, perhaps millions of them, which Sri Lankan expatriates have perforce to remit to sustain their kith and kin who have been chased away from their hearths and homes in the North and the East by our National Army and who have now taken shelter in India as refugees cum tourists.

and in recent years the Israeli public image has nose-dived alarmingly: admiration and sympathy giving way to hatred and revulsion at the militarist approach to dealing with unarmed Palestinian civilians in Israel and Lebanon.

Did not Israel earn the wrath of the world when its soldiers, along with the Phalangist Militia, in the grip of racial hatred and spiteful vengeance, stormed into Lebanon and massacred about 3,000 Palestinians including women and children in refugee camps in September 1982? Even patients in hospitals were not spared. Perhaps, Begin's Coalition Government of religious parties thought it was poetic justice to do to the Palestinians what Hitler had done to the Jews.

Anyway it was a very costly enterprise both in men and money as the people of Israel realised

By V. A. Philips

Do our financiers ever bother to assess the flight of capital outward-bound in this process? Perhaps our militarist politicoes are more concerned in fortifying their slippery base in the villages by deceiving the poor villagers to part with their pittance of five or ten rupees to the N.D. Fund by their emotion charged rhetorics as the only way to save the Sri Lankan (Sinhala) Nation. It won't be a bad idea for the SATURDAY REVIEW to start a Fund to save the Sri Lankan Nation from the UNP War Mongers!

To come back to the land of David and Goliath, there was a time when the whole world admired the courage and pluck of the people of Israel who have had to put up a stiff resistance for their very survival ever since the State of Israel was created soon after the Second World War against the encircling feudal Arab states who were determined to wipe it away from the face of the earth. But thank God, Israel has come to stay. Who can forget their daring rescue of the besieged hijacked passengers from Idi Amin's clutches at Entebbe Airport? The film version of this high drama in the air drew crowded houses of admirers the world over.

## MILITARIST APPROACH

This euphoria the Israelis once enjoyed has vanished into thin air

soon after and happily the Government of Israel has now decided to quit Lebanon unwilling to play the part of policeman.

Isn't it a cruel irony of the times that governments led or propped up by religious parties foment war and bloodshed ending in untold human suffering to thousands of people in most of the trouble spots in today's world in this so-called enlightened age? Not that the communist or leftist power brokers are any better. Aren't we slipping back to the Dark Ages with the sophisticated weapons raining death and destruction to satisfy the vanity of the rulers?

## NOTORIOUS RECORD

The UNP Government, has a similar notorious record of state terrorism, intimidation and thuggery ever since it came to power with a landslide victory in 1977. Almost every year since then has been a year of violence visited on those who did not see eye to eye with the Government and its stooges. For a change, the carrot and stick approach was often tried to trick their opponents into submission.

The climax was reached in July 1983 when, for almost a week, the Government abdicated its authority to the hoodlums with or without uniforms and robes. Either the

powers-that-be lost their grip and were groping in the dark or secretly believed that the Tamils had to be taught a lesson or two for all their big talk.

Was it not the nation's wealth and capital that went up in smoke? Does it not shame us to go out and beg for capital in the West and make a bonfire of it right at our doorstep? Come to think of it, it seems to be a clear case of cutting off one's nose to spite one's face.

Up went in smoke Sri Lanka's public image, too, in spite of the frantic efforts of the Government media to halt the slide.

The Sri Lankan Army received world-wide notoriety as the "most indisciplined Army" in the world!

The Amnesty International reports, too, did not mince words at the conduct of the Government law-enforcing agencies in their handling of the prisoners of conscience and other non-violent detainees who were subjected to novel, inhuman methods of torture: merciless beating with metal pipes; chaining to a standing position for hours on end; being hung upside down; smearing of chillie powder on sensitive parts of the body; burning with cigarette butts; pin-pricks on finger tips; electrocution, etc. These are perhaps the hallmarks of our ancient culture, civilisation and heritage.

## LONG-LOST FRIENDS

It is no wonder that the Governments of Sri Lanka and Israel teamed up like long-lost friends though to the world they seemed to be strange bedfellows. On the contrary, they shared many things in common: an identity in outlook of extreme puritanism and ritualism and a downright militarist approach to problems.

The Israelis are well-known for establishing Jewish settlements amidst Palestinians in occupied territories which they over-ran in the wars with their Arab neighbours making historical claims to such territories from biblical times.

Their counterparts in Sri Lanka, too, make similar mythical claims to regions inhabited by Tamil-speaking people for ages and hatch schemes of state colonisation not for their developmental value but with the sole motive of changing the demographic pattern of the population and to have the whip-hand over the minorities, all the time proclaiming to the world that Sri Lanka is a five-star democracy and nothing less!

Both Governments seem to be experts in devising new settlements of people amidst hostile surroundings for political purposes.

# SINHALESE WITH TAMIL SURNAMES!

The Editor  
SATURDAY REVIEW

I read with interest in the SATURDAY REVIEW of 6th April the reply Mr. V. Dharmalingam ex-M.P., gave Mr. S.L. Gunasekera.

Permit me to add a few further facts on the question of "traditional homelands of the Tamils".

When and by whom was the temple to Lord Murugan built at Kataragama? Lord Murugan is worshipped and is more popular among the Dravidians than among the Aryans.

Muslims, whether they live in Jaffna or Matara, in Puttalam or

Batticaloa, or in the Up-country, speak Tamil as their mother-tongue.

Married Muslim and Christian Tamil women in other parts of the globe do not tie the thali. Only in Sri Lanka and in Tamilnadu, Muslim and Christian Tamil women tie the thali. The Arabs who chose to settle down in Ceylon then, apparently married Tamil women and it goes without saying that Tamils were living in all parts of Sri Lanka at that time.

Sinhalese in the south-western coastal areas still have Tamil surnames, viz. Sinhakutty, Sembukutty, etc. Most customs and

names of the Sinhalese and Tamils are the same even to-day.

Tamils in the south-western coastal areas became Sinhalese during the British period. Tamils along the Negombo and Kochchikade areas have become Sinhalese under our very eyes, i.e. within the last 40 years, and the converts call themselves not Sinhalese but Aryan Sinhalese! Most of the Tamil schools became Sinhala schools.

During the British rule; Ceylon for purposes of local administration was divided linguistically into three areas—Area A—Up-country; Area B—Low-country (language of administration in these areas was Sinhalese) Area C—Tamil areas. Area C

the traditional homeland of the Tamils.

Today, to know whether a person is a Sinhalese or Tamil, one has to ask that person his or her name.

X. Y. Z.

## PLEA TO UGC

The Editor  
SATURDAY REVIEW

The University Grants Commission advertised on 10th March 1985 that those who qualify for admission should obtain admission forms on or before 10th April 1985 and return perfected forms to reach them on or before 12th April 1985.

It now takes anything between 10 to 15 days, for a letter to reach Jaffna from Colombo and vice versa.

In this condition, will the U.G.C. be magnanimous enough to accept applications bearing the date stamp of 12th April, in keeping with the accepted norm in such cases, in that applications bearing postal date stamp of the last date are admissible?

A. Thevarajan

Puloly West.

## IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT

*The eerie howl of that deranged dog  
with the cacophonous chorus of barks  
pierces the silence of the cold night  
reverberate through my sleepy skull.  
I try to snuggle into my pillow:  
aren't the barks yet two streets away?  
But the defying aggressive cry  
infects the dogs of our neighbours  
and now - now our Freddie too barks  
desperate, urgent, alarmed  
challenging those intruding aliens  
trespassing the privacy of our house.  
But a violent thud stifles Freddie  
then the creaking of our gate  
and the crunching of advancing boots  
invade the recesses of my mind.*

*In the silence of the December sky  
my heart takes up the frenzied bark  
breaking the walls of my chest  
and racing, racing frantically  
not knowing where or why.  
This sudden sinister silence torments:  
Have they entered my room  
Are bayonets pointed at my skull?  
Are fingers poised against triggers?  
And all my words flaunting Death  
words mocking military might  
words mounting revolutionary heights  
crumble under their marauding boots  
my body lies sprawled on the bed  
nervously clinging to the straw pillow  
to be disposed according to the dictates  
of the hands that hold State guns.*

*But from the depths of that darkness  
at the brink of imminent death  
a lightning sweeps through my mind  
freeing a gushing stream of visions:  
the whistling birds, the swaying trees,  
the dancing rivers, the soothing breeze  
and above all - Man  
lovable even in his frailty  
admirable even in his misery  
beautiful even in his agony -  
Dear Lord! I want to see another dawn  
another dewy fresh dawn.....!*

— SURESH

## LETTERS

covered Puttalam, Mannar, Jaffna, Mullaitivu, Trincomalee, Batticaloa, Amparai and Pottuvil. The language of Administration in these local bodies was Tamil.

The above facts prove beyond all reasonable doubt that not only Area C but entire Ceylon was from early times inhabited by Tamils and the entire country, therefore, is

## NEWS BRIEFS

(Continued from page 2)

Recently a low-flying helicopter spotted a gathering at a funeral-house in the KKS electorate and alerted security personnel who promptly arrived and surrounded the house. They left once they were satisfied it was a funeral-house and nothing hanky-panky was going on.

### Branch Library

Jaffna Municipal Commissioner, Mr. C. V. K. Sivagnanam, opened a branch of the Jaffna Public Library at Nallur on 17th April. There was no speechifying at the opening ceremony.

### Gross Violations

According to a report in the London Observer, two British Members of Parliament who visited Sri Lanka in February have stated that there have been gross violations of human rights in Sri Lanka. They are reported to have further stated that there has been indiscipline in the armed forces and that persons taken into custody had been 'roughly manhandled'.

### Political solution

Dr. Neelan, Thiruchelvam who met the British Prime Minister,

Mrs. Margaret Thatcher, on behalf of the TULF is reported to have told her that terrorism in Sri Lanka should be viewed in the entire context. He had also drawn her attention to the excesses committed by sections of the armed forces. She is reported to have stated that she was in favour of a political solution.

### Membership Swells

The membership of the Jaffna Traders' Association has swelled. Efforts are being made to enrol members from all parts of the Jaffna District.

## HELD UP

A large volume of letters and articles received during the SATURDAY REVIEW'S unintended interregnum still awaits attention.

Many of these are likely to have lost their topicality by now; of the others, we will try to use as many as possible, depending on the availability of space.

We hope readers will bear with us in the difficult circumstances under which the SATURDAY REVIEW has to function.

# JAFFNA UNIVERSITY NOT UP TO INTERNATIONAL NORMS

I should like to be given the opportunity to communicate through your columns to those at Jaffna University, both students and members of the distinguished faculty, the opportunities provided by the United States in higher education and to encourage them to make full use of such provisions. For in the long run, the educated Tamil can serve his people best by undergoing the best training he can get abroad and returning home.

First I should say something about the system. The chief difference between British-type degrees and American degrees is that the quality of the former is controlled while that of the latter is not, in keeping with the free-enterprise philosophy of this country. What this means practically is that the holder of a British degree may, at face value, be presumed to have reached a certain standard, whereas an American graduate cannot be judged at face value. And it is because of this, that the degree issuing university and the transcript assume such importance in this system. The university matters because, unlike in Britain, there is a wide variation in standards between universities. And the transcript is extremely important because to earn a degree here, one has to earn a certain number of credits, a credit being a class-room hour per week for a term; but the work involved for the credit is often not specified, except for vague minimum requirements in terms of subject area. Thus, for example if three credits in calculus are required for a degree, entering students are given an assessment exam, on the basis of which, one student may be asked to take an introductory Calculus I, while a more advanced student will take Calculus two just for the sake of learning and earn the same three credits or take Calculus I with which he is familiar and earn a high grade point average. Schools, including big name ones, hungry for fees or anxious to have well connected students such as film stars, foreign officials and children of magnates, often take sub-quality students and let them graduate under this scheme.

This does not mean, however, that the degree is bad. I have known master's level students who can afford the time, taking a course a term, waiting for professors who give take-home exams and thereby earning high grade point averages, while others who

for financial reasons have to graduate fast, taking an overload and letting their grades suffer. There are students who take a course in ballet for an M. S. in engineering and at the same time, undergraduates who take advanced M.S. courses just for the sake of learning.

The American system therefore, by letting the student determine the kind of graduate he is to be, presents a system that is beatable and yet allows a student, if he so chooses, to obtain a far better training than possible under the British system in which, for example it is inconceivable for an undergraduate to follow Master's level courses. A graduate therefore is judged on the basis of his college transcript listing his courses semester by semester. And since even this does not tell the whole story (about which exams were "take-home", which grades were obtained at a second sitting, etc.), the system of hiring and firing in employment is a necessary complement to the certification process; for an employer will often find that he has hired a graduate whose performance does not match his credentials and consequently it is common for professional employees to leave a company within a week of joining.

by **Dr. S. R. H. Hoole**  
Drexel University, Pennsylvania

I should caution therefore, that in a society like ours where firing is difficult, U.S. graduates, unfortunately including even those who are very good, will for the foreseeable future face the problem of reluctant employers. This need not however concern graduates of Jaffna University who have already obtained a socially recognized degree and come to the U.S. for a higher degree.

Now about admission. Worthwhile master's degrees are usually available only from Ph.D. awarding institutions, although there are some small colleges which provide very good first degrees only. But it is the big universities which offer financial assistance at graduate level. Decisions on admission and assistance, are based on the GRE score, the transcript and recommendations.

The GRE, the Graduate Record Exam, is essentially an aptitude test conducted at the American

Centre in Colombo. Although in theory, preparation and the number of times one takes the exam are of no account, in practice both do matter. Good preparation guides are available and every time one sits the exam, one gets to know the art of answering better and has the option to allow the old score to stand or be replaced by the new one. Usually science students with a score of 85 or above (i.e. those who rank within the top 15% who sat the exam) should be able to get offers of assistance if they try hard enough, applying to about 15 to 20 universities of diverse standings. Since each application costs about \$15-20 this may sound expensive on a Ceylonese salary, but is really a worthy investment. For doing so may make a difference between a big university and a small one or between a stipend of \$500 a month at one university and \$650 a month at another. The Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) is a must for U.S. visa purposes and is also available at the American Centre.

The college transcript and letters of reference, the other two factors on which admission is based, are equally critical. And in these two

the University of Jaffna falls short in not adhering to international norms in grading and in writing reference letters and I strongly feel that something ought to be done about it.

In grading, standardization should be done in the proper sense of the word. Customarily, in the U.K. approximately a good 25% of the students will obtain a grade of A, 45% a B and 25% a C, with a few negligible D's and E's. This of course results through standardizing, using a normal distribution to fit the performance. In the U.S., the percentage of A's is much higher even as much as 75% in some graduate courses. Therefore these grades reflect relative standing in a class, rather than any arbitrary absolute standard. The same holds for classes and typically, at the University of London a good 20-25% of the degrees will have a first class mark. When this is international practice, whom does it profit to fail at times as many

as 50% of a class as happens at Jaffna? And when most student there have A Level grades far superior to those in any other University in Ceylon as well as England, what is the reason for this?

One may produce excuses, but the fact remains that the system has somehow failed. For otherwise how can one explain the fact that nearly all students with low grades from that system, fare exceedingly well when they come out to the U.S. and the U.K.? One student from Ceylon, who had done a special degree and was ranked highly out of a large class, was not awarded a class. When applying for admission here, the admissions office denied admission leave alone aid, because they had worked out an equivalent grade point average of 2.2 out of 4 (which is insufficient for graduation here), on the basis of the score-sheet from Ceylon! Not one of the letters of reference written on behalf of that student mentioned the rank of that student or that, that year there were no first classes earned by that batch or that special students are taken from the cream of a batch. Finally the student, by virtue of being already present in this country, took courses for a term without proper admission and by coming out very high in class got enrolled with full financial aid and is a very successful doctoral candidate now! I am tempted to conclude that our universities take the cre'me de cre'me of Tamil society and break them. The temptation becomes all the more when I read letters of reference coming from Jaffna. Here again, an international norm is that when a lecturer has something nice to say about a student, he agrees to stand as reference and refuses otherwise. Typical letters of reference I have received from other international universities read very positively. When a student is first in class, his reference letter would say that he was first. When the student is not the first in class, but in a subject, the letter would say that and that only. When a student is neither first in the batch nor in a subject, I have come across letters striving to say something nice-in such and such an exam, this student was the only one innovative enough to answer such and such a question and so on. On the other hand, I have read letters from Ceylon which read so and so's "progress was satisfactory...and conduct

(Continued on page 7)

## THE RAJIV PHENOMENON — 2

## PROBLEMS OF EFFECTIVE MONARCHY

This proposition flies in the face of certain well-known facts. India is a functioning democracy; it holds free and fair elections to legislatures at the Centre and in the constituent units; it possesses an independent judiciary and a free press, sections of which refused to be terrorised into silence during the Emergency; the people will not be denied their democratic rights; indeed popular pressure, though silently exercised, proved to be so strong in 1976 that within 18 months of the supersession of the fundamental rights enshrined in the Constitution, Indira Gandhi felt obliged to order a poll in order to feel legitimate in her own eyes. Above all, Indian society is becoming democratised as never before.

But Indian democracy has survived precisely because it has been able to throw up a monarch — first in Nehru and then in Indira Gandhi — who could hold in check the age-old Indian tendency to fragment: the Janata which was elected to power in 1977 providing the best known example of this tendency. God alone knows what would have happened if these masterful politicians were not available to look after India.

AN ELECTED monarch is, of course, a contradiction in terms and India has not found it easy to live with this contradiction. But once we Indians have elected a monarch, we cannot afford to overthrow him or her unless we are prepared for a period of confusion. And we are not likely to do so unless he or she has committed what we regard as a terrible crime as Indira Gandhi did when she allowed her younger son to launch a programme of forcible sterilisation during the Emergency.

The problem does not begin and end with the monarch. In India, a party does not elect its leader, the leader "elects" his or her party; indeed, only an individual so sure of himself or herself and so assured of popular support of whatever size can lead a party, unless it deviates from the norm and is based on ideologically motivated cadres as the two communist parties are. And even the stronger of the two, the CPI (M) may lose power in West Bengal if and when Jyoti Basu is not available to lead it.

Mahatma Gandhi clearly "elected" the Indian National Congress; it had little in common with what passed under the same name ear-

lier. Nehru did not need to engage in a similar exercise; he was not so inclined either; contrary to the popular impression, he was a conservative quite content to live off his inheritance—the Congress Party as shaped by the Mahatma and the administrative machinery as established by the British. Indira Gandhi "elected" another Congress in 1978; it, too, had nothing in common with the party as it functioned before.

To underscore the point, permit me to refer to Charan Singh, by far the most important peasant leader North India has produced. He also feels free to do what he likes with his party; it is difficult to count the number of times he has changed the name and the executive committee of his "organisation". Most of those who have revolted against his arbitrary ways have had to come back to him. And even the hitherto indecisive Chandra Shekhar, leader of the rump Janata Party brought into

adoption of the democratic process. Let us take up the first aspect.

From the very beginning of their civilisation the Indian people have yearned for not only a just king, they have yearned for an Indian version of Plato's philosopher-king—the *yogi-king*. Mahatma Gandhi gave expression to one aspect of this yearning when he spoke of *Ramrajya* as the objective of the freedom movement. I say one aspect because there is another aspect to the Indian psyche which emphasises what you westerners would call cold amoral realism worthy of a Machiavellian prince. Indeed, Kautilya's *Arthashastra* is about two thousand years older than Machiavelli's *The Prince*. And Kautilya is not wholly an exception in the history of India's political thought, as is widely believed. The *Mahabharat*, one of India's two great epics, contains a chapter which discusses statecraft in similar terms of realpolitik.

Thus, they never forgave Indira Gandhi for promoting allegedly corrupt men. In the Nehru-Patel contest, the people, too, sided with the former because he conformed better to their concept of a prince on a white charger delivering justice to the poor and the depressed. In Indira Gandhi's case, too, a division did not come into play so long as she was seen to be battling men allegedly practising realpolitik, the organisational bosses in the Congress, from 1969-71. It came into play when she had finally vanquished them in 1971-72 with landslide victories in the elections to Parliament and state legislatures. She did not turn out to be a righteous enough ruler for them. The presence of men such as L. N. Mishra in her set-up was enough to clinch the issue for them. In 1975, she committed the final crime of superseding the fundamental rights—the elite's new *dharma* — which could never be forgiven. But the poor and the wretched stuck to her as their only hope, except briefly in 1977.

Rajiv Gandhi is trying to project himself as a righteous ruler and the circumstances appear to favour him inasmuch as he, unlike his mother but like his grandfather Nehru, is assured of easy ascendancy in the Congress and the country at the very start of his career as Prime Minister. This is a genuine advantage if it lasts, that is to say, if he is able to produce results. But what kind of results?

The answer is not as obvious as might appear on the surface. Broadly speaking, Rajiv Gandhi has set himself two objectives—clean politics and administration, and modernisation of the economy. He can certainly achieve significant results in both fields, but mainly at the top. While that will certainly be a worthwhile gain, one must not ignore the limitations inherent in the Indian situation. Corruption cannot be rooted out of the lower levels of the administration, whatever the government does; it has never been, not even under the alien British; too vigorous an effort in that direction can degenerate into a witch-hunt and destroy whatever effectiveness the administration possesses. This is not speculation; such a thing happened during the second half of the Emergency when the administration was paralysed by fear and the police came to rule the roost.

by **Girilal Jain,**  
Editor-in-Chief, The Times of India.

existence by his mentor, Jayaprakash Narayan, appears to have placed himself in a similar position. And you must know how desperately the AIADMK in Tamil Nadu has clung to M. G. Ramachandran and the Telugu Desam in Andhra Pradesh to N. T. Rama Rao despite their serious ailments. MGR was lying in a New York hospital with a serious kidney problem when the AIADMK won the elections last December in his name.

## TWO-FACETED PROBLEM

To clinch the issue — that in India, the old monarchical tradition remains well-entrenched — I might add that despite his genuine commitment to democracy, indeed to social democracy, Nehru too behaved like a monarch. He was not first among equals in the cabinet. He was the boss and he left no one in doubt that this was so. His ministers seldom dared differ with him in public, though some of them were highly critical of his basic policies of secularism and non-alignment in private. It will be fair to say that Rajiv Gandhi too has been cast in the role of an elected monarch. But that confronts him with a two-faceted problem — one facet resulting from tradition and the other from the

The *yogi-king* is evidently not a viable concept. A *yogi* cannot be interested in being a king. In our times, Sri Aurobindo gave up politics when he took to *yoga* in the first decade of the century, though he was the most eloquent exponent of the concept of Indian nationalism. Mahatma Gandhi was not prepared to accept office; he resigned even as an ordinary member of the Indian National Congress. Indeed, it was not possible to combine deep moral righteousness with the practice of realpolitik. But Indians expect their ruler to do so. Incidentally, this is true in the religious field as well. The *yogi* who has renounced the world is expected to produce miracles for those who turn to him for help.

## GENUINE ADVANTAGE

Here we run into another difficulty. For we are dealing with not only one people, with one broadly consistent approach, but several. For the purpose of this discussion, we are concerned with the two—the westernised elite and the others.

The westernised elite tends to emphasise the moral aspect of public life at the cost of realpolitik. Thus a majority of them preferred Nehru to Sardar Patel.

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

(Continued from last Issue)

To achieve their objectives, the Peramuna lawyers vilified the Tamils by placing before the Commission matters the veracity of which they never cared to check and by using language without any respect for ordinary human feelings. The Peramunas received ample support from the Police, who had been repeatedly censured by Mr. Sansoni in his report for turning a blind eye to violence and from the State Counsel Mr. Tennakoon.

The communal psychology of the Peramunas demanded that the Tamils should be made the culprits of their own misfortune. To achieve this they, with the help of their allies, the Police made many vile allegations against the Tamil people and their parliamentary representatives, the T.U.L.F.

To explain the burning of a large number of Tamil shops in the Jaffna Market and in the bus stand areas, the then Superintendent of Police of Jaffna gave the fantastic explanation that Tamils suffer from pyromania, a maniacal desire to set things on fire.

## A REPLY TO S. L. GUNASEKERA

By V. Dharmalingam, Ex. M. P.

Confessions relating to certain acts of youth violence committed during Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike's 1970-1977 regime and which acts did not have any material connection to the subject matter of the Sansoni inquiry were produced.

These confessions were made in the notorious 4th floor of the Criminal Investigation Department in Colombo by Tamil youths, in particular by one Sathiaselvan when they were detained without trial for periods ranging from two to three years.

The veracity of the confessions and the methods the Police used to get them out from the youths were never tested by cross-examination.

### NOT CHALLENGED

It should be noted that at the time these acts were committed and when the detention of the youths alleged to have been involved in these acts became the subject matter of adjournment debates and questions in

Parliament on a number of occasions neither Mrs. Bandaranaike, the then Prime Minister, nor Mr. J. R. Jayewardene, the then Leader of the Opposition, ever pointed even their little finger at the T.U.L.F. accusing it of any involvement in these acts or of preparing to wage a physical violent war of liberation.

If it were court proceedings, the Peramuna's lawyers would never have had a chance to pursue the line they pursued at the Sansoni inquiry but being a Commission of inquiry with a relax in the rules of evidence they were able to pursue their line and obtain a limited success at confusing issues though not at shifting the responsibility to the T.U.L.F.

The Peramunas with their allies repeatedly brought up over a period of one year the absolutely false allegation that the T.U.L.F. leaders made very provocative speeches at the 1977 election meetings about "Swimming in the blood of the Sinhalese", "making slippers out of the skins of the Sinhalese" and the like.

Mr. Sansoni went into these allegations fully by examining a number of witnesses, including the Ven. Nandarama Thero, chief priest of the Naga Vihara temple in Jaffna and came to the following conclusion at page 82, Para 124 of his report. "I have considered the evidence led on this subject through all the witnesses I have referred to. I am satisfied that none of the 'filthy statements', as they were correctly described, were made at the T.U.L.F. meetings mentioned. It seems to me that there has been a conspiracy to implicate T.U.L.F. politicians by accusing them of having made such shocking statements which they never made. It was a dangerous and evil conspiracy to damage Sinhala-Tamil relations".

After July '83 the world lost its respect for the Government and Sri Lanka lost its reputation and friends. Why should any one blame the Tamils and the TULF for Sri Lanka's present tragic plight which is the result of its own seeking?

# JAFFNA UNIVERSITY...

(Continued from page 5)

known to be good", and another just said no more than that a student's English was fluent! An example of a progressive attitude on the part of a university in promoting its alumni, is that of the University of London and is worth mentioning. In a joint M.Sc. course conducted by Imperial and Queen Mary Colleges, there were 22 students — 15 from Imperial College and 7 from Queen Mary College. Of these a student from QMC was ranked first and one from IC second. The letter of reference to the QMC student read that he was NO. 1 in the joint class of 22 and the letter about the IC student merely read that he was NO. 1 in the IC M.Sc. batch that year. It is an attitude that I wholeheartedly commend to the learned faculty at Jaffna.

What I urge upon the University of Jaffna then is to actively promote the welfare of its students. First this may be done by bringing the grading system in line with international practice. Indeed, a case may even be advanced, purely on grounds of self-interest, for changing over to the American system, although I personally have my reservations about it since we may lose higher things in the process. Secondly, our students may be given a leg-up, by providing them with decent letters of reference. A teacher worthy of his name must believe in his students and be prepared to take risks for them. There are so many positive things that may be said about them. It is useful to mention in reference letters that the student made it to the university despite government discrimination, to state how many entered the university out of the total who sat the A.Levels the year the student entered and to point out, since most Americans are not familiar with the A.Level system, the comparable grades of the typical British university student. For I believe that every student entering Jaffna is endowed with an exceptional intellect and has an immense contribution to make to science and to his people. To leave them, as most of them are today with credentials which will get them only a secondary school job at best, is a crime against humanity.

My advice to those students who can secure admission but without assistance, is that somehow you should find a financial sponsor to support your studies. For you are

the best of our society; great things await you and you have much to give our community. Once you start your course as a fee paying student, within a year, on the basis of your performance which I can assure you will rank you among the top few in your class, you will be recognized by the university and be offered full financial aid. In fact, it is not unusual to be offered aid at the end of the first term. If you plan carefully and find a university with low fees (those in the states of Texas and Washington charge low fees of about \$2500 for a year and still maintain good standards), at most you may have to borrow a year's expenses. But once you get aid, usually consisting of the fees and a monthly stipend of \$450-700 by careful living you could save at least \$200 a month and repay your loans before the end of your doctorate.

There may be those who ask whether we Tamils require so many highly qualified people. The answer, I believe, is a firm yes. We may not have immediate employment opportunities for very many qualified people. But the potential for contribution in terms of moral leadership, at a time when the best of the land are fleeing, is immense. And even if the returning graduates are underemployed, leaving aside the benefits to the individual in terms of self-esteem, there is one other factor that cannot be ignored: a trained scientist, whether he works in a laboratory, grazes goats or drives a taxi for a living, is going to innovate new and better ways of doing what he does.

To those who may be inclined to ask what I am doing here, I might as well add that I will be here only for as long as it takes my wife to finish her studies.

## AS IT STRIKES ME

*He and I came, the public library  
burnt,  
He and I came, Ballot boxes turned,  
He and I came, Black Monday  
dawned,  
I came, Nuwara Eliya burned,  
I came, Peace March bloomed,  
How come, I am confused?*

— Thambiran

# Saturday Review

SRI LANKA

## TRUTH — THE CASUALTY

*In times of war truth is the first casualty, they say. The contradiction between the 2 reports published below bears out the truth of this observation. — Editor*

The following report appeared on page 14 of the state-controlled Daily News on 13th April:

A four-hour gun battle that began on Wednesday night blazed into Thursday morning at Jaffna where a force of an estimated 300 terrorists pounded the Jaffna Police Station and the adjoining D.I.G.'s office with rocket fire.

Despite the ferocity of the attack the Police and supporting troops suffered no losses by gun fire but five policemen trapped under falling rubble were killed.

Against the five policemen lost, the terrorist force lost at least 21 fighters.

There were both men and women in the attacking force which was kitted in military-style uniforms.

"They used extensive rocket fire and flattened the two storey DIG's office building and parts of the Jaffna Police Station. That's how we lost the men pinned under the rubble. But the police fought back bravely and repulsed the attackers," a senior officer said on Thursday.

He said the terrorists had set off heavy explosive charges and destroyed the Jaffna Town Hall and a major part of the town's municipal building.

Despite the heavy firing and police having to move out of the destroyed buildings, the terrorists were not able to capture any arms or ammunition from the Jaffna Police Station where the heaviest strength of policemen in the North is maintained.

"At least fifty rockets were fired. Our men removed the arms and

ammunition and ensured they got nothing", the spokesman said.

While the battle blazed at the police station, a second force of attackers engaged troops at the Gurunagar Army Camp. But they were repulsed and troops supported police in beating off the attack.

The bodies of three of the dead policemen have not yet been dug out of the rubble. A crane summoned from the C.T.B's Kondavil depot was hijacked enroute.

According to the police, the strength at the Jaffna police was 160.

Jaffna plunged into darkness moments before the attack on the police was launched.

Senior D.I.G. Mr. Ernest Perera and D.I.G. (North) Mr. Tilak Iddamalgoda flew to Jaffna yesterday to assess the situation. They reported to the I.G.P. on their return to Colombo on Thursday.

Police said that groups of terrorists were moving around Jaffna town which was deserted with shops closed and public and other transport completely stopped.

There had been some engagements between these groups and the security forces.

The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), led by Velupillai Prabhakaran was believed responsible for the attack.

"The curfew was lifted to enable people to engage in traditional festivities and religious observances during the new year. But the terrorists have spoilt it all for ordinary people," a resident said.

Note by Editor:

HA! HA!!

## TIGERS: V-SIGN

Here's an English translation of the text of the radio broadcast (Friday, 12th April) of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (L.T.T.E):

The people are fully aware of our attack on the Jaffna Police Station at 9.45 p.m. on 10th April. They are also aware that the next day (11th April), Jaffna Town was fully under our control till evening.

Following this incident, it has become imperative for us to expose the statement issued by Sri Lanka's

Minister for National Security to the Sinhala people and the media.

It is necessary to recall that some months ago, Lalith Athulathmudali the Minister for National Security, stated that news from the battle-front has to be censored.

On 10.4.85 when hundreds of our liberation fighters attacked the

## Buildings Racket...

(Continued from page 1)

On the contrary, the University claims that it has paid all the bills that had been duly certified by various authorities and even advanced money for the purchase of materials which have not been fully accounted for by the contractors.

Before 1977, all the construction work was done by the Department of Buildings and as with most government departments, there were delays in attending to the work.

From 1978, private contractors were also offered work but the private contractors have been more sluggish so that the University Authorities have now asked the Department of Building Construction to construct the Arts Block!

Those in the know allege the administration of the University is to blame for the entire situation.

There have even been allegations that the contractors were selected improperly, that the same contractor was given three projects when he was not properly equipped to tackle even one of the projects.

The normal procedure is to invite tenders and select suitable contractors from the applicants. But contrary to this, all the main construction works at the University were given to contractors on a 'selected contract' basis. These contractors were selected through the Chamber of Commerce via a private construction firm. These contractors were asked to produce an estimate and the estimate was readily approved. The contractors were paid the total expenses of the project plus a further 33 per cent of the total amount as 'extra payment'.

What is intriguing is that those in the seats of power at the University should have agreed to this 'selected contract' basis.

There have also been allegations in University circles that the money allocated has been criminally wasted on some buildings.

Some cycle sheds, which can barely shelter 50 odd bicycles, had been built at a cost of almost Rs. 50,000 each.

On the occasion of the first - ever convocation of the University the authorities had spent thousands of rupees in building some small pillars with a decorative chain linking them. Most of these pillars are now semi-erect or fallen!

Symbolic, perhaps, of the prevalent state of affairs.

Jaffna Police Station at 9.45 p.m. several police commandos were killed. The people have directly seen for themselves how the Police Station building has been destroyed.

Never before have such modern weapons and equipment been used in this region. Never before in the history of the militant struggle have such explosions been heard.

The most noteworthy feature of this attack is that not one member of our attacking force was killed or received injuries. Everyone returned safely.

The assault which began with the interruption of electricity supplies at 9.45 p.m. went on for 3 hours. Some commandos ran into the Fort to save themselves.

During this attack we captured more than 200 weapons, more than 500 sophisticated hand grenades, more than 20,000 bullets, gas guns and pistol guns. We completely destroyed the Police Station and the DIG's Office.

Some Sinhala policemen surrendered. They will definitely be released, one by one, after they have gained a clear knowledge of the struggle.

The military forces were prevented from coming out of their camps during the attack.

The next day, youths belonging to our Movement deployed themselves throughout Jaffna Town. They stood shoulder to shoulder with the people, were one with them, and gave them protection.

## MONKS' VISIT

We have received an impressive number of letters from readers expressing surprise - and happiness - that there are among Sri Lanka's Buddhist clergy members whose heart bleeds for the Tamil people.

Ven. Mandawala Pannawansa's letter, published in the S. R. of 6th April, must have come as an eye-opener to many people.

Well, here is some more good news.

The Political Organisation for Humanity of which Ven. Pannawansa is the Secretary, has accepted our invitation to send a delegation to Jaffna early next month.

Individuals and Organisations interested in meeting the delegation are requested to contact the Editor before the end of April.

We make a special request to the militant groups to utilise this opportunity to enter into a dialogue with the people from the South. Their representatives could meet the Editor in private and make the necessary arrangements.

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