

# Saturday Review

## SRI LANKA

Vol. 4 No. 21

10th August 1985

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# IT'S ALL UP TO JR

All Sri Lankan eyes are on the Bhutanese capital where representatives of President Jayewardene's Government will again lock in verbal combat with representatives of the Tamil people, beginning on Monday.

If all goes well, then the President himself is likely to enter the stage — in the third phase of negotiations, to be held later.

All indications are that a framework for a settlement will emerge after next week's meeting.

We are not privileged to disclose what form it would take, but the phrase "like the Indian States" has been very much in the air recently.

One of the major controversies at Thimpu had been the degree of power that should be vested in the various decentralised units or "states" that are to be eventually established.

An indication of how far the Government is willing to go was given by National Security Minister Lalith Athulathmudali in a recent speech (reported in the SR of 27th July 1985).

Will police powers be vested in the decentralised units? This is one point of argument.

In India, the Central Government lays down the norms for the recruitment and training of the police but control is vested in the State Governments.

For any meaningful devolution of state power, this should be the position in Sri Lanka as well.

There is an already well-trained army of several thousands of militants who could readily take over policing the Northern regions.

The other point we wish to stress is that the Government should make it clear to the Sinhalese people that the proposed devolution of state power is not going to be something exclusive for the Tamil people. It will be applicable to all of Sri Lanka.

If the Sinhalese people are told this bald fact, there would then

be much less resistance to a settlement of the ethnic problem on equitable terms.

It is up to the Government, especially President Jayewardene, to take the Sinhalese people into confidence, tell them what is planned and win them over.

Sri Lanka can expect all the necessary help from India to carry out the plan. As proof, there was the re-visit to Sri Lanka by Indian Foreign Secretary Romesh Bhandari this week.

But we can say on very good authority that this is the last time that India will be offering its good offices to find a political solution to the ethnic problem.

India will stand aside if the Government is unwilling or unable to effect a meaningful devolution of State power that would satisfy the aspirations of the Tamil people.

Time is fast running out. The cease-fire expires on 8th September.

## Homicide verdict on Karainagar shooting

The Jaffna Magistrate, Mr. S. Nagarajah, returned a verdict of homicide at the resumed inquest into the shooting of three persons at Alady, Karainagar, on 22nd July. (See SR of 27th July).

The deceased are: S. Tharmalingam, R. M. P. at Nedunkerny Hospital, S. othinathan and A. Thambiah.

When the inquiry was resumed on 8th August, the J.M.O., Professor N. Saravanapavanathan, gave evidence. He testified that he performed the postmortem on Sothinathan and found a gun shot injury on his head and two gun shot injuries on his left leg. He said Sothinathan would have

died within a few seconds of receiving the injuries.

Testifying further the J.M.O., said that there were gun shot injuries on the stomach and left leg of the deceased Thambiah.

Regarding deceased Tharmalingam, the J.M.O said that there were 31 external injuries and eight internal injuries in his body. The J.M.O said he had recovered three pieces of metal from the body. In his opinion death would have occurred as a result of shock through bleeding. The injuries may have been caused by the explosion of a bomb. If prompt medical attention had been rendered his life could have been saved, the J.M.O. said.

## Beefing up the army

The Government has decided to form a 10,000 strong National Auxiliary Force to assist the armed forces in the North and the East. The Cabinet has approved the release of funds for this purpose. The capital expenditure is Rs 2.5 million and the recurrent expenditure Rs. 16 mil.

## CONVOCATION

The University of Jaffna will hold its Annual Convocation for the Conferment of Degrees and Diplomas today at the Kailasapathy Auditorium.

The Chancellor Prof. T. Nadaraja will preside.

## DEATH FAST

33 Tamil youths kept in detention at the Tangalle Prison have reportedly started a fast unto death. These youths who were taken into custody under the Prevention of Terrorism Act have still not been produced before a magistrate though the Act stipulates that should be done within a period of 18 months of being taken into custody.

செய்திக்கதிர்

விபரம் உள்ளே



# Saturday Review

SRI LANKA

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## S. R. Refugee Relief Fund

The following further disbursements have been made from our Fund:

Mannar Association for Relief and Rehabilitation — Rs. 10,000

Trincomalee District Federation of Young Men's Hindu Associations. — 10,000

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# SRI LANKA — LAND OF REFUGEES

We continue to receive appeals for assistance from volunteer organisations engaged in relief work in the Northern and the Eastern provinces.

We shall try to help as many organisations as possible to the maximum extent that our resources permit, without duplicating relief efforts.

As stated in the S. R. of 13th July 1985, the need now is for long-

term rehabilitation of the thousands of affected people still in numerous make-shift refugee camps.

In Mannar, for instance, according to the Association for Relief and Rehabilitation, the toll of lives and property destroyed during the repeated incidents has rendered the district paralytic.

Over 200 lives were lost and about 250 families were rendered homeless

while more than 100 persons were rendered widows and orphans.

The total number of refugees in the Trincomalee district is nearly 30,000, comprising Tamils (28,820), Sinhalese (4,318) and Muslims (160).

We publish below a detailed list of the number of refugees in the various camps and the property damaged to highlight the magnitude of the rehabilitation problem:-

## Total No. of Refugees in Official Camps in Trinco District

A. G. A. DIVISION	CAMPS	SINHALESE	TAMILS	MUSLIM
KANTALAI	Kantalai MMV	927	—	—
	Agbopura MV	2,091	—	—
	Agbopura Budd. Temple	260	—	—
	Muslim MV	309	—	—
GOMARANKADAWALA TOWN & GRAVETS	Adampane Vid.	160	—	—
	Cod Bay	525	—	—
KUCHCHAVELI	Pulmoddai	—	—	25
	Nilaveli (5 Centres)	—	3,500	—
	Thiriyai	—	2,557	—
KINNIYA	Kinniya MV	—	—	135
	Eachanthivu	—	319	—
	Alangkerny	—	162	—
MUTHUR	Muthur Budd. Temple	47	—	—
	Raalkuli	—	185	—
	Muthur MMV	—	892	—
	Thoppur MMV	—	224	—
	Allainagar	—	367	—
	Nallur	—	325	—
	Sambhur	—	—	—
	Chenaiyoor	—	9,189	—
	Kadatkarachenai	—	—	—
	Kaddaiparichan	—	—	—
Total :		4,318	17,720	160

NOTE : (1) Consequent to the killing of nine Tamils at Pankulam on 24th May everyone fled to Trinco. GA Trinco opened a camp for them at Kinniya on 1st June. This was closed the following day on Co-ord. Officer's orders. The people are now living with friends and relations. Altogether, more than 400 families numbering

1,804

(2) People of Eachilampathai and Verugal fled into the Batticaloa district. Accommodated in five camps in Vakarai AGA's Division 1874 families

numbering 9,296

28,820

(3) This makes the total of Tamil refugees

## Kuchchaveli A. G. A's Divn.

Kumburupiddy G. S. N. Division	31
Kuchchaveli —do—	265
Thiriyai —do—	239
Erakakandi —do—	02
	537

## Seruvila A. G. A's Division

Verugal G. S. N. Division	474
Eachchilampattai —do—	621
Dehiwatta —do—	540
Neelapola —do—	14
Mahaweligama —do—	256
Somapura —do—	10
	1915

## Muttur A. G. A's Division

Muttur East G. S. N. Division	12
Periyapalam —do—	17
Kaddaiparichchan —do—	401
Sampur —do—	393
Muttur West —do—	15
Mallikaitivu —do—	254
Kiliveddi —do—	704
	1796

## Total No. of houses damaged

## Percentage of Permanent Semi - Permanent houses

31	20%	80%
265	45%	55%
239	30%	70%
02	—	—
537		
474	20%	80%
621	25%	75%
540	30%	70%
14	—	—
256	25%	75%
10	—	—
1915		
12	—	—
17	2%	98%
401	25%	75%
393	40%	60%
15	—	—
254	25%	75%
704	30%	70%
1796		

Total number of houses burnt or damaged = 4248. Out of the above, 30% are permanent dwellings and the balance are semi-permanent and temporary.

Date : 16.7.85



# A MANDATE — LIKE YOUTH — IS A FICKLE THING

One of the sterile questions that have been argued about among Tamils of Sri Lanka with more heat than light is who has a mandate to act on their behalf and for what? Some had maintained that the Tamil United Liberation Front being the sole elected representatives of the Tamils were the only ones mandated to act on the Tamils' behalf. The TULF itself has disclaimed this by stating that they will not be party to any negotiations with the Government which do not include the militants.

Others have insisted that the TULF has lost its mandate because the specific mandate they received in 1977 was to obtain for the Tamil homelands the separate state of Eelam and not to go for talks with the Government on district, provincial or other councils.

The TULF has tried to counter this by stating that their mandate is indeed for a separate state of Eelam. But if the Government were to offer a viable alternative, they will take this before their constituency for a fresh mandate.

Another opinion has been that the TULF leaders ran away to India in the wake of the 1983 riots while the militants stayed behind and upheld the dignity of the Tamils by their defiance of the state, and hence the mandate in effect has passed on to them.

arrangement that would give them free economic, cultural and educational articulation in dignity and security, which it was once felt was possible only under Eelam.

A related issue is not just what the people wish, but to what extent they are prepared to go in pursuit of these wishes and whether the leaders measure up to the calibre of their people. For example, if the people vote for a satyagraha campaign and the leaders in good faith open such a campaign for which only a few stragglers turn up, what was given to the leaders was not a mandate.

On the other hand if the people have made or are prepared to make the required sacrifices and the leadership either wastes away its political capital, remains supine or capitulates, then the leadership has failed. I do not think the TULF failed in not understanding their mandate. But their failure is attributed commonly to their not having prepared or led their people towards a struggle. They had talks during which the people were very much in the dark without being activated to look for an alternative in the event of the talks failing, as the DDC's finally did.

With the debacle of the 1983 riots the Tamil people needed a

have, within a matter of years, been elevated to the ranks of statesmen who must discourse and sup with the highest on the subcontinent.

This has an important corollary. If the militant leaders are to keep up the momentum, they must now behave like statesmen and exercise themselves in the arts of good government. Here is where they seem to have something to learn. A mandate, like youth, is a fickle thing. A feel about Jaffna seems to suggest that despite the existence of the Eelam National Liberation Front, the militants have not got their act together.

The first principle of good government is a commonly accepted understanding of the principles by which the relations between the rulers and the ruled are governed. This remains a mystery. What we are witnessing is a hotch-potch. Sometimes good and at other times bad. No nation, federal state or autonomous region can be run on the basis of taking and taking from the haves. One day all will be have-nots.

Another principle of good government is that the use of force or threats must be severely circumscribed. Even to tolerate this spells disaster. There is a saying about winning the war and losing the peace. Some recent events are disturbing.

Another rule which the militants can observe with profit is to avoid ostentation or any air of carnival

(Continued on page 7)

by M. RATNAM

Yet others maintain that the issue is not so clear cut. The militant youth leaders themselves, perhaps for no fault of their own, have more or less become residents of India like their TULF counterparts. While those like Thondaman, who leads an important section of the Tamil community and have remained behind speaking out fearlessly in critical times when few other voices were raised, must also be included in any representative Tamil body.

In order to untangle this mess the first thing to realise is that in human communication words seldom capture the intended meaning. And this is more true in politics and religion than in say chemistry. If a litmus paper turns from red to blue there is little else to be said. But in human affairs, meanings of utterances cannot be isolated from the cultural setting. Thus on the question of a mandate it is important to know what the people in general intended and what their leaders understood. It is quite probable that the people voted for Eelam as the preferred possibility, but would settle for an

new leadership at least to take over some of the functions which the TULF could not then fulfil. With the consultative machinery of the electoral process having broken down, other processes came into being. To cut a long story short. The Boys received a mandate. But not necessarily to the exclusion of the TULF. This is borne out by the fact that the people are very much interested in what Messrs. Amirthalingam, Sivasithamparam & Co. say and do in India, as a glance at the Tamil papers would show.

The people admired the willingness of The Boys to die for a cause and they were actively or passively supported. The Tamil people also relished the new-found dignity which their own sacrifices and the sacrifices of The Boys had given them. The mandate given to The Boys is given its seal by none other than the Government of Sri Lanka which has talked to them in partnership with the TULF at Thimpu. Thus the militant leaders from being small bands of renegades

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# David Selbourne

I am very uneasy as an academic. I dislike the world of academia profoundly. I earn my living from it but not only do I dislike the world of academia, I dislike most academics. So I am viewed with a certain amount of disapproval. I find academics in general singularly unwilling to make moral commitments. Singularly unwilling to declare what they know when it becomes rather awkward to declare it. Unwilling to jeopardize their careers, even when they possess truths that they ought to disclose. This is a sad lesson I have learned from my experience as a journalist. As soon as you make a commitment to tell the truth, you are denounced from all quarters as being subjective, unsound, unacademic or impressionistic. This has been my experience. This is why I suppose I spend a lot of time writing about the sufferings of ordinary people. I don't think we should concern ourselves with much else. But this is a very partial, subjective, prejudiced view.

I don't want to be an expert on Sri Lanka or India in a vacuum. I believe in finding out in order to tell others. I am especially finding out about the pain and miseries of people in Sri Lanka. This is what got me into trouble in Sri Lanka. The offence which I caused was of having spoken to President J. R. Jayewardene in 1982. Also, of having spoken to his Minister of National Security Mr. Lalith Athulathmudali. We were contemporaries as students in Oxford. We knew each other from 55 to 58 as undergraduates. We both studied law.

My meetings with President Jayewardene and Lalith Athulathmudali were very courteous. They spent several hours with me not surprisingly because of the old school tie which operated with great effect when I first went to Colombo. We were greeted on first name terms and Lalith was extremely indiscreet. He started talking some of the most obnoxious nonsense about the Tamils, which has ever been my misfortune to hear.

I didn't have a notebook in front of me. We were talking as ex-fellow undergraduates. I recall what he said when I asked him (tongue-in-cheek), "Well Lalith, what is the solution to the Tamil Problem?" He said, "We are going to smash heads." The date of that conversation was July 1982. I registered it mentally and I wrote it in my notebook afterwards.

I spent a good number of hours with Jayewardene, who I was introduced to by Athulathmudali, who vouched for me,

saying: he is a good fellow, you should chat with this man. He is going to write about you. He comes from Oxford. He is a lawyer. Obviously he is going to be O. K. I imagine something like that must have taken place, otherwise I wouldn't have got the reception I got. He actually took me in his car for all of one day. In all my years of reporting, that had never happened.

I sat in the back of this huge limousine with Jayewardene on my left, saluting the crowds through the window, waving his right hand. On my right was Gamini Dissanayake. In the seat in front (it was a seat that pulled down) was none other than Lalith Athulathmudali. I travelled around with this gang for some hours. Because of their friendliness they were also indiscreet. And I was sorry about this. I was sorry in a sense to betray their trust. But the gravity of the things

a good Gandhian. A real Gandhian!", he said.

As you know Mr. Amirthalingam's politics are broadly self-described as Gandhian. I waited for a moment and I said, "Where are you going to get a true Gandhian leader from?" There was a certain amount of laughter in the car. And then some silence. And then Jayewardene said to me. "Is that our problem?" There was more laughter in the car. As we drove, waving to the crowds, we went on with this bantering, and I realised—cumulatively—those guys would never make any political settlement on the Tamil Question through negotiations unless there were very powerful forces, coercing, driving them towards it. I found them cynical.

Then as I grew to know the monstrous scale of violence being carried out whilst they sat

David Selbourne, Oxford Professor and journalist with the Manchester Guardian spoke in Toronto recently. He has worked extensively on South Asia and was expelled from Sri Lanka in 1982.

This article is from a speech at a seminar organised by South Asian Resources and Information (SARI) at the University of Toronto. As he points out at the end, his 'Human Rights' message is to non-Sri Lankans. At the beginning he seems to be responding to queries about his interest in the region.

He also spoke at York University, sponsored by the Tamil Eelam Society, which was attended by over 400 people. Representatives from the provincial parties (recently elected Ontario Cabinet Minister Alvin Curling, who is from the Cambean) the Churches, Amnesty International and the Canada-Asia Working Group also spoke. Sri Lankan Government supporters picketed and joined the meeting.

they said to me, as we went around bantering and joking, revealed their contempt for the Tamils, and especially the contempt they had for their political leaders like Mr. Amirthalingam, while I sat between them, keeping my own counsel, plying them with the sorts of questions that eventually began to draw from them further indiscretions. That experience has coloured my view in everything I have written ever since. It doesn't mean that everything they told me was the absolute truth of what they believed, I think it did give me clues to what was going on in Sri Lanka which were privileged. I recall Mr. Jayewardene saying to me, between waving out of the window, that the Tamils would have to get a new political leadership. They would have to get proper leaders, is the proper phrase. So I said to him, "Mr. President, what kind of leaders?" "We will have to find

and laughed, increasingly nervously since 1982, I began to sense something of the predicament, a racial minority, an ethnic minority and a religious minority might face where such a degree of machiavellianism, cynicism and contempt are combined in the ruling of the country.

I must say before I go much further that I do not want to use the word Sinhalese as a term of reproach or abuse. I don't want to identify as Sinhalese everything that is bad in Sri Lanka, or use the word Tamil as an adjective of approval. That would be a great mistake. Nevertheless, we are dealing with a Sinhalese rather than a Sri Lankan Government, and we are dealing with an embattled Tamil minority for whom time is running out and whose backs are up against a wall, and who are in a severe state of political and physical crisis, perhaps more than any other people I can think of in the world. They are in

a terminal condition of political and physical danger.

As I drove around with these chaps I sensed a deep degree of unconcern for this predicament. And this is one of the features of the way in which Sri Lanka is governed, which arouses in me, really serious fears about the way in which Sri Lanka is being governed. One of the features of the violence: in 1956, in 1958, in 1961, in 1974, in 1977, in 1981, in 1982, July 1983, April and August 1984, and more or less continuously since with counter-violence increasing pro-rata since 1977 after a very slow beginning is that it is being committed without punishment, that crime has not been followed by punishment, and increasingly this is so as the atrocities have escalated.

This is one of the things which is most offensive to international opinion, and to the well-intentioned Sinhalese themselves, who are filled with great anxiety as to where the country is going. In the horrible holocaust of July 1983, when as we know from my colleagues on "The Guardian" and reported by David Beresford from the thick of it after I had been expelled, young girls were raped and decapitated, and their bodies set on fire, in the streets of Colombo, while people watched. These crimes and the crimes committed against the Tamil prisoners in Welikade Jail in Colombo, on two separate days in July 1983, these crimes have not been followed by inquiry, let alone punishment, is a tremendous crime against humanity. Not even token punishment is being meted out. Amnesty International says it knows of no reproof or punishment, suspension or serious action, political justice or legal redress. There are some cases of compensation for damages, but the serious crimes and this is my second point—with state complicity—have worsened. This kind of situation challenges the world, it unhinges the rule of law, it menaces every conception we have of justice, if crime is not followed by punishment. One of the reasons I am so exercised is because of this, and I combined my personal knowledge of these characters with their cynicism and their unconcern. Despite the fact that they have Tamils in their leadership, they are in my sense of the word, racist, though the word is much disputed. They



# Rides Again

have presided over a state which has used crime as a method of solving Tamil problems, of increasing their problems. We can see from report after report, there has been connivance and complicity by the authorities, and this goes right back to 1958. It is this cluster of circumstances, which so terrorizes the individual who hopes there will be some justice in the world and believes that crime in the end is bound to be punished. In Sri Lanka this is doubtful, very doubtful and this is what is so frightening.

It is in this context, normally omitted from academic accounts of these matters, we can detect three general tendencies which characterize the development of the Sri Lankan polity since independence in 1948. There have been increasing Sinhalese pressures on the Tamil minority: there have been constitutional changes, priviledging of language, of religion priviledging of certain hegemonic positions viv-a-vis a minority.

One could say this is not surprising, one wouldn't expect a majority to do any different especially when it has inherited grievances about alleged Tamil privileges and favours gained under British colonialism. The Sinhalese argument is that they have been regressing but it has gone in the direction of the Sinhalisation of the polity which was a formal liberal democracy, western style.

The Soulbury Constitution of 1947 set the ball rolling, but at a certain point western democracy was Sinhalised, entrenching majority power thus failing to satisfy the minimum requirements for good management of a multi-ethnic society: with certain compensations. Some kinds of protections have to be built in to ensure a political distribution of influence, where the majority will not trample on the rights of minorities.

The Sinhalese parties, for instance, have never appealed to Tamil voters in order to win elections. The Tamil minority has always been too small to register itself as a kind of constituency to which the Sinhalese politicians have any need to appeal. They have been able to appeal only to their own communities, and as the political situation has degenerated, they have appealed, I am afraid to the worst instincts of the majority, to a populism so familiar in the sub-

continent. It is a very marked feature of the political process in Sri Lanka. Rival Sinhalese politicians have played to the Sinhalese gallery, and haven't been able to detach themselves from appealing to the baser instincts which they have aroused and unleash on the Tamil people. This has become the basis of their political support within the country. Even though there may be Sinhalese politicians who do not approve of what is going on and indeed this might surprise you, but Mrs. Bandaranaike, is one of the politicians who in private before I was expelled in 1983, expressed the greatest anxiety about what was being done to the country. I can tell you the kinds of things she said to me, again, off the record, fearing for her own political position, not wishing to be recorded.

But expressing the kinds of anxieties in private about the Tamil population, which she could not talk in public, because of this competitive populism, the communalisation, the making racist of the political process. This is one tendency.

The second tendency is an obvious one. As the Tamils have grown more embattled and more insecure and more driven to the wall and more afraid they have of course upped their demands. They have moved from requesting or requiring or demanding a modest form of devolution in their home lands to demanding for a separate state. Even so it has been an unwilling process a disagreeable process for most Tamils, who would rather not have rocked the whole Sri Lankan polity but found their place in the sun alongside their Sinhalese brethren in some kind of federal solution.

In my view it is too late for that. The great tragedy of Sri Lanka is the misgovernment of Sri Lanka. I don't think the Sri Lankan polity can be put together again. I think that so much damage has been wrought to its structures that it is impossible to me to visualise anything less than the long-term inconceivable solution of a greater degree of self determination call it separatism if you like than was ever contemplated by the Tamils themselves. They are now both stuck in a dreadful situation where the Sinhalese cannot concede to the Tamils what they demand because of the populist forces they have unleashed while the Tamil political leadership driven out of the political system as they have been cannot

sell to the Tamil people anything short of the very ultimate demand which they cannot deliver from the Sinhalese majority. It is a real hornets' nest, it is a real double bind in which both sides have very little room to manoeuvre.

Now the third general tendency adding to the Sinhalisation of the polity and the stepping up of demands by the Tamils to ensure their physical security has been a less remarked process which ought to worry Sinhalese and Tamils alike. It is merely the destruction of the Sri Lankan economy due to the huge waste of resources to fight this increasingly bitter internecine conflict but the increasing concentration of powers, the increasingly anti-democratic developments in political institutions implicit in what I have said already. It has produced a situation which as a result of very skillful amendments introduced through the Sri Lankan Constitution, and referendum, cancelled general elections and gave Sri Lanka a long Parliament which lasts till 1989, a twelve-year Government. An unprecedented sort of event which produced a situation in which my former friend, Mr. Jayewardene is Head of State, Head of Government, Head of the Armed Forces and Head of the overwhelmingly largest Sinhalese party, the United National Party. He has also got the power to replace four-fifths of the members of parliament. He has the power, if any members of his party resign to nominate their replacements as head of the UNP and one of the things that he did during this swift transition from a relatively functioning democracy to an autocracy was to get undated resignation letters from all his MP's. Thus he is in the unique position of being able to replace most of the legislature by the authority of his own nominees.

Now I cannot think of any greater trust or power vested in the hands of one individual head of state, head of government, head of armed forces, head of the ruling party and

with the power to nominate replacements for every single sitting member of parliament in his own party which is an overwhelming force in parliament. And yet Jayewardene said to me and he said it to the press and he says it to the world all the time "I cannot do anything." He said "I cannot move, I am surrounded by forces which prevent me from doing what I would like to do." I asked him what he meant by that. He said he had extremists in his own ranks among the Sinhalese who as he put it, to kill all the Tamils. I didn't write any of this down. He said he was powerless in this situation, to find the kind of solution he would like, to the inter-communal conflict.

Well, we can weigh this as a version of the truth certainly as you know what it means. Jayewardene is presented to the world as a man of moderation, helpless victim of forces he cannot control, surrounded by wild men who if he were not there would sweep the Tamils away into the Palk Straits to scatter across the face of the world. But that is what is happening and it is happening under his aegis. Crimes are being committed without punishment under his aegis and at no point at all, has there been any suggestion by him or any of the men around him that he is seriously intent on achieving a negotiated solution.

A report in the "Guardian" recently nevertheless should be referred to. The news has not reached the Tamil community, it certainly hasn't reached the Canadian Press which I discovered when I spoke to the "Globe". There is allegedly in existence a draft document in Colombo which promises in return for the Tamils laying down their arms a withdrawal of the Army from the Northern Province and a cancellation of the Sixth Amendment, (which was another Constitutional change which effectively drove the Tamil representation out of the system.

(Continued on page 6)

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Editor

## SATURDAY REVIEW

Any project for the good of the community, prepared properly and executed well and to achieve acceptable standards should receive the support and co-operation of each and every member of the community. But project hastily prepared without a feasibility study and without a proper infrastructure being assured with doubtful projected standards, deserves rightful criticism (if not to know the facts), however well intentioned it may be. This is applicable, more so when participants from the public, especially the youth are to pay large sums of money.

Recently, the establishment of a North Sri Lanka private medical college was advertised in the news-

## WHAT GOES ON?

papers without mention of the body that would run it but the application form mentions that it should be completed and returned to the Secretary, North Ceylon College of Private practitioners. Inquiry revealed that there had been no agreement on the start of the College but that certain members decided to go ahead. Applications were to close on 31st July, interview to be held about 10th August and sessions to start in October. It is understood that the individuals hope to have clinical training in Tellipallai hospital. for the present, a building (a house) is believed to have been

rented for classes and an intake of 60 to 100 students expected.

My inquiry reveals that adequate preparations have not been made for dissection of cadavers, physiology, biochemistry, pathology and other paramedical practical training so very important.

Further, adequate or even meagre staff is not assured. It is rumoured that tape-recorded lectures may be on the Air.

Even if 60 students are taken, at least 12 specialists need to be appointed to Tellipallai Hospital

and minimum of four Professors and double the number of lecturers will be in necessary for proper bedside clinical training, the most important aspect of the training — leave alone the number of professors and lecturers needed for paraclinical training. Can Tellipallai Hospital get this staff in one and a half years, when clinical training will have to start?

## LETTERS

Tapes cannot under any circumstances replace the all important bedside training. Standards acceptable abroad should be attained

(Continued on page 7)

## David Selbourne.....

(Continued from page 5)

Altogether making illegal in effect the espousal of the separatist cause as a result the TULF is in exile.) The dropping of the sixth amendment the relegitimising of moderate Tamil political representation is one of the offers floating out of Colombo as a new plan. In return the Tamil separatists, so called are to lay down their arms.

When you consider the various bouts of negotiations and there have been two main bouts '56 to '58 and '83 to '84 — It has always been accompanied by an escalation of anti-Tamil violence.

Somebody ought to note that whenever the negotiation process has started, violence is unleashed against the Tamils in the streets in Colombo and everywhere else in Sri Lanka. When the majority appears, has appeared, to be ready to negotiate with various kinds of plans that would allay Tamil fears, mobs have come out on the streets and attacked Tamils. That is because Sinhalese fears are real in certain ways, not as real as justified Tamil fears of course, but they are the facts of situation.

The mere prospect of it being carved up, just as Ireland has been and part of it becoming the domain of the Tamils, is enough to bring crowds on to the streets, egged on sometimes by the Buddhist clergy, who then start ransacking, pillaging looting and ultimately driving toward those ghastly events. Which suggests, as did the assassination of Bandaranaike by a Buddhist monk in 1958, that there are extremely powerful forces in Sri Lankan society who will fight to the last man, to prevent any settlement with the Tamils including

modest devolution or modest forms of self-determination. That is the other part the agony of Sri Lanka.

It is not just separatism that is being resisted with mob violence, stirred up by populist politicians. Quite moderate forms of federalist solution and modest forms of devolution have aroused the fears of the Sinhalese majority, which is the thin edge of the wedge, which would mean the end of Sinhalese hegemony in Sri Lanka. Instead what we have had is the turning of Sri Lanka into what has been well described by some political analysts, an analysis which I approve of, a national security state.

We have a tragic denouement which has led to the militarization of the economy, increasing economic dependency, the turning of Sri Lanka into a Free Trade Economy, so called, deeply dependent on the IMF and the World Bank, the usual cluster of a authoritarian powers, increasing role played by the military whose forces have more than doubled in the last two or three years. The figure we were quoting to journalist not long ago was a 12,000 strong army. It is now 35-36,000. The military budget has gone up from \$50 million rupees a year to four billion and Sri Lanka is in deep economic difficulty not only because of that but because of the price of tea.

In such circumstances, we must discuss what kind of sanctions the world community has, to bring the Sri Lankan regime to its senses. I doubt it can. I have a deeply pessimistic view of where Sri Lanka is going. But we have to speculate about what kind of sanctions the world community has got, and some of them are financial or

economic. The human rights lobby is doing what it can to raise the grotesque record of human rights violations in Sri Lanka, wherever it possibly can utter a voice that can be heard.

We set up in Holland, in February, it hasn't been announced yet, an International Emergency Committee on Sri Lanka after a meeting that was attended privately by some 45 people representing 21 different countries of the world from Australia, Egypt, Morocco, Canada the US and most of the countries of Europe and so on. On 30th April the formation of this emergency committee will be announced in London. They have chosen a full time Secretary General. The funding is coming from the Dutch Human Rights Institute, the Oslo Peace Research Institute and a section of the United Nations University. It is a small venture maybe but it represents an attempt to raise the question of this gross record of violation to a higher threshold of visibility.

An American Committee will be set up in which will be associated with the Committee in Europe which will bring together American civil libertarians and human rights activists, in an effort to publicise these issues there. There have been some talk of setting up a similar Canadian committee. It is entirely for raising the question of the human rights violations in Sri Lanka, and to stop the misery and the murder. This is the immediate priority.

Let me end there by saying I could have given an academic analysis. We can talk about the absence of a Sri Lankan national identity. We can argue that independence from the British in 1948 did not even create a national polity, with a national Sri Lanka

consciousness. We can also talk about these competing ethnic consciousnesses that are now locked in combat as an expression of a failure of any real Sri Lankan to develop. In fact I don't think there has ever really been a Sri Lanka. There is a Sinhalese community proud of its history, proud of its culture, its own language and its own predominant religion. And so is the Tamil Community. And if you were to ask me what is Sri Lanka, I simply wouldn't know, and in fact I don't think the Sinhalese and Tamils know what it means. They are very uneasy with the term Sri Lanka.

But the basic problem in Sri Lanka right now is the problem of human rights and human suffering and it is to that we must bend our attention. I think the victims of history are at first made victims and when they cry out, they are identified as being emotionally prejudiced, exaggerating their case, tend not to be listened to.

To the Canadians in this audience, I would say quite readily, we have a role not to be pseudo-experts, not to be patronising neo-colonialists dressed up in a fancy dress, as academics or whatever it is. We have a role with our own communities.

My address has been to Canadians and Americans, not to expatriates. It is they who have to be reached, the non-participants, the non-combatants, the non-Tamils. Because, paradoxically, it is they who will be listened to and not the Tamils. The Tamils themselves cannot get near it because they will be dismissed, waved away, because they are speaking for themselves. Anybody interested in stopping the persecution, the crucifixion, the martyrdom of the Tamils must speak out.



# FOCUS ON THIMPU

BY SUMANTA SEN

## PHUNTSHOLING (Bhutan):

Every morning hosts of Indians crowd the office of the immigration officer of this small town, the gateway to the Himalayan Kingdom for those seeking to make the journey to Thimpu by road — still the most popular means of reaching the Bhutanese capital.

The purpose of visit for which permission is needed is inevitably stated to be "business" which it really is. For most of these Indians are traders here or in other north Bengal towns, on their way to the Bhutanese capital to collect dues from their counterparts there.

Even as the rest of the world is on the threshold of stepping into the 21st century, business in this small corner is still conducted in the same manner as in the days of yore, when in the absence of the present day road the 178 km journey from this border town to the capital had to be made either on foot or on horseback. As it was then, so also today shopkeepers in Thimpu come down once a month or so to collect their merchandise from traders here on credit. The money is paid at a later agreed date.

## MUTUAL TRUST

The volume of trade has to be considerable, as over 70 per cent of Bhutan's imports are from India. Yet it is basically done on credit and what is even more fascinating very often with no written records being kept on either side. The explanation for this is "In the past also transactions took place by word of mouth so why should there

be a different system today?" Mutual trust is the keynote of relationships and nobody can recall a single instance of its not being honoured.

There are many incidents to highlight this trust. A cloth trader here had sold a considerable quantity to a Bhutanese in Thimpu and before the date of payment arrived, the latter died. The Indian businessman was, however, not perturbed as he was certain that he would not lose his money. And how right he was, for after one year the trader's widow repaid the money.

This, of course, had happened long ago. But going by what people have to say even today, attitudes on both sides remain as the surrounding mountains. The trader in his "gaddi", who back home perhaps would not trust even his brother, has not the slightest hesitation in having full faith in the Bhutanese.

And trade between Bhutan and India is not restricted to the businessmen of Phuntsholing and Thimpu. All along the border, running along Jalpaiguri district of West Bengal, there are tiny hamlets that survive on such trade, coming to life twice every week when the transactions take place.

These are the two days when the trader from the Indian side meets his opposite number from Bhutan and the day passes in buying and selling, invariably on credit, and collection of old dues. At the end of the day, the Bhutanese return to the hills and the Indians to various towns in Jalpaiguri and other districts.

(Courtesy, "The Times of India")

## Mannar Citizens Stir Up

The following were elected to the Committee of Management at the inaugural meeting of the Mannar Association for Relief and Rehabilitation held recently at the Town Hall Mannar):

President: Rev. Fr. A. Xavier Croos (Vicar General, Mannar).

Vice-Presidents: Janab S.H.M. Razheed, J. P. (Private Secretary to the District Minister of Mannar), Mr. V. Kailasapillai, Rev. Sri Dhamma Jothi Thero, Chief Incumbent of Swarna Bimbarama Vihare, Mannar, and Mr. A. P. Figurado.

General Secretary: Mr. Sinclair Peter, Agricultural Instructor.

Assistant Secretaries: Mr. P. K. Selvarajah, Labour Officer of Mannar and Janab M. R. Thahir, Attorney at Law.

Treasurer: Janab M. M. Haniffa, Postmaster of Mannar.

Assistant Treasurer: Rev. M. Virgini, Principal, St. Xavier's Girl's Maha Vidhyalayam, Mannar.

Three district co-ordinators from each of the assistant government agents' divisions and five members from the village level too, were elected to the Committee.

The Government Agent of Mannar Mr. M. M. Abdul Cader who is also the patron of the Association, in his opening address, reiterated the necessity for the formation of such an association to foster the unity of all the citizens in the district and invited all sections of the people to join and serve the association for the common good of everyone.

## LETTERS

### WHAT GOES ON

(Continued from page 6)

as in two years of the first batch passing out (in six years) there will be an excess of doctors and they may have to find employment abroad. For such acceptability foreign teams would want particulars about staff, curricula, equipment, buildings, clinical training facilities etc." and would want to come down and inspect same.

With the blessings of the Government and the help given by the Colombo Medical Faculty, it took eight months of preparation for the Colombo North Private Medical College, we are told. Are we in a hurry and perhaps being foolish in our enthusiasm?

Though I understand that permission had not been given by the Government for the establishment of the College and the use of Tellipalai Hospital, this may not be a problem if a measure of autonomy is given to the North and the East of course; if not given, the project is bound to be a miserable failure.

Some of this information I get may be true, may not be true but the public has the right to know what measures have been taken, what standards are aimed at and who is responsible for the running of the college.

It would probably be wiser to wait a little, plan properly and await political solutions before a start is made.

Nallur

A Doctor

Thirunelveli

S. Sivakumar

### FLOODED OUT!

Editor

SATURDAY REVIEW

I wish to draw the attention of the Jaffna public, the University authorities, the architect and the contractors to the plight of the students of the Jaffna Medical Faculty.

We have been putting up with many inconveniences and hardships from the inception of the Faculty, but things are becoming intolerable: with every rain, let alone a monsoon downpour, the entire groundfloor (the only floor in occupation since 1982) gets flooded. Some of our Lectures and practicals had to be cancelled as the one and only "lecture room" and the Laboratory were flooded.

When we were sitting the 2nd MBBS examination last month, we had to shift tables and chairs halfway as water started pouring through the roof the hall!

Things will get worse once the real monsoon begins. There are so many cracks and major defects in the building which endanger the lives of students and staff, those interested are requested to come and see the Faculty building when it rains or soon after a rain to appreciate the difficulties the Tamil students are undergoing.

## A Mandate...

(Continued from page 3)

celebration. Permanent peace is not yet at hand although the settlement of the Sikh question in India portends a good omen. The TULF made the mistake of celebrating the 1977 election results as a victory and this was followed by the 1977 race riots.

True, the government has climbed down from its more pompous positions and is talking to the militants and "operation military solution" is admitted a failure. But this is far from saying that the Sri Lanka Army is a write-off. Many analysts admit that sections of the Army performed well and quite professionally only they were ill-served by a fickle political leadership which gave them an impossible political task rather than a possible military one. The Army got the deserved title of "the most indisciplined Army in the world" mainly because of the political tolerance / encouragement of several "shoot and loot" brigades. Now that there is a ceasefire which is more or less observed as far as

ceasefires go, why tweak the lion's nose while he slumbers in his lair?

Not least perhaps, something needs to be done about the decline in our cultural values through years of brutalisation. When it came to old folk in the past, we sometimes listened to them with respect for their wisdom and sometimes humoured them when the last was lacking. But never said a rude word about them. Now when an old man shows a few pardonable signs of eccentricity, I have heard of schoolboys making comments like, "he must be finished (off)". A culture is to do with the whole of life and with future and past generations, and must surely account for the hard fact that old age is a disease that most of us mortals are likely to catch, militants, schoolboys or otherwise. If we forget this life becomes a terror.

I have written as a citizen desiring the common good of all citizens, and hope this piece will be received as such.



# Saturday Review

SRI LANKA

## PEOPLE PICKET PEOPLE'S BANK

People who had pawned their jewellery with the People's Bank and sympathisers, including members of RDS societies and University student bodies, picketed outside the People's Bank Branches all over Jaffna yesterday (9th August), putting a halt to the Bank's transactions. The employees were locked out.

Yesterday's picketing was the climax of a campaign which started on 19th July when there was token picketing in front of the People's Bank at Chunnakam.

The main demand is that all pawned jewellery for which the principal and interest had already been paid should be handed back

through the same branch where it was pawned earlier.

A leaflet issued by the Pawnors' Association states that no action has been taken by the Bank Authorities, either at the Head Office or at Regional level, despite several memoranda being submitted to them.

The Association has warned that the picketing will continue until action is taken to meet their demands.

It has sent telegrams to Finance Minister Ronnie de Mel, Rural Industries Minister S. Thondaman and Communist Party M.P. Sarath Muttetuwegama, briefing them about the situation.

### Six Killed

Six people, including three Buddhist monks, were killed at the Somawathiya Temple, in Trincomalee district, on 2nd August.

Various versions of the incident have been published in the newspapers, both in Colombo and Jaffna.

The SR has tried hard to find out the truth but without success because of communication difficulties.

### DAMN LIE

It is time that whoever is in charge of LANKAPUWATH is removed because this News Agency continues to publish so many damn lies and mislead the people of Sri Lanka.

The latest damn lie is to describe the SATURDAY REVIEW as the official organ of the Eelam National Liberation Front (ENLF). (Vide the state-controlled "Daily News" of 7th August, 1985).

## NON-CAPITALIST PATH OF DEVELOPMENT

Capitalism brings privation and suffering to the working people. It brings ruin to the peasantry. If the economically weak countries take the capitalist road, they will inevitably be doomed to remain backwards. Social inequality will grow.

Socialism, on the other hand, brings happiness to the people. It ensures the rapid growth of the economy and of culture. The exploitation of man by man, social inequality and unemployment are done away with.

To learn about the non-capitalist path of development to socialism, read the book "Lenin and Asia" by Attorney-at-Law T. Duraisingam, a pioneer of the socialist movement of our country.

SINHALA, TAMIL AND ENGLISH EDITIONS OF THE BOOK ARE AVAILABLE AT BOOKSHOPS.

Price Rs. 10/-

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

## A LETTER TO THE BOYS

MY DEAR FRIENDS:

On 27th July 1985, I addressed our Sinhalese Friends through the columns of the SATURDAY REVIEW.

The gist of my appeal to them was to face reality and agree to a sensible solution to the ethnic problem which would do justice to the Tamil people without jeopardising their own interests.

Now it is my turn to talk to you, again through the SR.

I have the utmost admiration for you, irrespective of your group affiliations, for your endeavours to liberate your people.

I think you have already achieved a large degree of success towards achieving your avowed objective.

The fact that you have been able to force President Jayewardene's Government to the conference table, no matter whether it be Thimpu or Timbuctoo, without having to lay down arms or renouncing your demand for EELAM, is a great achievement.

Now, you have to build upon it. It is not for me to say what stance you should take at the Thimpu talks. But you must be amenable to accept and act upon political, economic and social realities.

Eelam or no, you must give thought now itself to plans for development of your traditional home-lands—independent of the Government.

So much can be done for the development of your areas and provide employment for thousands of your people and relieve their suffering even as you carry on your liberation struggle.

Remember the Allens' affair? You succeeded in chasing out the Americans from Jaffna. But at the same time, you missed a golden opportunity.

Water is going to be a big problem in the North in the years to come. Why not use everyone, anyone, to solve this problem?

Seventy five per cent of the work on the Chavakachcheri and Point Pedro water projects, with U. S. aid, was completed when the contractors were forced to abandon operations.

Why not get the projects re-activated for the benefit of your people?

I discussed this matter with the First Secretary of the U. S.

Embassy when he visited the SR office during his recent tour of Jaffna. He said his Government was willing to re-start the two projects and finance similar projects in other areas of the North provided the people made a request.

May I have your permission to make this request on your behalf?

I hope nobody will dub me as a CIA agent. I am nobody's agent, as the columns of the SR will bear testimony ever since I had anything to do with it. I am only concerned with the overall welfare of the Tamil people who have a rightful place in Sri Lanka.

Think also of the re-afforestation of the North, which has now lost much of its greenery.

I have been visiting Jaffna long before many of you were born. What wonderful groves of palmyrah trees there were then. And the palmyrah toddy! How luscious! Now you find only single trees in certain areas.

Do you want to inherit a desert? Already, obtaining firewood is a problem in Jaffna. Even as you stage your Harts, why not plant trees? Ask your people to carry plants, instead of pwards, as they demonstrate and fight against state repression. In a few years time, you will reap a rich harvest.

There is the problem of robberies, which are becoming a real menace to Northern society as a whole.

As part of any liberation struggle, attacks on State machinery is the norm.

But attacks on established establishments in the North—establishments belonging to your own people—are unpardonable. It only creates a situation of self-paralysis.

I appeal to you to police the north, to preserve it and the people, to develop the region so that your people inherit the Earth—your Earth—as a proud people.

My good wishes are with you.

Yours fraternally,  
Gamini Navaratne

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