

# Saturday Review

SRI LANKA

Vol. 4 No. 32

26th October 1985

## KLEEN KHUT

FOR

1. LADIES & CHILDREN'S DRESS MAKERS,
2. PHOTO COPY & RONEO SERVICES,
3. TYPING WORK.

239, POWER HOUSE ROAD,  
JAFFNA.

Tel. No.: 22823

# MOTHERS APPEAL - STOP THE ROBBERIES

TEXT OF AN APPEAL FROM  
THE MOTHERS FRONT

*We, the members of the Mothers Front of Jaffna, make a humble appeal to our children: Do not allow anything to happen that would besmirch the fair name of our community.*

*Fight on for our people: continue your fight against suppression and oppression. We, the Mothers, have always extended our support and expressed our solidarity with all just struggles of the peoples here and far away.*

*We have been disturbed by some of the incidents that have taken place in the North in recent times, particularly the spate of robberies and killings.*

*This must be stopped. It is your sacred duty to safeguard the people who are here with you. The ordinary people must not be allowed to be harassed by anyone. If you allow this to continue to happen, you will be failing in your duty.*

*There are many enemies against us, both outside and within. By their activities the enemies within are weakening the unity of the*

*people and giving substance to those forces which are trying to keep the Tamil people in bondage for perpetuity.*

*Hound out these devils, they are a danger to all of us.*

*Take action to stop the robberies and killings, which are draining the resources of our community and bring about suffering, disension and disillusionment among our people.*

*That is our humble appeal to you, our sons and daughters.*

**Editor's note:** We fully endorse every word of the moving appeal by the Mothers' Front.

We, too, have been dismayed by the unwarranted attacks on the person and property of innocent Tamil people — not by the Army of occupation, which is in their very nature — but by sinister and lumpen elements within the Tamil community itself.

As Regis Debray said: "The line dividing a brigand and a guerilla is a very thin one."

This cannot be allowed to go on. For it could only result in total anarchy. Is this what the Tamil people want?

## MONITORS CHALLENGED!

Prof. V. K. Ganeshalingam, President of the Citizens' Committee of Point Pedro has brought to the notice of Brigadier Hamilton Wanasinghe Co-ordinating Officer violations of Cease - Fire by Security Forces.

In a particular incident it is reported that on 16.10.85 at about 3-30 p.m. six men from the Army Camp at Point Pedro opened fire at random injuring about four civilians.

"A peaceful and calm atmosphere has been shattered by this unprovoked, uncalled for and therefore unwarranted shooting. Fortunately the normally busy town was less free of people, as

otherwise the casualties would have been more. The injured include a small girl who was returning home after tuition and a woman fish-vendor. This is a crying shame" the report adds.

It is also reported that on the same day (16.10.85) the Navy chased all fishing crafts with the threat of shooting them, if they did not return immediately to shore. The fishermen who were out as usual to catch were forced to shore.

The irony is that these two incidents occurred on the very day the Committee appointed to monitor the cease-fire, was formally inducted in office by the Hon. Minister of National Security.

## LALITH WRITES

The Editor  
SATURDAY REVIEW

In a recent edition of your Journal (10th August 1985), there is a reference to a discussion in which Mr. David Selbourne attributes certain statements to me. These statements are defamatory of me and I want to deny these in the most emphatic terms.

I have a note relating to my meeting with Mr. Selbourne and

they do not bear out Mr. Selbourne's accusations.

Lalith Athulathmudali  
180/3, Polhengoda Terrace,  
Colombo-6.

(627 AT BOOSA)

As at 19th October, 1985 there were 627 Tamil detenus in the Boosa Camp. Among them were seven women.

Release ALL Political detenus in Sri Lanka jails



## Saturday Review

SRI LANKA

No. 118, 4th Cross Street,  
P. O. Box 122  
JAFFNA.

Telegrams: SATVIEW

EDITOR  
GAMINI NAVARATNE

Subscription Rates inclusive  
of local postage and foreign  
Air Mail Rate

### Sri Lanka

Annual — Rs. 170/-  
Half-year — Rs. 85/-

### India

Annual — Rs. 225/-  
(Indian Rupees)

### Singapore / Malaysia—

Annual — U. S. \$ 30

### All other Countries

Annual — U. S. \$ 50

Cheques payable to  
New Era Publications Ltd.

### Advertising Rates

Contracts — Rs. 15/- per  
col. centimetre  
Casual — Rs. 20/- per  
col. centimetre

## S R. Refugees Relief Fund

We acknowledge with thanks a handsome contribution of Rs. 23,000 to the SATURDAY REVIEW REFUGEE RELIEF FUND by a donor who wishes to remain anonymous.

We also thank the following donors for their contributions:

Miss. V. Sathiyapama	Rs. 100.00
Mrs. Ratnagopal—1 parcel of used clothes.	
Mr. R. Somalingam,	
Jaffna	Rs. 50.00
Anonymous.	Rs. 50.00

The following further disbursements have been made from the Fund:

Mr. S. Sivanandarajah- Vadduk-koddai. (Medical supplies for Trincomalee Refugees)	Rs. 7,856.75
High Level Students Consortium in Trincomalee (medical supplies)	Rs. 10,018.30
Refugees at Nallur Camp (Medical supplies)	Rs. 3,455.00
Handsprayer and chemicals for Mannar Refugee Camps	Rs. 6,227.50

# OUT — PRIVATISATION

Below is the text of a Press release issued by V. S. Maniam, General Secretary of the United Lanka Estate Workers' Union.

President Jayewardene came out with a bombshell recently addressing the Planters' Society, he announced that he has no objections to turning the 2 State Plantation Corporations namely, J. E. D. B. and the S. L. S. P. C. into Public Companies with 51% shares to be held by the State. His argument is that such a measure will enable the country to raise its own money and not be dependent on the World Bank for funds for its development.

This is nothing short of a big joke. How does the President expect to raise the money, as he claims.

This step will only serve to make the privatisation of the State Plantation complete and the workers will be thrown back to

the early days of unbridled exploitation. The State Plantations were nationalised by the former Government. Of course that Nationalisation process was mis-used to throw out workers in certain areas very unjustly. But since it involved long-term benefits and some degree of say and recognition of the workers at large, it was defended by the workers and Trade Unions amidst enormous sacrifices. It was just that step which paved the way for estate staff to rise in position in the management of the Plantation.

At that time Mr. Thondaman whose proprietary interests were jeopardised, shed crocodile tears for the workers, taking advantage of the gross injustice which was quite unnecessarily meted out to the workers in certain areas by the Government's henchman.

Mr. Thondaman's silence to-day at the President's announcement

makes it very clear that his agitation at that time of the takeover was not really in the interests of the Tamil workers.

The workers were able to win at least a minimum wage increase after a bitter struggle in 1984 largely because of the fact that the State Plantations were under the control of the Government. Even so, the promises of further concession held out, have not been honoured by the Government. Obviously then, if the State Plantations are privatised, as the President in fact intends the workers will never be able to win for themselves, even minimum concessions and their lot will be back to square one as real slave labour.

It is now the paramount duty of the trade unions and the entire working class in the country to launch the most vigorous agitations against this dubious move of the Government and thwart it at all costs.

## News Briefs

### 3 MUSLIMS SHOT

At an inquest held it was reported that 3 muslims had been shot and then burnt. Their bodies were identified as Ismail Mohamed Nagib (18), Segu Mohamed Rasathamby (48) and Mohamed Saleem (28). It was stated at the inquest that they were taking coconuts in a bullock cart when they were shot. A verdict of homicide was returned. There was tension in the Muttur area as a result and shops were reported closed.

### SERIOUS CONCERN

A statement allegedly made by the Opposition Leader Mr. John Howard in Australia in which he likened 'Sri Lanka's racial discrimination to that of South Africa, has caused serious concern and Foreign Minister Mr. Shahul Hameed is reported to have sent a 'special message' to Australian Foreign Minister, Mr. Bill Hayden.

### PLOTE CUM JVP

According to a report in the 'Island, of 11-10-85 a splinter group of the JVP is supporting PLOTE. According to Police sources, the Police Station at Pottuvil was reportedly attacked in liaison with this splinter group in the South which is considered a 'new infiltration.'

### TRAIN SERVICES

On 15-10-85 the 'Uttaradevi' 'Yarl Devi' commenced from

## Not THE NEWS

In a message of felicitation to the two most successful old boys of Royal College at the school's 150th anniversary celebrations, the Principal said that there is a crisis in education. He went on to say, all the great sciences and laws taught by this school for 150 years have been shown to be demonstrably useless when it comes to getting on in the world as exemplified by these two worthy gentlemen. They have disregarded with impunity the laws of Economics of Good sense, of Geopolitics and even the solemnly undertaken International obligations on Human Rights. They even seem to breach the law of gravity through frequent travels by helicopter".

Inaugurating the construction of the second storey of the new Medi-

cal Faculty building of the University of Jaffna, the Vice Chancellor applauded all concerned comparing this building with the Empire State Building of New York. He said that the construction of this building has involved five years of intensive effort and is still going strong.

Following the First Cricket match with the Pakistani team in Pakistan, the Sri Lanka Cricket board has sent a telegram to its Pakistani counterpart which reads as follows: We believe that good Umpires exist only in peace loving Democratic countries such as ours and not in places run by tin-pot Dictators. We urge you to accept a new panel of Umpires from Sri Lanka lead by Ministers Hameed and Mohamed.

Colombo and K.K.S. Railway sources say that the 'Inter-city' will start on the 18th. The train services were suspended after the Hartal in August.

### BATTI. CIT. COM.

The Co-ordinating Officer and Police Chief, Mr. Maxi Perera assured a delegation of the Batticaloa Citizens' Committee that all complaints made by them would be fully investigated.

### FACE — LIFT

According to a report in the 'Island' of 29-9-85, the Government's propaganda machinery is to be 'revitalised' to 'correct Lanka's image abroad.' We trust it is not a vote of censure on Lankapuvath, Rupavahini and SLBC and the local media which have been doing a good job to keep the Lion Flag flying and giving a 'facelift' to the Security Forces.



While accepting defeat for his party at the Punjab elections, Mr. Rajiv Gandhi, India's youthful Prime Minister, has expressed justifiable satisfaction, if not pride, in that the Congress (I) "might have lost the electoral battle in Punjab, but (it) has won the war for India's unity and integrity." It is too early to say conclusively whether the war, at least on the Punjab Front, is over. But the universal verdict is that Gandhi deserves to win.

What is it that Mr. Gandhi brought to bear in his approach to the solving of a problem which during the last three years had caused large-scale killings, the assassination of a Prime Minister and desertions in the Indian Army? Prof. Morris-Jones, in his penetrating analysis of the Indian situation and his prognostication of the expected change of directions in the aftermath of Mrs. Gandhi's assassination and Mr. Rajiv Gandhi's electoral success, (W. H. Morris Jones, India, after Indira: a tale of two legacies, *Third World Quarterly*, April, 1985) had outlined three options for the new Prime Minister: "an attempt to restore the first (Nehru's) legacy of institutional growth and negotiated, bargaining political relations; a continuation of the second (Indira's) of confrontational approaches by personalised and coterie leadership alongside continued erosion of collective cohesions; an effort to reject both legacies in favour of some new

style of leadership (possibly depoliticisation). Prof. Jones who demonstrated "an ideological preference for an attempt to return to the first" and many others who would share within that preference, will no doubt agree that Mr. Rajiv Gandhi has, on the Punjab issue, displayed a capacity to break with recent tradition.

Whilst conceding almost all the Sikh demands, he obtained the assurance from the Akalis that

the truth of the matter is that although the traumatic proportions attained in the recent past has rendered the Punjab crisis seemingly intractable, it was the Centre's gross mishandling of the situation during 1980-84 that provoked Sikh separatism, and the first step Mr. Gandhi had to take was to reverse the Centre's policy. In this particular situation it may well be sufficient to ensure a long-term solution.

a collective approach to the nationality problems of individual countries, it is also clear that some of them cannot on their own achieve solutions to these problems. The spill over into India of the nationality problems of neighbours is perhaps the main but not the only casual factor for this inevitable inter-dependence. Sri Lanka's recent attempt to keep away from a periodic SARC meeting may be seen as a negative reaction to the apparently unpalatable reality. South Asian grapes are not sour at all!

India's influence in this regard will be profound and can even produce a demonstration effect on others resulting from the manner in which Mr. Gandhi guides his own country to a new equilibrium in the Centre-State and intra-state relations, hopefully through a restoration of the Nehru legacy. But it must at once be emphasised that each of the nationality problems in South Asia has its own specificities and terms of the solution of one may not be relevant to that of the other. What is also useful to remember is that mere formal agreements can hardly be expected to survive in the absence not of goodwill for there is no goodwill to begin with but of political determination and strength to utilize state power to implement that agreement and subordinate all other considerations to achievement of that goal.

## RAJIV'S PUNJAB DEFEAT DEMOCRACY'S GAIN

Rajan Philippupillai

they would co-operate with the centre in establishing a relationship that would bring out the "true federal characteristics of India's unitary constitution." What's in a name: Federal or Unitary. Mr. Gandhi may well exclaim so long as sufficient autonomy is given to accommodate 'Sikh nationalism' within the limits of India's unity and integ-

South Asia, despite the rarefied attempts to establish a State level co-operation in the spheres of economy and trade (SARC), is very much a melting pot of seething nationalisms which threaten to tear apart existing state formations. The conditions for the emergence of a south Asian identity are not lacking. While it may be utopian to expect

# CEASE-FIRE MONITORS' AUTHORITY

The eleven - member Cease-fire Monitoring Committee appointed by President Jayewardene has the authority to:

- Investigate and report on violation of cessation of hostilities.
- Assist authorities in facilitating the return of all displaced persons of all communities to places from where they were displaced.
- Assist and facilitate meetings between persons detained under the Prevention of Terrorism Act and their relatives.
- Visit prisons and detention camps where prisoners are detained when the committee

considers it necessary (subject to the normal rule governing such visits) to ascertain the condition in such camps.

The Committee will receive from any person representations relating to violations, to grievances and suggestions relating to the above matters. Such communications could be made direct to the Secretary-General to the Committee or to any member of the Committee. In order to facilitate the communication of representations and/or complaints any person could convey such representations and/or complaints through a Citizen's Committee or Government Agent or Assistant Government Agent.

The Committee members are: Mr. H. Deheragoda, a former Supreme Court Judge; Mr. H. Rodrigo, former Supreme Court Judge; Mr. M. M. Abdul Cader, former Supreme Court Judge; Mr. G. Goonetilleke, retired Public Servant; Mr. M. Sivanathan, retired Permanent Secretary; Mr. T. B. Panabokke, former High Commissioner for Sri Lanka in India; Mr. I. B. Fonseka, former Permanent Representative for Sri Lanka in the United Nations; Mr. J. W. Subasinghe, P. C.; Mr. K. Sivapalan, Emeritus Principal, Hindu College, Trincomalee; Mr. M. Husssein, Attorney-at-Law; Professor K. Sivathamby, University of Jaffna.

Mr. E. F. Dias Abeysinghe is the Secretary-General to the Committee.

## ADIOS AMIGOS

To the decline of professional standards in Jaffna is now added that of robbers. People used to think that the robbers owed it to their calling to lose some sleep and do their stuff around 2 a.m. But having met with little resistance they now get about their work at 8.00 to 10.00 p.m. and have a good night's rest like us ordinary folk.

They show unaccustomed courtesy. They ask for the time and remove clocks. They even tell people that solid foods are bad for them before removing their gold teeth. They greet their involuntary hosts with such violent effusion that some break their heads against walls and are hospitalised.

The militant groups to whom people naturally turn for the maintenance of order and policing seem to be taking the line that as a result of the robbers advancing their visiting hours their patrols are unable to distinguish between civil and uncivil callers whenever they see a parked vehicle.

When some callers visited a house near the Kondavil-KKS Rd. junction, a local wit took to ringing aloud the nearby temple bell. Before the callers could ask for the time they decided it was time to say 'adios' and took themselves away leaving the house intact.



# Settlements And

Any situation gives rise to vested interests. Even desperate situations provide particular individuals and groups with narrow advantages which they may try to exploit. The Sinhalese-Tamil conflict has not shown itself to be an exception. Some of the Tamil demands made at the Thimpu peace talks and the protests voiced both in Sri Lanka and India against the holding of those talks rather clearly reflected vested interests and not the true interests of the Sinhalese and Tamils. Ironically enough, hardliners on both the Sinhalese and Tamil sides found themselves, temporarily perhaps, united in a lone-distance marriage aimed at defeating the purpose of the talks: the Tamil side by making, what the government called, "impossible demands", and the Sinhalese by refusing to see any merit even in sitting down with the Tamil groups.

The four most controversial Tamil demands will be examined in this article. They are the claims of distinct nationality, self-determination, traditional homelands, and the amalgamation of the Northern and Eastern Provinces. The two basic themes of this article are first, that these Tamil demands (or positions staked out) are not acceptable as presently articulated, but, second, that the Tamil rights (or interests) these demands are intended to promote are acceptable, and in fact will have to be given governmental recognition if any settlement reached is to be enduring.

## SELF-DETERMINATION

To those influenced by the Western (Anglo-American) political tradition, the elevation of an ethnic group into the more politicized category of a "nation" provides an intellectual and moral platform from which a struggle for national independence may be launched and then justified. The Ibos of Nigeria couched their struggle for Biafran independence on this basis. But neither in Nigeria nor for that matter in India or the United States were the aggrieved minorities recognized by their respective governments as nations. There were sound reasons for this.

In the Western tradition, a "nation" is generally agreed to be a grouping of people who share a common past and vision for the future that includes full autonomy and the promise of independence. In practical terms, a nation is the largest grouping that effectively commands the loyalty of the people. Thus, if the Nigeria Ibos, Indian Sikhs or American blacks had been recognized by their respective governments to be nations, it would have been a tacit acknowledgement that their primary loyalty would not be to their respective states, but

to their own "nations". This was obviously unacceptable.

Now it may be true that due to the bitterness generated by the ethnic strife the Tamils do not in fact feel loyalty towards the Sri Lankan state. It may also be true that a prevailing Sinhalese conception of Sri Lanka that derives its inspiration from chronicles of the ancient past categorizes the Tamils as alien invaders. Therefore, it could be argued, acknowledging the Tamils to be a nation would be merely to recognize an existing fact. But what exists today is by no means the ideal to be "frozen" and carried into the coming decades. In the hierarchy of affiliations that a person may have (ranging from family

of ethnic-nationalism in those countries, particularly the former, is much more limited—in effect, to "singing and dancing".

Had Sri Lanka been a country modelled on the Eastern European tradition, then giving explicit recognition to the nationality claims of the Tamils (and other communities) might not have presented any serious problems. This would have been even more true had Sri Lanka also been a communist country like the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia because the secessionist tendencies of the "nations" would have been adequately counterbalanced by the centralizing tendency of one-party rule.

The Twenty six-year old author is one of the most perceptive of Sri Lanka's academics, one of the few who made an in-depth study of the National Question.

He has sent us this contribution from the U.S.A., where he is on a scholarship.

by

Jehan Perera

to village to country), the most encompassing loyalty is the ideal that should be striven for. At this time in world history, the realities of international politics have established that the largest such unit is the country. Loyalty to Sri Lanka, the island-entity as a whole, should therefore take primacy over other sectional loyalties. Perhaps at some future date the ideal loyalty will grow beyond the country to encompass a whole region (such as a South Asia composed, in addition to Sri Lanka, of India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nepal) and from thereon to all of mankind as envisaged in the great religions.

In contrast to the Western, there is also an Eastern European political tradition in which a nation is not seen politically as such but rather as a natural, cultural creation or a "community of sentiment". In terms of this tradition, several "nations" may coexist within one political structure. The Soviet Union and Yugoslavia are examples of countries with a multitude of ethnic groups most of which are designated as "nations". Unlike Western-tradition democracies such as India and the United States which explicitly forbid secession in their constitutions, the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia freely offer to their nations the rights of self-determination and secession. Of course, the actual practice may suggest that the scope

However, since Sri Lanka is a democracy belonging to the Western tradition, to grant the Tamils the status of a "nation" would run counter to the established precedent in similarly situated countries. Further, any such recognition could be easily exploited by opposition politicians who could play upon the logic which says that a nation must have its own country and thereby stimulate Sinhalese fears of Tamil secession.

Yet in the Tamil demand for nationhood is the cry of an ancient and proud people who, since independence, have come to feel deliberately excluded from the Sri Lankan polity especially with regard to the determination of national policies that have affected their interests intimately and adversely. This has simply got to be acknowledged by the government and the Sinhalese people. Sterile debates whether the Tamils are justified or not in feeling the way they do is no longer the point—the point is to satisfactorily resolve the most terrible tragedy that afflicts modern Sri Lanka. To this end, the claims of the Tamils may be given recognition in the following manner: first, by acknowledging that Sri Lanka is composed of four major ethnic communities none of which shall be favoured by law: second, that none of these communities is by itself a "nation" but together form

one; and third, that each community possesses a right of autonomy within a commonly shared country. These principles offer a political and moral basis for federation, but not for separation.

An alternative formulation of these same principles can be derived by using the distinction between "nation" and "nationality" drawn by Prof. H.W. Morris-Jones who recently lectured in Sri Lanka. According to him, a nationality refers to a group of people with a clear identity in terms of language and a homeland, but which is compatible with membership in a larger nation. The use of the term "nationality" is therefore less controversial than "nation." In fact there is today a de facto recognition of the Sri Lankan communities as nationalities. Thus, there could be explicit recognition of the Sinhalese, Tamils and Muslims as nationalities with limited rights of self-determination, specifically excluding secession but emphasizing those rights that ensure security and the preservation of cultural identity. Secessionist tendencies in ethnically divided countries such as Nigeria and Canada have more or less perished in such an environment.

## TRADITIONAL HOMELANDS

The Tamil demand with regard to traditional homelands is one that is presented in terms of a historical right. It bears a curious kinship to Sinhalese claims, for instance that the island is a "Sinhala-dveepa", and is similarly based on a mixture of fact and myth. It must be remembered that history can be argued and interpreted in more than one way. For instance, Prof. Jerry Pieris, using data compiled in the British period, has shown that broadly speaking only a rather narrow coastal strip of the Eastern Province was occupied by Tamil settlements. The interior was almost fully jungle and what Prof. Stanley Tambiah has called a "no-man's land." Strictly speaking, therefore, the traditional homelands would have to be limited to the coastal strip: there is no valid reason to include the spacious interior which forms the rest of the Eastern Province simply because of the arbitrary line-drawings of the British. But if the Sinhalese can use this logic to defeat the Tamil claims, so can it be used against them. The Sinhalese claim that the Estate



# Tamil Demands

Tamils have no right to be in the central highlands, or "traditional Kandyan lands", on which ground they were deprived of their citizenship in 1949, can be disputed because much of the land that the British acquired for the tea industry, especially at the higher elevations, was either uninhabited or very sparsely populated.

Clearly then, analyzing "traditional homelands" arguments of both Tamils and Sinhalese in terms of "who came first" is not helpful in resolving the ethnic problem. Rather, it leads to partisan interpretations of history at a time when one of the most urgent needs is to demystify history and prepare Sri Lankans for the 21st century.

Although presented in terms of history, both the Tamil and Sinhalese claims to the Eastern Province are fundamentally political; they pertain to the basic nature of the political set-up and revolve around security and ethnic identity. Thus, the Eastern Province has gained the status of a "homeland" in Tamil eyes partly because of recent events that have made clear to them their vulnerability in Sinhalese-majority areas. But satisfying these political imperatives by "reserving" the Northern and Eastern Provinces for Tamils is hardly a practicable solution because it runs counter to any accepted conception of national unity or economic efficiency. For instance, a study done by the respected Marga Institute has demonstrated that both the Northern and Eastern Provinces would suffer from a severe manpower shortage in a few years if future land colonization were to be reserved for Tamils because there simply are not enough Tamils to fill it up to its economic optimum without causing economic dislocations elsewhere.

It is observable, however, that in ethnic conflicts, rationality falters before emotion. The process of coming to a conclusion on an emotion-charged issue seldom begins with a premise (or reasoned argument) from which a conclusion is subsequently worked out. Rather, things begin the other way around—with a conclusion more or less vaguely formed, for which reasons are found later. Each side rationalizes its own beliefs, however tenuous and unreasonable they might be, confident that events will prove them right. But this is a totally

unconstructive attitude because more than anything else both sides need to compromise—a solution that is unfair to one side will be resented and will eventually be undermined by that side. It was the harsh treatment of Germany by the victorious Allies at the conclusion of the First World War that paved the way for Hitler and the Second World War. This is an absolutely vital point that the Tamils must realize, as much as the Sinhalese.

A mutually acceptable compromise on the "homelands" question could be to acknowledge both the present political need of the Tamils to preserve their numerical preponderance in the Northern and Eastern Provinces, and the existence of land hunger in other parts of the country. A practical policy would be to structure the colonization of the two provinces for, say, the next 25 years on the basis of the existing population ratios in the respective provinces. After that agreed upon period elapses, the land colonization policy should be restructured by a joint Central and Provincial government — sponsored commission.

## RHETORIC AND REALITY

There is a sense in which the three Tamil demands examined above are primarily rhetorical and propagandist. The three demands may be conceded on paper by the government but with little tangible gains to the Tamils were it to be accompanied by a larger army presence rather than by a real sharing of power. To give an example, the Palestinians remain stateless even though a great majority of countries officially recognize them to be a nation with the rights to self-determination and a country.

Whatever the Sinhalese "National Front" and its leadership may say, there can be no military solution to Tamil guerilla warfare — an authority no less than the present army commander Nalin Seneviratne has said so. But political solutions have contained both guerilla activities and terrorism to the extent, at least, of preserving national unity. Contrary to popular and stubbornly uninformed opinion, federalism has nowhere led to separation; but counter-terrorist operations, which degenerated into state terrorism, have led to separation.

There are a variety of ways in which power may be distributed

out from the center to regional minorities. Federalism, which is the commonly employed form, is a political mechanism that has as its primary focus the reconciliation of national unity with the maintenance of regional and minority rights. In a federal system the powers of the central government are limited in regard to certain agreed upon categories such as education, land settlement and police powers. Some powers are kept by the central government, while others are shared by the two levels of government or given in full to the provincial governments. This is neither separation nor a first step to it.

## AMALGAMATION

Where as in Sri Lanka ethnic groups are territorially intermixed, reduction in conflict at the national level may be obtained by the creation of federal states (or provinces) with a mixed populations. First, if ethnic proportions vary over the country, a group that is a minority at the center may be a majority in one or more states as the Tamils are in the Northern and Eastern Provinces. They will be in a position to determine policies in these provinces which should mitigate whatever resentment their small influence, or even exclusion, from the center causes them.

Second, state governments in mixed areas would provide opportunities for the development of inter-ethnic relations and cooperation that may soften ethnic hostilities especially among politicians. For example, take the Eastern Province which is composed of Tamils, Muslims and Sinhalese. No ethnic community on its own can command even a half of the vote in the province. To form the provincial government, therefore, the UNP and SLFP will have to persuade not just the Sinhalese, but also the Tamils and Muslims to vote for them. Similarly, the TULF will aim to win over the other communities in order to form the government. To give a hypothetical case, in order to isolate the UNP, the SLFP might have to enter into a pact with the TULF. Now if the SLFP and TULF are cooperating in the Eastern Province it will be difficult (and embarrassing) for them to be hostile to one another in the central parliament, say, over some issue relating to the Northern Province's budget requests.

Such cooperation between political parties and ethnic communities is unlikely to develop in the case of

a single federal state formed out of a merger of the Northern and Eastern Provinces. Instead, a single Tamil-supported party could well dominate the state. This would institutionalize a permanent Tamil-Sinhalese division that would be echoed every time the Tamil state wanted to do something (for instance, build a factory with foreign aid) that required the cooperation of the central government. Since a request, even if reasonable, would probably be perceived by Sinhalese parliamentarians as a "Tamil demand", it may automatically be opposed. In addition, the interests of the minority Muslims may not be given adequate consideration by a Tamil regional government confident of its own Tamil support.

As a general proposition, the more federal states of a viable size that a country possesses, the greater will be the tendency for ethnic groups to be concerned with parochial (or local) issues that cut across national ethnic divisions. Also it becomes more difficult for the states to combine across statelines to make unified ethnic-based demands at the center. Thus, if there are two separate provincial governments in the North and East, it is likely that the Northern Province (with its water-scarcity and better educated population concentrated in the Jaffna District) will have needs and demands that differ substantially from those of the Eastern Province (with its newly irrigated lands and mixed population).

However, one major problem that will remain even if the Northern and Eastern Provinces were to be given autonomy as separate entities will be the inclination among the rest of the country to consider the two provincial governments as "Tamil" ones which were wrested away from the center. Thus, when potentially contentious issues such as the allocation of central government revenues and foreign aid is concerned, there is a strong possibility that Sinhalese - Tamil divisions will once again come to the fore. This could best be averted by granting provincial governments to all the provinces.

For example, in India, the chief ministers of all the states commonly get together to press for more funds from the center. Such center-periphery bargaining actually helps to unify the country because all the major communities are represented on both sides (among the chief ministers on one side and the cabinet on the other) and so ethnic issues diminish in importance in settling the disputes. Further, if in Sri Lanka there were to be nine provincial governments, then standard criteria applicable to all nine

(Continued on page 7)



# A. G. A. EXPLAINS

We received the following communiqué from the Kachcheri AGA Lands regarding a letter appearing in the SATURDAY REVIEW of 28-09-85, written by Mr. S. Kirupamoorthy of Kankesanthurai.

Editor

SATURDAY REVIEW

The following facts refer to the contents in the latter half of the letter which appeared in the SATURDAY REVIEW of 28-09-85.

In the first instance, Mr. Kirupamoorthy is not an aggrieved party in this case. He represents one Mr. S. Kathiripillai of Mailodai, Myliddy North, Kankesanthurai. He made representations along with Mr. Kathiripillai on 26-10-84 and wanted certain clarifications to land acquisition proceedings in 1949, which Mr. Kirupamoorthy himself has referred to as "Nearly 3 decades old."

As records relating to more than ten years have been sent to the Record Room, it took some time to trace the documents referred to. Subsequently M/s. S. Kathiripillai and Kirupamoorthy were requested to meet me at my office on 28-02-85, 12-06-85 & 11-07-85 to clarify matters more fully by reference to plans. It is regretted that none of them turned up on these dates; but they continued to correspond calling for clarified data in writing.

Since Mr. Kathiripillai and Mr. Kirupamoorthy have not desired any interview, the available data have been furnished to Mr. Kathiripillai by my letter dated 02-10-85.

## FOR COMPENSATION

Editor

SATURDAY REVIEW

It is very distressing even to think of the tragedy overtaken the three young souls before the naked eye of the security personnel of the Valvettiturai Police a month back while returning from school—an estate student boy, student son of a poor widow and the podgy student son of an energetic surveyor, retired and social worker. All three suddenly disappeared in front of Valvettiturai Police in broad daylight. Alas! a stone-throw distance from the surveyor's house. This surveyor father with grief unquenchable walked into the Police Station after running from pillar to post, the Jaffna G. A. down to all relevant authorities to ascertain whether the three students are alive, dead or taken to other camps for torture, perhaps ferried to the steamer convert navv ship anchored at sea overlooking the Valvettiturai

Police. To his dismay the answer was in the negative. The school books, condiment bags carried by these students were found strewn in a well adjoining the Police Station. Consequent to a search by relatives the security personnel of this Police Station blasted 3 nearby houses and filled this particular well. Now the suspicion centres round the clue whether the three students are buried in this well. But the parents cannot gain access to this well.

Can the affected parents claim compensation from this police and if so details of death and damages could be registered there. Where could they go when they are left with no option other than to be in perpetual anxiety as the

fate of their disappeared children still remains a mystery. The name board of this police station appears in banner letters. But hardly any public enter nor any complaints are entertained or action taken. Its surroundings filled with sand gunnies, barbed wire and manned by a regular police force with an auxiliary Commando unit. The Ponnalai, Point-Pedro road running in front is almost devastated with trenches and rubble scattered all over to a distance of 300 yards except a foot path for pedestrians. Besides this road was declared for free flow of traffic in terms of the recent ceasefire. In these circumstances does the civil police serve any purpose to law abiding citizens of the Area?

When the government is engaged on a planned project of 10 million houses and mass tree planting campaign elsewhere in Sri Lanka the houses in the North and East are getting demolished or set ablaze intentionally and matured yielding trees destroyed by state forces with impunity and scant disregard to law and order. The writer begins to wonder whether arson is legalised in the North and Eastern part of Sri Lanka with the blessing of the ruling hierarchy. Really a flagrant violation of the penal code concerned by state forces and the fate of the Tamils become more confounded by repeated denial over

the state media. Sorry to find a little bit of athulathmuthalism methodically creeps to foul the political arena of Sri Lanka like the Nazi Gobellism in the second world war Germany and its ugly aftermath.

M. Selvasunderam

Thondaimanaru

## WRONG FONT!

Editor

SATURDAY REVIEW

In the stamp issued by the Ministry of Posts to mark the translation of Al-Quran into Sinhala, Al-Quran has become Al-Qural in Tamil. A few years ago in a medal issued to mark some occasion in one of the armed forces the President of Sri Lanka was described in Tamil as a Foolish President. People's (மக்கள்-makkal) President became Foolish

# LETTERS

(மக்கள் - makkan) President. The matter was even raised in Parliament. But such howlers continue to occur in almost all government rendering in Tamil of notices, name boards, sign boards and so on.

The Tamil alphabets are painted or engraved at the will and pleasure of the individual painters or engravers. Words are written with no regard to the meaning with the letters coming in at any place as the painter or engraver likes. The shapes and sizes of the letters are painted or engraved according to the imagination of the painter or engraver without any regard to the normal form of the letters. As a result, the painted or engraved words look hideous and frightening in appearance. In many cases words convey no meaning or wrong meaning and sometimes they are raw filth. But no one seems to bother about these mutilations even though there are Tamils and Tamil speaking persons as Ministers in the government.

When the foreigners were ruling us no such howlers occurred. If one would look at the harbour wall along Reclamation Road in Pettah one could still notice parts of the war time slogans written in Tamil also in the forties. The letters are of about a foot in height. And what beautiful and perfect characters they are. If one would compare the Tamil characters painted in the recent advertisements on the same wall itself one could

notice the difference even if one does not know Tamil.

If one would see the engraved Tamil name board on the wall of the British High Commission at Kollupitiya one could see how the foreigners even now are giving due respect to another man's language.

Why and how are the Tamil characters being desecrated in government and corporation offices and public places?

ARUL

Colombo

## HOME, SWEET HOME!

Editor

SATURDAY REVIEW

The Prime Minister, Mr. R. Premadasa's gesture in allotting a piece of land to the Working Journalists for a Journalist Centre and the government's willingness to afford other facilities to the Journalists for their well-being is something that has to be appreciated and applauded not only by the journalists themselves but by all sections of the people.

For, it is the journalists who serve as the best watch dogs of the nation, exposing and spotlighting the mistakes, misdeeds etc. of the government and its officials, the unsocial and unpatriotic activities of any citizen and reflecting the thinking and aspirations of the people.

The working journalists in our country have been and are working under many hardships and handicaps. Nevertheless, they have been doing a good service to the people and the country.

The working journalists, however, should not allow the patronage of the government to influence them in any way in their truthful pursuit and presentation of the facts, however unpalatable they may be to any government in power at any time.

Colombo

RAJ

## PARADISE LOST

Editor

SATURDAY REVIEW

I am writing this letter to you as you must know what is happening in Jaffna.

No C. T. B. Buses. No Petrol. Mini Vans overcrowded like sardines in tins. No letters from our loved ones. No papers coming from Colombo. The militant youths are going about asking for money, food, cycles.

Boys are going about on motor cycles and vans. No number plates. 4 or 3 boys on Mo-Bikes! Jaffna needs at least another 30 years to rebuild itself.

Manipay

R. A. Nathan



# INDIRA REMEMBERED

On 31st October, 1984 the whole world was shocked about the assassination of Mrs. Indira Gandhi by her own security guards. The world leaders condemned the brutal killing of Indira Gandhi and mourned for her. The Tamils in Sri Lanka shed their tears for the courageous leader who championed the cause of the freedom fighters among the Tamils in Sri Lanka who have been living with multifaceted problems.

She had her preliminary education at Switzerland and later at Pune, Bombay, Bristol, Visuvabarah and Somerville College, Oxford. She took part in politics when she was young. She read historical books and understood world politics when she was young. She started a movement in 1930 when she was only 12 years old to help the freedom fighters. She joined the Indian National Congress at the age of 21 and dedicated her life for its progress.

She worked with the freedom fighters to free her country from the British rule and she was in detention for 13 months without any trial. After Independence she worked hard for the progress of her motherland. She became a member of the congress

working committee in the year 1965. Then she was elected as the President of the Indian Congress in 1959 and assumed her duty for one year. She joined the cabinet as the Minister of Information and Broadcasting on the invitation of the then Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri. After his death she became the leader of the congress parliamentary party and subsequently the Prime Minister of India.

neighbours. But she never failed to realise to modernise the armed forces in India to the present need. On the other hand she dedicated herself to remove poverty from the land of her birth. During the span of 16 years as the Prime Minister of India with the population of about 700 million, she preached the message of unity and communal harmony in every nook and corner of India.

by

V. Rattai

From 24th January 1966, she ruled India for 16 years and stood for a united strong India. She worked for Peace and Unity. Because she had a firm belief that these two will help India's progress. During her office as the Prime Minister she faced two wars with her neighbours. She made a historic opening talk with China and relaxed the 14 years tension in 1976. After the war with Pakistan, 90,000 Pakistani Army surrendered unconditionally to the Indian Army. Then she signed the Simla Pact with Pakistan and paved a way for lasting peace between the two

She always liked children. She said that the children were the citizens of tomorrow and they were the wealth of a nation. So, she paid great attention to their progress and organised the Indian Council of Child Welfare.

She followed her father's foot steps and put India on the path of Non-alignment and became the Chairman of it in 1983. She was a courageous lady with firm convictions. She was considered to be one of the greatest leaders in the world.

## Saving the Xaviers!

Mrs. Xavier (42) and Miss Xavier (16) Mother and daughter from Thannamunai Batticaloa, allegedly arrested by the Security Forces are said to be 'missing.'

## Thampalagamam Refugees Flee to Kinniya

600 Tamil refugees from the village of Thampalagamam in the Trincomalee District have fled to Kinniya through fear.

Attempts are being made to resettle them in Thampalagamam.

## Navy's Fireballs

Karainagar Navy seems to have begun its shelling practice again.

On two consecutive days Sunday and Monday (20th and 21st respectively) when lights of the Town had dimmed, suddenly these fire balls landed on the middle of the roads. Fortunately, no one was hurt or any property damaged. But people were in fear thinking the worst.

Residents of the area say that there was no provocation for the shelling as there was no attack by the Boys.

# SETTLEMENTS AND TAMIL DEMANDS

(Continued from page 5)

governments would be devisable which will lessen the possibility of discriminating against or favouring one or two of the provinces—if a province is treated markedly differently from the other provinces, this will be immediately obvious. However, if there are only one or two provincial governments then, since there will be nothing against which to compare them with, the opportunities for discriminatory treatment will be enhanced and lead to inevitable abuses.

At this time, however, a federalism that encompasses the nine provinces is unlikely for two compelling reasons. First is the Sinhalese reluctance to seek a far-reaching devolution of power. This reluctance stems largely from the association of federalism with Tamils and separatism, and a lack of information about the benefits of devolution. Second is the governmental opposition to island-wide devolution which partly reflects the popular Sinhalese doubts, but also reflects the generalized reluctance of central elites to relinquish any part of their power to peripheral elites.

Finally, a crucial issue to be addressed is the debate that centres around whether the powers to be given to the provincial governments should be akin to the Indian states or union territories. The difference between the two is significant: the central government cannot override laws passed by the states in those areas where power has specifically been devolved to the states, but in the case of the union territories it can. In the context of the present Sinhalese-Tamil estrangement, the system of provincial governments that is set up should not offer any structural temptations for one side to undermine the other side's legal and reasonable intentions. Granting the provinces only union territory powers may lead to constant and petty central government interference in provincial affairs that will eventually undermine the workings of the whole system. Thus, in terms of preserving ethnic harmony after a settlement is reached, a grant of Indian state powers is strongly preferable.

## FEDERALISM IN PRACTICE

Much of the foregoing may have appeared to be merely speculative,

but it has its practical applications. The Nigerian experience affords the best available evidence on the varying impacts of federalism in practice.

The first Nigerian Republic was formed prior to the Biafran civil war. It consisted of three regions, each of them controlled by a single ethnic majority—Hausa, Yoruba and Ibo. Each group used its control of its region to struggle for power at the center. The Ibos lost out in this struggle, and soon they unfurled the Biafran banner. In being composed of three sharply differentiated ethnic regions, the first Nigerian Republic is comparable to Sri Lanka where provincial autonomy to be extended to an amalgamated Northern and Eastern Provinces or even to the two Provinces separately. The Nigerian failure illustrates the important lesson that federalism is not an "instant solution" to ethnic conflict besides wounds taking time to heal, much depends on the form of federalism that is adopted.

The Biafra war provided the occasion for the restructuring of the federal system that had failed.

Partly to counter the Ibo charge that Nigeria was dominated by the more populous Hausa region, the three regions were carved into nineteen federal states. As a result, the Hausa were spread among six states the Yoruba among five and the Ibo between two.

The creation of the new states provided an impetus for political leaders to see issues in terms of competition among states rather than as ethnic issues. For example, where demarcating electorates was concerned, small states joined hands irrespective of ethnic considerations against the large states, while on revenue issues the states divided on the lines of richer versus poorer. Inter-ethnic alliances were a notable feature in these disputes.

A future alliance of the Sri Lankan ethnic groups might, at this time, seem fanciful given the deep hostilities and mistrust that exist. But if across the abyss of massacres, disinformation and history moderates reach out at least to one another without surrendering to popular sentiment and its bitter despair, then, even in a little way, the process of reconciliation would have begun.



# Saturday Review

## SRI LANKA

## MUSLIMS KICKED OUT!

How prophetic the SR of 5th October was?

In a story on the last page under the headline 'Lanka-Israel's best pupil' we said that what is happening and what has happened to the Tamils at Vavuniya, Trincomalee and Batticaloa clearly show that the pupils had learnt their Israeli guru's lessons well. We went on to say 'The Israelis drove out the Palestinians from their traditional homelands in a concerted and determined manner. The Sri Lankan Government is following the same strategy. Vavuniya is a vital border area, Trincomalee is a strategic location. Batticaloa has to be Sinhalasised because it once housed Deegavapiya. This programme has been going on from D. S. Senanayake's time. The Muslims in Batticaloa are the next in line for the chop. Quite a few of them were evicted earlier from fer-

tile paddy lands because these lands were once supposed to have belonged to the Deegavapi'.

Today the Muslims traditionally living in Ponaveli in the A. G. A.'s Division of Addalaichenai are being literally driven away. In their place outsiders, presumably Sinhalese, have arrived to forcibly settle down on those lands. The affected Muslim peasantry has wired the President and the Muslim Ministers protesting that they had been living in this area for generations but now Home Guards are harassing them in every possible way to drive them out of their traditional homeland. They have warned that if this situation is not stopped immediately there will be another violent riot.

It gives us no great pleasure to have proved to be Cassandra so soon.

## Appeal To Lawyers 'With A Human Face'

The Movement for Inter-Racial Justice & Equality (Northern Branch) has sent us this copy of the letter addressed specifically to lawyers seeking their professional assistance to help the detenus in custody under the P T A. It is signed by Fr. J. E. Jayaseelan, MIRJE President:

The members of the Co-ordinating Committee of Citizens' Committees who have been the first team to visit the detenus at Welikade jail, have brought to our notice the harrowing news of the possibility of a continued incarceration of many a detainee because of the lack of adequate legal assistance.

They inform us that at the present rate of delay in the cases that have been filed and have been taken up, it would be years before the last detainee is out, if the current processes continue.

The problem is one of acute shortage of lawyers who can read & write Tamil. The statements of almost all the detenus are in Tamil. The number of translators who could get these docu-

ments either into Sinhala or English is appallingly low.

Those lawyers and their assistants who have committed themselves to work in these cases want assistance to speed up the proceedings.

We seek your assistance to help the unfortunate detenus, many of whom are being detained without proper charges.

Even though on the face of it, this appeal might seem directed towards only those lawyers proficient in Tamil, it must be stated that even those who are not proficient in Tamil could help in many matters connected with the preparation and prosecution of defence. So let this appeal be not taken as something aimed at lawyers of one or two ethnic groups. Please take it as being addressed to all lawyers with a sense of social justice and human sympathy.

Those desiring to help, please contact the Secretary, MIRJE, 6, Aloe Avenue, Colombo 3.

## Army's Unilateral Firing

Jaffna Town had been luckily spared the sounds of gunshots and the rattle of machine gun fire for quite some time now.

But on Thursday night (25th Oct.) round about midnight everyone's sleep was rudely shattered by the explosion of hand grenades followed by rapid machine gun firing, rifle shots and the occasional mortar shell. This demonstration

of awesome fire power went on for about one hour. Perhaps this was meant to be a demonstration effect or a reminder of things past.

Since there was no retaliatory firing by the militants, the Army's firing was as unilateral as its declaration of a cease-fire.

At the time of going to press, no casualties are known.

Flash: Army shelling on Thursday night left the 3rd and 4th floors of Veerasingham Hall — housing the National Cooperative Council — in shambles.

## Med. Fac. Block Creeps And Crawls

The Medical Students' Union of the Jaffna University will meet the University officials and other parties concerned on 30th October, regarding the construction of the new medical faculty block which was mooted in 1970, the foundation stone being laid the same year.

From time to time the Medical Students have been agitating for the early execution of this building project.

Mr. K. Senthil Kumaran, Secretary of the Medical Students' Union has sent this letter to us on the eve of the said meeting.

The building construction was started in 1979 under the 'Letter of Intent' and the signed contract which actually seems like a one sided document giving many favours to the contractor Messrs. Manoharan & Vettivel and the consultant Architect, Thurairaja Associates. Originally the three storey building was to be completed within a period of three years at an estimated cost of Rs. 23 million.

We went on strike on two occasions, one in the latter part of 1981 and early in 1982 and then entered the 1st storey to follow our studies at an yet incomplete building with the assurance that it will be completed by the next year. Yes yet again it turned out to be just a hollow promise. And again following a strike in 1983 we were made to understand that the building will be constructed by August 1984. But we are still not in a building fully constructed that only the ground floor is available either due to inefficiency of the council or the lack of integrity of the contractor or both.

It is understood that the contract was extended to June '82, again to June '83, then to August '84 March '85, Dec. '85, and now March '86.

But this date again becomes another improbability, observing the work force employed which is about less than 50 persons a day whereas it needs about 400 workers per day to meet the scheduled date. But nearly 40% of the total work has yet to be done and the work is already overdue by 3 years. There is no Engineer employed by the contractor, only a part time engineer has been appointed as recently as 2 months back; on the Consultant Architect side is a qualified person for construction. Such is the fate of a major project undertaken by the members of our community!

## Heartbreak Kills Refugee

Mr. S. Arumugam (58) who was one of the 142 refugees from Vavuniya and Trincomalee who took refuge in Navaly died suddenly.

The father of four children he was heart broken after the tragic events and was ill for some time.

## Nedumaran In Town

Nedumaran, the leader of the Kamaraj Congress in Tamilnadu, was in Jaffna 'touring' the area for a few days.